

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES

**MASTER and  
DOCTORATE**

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DEGREE

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# INTRODUCTION



The Graduate Program in Religious Studies (hereafter, “the Program”) began its activities in 1976 as the first Masters degree program at the Methodist University of São Paulo (UMESP). In 1990, the program received formal recognition by the National Council on Education and also created the Doctoral Course, which received recognition four years later, in 1994. Since then, all courses in Brazil are regularly evaluated by the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES). CAPES evaluates the graduate program every three years and attributes a grade on a scale of 1 to 7. In 2009, the graduate program earned a grade of 5. In 2012, CAPES issued a grade of 6 to the graduate program, the highest grade applied to a graduate program in Religious Studies or Theology in Brazil. UMSEP’s graduate program was the first in Brazil to earn a grading of this distinction from CAPES.

**UMSEP’s graduate program is internationally recognized and is the number one religious studies program in Brazil.**



In its 37 years of existence, the Program has graduated 542 masters students and 180 PhDs. Many of our graduates work today in Schools of Theology and graduate programs of Theology and Religious Studies in Brazil and abroad. Approximately 110 students are from different regions of Brazil and many countries in Latin America and Africa. Professors in the program hold doctorates from Brazilian, North American and European Universities. Teaching and research activities involve sustained engagement of both professors and students in the critical study of the phenomenon of religion, seeking scientific knowledge and social relevance from inter and transdisciplinary methodological perspectives which respect the complexity and variety of religious experiences on our continent.

# INTRODUCTION

The Program publishes five premier research journals. Since 1985, faculty and students have shared their research in the revista *Estudos de Religião* (journal *Studies in Religion*; classified by CAPES as A2: Access: [www.metodista.br/estudosdereligiao](http://www.metodista.br/estudosdereligiao)). This journal is available electronically (Open Access Journal). The Program also publishes *Mandrágora*, a journal related to the Mandrágora/Netmal Research Group on Gender and Religion. The electronic journal *Correlatio* examines themes emerging in the Paul Tillich Research Group. Finally, the electronic journals *Oracula*, and *Convenit International* (Research Group "Religion, Language, Culture and Society") explore concepts in *Oracula* research and the intersections of religion, language, culture, and society, respectively.

The Program maintains diverse support projects for its formal academic activities. These include the library of Religious Studies (Ecumenical Library) which houses approximately 21,000 books and 3,140 journals, and a faculty and student exchange program with foreign universities. Since 1996, the Program has offered the Week of Religious Studies (Semana de Estudos de Religião). Its intention is to foster scientific exchange and critical discourse around issues in religious studies on both national and international levels. The program also draws support from the Scholarship Fund of the Ecumenical Institute for Graduate Studies (IEPG). This is an organization created by diverse churches that encourages ecumenical theological education. Since 1999, the IEPG has maintained the Dr. Prócoro Velasques Filho House, which provides residence for students of the Graduate Program in Religious Studies during their period of studies.



Dr. Prócoro Velasques Filho House



Campus Rudge Ramos

# PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Graduate Program in Religious Studies investigates religions and their particular forms of expression, articulation, and relation to historical, social and cultural contexts. Utilizing an interdisciplinary approach to Religious Studies, the degree program deploys diverse theoretical instruments from the human sciences, such as: literary and linguistic theories, culture, gender, historiography, social sciences, theology, exegesis, philosophy, psychology and pedagogy.

The Masters degree in Religious Studies seeks to attain the following objectives:

- Train teachers for institutions of higher education;
- Promote the training of researchers;
- Stimulate scientific production in the area of Religious Studies;
- Prepare students to work in schools, community leadership, religious institutions, and governmental and non-governmental organizations;
- Promote dialogue with society regarding themes of interest related to the phenomenon of religion.

The Doctorate degree in Religious Studies has the following specific objectives:

- Promote the scientific formation of professors and researchers for the development high level academic activities;
- Develop systematic studies and advanced research of religious phenomenon;
- Stimulate scientific production and the publication of theses, dissertations, monographs, and original research.





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# AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

## 1. RELIGIOUS LANGUAGES

The study of texts, symbols, myths, rituals, religious practices, as well as doctrinal systems based on language and articulation, by means of the methods of linguistic sciences, hermeneutics, theology, philosophy, history, and anthropology.

