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## “Arise and Shine!”

These words from the book of Isaiah decorate the facade of the second main building of Friedensau Adventist University. Wilhelm Michael House was built right at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century. This engraved call reflects the great Adventist missionary enthusiasm of that time and the vision that established Friedensau as a mission-oriented institution.

“Arise!” – the older someone gets, the harder it is to obey calls like this. Could this also be true for denominations and local churches? If we look at our church in the West, we see clear signs of aging in the demographic structure. Moreover, the social progress within Western societies and the process of secularization dim missionary enthusiasm.

The call remains the same, but society – and along with it our church – is experiencing diverse changes as time passes. Are we going to remain faithful to our ancestors or shall we change our motto from Isaiah 60:1 to Matthew 11:28: “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden ...” (ESV)? Our experiences force us to realize that we must work harder in bringing our theological reflection, present church reality, structural design, strategical plans and missionary praxis in the context of our changing society into closer harmony. The critical, humble and integration-oriented reflection about them is not supposed to take a back seat to “business as usual” mission practice and theological debates.

Many are looking for orientation. It’s time to arise and Shine. Are you ready to join? Then let this newsletter inspire you to shine even brighter!

*Dr. László Szabó  
Vice Dean of Theology*

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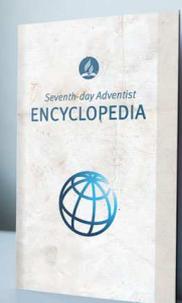
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**DO YOU WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE LARGEST SCHOLARLY WORLD CHURCH PROJECT?**

**WANT TO WRITE FOR THE CHURCH'S FIRST ONLINE ENCYCLOPEDIA?**





### ***European Theology Teachers' Convention***

As the Protestant world commemorates Martin Luther's nailing of his 95 theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, Adventists are also joining the celebrations in several ways. One significant event was the 2017 European Theology Teachers' Convention held at Friedensau Adventist University on April 19–22. In line with the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the theme of the event "On the Freedom of a Christian: Human Accountability and Liberty in the Light of the Reformation," was to lead participants towards pondering over the impulses the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation offer Christians today. This biennial conference brought together seventy participants from about fifteen countries to discuss the implications of Luther's famous treatise "On the Freedom of a Christian" (*De libertate christiana*). Participants of the convention were treated to not only academic exercises but to a social and spiritual atmosphere by the hosts in the heartland of the Reformation. Highlights of the event included plenary papers, short papers, devotionals, quiet moments at noon as well as study trips to Reformation places (Wittenberg, Zerbst and Ziesar) ending with the Lord's Supper. For Leif Hongisto of the Middle Eastern University it was the variety of the experience that set the tone of this convention.

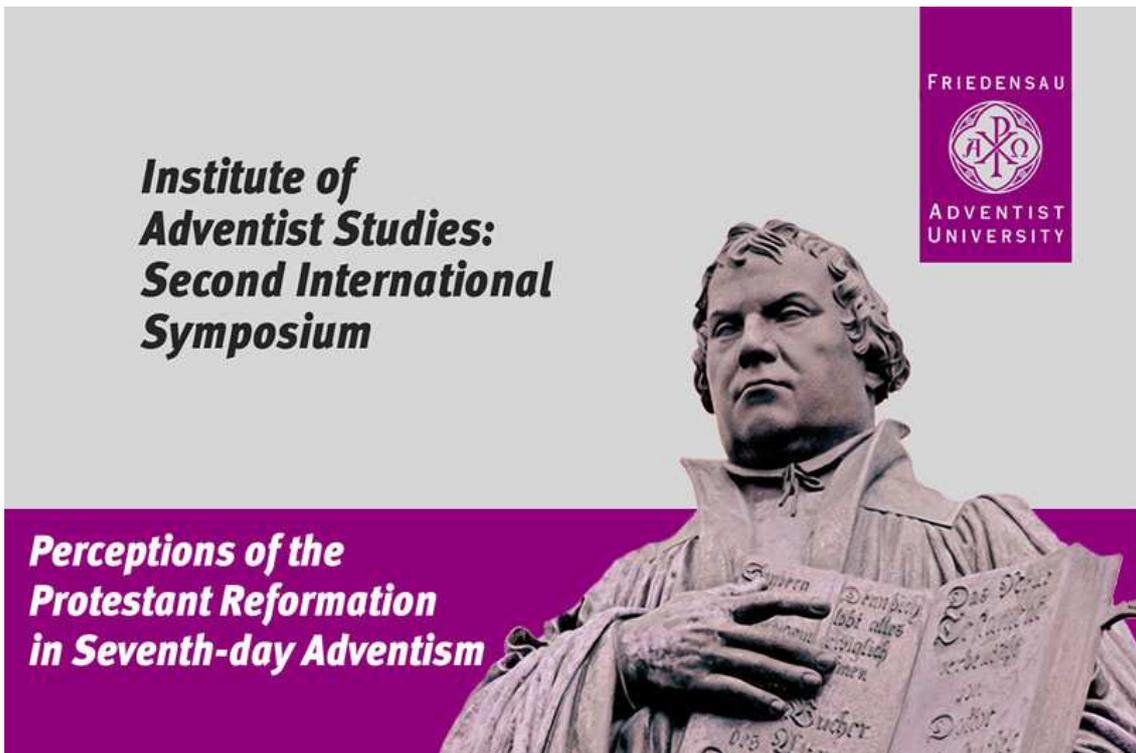
*Chigemezi-Nnadozie Wogu  
Research Associate at FAU*



