

Pastoral Care & Counseling: Boundaries & Borders

ECPC Conference in Göttingen, August 15 – 20, 2013

In the living of life one encounters boundaries.

Living life means crossing borders and overcoming limits: growing, learning, discovering new things and making new contacts.

Living life means running up against boundaries: the limits of one's own vitality and knowledge, limits of cultural and political borders as well as of ethical judgment.

Living life means suffering from boundaries, from inward and outward blockages. There is a desire to be freed of boundaries:

“You have set my feet in a broad place.” (Psalm 31: 8)

At the same time boundaries preserve life in the face of dissolution or excessive demand. Boundaries protect the identities of individuals, groups and societies.

Boundaries separate between here and there. They mark places of manifold variety and of safety:

“You set a boundary that they may not pass.” (Psalm 104:9)

Pastoral care entails **working with boundaries** – with the experience of enclosure and blockage as well as with the experience of losing oneself in boundlessness.

Pastoral care entails the perception of boundaries both familiar and strange, both inward and outward.

Pastoral care crosses over boundaries while also encouraging the acceptance of boundaries. Pastoral care defines boundaries while also helping to discover new territory within the boundaries.

Pastoral Care & Counseling: Boundaries and Borders

that is the theme of the 12th Conference of the *European Council for Pastoral Care and Counseling (ECPC)* in the Summer of 2013 in Göttingen to which we are issuing an invitation in cooperation with the Institute for Practical Theology of the University of Göttingen.

Pastoral care with boundaries includes pastoral caregivers and counselors from Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Free churches in Europe who will cross over boundaries of nationality, confession and origin. They will gather at the former German-German border, at what was a seam between Eastern and Western Europe. They work in interdisciplinary manners with a variety of methods. They pray, sing and celebrate together.

For 40 years pastoral caregivers and counselors have crossed borders in Europe for the sake of exchange on their discipline and its methods. We want to celebrate the anniversary with special guests from the early years and with visions for the coming decades.

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We invite you to come to Göttingen:

- for lectures that highlight border experiences in art, politics, medical ethics and other cultural realms,
- for workshops and small group encounters
- for concerts and a great celebration

We will explore, at small or great distances, border sites of pastoral care.

Further information on the program of the conference and on workshop procedures, on travel and lodging, on costs and fees, on applications will follow in due time.

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