Research Area 1:

### 1.1 LITERATURE AND RELIGION IN THE BIBLICAL WORLD

The primary focus of this research area is twofold: to analyze texts from the Biblical world in different canons, apocryphas, pseudepigrapha, Qumran 2); to examine these texts with particular attention to religious -cultural diffusion in literary, and sociohistoric perspectives, as well as their history of reception. There are five research groups within this area. Each is described below:

#### 1.1.1 Research Group: Oracula – Studies of Apocalyptic, Mysticism and Visionary Phenomenon

Beginning: 2003. Coordinator: Paulo Augusto de Souza Nogueira

This research group studies prophetic and visionary narratives of Early Christianity (including apocryphal literature). Researchers analyze the literary expressions, religious practices, and identity of early Christian communities. Researchers study fictional and grotesque visionary narratives. These accounts of visionary trips

around the world, missionary trips of the Apostles to foreign lands, and the incursion of magic and prophetic practice in the large cities of the Mediterranean.

The forms of imagination and the construction of identity on the frontiers of culture are studied from the perspective of narrative analysis, cultural history, cultural semiotics, and memory studies.

Between 2013 and 2015 the Oracula Group developed a Research Project financed by Foundation for Research Support of the State of São Paulo, (FAPESP) entitled Memory, Narrative and Identity in Primitive Christianity: from the Acts of the Apostles to Apocryphal Apostolic Acts. The Group also organizes the Electronic Journal Oracula (Access: [www.oracula.com.br](http://www.oracula.com.br)).



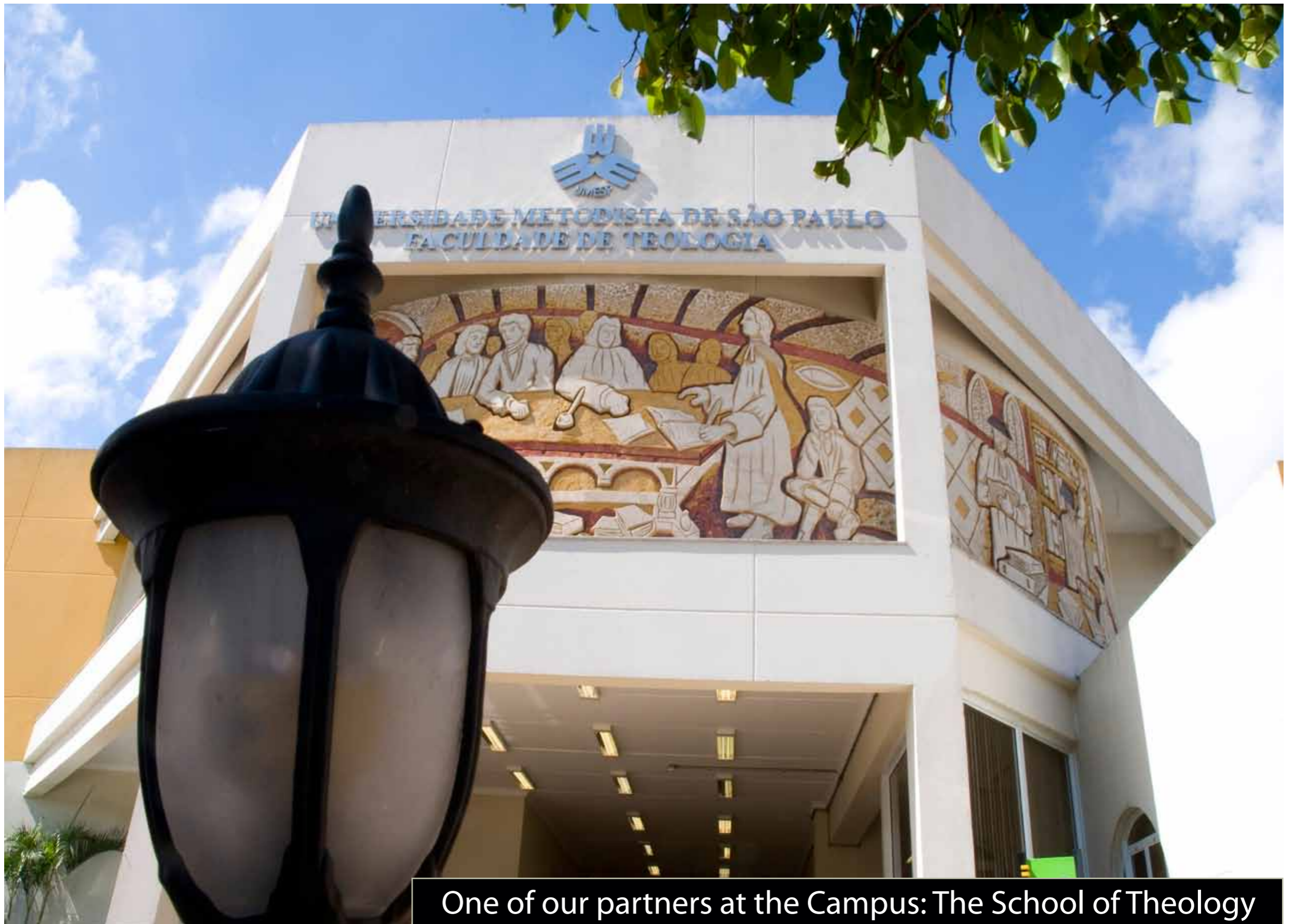
1.1.2 Research Group: The Archeology of the Ancient East  
Beginning: 2013. Coordinator: José Ademar Kaefer

