



FRIEDRICH-ALEXANDER
UNIVERSITÄT
ERLANGEN-NÜRNBERG

PHILOSOPHISCHE FAKULTÄT
UND FACHBEREICH THEOLOGIE

Call for Papers

Young Researchers' Workshop

within the International Conference

“Public Theology – Religion – Education. Interreligious Perspectives”

(12th Nuremberg Forum, 3 to 6 October 2016, in Nuremberg, Germany)

The Topic

Since the turn of the millennium, the awareness in liberal democratic societies has grown that religion cannot simply be regarded as a private matter, but that it has an indispensable public dimension. Unfortunately, the religious dimensions of terrorism and violent conflicts have more strongly reinforced this awareness than the many positive, constructive contributions by religions to the common good. There is also an increasing appreciation, however, of how much even secular societies gain from the political and social engagement of NGOs, civil movements, associations, groups and individuals – among which religious groups and religiously inspired people play an important role.

In the Christian context, the calling to contribute to the common good has come to be discussed under the label of “public theology”, and has, among other things, led to the establishment of a “Global Network of Public Theology” (2007). Other religions have their own traditions and perspectives, from which responsibility for society is motivated and reflected. Judaism, for example, has significantly influenced public culture, especially in Europe, and it keeps sensitizing the public to problematic developments in society. For representatives of Islam in liberal democratic societies it becomes more and more important not just to show that Islam is compatible with democratic values, but to show that Islamic perspectives can make positive contributions to the common good. In Buddhism, since the middle of the 20th century, the movement of “engaged Buddhism” has developed, in which meditative spirituality is combined with active social and ecological commitment. And in the Bahá’ís community social and non-partisan political commitment has always been fundamental. It is obvious that all these religions, and others as well as many non-religious movements, have an important public function in society that provides resources for their humanization.

In general, the contributions by religious actors to the common good imply educational aspects. They aim to stimulate processes of perceiving, thinking and learning that help to develop new analytical perspectives and to discover new opportunities for action. Thus, on the one hand, education is an integral part of the public dimension of religion and of public theology. On the

other hand, the realm of public education also constitutes an important subject of social debate to which religions can make substantial contributions. The question of how social coherence and a culture of humanity can be maintained in pluralistic societies is closely linked with the question of which should be the guiding objectives of public education. In both areas of discourse religions can play a vital role. For these reasons, the conference intends to illuminate the multidimensional relationship between public religion/public theology and public education in the view of diverse religions.

The Conference

The conference gathers together renowned experts from various countries and religions for academic exchange and discussion and for promoting academic work and research in the thematic field. It intends to draw attention to the contributions of religions to the common good, with a focus on educational aspects and stimulated by the Christian concept of 'public theology'. By promoting interdisciplinary, interreligious academic and social discourse and research it also aims to strengthen the religions' public responsibility, especially with respect to public education, as well as their public visibility as resources for the humanization of societies. This aim is in line with the now 30-year-old tradition of the Nuremberg Forums to facilitate intercultural and interreligious dialogue and learning in pluralistic societies. The Nuremberg Forum is organized by the Chair of Religious Education at the Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (FAU), Germany (Professor Manfred L. Pirner, Professor Johannes Lähnemann, and Dr Werner Haussmann) together with Professor Peter Bubmann (FAU, Practical Theology), Dr Florian Höhne (University of Bamberg, Systematic Theology), Professor Andreas Nehring (FAU, Religious Studies), Professor Henrik Simojoki (University of Bamberg, Protestant Theology/Religious Education) and Professor Thomas Wabel (University of Bamberg, Systematic Theology and director of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Research Center of Public Theology), and in co-operation with the Global Network of Public Theology, GNPT (chairperson: Professor Elaine Graham, University of Chester, UK).

For more information see: www.nuernberger-forum.uni-erlangen.org

The Young Researchers' Workshop

The Young Researchers' Workshop is designed as an integral part of the conference. All participants are expected to take part in the whole conference. In addition, there will be extra paper sessions in a pre-conference phase starting on Monday, 3rd of October (see the attached draft program). There will also be a time slot for poster presentations and informal discussions about them. Every presenter will be put in touch with an academic “godparent” – one of the experienced scholars presenting at the conference – who will individually discuss the young researcher's project with him or her during the conference. **All** accepted applicants are expected to present a paper in one of the paper sessions **and** a poster in the poster gallery.

Conditions for Application and Financial Support

Young Researchers are eligible to apply for being accepted as presenters at the Young Researchers' Workshop, if they are below 40 years of age and in the process of writing a doctoral dissertation, conducting a post-doctoral research project or doing similar qualifying research above Master level in the thematic field of “public theology – religion – education” as outlined

above. The approach of the research project may be theoretical, historical or empirical. It may refer to any religion. Application requires the submission of

- 1) an abstract of the research project of about 1,000 words (in Word-, ODT- or rtf-format)
- 2) a letter of recommendation by the professor or senior researcher coaching the project
- 3) a short curriculum vitae including all your contact details and a photograph.

Applications should be sent via Email to nuernberger-forum@uni-erlangen.de

Deadline is 15 April 2016. You will receive a confirmation of receipt within two weeks.

Applicants without financial support by their own university or academic institution can apply for the reimbursement of the conference fee as well as travel and accommodation expenses of up to 1,500 Euros. In this case, the attached form “Application for Financial Support” should be completed and submitted along with the documents listed above. If you are accepted as a presenter of your research project you will receive notice about the financial support granted along with the letter of acceptance.

Criteria of Selection

Criteria for assessment of submissions include

- a) theoretical and/or practical significance;
- b) originality;
- c) soundness of scholarship and research design;
- d) proper study execution;
- e) relevance and appropriateness of findings and conclusions;
- f) implications for theory and/or practice;
- g) clarity and organization of the paper.

Nuremberg, 01/02/2016

For the conference team:



Professor Dr Manfred L. Pirner