

THE CENTER FOR MISSIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AT FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY:

A Brief Overview

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Amos Yong is Director of the Center for Missiological Research (CMR) and Professor of Theology and Mission in the School of Intercultural Studies.

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The Center for Missiological Research (CMR) was founded in 2007 by Jehu Hanciles and Douglas McConnell as part of the School of Intercultural Studies (SIS) at Fuller Theological Seminary. The mission of the CMR is to provide an exemplary doctoral-level missiological program, centered on a community of scholars drawn from around the world, and equipped to address the seminal missiological issues facing the global church in this century.

This includes three major areas of focus:

- To provide critical resources for new missiological research
- To equip men and women from around the world for faithful leadership in missiological education and practice within the church
- To create a rich environment in which Western and non-Western scholars might engage and learn from each other

Administratively, the CMR was set up to consolidate and provide oversight to a number of its ongoing missiological *research* programs, initiatives, and activities. These can be summarized under four headings.

Post-Graduate Programs

First, CMR manages the two academic post-masters programs in SIS: the Master of Theology (ThM) in Intercultural Studies and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Intercultural Studies. While both programs pre-date the founding of the Center, both needed to be assessed and revised, and this task fell to the new Center.

For the up-to-half a dozen students that matriculate into each of these programs annually, we provide a collegial context within which they learn together with and from each other reflecting the Center's objective to be a community of learning. This begins with a yearlong sequence of three seminars relevant to the discipline of missiology. The students are introduced to the challenges of Christian—and particularly missiological—scholarship, missiology as a poly-centric discipline and an overarching conceptual framework for their dissertation research.

In addition to the weekly or biweekly seminar meetings, there are also at least monthly colloquia where second—and later—year students present emerging aspects of their research to faculty and

peers. This solicits opportunities for analysis and discussion, and our quarterly events hosted by faculty (the *Salon Missiologique*) feature presentations, usually by the host, on his or her latest research, writing, or publication. Last, but not least, for our community of scholars, there are periodic special lectures from guests of CMR, usually established missiologists or other scholars working in missiologically-implicated areas, that complement, extend, and enrich the conversation for faculty and students alike.

Global Research Institute

The CMR also administers the Global Research Institute (GRI), a post-doctoral fellowship dating back to the early 1990s, given to scholars from the majority world. Each year, the GRI funds up to four fellows who are able to secure a six-month sabbatical or leave of absence from their home institutions in order to come to Fuller Seminary to research and write.

The objective of the fellowship is to promote scholarship in intercultural studies and related areas by majority world scholars—especially, but not only—for a majority world readership. Many of these scholars teach in smaller seminaries, institutes, or schools that have inadequate library resources or are too busy with teaching and other institution-related tasks to do the research and writing needed to pursue the completion of their PhD. GRI fellows are provided round-trip transportation, housing walking distance from the (adequate for accompanying spouses, many of whom come together), full library access, and office space. They are included in the life of CMR, SIS, and the seminary, and generally make at least one CMR colloquium presentation during their stay.

Annual Missiology Lectureship


In addition to supporting student (through the post-masters academic programs) and majority world (through the GRI program) research and scholarship, CMR also facilitates an annual missiology lectureship that was founded in 1965. Currently, the CMR director and the CMR Administrative Committee work collaboratively with the SIS Dean's Office and faculty to conceptualize and organize this annual event.

The CMR is devoted to supporting and furthering the most innovative and rigorous research...

Academic Book Series

Finally, SIS Dean Scott W. Sunquist and CMR director Amos Yong have initiated two new academic book series to further missiological research and scholarship. The first, under contract with Baker Academic and designed specifically for SIS/CMR faculty and alumni of the PhD program, is called "Mission in Global Partnership: Emerging Issues of the Global Church in Mission." Its inaugural volume, *Joyful Witness in the Muslim World: Sharing the Gospel in Everyday Encounters*, was written by Evelyne A. Reisacher, Associate Professor of Islamic Studies and Intercultural Relations, and will appear before Christmas 2015.

The second book series, "Missiological Engagements: Church, Theology and Culture in Global Contexts," will be published by IVP Academic. Sunquist and Yong co-edit this series with John Franke, co-director of the Gospel and Culture Network. Its inaugural volume, *The Gospel and Pluralism Today: Reassessing Newbigin in the 21st Century*, will be available at the SWM/SIS 50th Anniversary celebration conference in October 2015. Sunquist and Yong are eager to receive proposals for this "Missiological Engagements" series; for prospective authors needing more information, see the IVP website: www.connect.ivpress.com/cgi-ivpress/book.pl/code=5093.

Missiological research is more urgent than ever as we move further into the 21st century. The CMR is devoted to supporting and furthering the most innovative and rigorous research in this burgeoning and complex field, in anticipation of the coming reign of God. 

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