The “Archeology of the Ancient East” Research Group has as its main objective the study of archeological sites (telim) of the Ancient East, particularly in Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and Syria.

The focus of the research group is to enlarge the horizon of the knowledge of researchers regarding the history of Ancient Eastern people and their role in the formation of the biblical literature in the First Testament. The periods of greatest interest of the research group are from the Bronze to Iron Ages. This research seeks to enrich the production of dissertations and theses of students.







One of our partners at the Campus: The School of Theology

Research Area 2:

## 1.2 THEOLOGIES OF RELIGIONS AND CULTURE

Utilizing diverse theoretical instruments this research area studies symbolic, narrative, ritual, doctrinal and ethical expressions of religions. The second research area examines interpretive and theological systems to articulate the complexities of religion and culture.

### 1.2.1 Research Group: Paul Tillich

Beginning: 1993. Coordinator: Claudio de Oliveira Ribeiro

The group unites teachers, researchers and students interested in the study of the thought of Paul Tillich and its presence in today's world. Its main objectives are: to conduct research that constructs a systemized analytical and theological instrument of culture to dialogue with philosophy, phenomenology and human sciences; to compare and contrast the thought of Paul Tillich and his followers with the methodological contributions of other theologians of culture; to publish translations of Paul Tillich and sources related to his works; and to increase contact with Paul Tillich research groups in the United States and Europe. Access to the electronic journal *Correlatio*: [www.metodista.br/corrlatio](http://www.metodista.br/corrlatio).

### 1.2.2 Research Group: Theology in the Plural

Beginning: 2010. Coordinator: Claudio de Oliveira Ribeiro

The last decades of the twentieth century were marked by a "crisis of paradigms" in the field of Religious Sciences and Theology. During this crisis intense discussion emerged around the values of

plurality, subjectivity, and ecumenical perspectives for theological reflections. Based on these foundations, the group conducts research centered on the following aspects: a) Plural logic and theology; b) Theological method, cultural studies and theology; c) Ecumenical theology of religions; d) Theology, literature and music; e) Systematic theology and contemporary themes.





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#### 1.2.4. The Research Group Archeion — Hermeneutics of Religious Texts

Beginning: 2010: Coordenator: Rui de Souza Josgrilberg

The Archeion research group seeks to develop research that deepens and articulates the hermeneutic phenomenological method in the sciences of religion and culture. The group's overall objective is to examine hermeneutics of sacred texts about various religious traditions. The groups analyze ancient texts of different religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Latin American religions. Sustained attention is given to the phenomenological methods of the following authors: Husserl, Mircea Eliade, Paul Ricoeur, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Paul Tillich.