What other participants said about the ETTC:

- "I really enjoyed the hospitality. The leaders of Friedensau Seminary are very friendly, warm and welcoming people."
- "The convention was well organized and I enjoyed thoroughly the quality papers presented. The deliberations served as encouragement and inspiration."
- "It was great to be at Friedensau for the ETTC. I enjoyed being part in it and to experience so much friendship. Thank you also for the communion service that was extremely meaningful!"





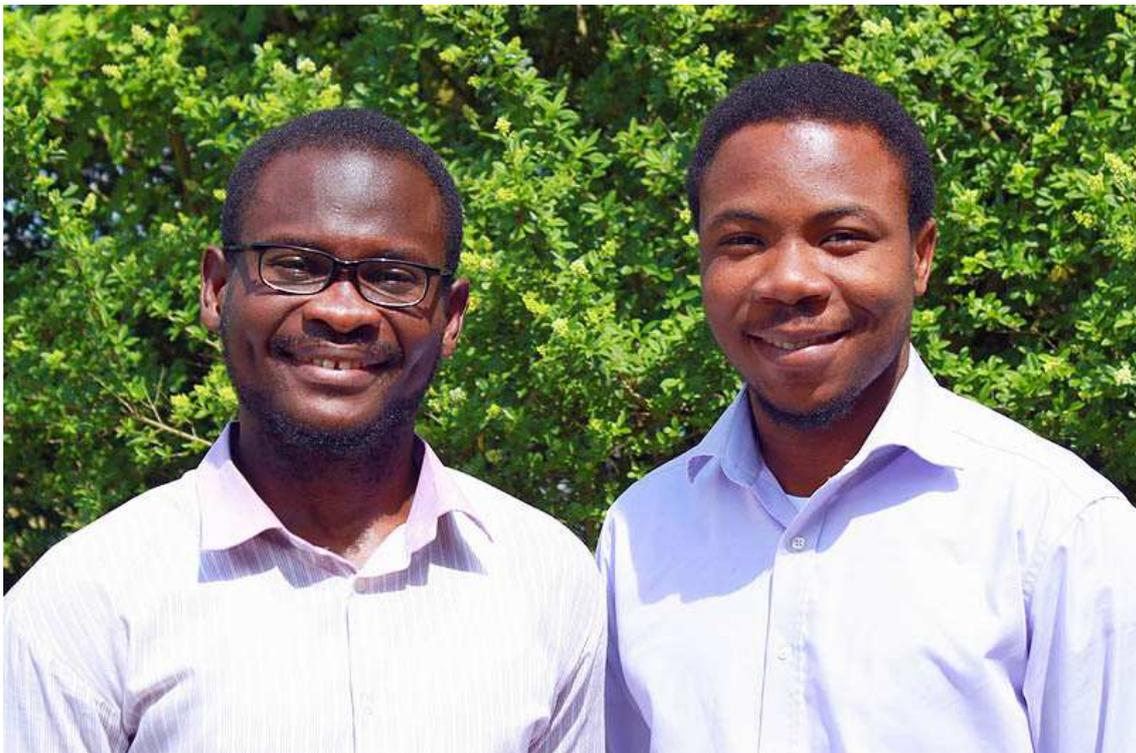
**Institute of  
Adventist Studies:  
Second International  
Symposium**

**Perceptions of the  
Protestant Reformation  
in Seventh-day Adventism**

**FRIEDENSAU  
ADVENTIST  
UNIVERSITY**

### ***New Book on the Reformation in Preparation***

In May 2016, 18 scholarly papers were presented at the Second Symposium of the Institute of Adventist Studies in Friedensau. The papers – dealing with “Perceptions of the Protestant Reformation on Seventh-day Adventism” – are currently being prepared for publication. The 300-page book is scheduled to be released in October – just in time for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nailing of the 95 theses to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg by Martin Luther. More details in the next newsletter.



