

## EST Congress 2016 – Panel

<b>Title of panel</b>	<b>Mediators of the divine: Rethinking the concept of ‘interpreter’ in light of interpreting in religious contexts</b>
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Translation and Interpreting Studies has only fairly recently seen the emergence of research into interpreting practices in churches and other religious contexts, although such activities are practiced on every continent, if and when religion crosses linguistic and cultural borders. Research conducted within Translation and Interpreting Studies has so far reported on church interpreting occurring among Methodists in the Gambia (Karlik 2010), Protestants in Korea (Shin 2013), and Pentecostals in Finland (Hokkanen 2012), among other denominations and geographical locations.

The existing body of research on church interpreting seems to challenge the boundaries traditionally set around the concept of ‘interpreter’. For example, several studies have highlighted the double position of the church interpreter as fulfilling not only a linguistic function, but also a religious one (e.g. Kaufmann 2005; Balci 2008). Thus, interpreters in many churches and other religious contexts are regarded not only as mediators of languages or cultures, but also (and in some contexts, primarily) as mediators of the divine, relaying messages inspired by God (Downie 2014) or enabling an encounter between their listeners and the Holy Spirit (Hokkanen, forthcoming). Furthermore, many of the studies conducted so far describe church interpreters as full participants in their respective interpreting environments (e.g. Karlik 2010), which stands in contrast to traditional notions within Translation and Interpreting Studies of the interpreter’s role as an impartial professional.

With the proposed panel, we invite contributions examining how the concept of ‘interpreter’ is molded by church interpreting practices in different contexts. Thus, the panel follows the strong tradition in Interpreting Studies to regard interpreting as a socially-determined activity (e.g. Wadensjö 1998; Angelelli 2004) and seeks to tease out the implications of different social and religious contexts on the concept of ‘interpreter’ and the way it is understood and applied. Here, church interpreting is taken to include all modes of interpreting: both simultaneous and consecutive, whether spoken or signed. Contributions related, but not limited, to the following questions are welcomed:

- Which social or religious notions affect the concept of ‘interpreter’ in religious contexts?
- Who functions (or is allowed to function) as an interpreter in religious contexts? Why?
- What kinds of roles do interpreters have in their religious contexts?
- What kinds of norms regulate the work of interpreters in religious contexts?
- What kinds of expectations do the listeners and other participants have for interpreters’ performance in religious contexts?



- How does the concept of 'interpreter' as understood and applied in religious contexts differ from the way it is used and applied in Translation and Interpreting Studies?

References:

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Wadensjö, Cecilia. (1998) *Interpreting as Interaction*. London & New York: Longman.