As specific objectives, the group develops an epistemology of the religious expressions, the concept of ontophany, and observations of religious experience that produces new meanings and new symbolic forms. The methodological space is phenomenological (static, genetic and the generative phenomenology of Husserl as starting point) expanded by the hermeneutical tradition. The group has an interdisciplinary character where contributions from areas such as philosophy, history, literature, psychology, and theology are gathered. Although there is the interdisciplinary character, there is a shared interest in the hermeneutics and the common method of phenomenology. The group meets regularly and frequently participates in seminars, research forums, and conferences. The group publishes electronic journals, printed journals, and books containing the results of the participant's research. The electronic Journal published by this group is *Convenit International*. (<http://www.hottopos.com/convenit14/index.htm>.)



#### 1.2.5 Research Group: Religion, Language, Culture and Society Beginning: 2014. Coordenator: Luiz Jean Lauand

This research group examines language, anthropology, and philosophy in diverse religion. The research group primarily focuses on religious languages and their symbolic, narrative, ritual, doctrinal and ethical expressions. In concrete terms, these are expressed in the following manners: elucidation of metaphorical concepts and myths for religious purposes (Rui de Souza Josgrilberg); language as a means of understanding philosophical and religious anthropologies (Luiz Jean Lauand) and the emblematic and metaphoric languages of the religion of the heart in Brazilian Churches and their articulation of the relation between religious subjects, Church and society (Helmut Renders). The electronic Journal linked to this group is *Convenit International* see: <http://www.hottopos.com/convenit14/index.htm>.



## 2. RELIGION, SOCIETY AND CULTURE

This area of concentration studies, in an interdisciplinary perspective, the multiple interfaces that are established between society, culture and the field of religion – institutions, movements, organizations, religious practices and experiences – with the utilization of instruments from social sciences, history, economy, psychology, pedagogy, theology, and philosophy.

Research Area 1:

### 2.1 RELIGION AND SOCIO-CULTURAL DYNAMICS

This area of research studies the inter-relationships of institutions, organizations, movements and subjects and their respective religious practices with social, cultural, economic and political processes in their dynamic of reproduction and transformation, with emphasis on studies of gender, power, citizenship, periphery, and media.

2.1.1 Research Group: Gender and Religion – Mandragora / NETMAL  
Beginning: 1989. Coordinators: Lieve Troch and Sandra Duarte de Souza

The strong androcentric presence in religions, in general, and in Judeo-Christian traditions, in particular, presents the imperative necessity of revealing the traumas these social relations of sex have involved. The Group of Research on Gender and Religion – Mandragora/NETMAL seeks to demonstrate the transversality of gender in the objects dealt with, and, from an interdisciplinary approach, analyse the implications of gender in symbolic-religious



systems that inform the faithful, and social institutions in general. The purpose of Mandragora/NETMAL is to serve as a space for academic and interdisciplinary reflections, and stimulate debate regarding gender and religion as fundamental to the process of deconstruction of social inequalities. As such, the category of gender is not used in isolation, but is articulated with other categories such as race/ethnicity, social class, and generational aspects. Access to the electronic journal *Mandragora* see: [www.metodista.br/mandragora](http://www.metodista.br/mandragora)

2.1.2 Research Group: Interdisciplinary Group of Research on Protestantism (GI-PESP)

Beginning: 1999. Coordinator: Leonildo Silveira Campos

The group seeks to offer data and interpret, sociologically, the tensions and challenges of Protestantism in contact with modern and post-modern culture. The research, beyond field research, also seeks to accompany intellectual production and the media regarding the subject, with the object of amplifying and deepening knowledge of the religious phenomenon called "Protestantism".



### 2.1.3 Research Group: Religion and Urban Periphery in Latin America (REPAL).

Beginning: 2007. Professor Coordinator: Dario Paulo Barrera Rivera

This research group focuses its religious \*\* on the practices of persons and communities on the Latin-American urban periphery. Particular attention is devoted to the relation between religious practices and social inequalities in the urban context.

The Group dialogues with a broad spectrum of perspectives and fields of knowledge that study urban problems: Urban Sociology, Urban Anthropology, Geography, Social Work, History of Daily Contemporary Life, and Pedagogy. The group constitutes space for debate and criticism of recent publications and research, is oriented toward theoretical questions regarding the subject, develops research, promotes seminars with specialized researchers, and maintains relations with groups and research centers regarding urban problems within and outside of Brazil.

