

Call for Papers: Faith and spirituality in the wake of scandal

Erfurt, Germany, 26–27 June 2025 (On site and Online)

Recent years have seen a seemingly endless stream of Christian scandals come to public attention, usually provoking a period of crisis within the organisations where they have taken place and sometimes, but not always, leading to the collapse of particular churches, organisations and ministries. Whilst many of these have taken place within charismatic congregations, they are not confined to these environments, and traditional denominations, evangelical churches and a variety of para-church ministries have been confronted with prominent media and social media coverage exposing long-term patterns of abuse, manipulation, and exploitation which, once brought to light, can call the integrity of their foundations into question.

Members of these congregations, as well as those who identify in some way with their beliefs or practices, are often forced into reexamining their own sense of faith and spirituality. Some stay around and some leave, some quietly reflect on their experiences whilst others process them in public via documentaries or social media, some actively call for reform or accountability, whilst others slowly transition to different forms of belief and spiritual practice.

This workshop seeks to explore the range of responses and trajectories opening up in post-scandal Christian environments, including but not limited to:

- Loyalty to or questioning of institutional leaders and narratives
- The effects of credibility loss
- Handling of trauma
- Reflection on accountability, integrity, and the ethical use of resources
- Managing the abuse of power
- Institutional responses and narratives, including dissonance between promoted and practiced values
- Restorative practices to rebuild trust
- Capacity building for governance, financial integrity, and ethics for Christian leaders and staff
- Advocacy to promote justice and accountability to confront systemic failures.
- Responses through media and social media including documentaries and podcasts
- Crises of faith/holding on to faith
- Communities of solidarity and advocacy groups
- The migration to or development of alternative forms of spirituality
- Artistic and musical responses

Papers can be presented in person or online, and there is a limited amount of funding available to cover travel and accommodation costs for those most in need.

Paper or panel titles and abstracts (maximum length: 250 words) should be sent to mark.porter@uni-erfurt.de by 28th February 2025.