

ISERT 2018 Helsinki

The theme of ISERT 2018 is Shifting Borders in Empirical Theology. The conference focuses on addressing the empirical viewpoint of borderlines and their transition between religion and spirituality, between religions and between religious, non-religious, and sacred and profane.

There are many kinds of borders: stronger and weaker, some are very visible, others invisible. Quite often, we see only one side of the border, the other side stays alien to us. By drawing attention to the borders, and especially shifting them, we want to inspire a search for new thoughts and new knowledge, i.e. to shift the borders, or even fade them if it seems rational.

Finland, the host country of the conference, is religiously, geographically and also culturally on the Western and Eastern borders. Historically, the borderline in Finnish religion has been the relationship between Catholic and ancient folk religions (e.g., Sami religions). Later, encounters between Catholic and Protestant traditions have formed one borderline, as have the encounters of Lutheran and Orthodox Christianity. Today, the cultural frontier is not strongly between religions, but between religious and non-religious culture, and the border between religion and spirituality seems to be in constant flux.

The conference will be organized by a local team: Prof. Antti Räsänen, PhD. Anneli Portman, ThD. Suvi-Maria Saarelainen, and MTh., Doctoral Student Aino-Elina Kilpeläinen.