### 2.1.4 Research Group: Religion and Daily Life: Historiography and Theological – Literary Interpretations

Beginning: 1999. Coordinator: Lauri Emílio Wirth

The fundamental purpose of the group is to study religious experiences based on two emphases: a) Historiographical: raises questions prioritizes arguments attributing to regarding religious the historical subjects in the micro spaces of family relations, in the strategies of daily survival, articulations with dominant religious discourse, and with the macro social processes; b) Theological: gives priority to the process of the re-elaboration of religious symbols within the experiences of groups and their form of representation encountered in daily life. The classic texts of religion, including the Bible, are considered as normative by the tradition of churches, and are studied with possible interlocutors in the process of the construction of the religiosity of groups. Based on these presuppositions, the group intends the following pursuits: 1) Elaborate theoretical and methodological references for the study of religious experiences and representations of the sacred directed to the investigation of webs of meaning and religious memory, principally in popular daily life; 2) Realize field research based on oral historical method, life history, and narrative theology together with religious groups in Latin America.

Research Area 2:

## 2.2 RELIGION AND PSYCOSOCIAL AND PEDAGOGICAL DYNAMICS

This research area studies psychosocial, pedagogical, and missiological aspects of religious experiences and practices in the contemporary world, and, as such, the impacts and influences of actual transformations in religious experiences and practices.

### 2.2.1 Research Group: Practical Theology in Brazilian Context (GETESP)

Beginning: 1999. Professor Responsible: Nicanor Lopes

The group studies the implantation and development of practical theology in Christian Churches in the context of Brazil. The main focuses of the research are Catholicism, Protestantism of immigration and mission, and Pentecostalism.

### 2.2.2 Research Group: Religion and Education

Beginning: 2003. Professor Responsible: Jung Mo Sung

Two apparently paradoxical characteristics mark our time: a) great technological development that permits the globalization of the economy and the generation of wealth unimagined beforehand; b) social exclusion of a significant part of the world population. Beyond this, we also confront environmental crises that could lead to a situation of economic and social non-sustainability. These characteristics are aspects of a unique civilized process, the Western World, which, based on the myth of progress,

unholds the unlimited search for wealth and the overcoming of the very human condition. In order to leave these crises behind, one of the challenges is surpassing current scientific models and educational systems that separate material and spiritual aspects of human lives, negate the ambivalence of life and reality, and make instrumental reason the only acceptable type of reason.

The research group seeks to analyse the possible contributions of religions for a “reconciliation” of human beings with the human condition, whose objective is the construction of new educational and cultural practices that are capable of criticizing the current societal model, and contributing to the construction of a society that expresses greater solidarity.



# FACULTY MEMBERS

*PROF. DR. CLAUDIO DE OLIVEIRA RIBEIRO*

Doctor in Theology from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro. Research interests: Systematic Theology, Theology of Culture.



*PROF. DR. DARIO PAULO BARRERA RIVERA*

Doctor in Religious Studies by the Methodist University of São Paulo and Post-Doctorate in Religious Studies from the Methodist University of São Paulo. Research interests: Religious Practices in Urban Periphery, Pentecostalism, Migration and Religion.



*PROF. DR. HELMUT RENDERS* (Academic Dean)  
Doctor in Religious Studies from the

Methodist University of São Paulo, and Post-Doctorate from the Federal University of Juiz de Fora. Research interests: Systematic Theology, Religion, Culture and Society, Iconography.



*PROF. DR. JOSÉ ADEMAR KAEFER*

Doctor in Sacred Scriptures from the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität, Münster, Germany. Research interests: Old Testament, Exegesis, Arche-ology of the Ancient Near East.

*PROF. DR. JUNG MO SUNG*

Doctor in Religious Studies from the Methodist University of São Paulo, and Post-Doctorate in Education from the Methodist University of Piracicaba. Research interests: Theology and Economy, Religion and Education, Liberation and Postcolonial Theologies.



*PROF. DR. LAURI EMILIO WIRTH*

Doctor in Theology from the Evangelical School of Theology of the University of Heidelberg, Germany. Research interests: History of Christianity, Postcolonial Studies, Oral History.