## ***Two Winners of the Ministry Writing Contest***

Sully Sanon, an International Social Science student from Haiti, has won a first prize in the fifth Ministry Student Writing Contest. It comes with a price money of \$500. At the time of writing, Sully was still an MTS (Master of Theological Studies) student graduating in 2016. His essay is entitled "Interpersonal Support: A Prophet-Scholar Model" and analyzes the relations between Ellen G. White and John N. Andrews. The author concludes that "whatever we do in the church or the position we serve, we are at first human beings and it is a Christian call that we support each other."

Sully Sanon is not the first MTS student at Friedensau to win a price from Ministry. Two years ago, Chigemezi-Nnadozie Wogu from Nigeria, who is now a research associate at the university and a doctoral student at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, had also won a first prize with a paper entitled "The salvation of non-Christians in Africa: An Adventist perspective." If you would like to read Chigemezi's article, you can find it [here](#).

## ***Mission Emphasis in the MTS Program: Friedensau's Response to Contemporary Challenges***

"The MTS enlarged my vision and equipped me with the necessary tools for doing mission in an increasingly secularized world." With these words Vladimir Krumov, a student from Bulgaria, said farewell at his graduation in October from the Master of Theological Studies program with emphasis on Mission Studies. He has since resumed work as a pastor in his homeland with new enthusiasm.

Two years ago, an optimization regarding the content of the Master course on Mission Studies was implemented. The goal was to offer students the opportunity not only to enlarge their missionary knowledge, but also their competences and skills in this area through additional class work on research and teaching as well as through practical work. Beside the general theological courses in Old Testament, New Testament, Systematic Theology and Church History, there are three emphases in the MTS program in the area of mission.

The foundations of mission theology include several areas which help in giving orientation and in broadening one's horizon. First of all, the biblical foundations are given priority. In the constantly changing societal context it is important to have a reliable basis by researching the biblical foundations, studying developments in the history of mission and analyzing the different theories on mission. Among others the following courses are being taught: Theology and History of the Adventist Mission, Biblical Mission Theology, Church Growth, Foundations of Leadership and Coaching, Church Planting, and Questions of Missionary Theology.

Secondly, the course of studies is dealing with the foundations of empirical research. Beside qualitative and quantitative analysis, the students are taking classes on Postmodern Religiosity, Cultural Anthropology, Faith and Science, and Religion and Society.

Because of the challenges of secularism, the Seventh-day Adventist Church is facing a crucial test that needs to be taken seriously. Instead of retreating in fear, these challenges demand insight and courage. Several studies demonstrate that churches do not need to be the losers of the secularization process. In spite of the growing unchurched, the pluralization and privatization of religious and spiritual beliefs –and against a widespread assumption –, secularization is not to be equated with the loss of meaning of religion. Rather, it is a shift from the universal and communitarian religion of earlier times towards a religious pluralism or even a totally private religiosity. Religions can answer the question concerning their lasting value convincingly by presenting the gospel as a relevant and holistic problem-solving approach to human needs.



In his Master Thesis, Vladimir Krumov carried out an empirical investigation of the Adventist Church in Bulgaria and presented a proposal for strategic planning. The leadership of the church in Bulgaria accepted this scientific support with great openness and is working on incorporating the results and suggestions into their planning. Thus, an MTS graduate has provided significant support to the church. His research detected possible factors of (the lack of) growth such as the low proportion of men (only 30 %), the important role of the Roma people in the life of the church – it is the only dynamically growing group –, and the challenges concerning the geographic distribution of the church members – problems the church in Bulgaria will need to face.

Thirdly, the degree course stresses observation and analysis of different practical work models. Through study tours, students learn about different models in the field of church growth, church planting, intercultural work, group work, and others. On site, they conduct case studies in order to observe and comprehend activities of leaders, developmental processes, changes in strategic planning, and strengths and weaknesses. By visiting and analyzing more than a dozen different projects during their two years of study, the students' horizons are broadened, their reflective faculties are nurtured, and their treasure trove of experience is increased.

The MTS also offers the opportunity for practical field work whereby students can develop skills concerning leadership, intercultural work, team work, social commitment, evangelization, and church planting. They even spend one month in the Masai steppe in Tanzania, work together with locals, and develop plans for the villages they are working in. (This is the area where Friedensau opened its first mission as early as in 1903.)

One important objective of the Master of Theological Studies program with emphasis on Mission is the training of missiologists who not only enter their ministry enthusiastically, but who render the Adventist Church valuable assistance in facing the challenges of the present time through their academic and practical training. For more information, go to <http://www.thh-friedensau.de/studies/theology/master-of-theological-studies/> or write to [laszlo.szabo@thh-friedensau.de](mailto:laszlo.szabo@thh-friedensau.de).

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