Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to Sao Leopoldo, Brazil, to the next IAPT Conference April 4-8, 2019! I am sure the event will be an exciting and important experience for all members and guests next year.

A few weeks ago, I had the privilege of visiting the conference venue and working with our Brazilian colleagues planning and preparing the meeting next year. The planning process is in good shape, the program is more or less finished, and the online program and information will soon be available.

During a 2-day seminar Dr. Nicolas Pannotto from Argentine, now teaching in Chile, gave inspiring lectures and introductions to the topic of decoloniality, the centerpiece of next year’s program. Dr. Pannotto recently published the very relevant book *Religion, Politica y Poscolonialidad en America Latina* (Madrid/Buenos Aires: Mino y Davila, 2016).

In his book as well as during the Sao Leopoldo seminar, Pannotto introduced us to the central aspects of postcolonial and decolonial thinking and scholars. The audience consisted primarily of colleagues and students from the EST – the Escola Superior de Teologia – the host of the IAPT 2019 Conference. The goal was to prepare and develop competence for the keynotes, papers, and discussions next year. This proved to be a very good and important way to prepare the future international meeting.

Our two colleagues Valburga Schmiedt Streck and Júlio Cézar Adam from EST are working closely on the host and program preparations. I certainly hope you have already put the conference in your 2019 schedule. The invitation will focus on the narratives and challenges the decolonial traditions that developed in South America represent today. I am certain this will be a very inspiring challenge for everyone in the IAPT.

EST is today one of the leading teaching and research institutions in theology in Latin America. Our EST colleagues are planning important excursions during the conference time as well as scheduling time to experience the local context. I am looking forward to seeing you all next year (this week we counted approximately 180 IAPT members)!

The Executive Committee (EC), and especially our colleague Birgit Weyel from Tübingen, has worked intensely the last months to prepare and organize the new open-access publication series for our upcoming conference proceedings. Some months ago, the EC decided to change from LIT Verlag to Tübingen University Library Publisher. The name of the new series will be *International Academy of Practical Theology. Conference Series*. The EC of the IAPT will be the responsible editor. In addition, the EC will nominate 8 representatives to an Editorial Board for the new series, which will work together with the editors (from last year`s conference) as referees and advisors for the series. As was decided in the Oslo business meeting, the series will be published in full open access with a ISNN number.

I am convinced that the new series will be a good publication platform for our publications, not the least because of the good work of many colleagues and also the recognized position of the Tübingen University Library Publishers. Publishing full open access requires a lot of competence and professional experience to secure that a publication will be accepted and received in the library systems and by the general public. Next year’s volume from the Oslo conference, edited by Aulio Vahänkagas (Helsinki), Kristine Helboe Johansen (Århus), and Sivert Angell (Oslo), is also coming along quite well and is scheduled to be published before the Sao Leopoldo conference. Thanks to all of you who have contributed articles – and of course to all the editors for their hard and good work so far.

The EC has received a good number of applications from colleagues who want to become new members according to our new by-laws, which has moved from recommendations to pure applications. Three members in the EC have the mandate to look at the applications in order to secure that the quality is the required one. It would appear that we will have more registered members by next year than we did 2 years ago. I hope the new process for becoming an IAPT member will be experienced as a positive path, while at the same time securing a good academic quality in the membership.

In mid-May, the Università Salesiana in Rome, together with the IAPT, hosted the conference *Christian Communities in the Face of Immigration*. EC members Birgit Weyel (Tübingen), Francis-Vincent Anthony (Rome) and myself presented papers. In a situation in which ever more European countries are working to reduce the number of migrants landing in their countries, it is an interesting sign that in many places Christian communities seem to favor more hospitality. I think it is an appropriate topic for contemporary practical theology to research and interpret this ongoing tension, theologically, empirically, and ethically. Thanks go to Francis-Vincent who hosted the event for all of us.

On behalf of the EC I hope you all have a pleasant summer( or winter) vacation in the months to come. And of course my warmest wishes for all research, teaching, and social life when the semester restarts once again!

Rome/Oslo May 16,2018

Trygve Wyller