*PROF. DR. LEONILDO SILVEIRA CAMPOS*

Doctor in Religious Studies from the



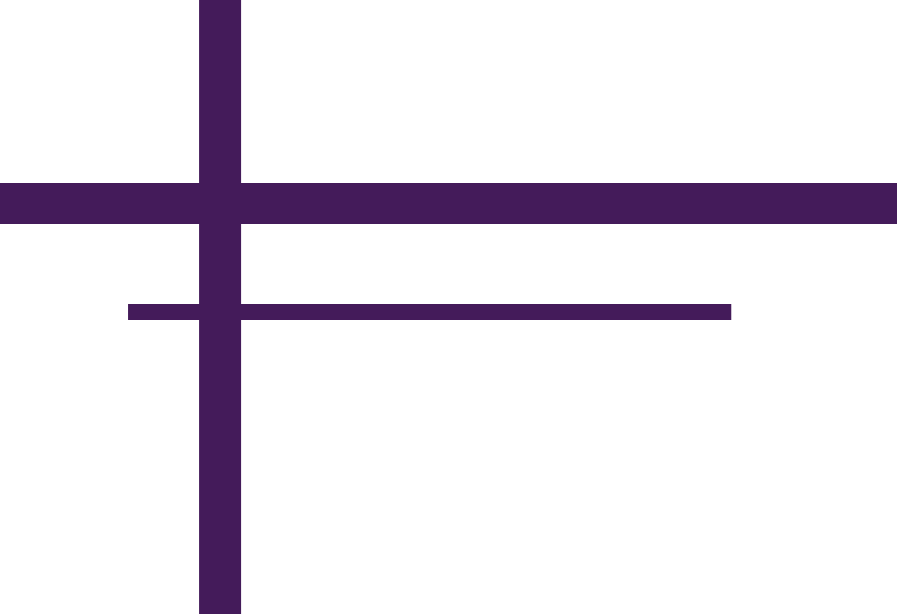
Methodist University of São Paulo. Research interests: Sociology and Religion.

*PROF. DR. LIEVE TROCH*

Doctor in Theology by the University of Tilburg, The Netherlands. Research interests: Feminist Studies in Religion and Theology, Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue from below, Postcolonial







*PROF. DR. PAULO AUGUSTO DE SOUZA NOGUEIRA*

Doctor in Theology from the Evangelical School of Theology of the University of Heidelberg, Germany, and Post-Doctorate in History from the State University of Campinas (NEE /Nucleus for Strategic Studies). Research interests: History and Literature of the Early Christianity, Literary Theory and Semiotic of Culture and Religion.



*PROF. DR. SANDRA DUARTE DE SOUZA*

Doctor in Religious Studies from the Methodist University of São Paulo, and Post-Doctorate in Cultural History from the State University of Campinas. Research interests: Feminist Studies and Religion; Culture and Religion; Politics and Religion.



*PROF. DR. LUIZ JEAN LAUAND*

Doctor in Philosophy and History of Education from the University of São Paulo. Research interests: Education and Philosophy of Religion.



*PROF. DR. PAULO ROBERTO GARCIA*

Doctor in Religious Studies from the Methodist University of São Paulo. Research interests: New Testament, Literature and History of Early Christianity.



*PROF. DR. TÉRCIO MACHADO SIQUEIRA*

Doctor in Religious Studies from the Methodist University of São Paulo. Research interest: Bible/Old Testament.



*PROF. DR. NICANOR LOPES*

Doctor in Religious Studies from the Methodist University of São Paulo. Research interests: Practical Theology and Mission.



*PROF. DR. RUI DE SOUZA JOSGRILBERG*

Doctor in Religious Studies from the University of Human Sciences of Strasburg, France. Research interests: Systematic

Publications of faculty see:  
<https://metodista.academia.edu/>





Exchange with visitors from Korea

Liberation Studies.

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Webpage in Portuguese

[www.metodista.br/posreligiao](http://www.metodista.br/posreligiao)

Webpage in English

<http://portal.metodista.br/posreligiao/english>

General Informations: Program, Faculty, Library, Research Groups and Projects; Recent Publications.

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Webpage "Theses and Dissertations":

[http://ibict.metodista.br/tedeSimplificado/tde\\_busca/index.php](http://ibict.metodista.br/tedeSimplificado/tde_busca/index.php)

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