Preface

Public Theology is a paradigm in Theology which is currently getting increasing attention globally. In May 2007, a group of about 40 theologians from all over the world founded the Global Network for Public Theology at a conference in Princeton. It unites institutions from various contexts which are dedicated to the task of reflecting ethical questions debated in the public discourse, investigating the response of the Christian tradition to these questions of public interest and voicing the fruits of this research in the debates of civil society.

Many of the contributions which have been given to the development of Public Theology are strongly contextual. For example the founding of the Beyers Naudé Center for Public Theology in Stellenbosch can only be understood in the context of the struggle against apartheid and the effort to overcome its consequences until today.

The purpose of the conference is to analyze and honor this contextuality and at the same time investigate where the common features of all contextual public theologies can be found. While the Global Network for Public Theology meets every three years – after its founding in 2007 in Princeton it met 2010 in Canberra and Sydney – this fundamental question has not been systematically addressed yet in the research done so far. The conference will bring together leading public theologians from all over the world to discuss it.

Heinrich Bedford-Strohm
Conference program

Thursday (June 23rd): Introduction
16.00: Guided tour through the City [optional].
17.30: Evening snack and Registration.
19.00: Contextuality and Intercontextuality in Public Theology (Prof. Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, Bamberg)
19.30: The Paradigm of Public Theology – Origins and Development (Prof. Dr. Dirk Smit, Stellenbosch)
20.00: Panel: The Place of Public Theology between Theology and Public Policy (Prof. Dr. James Haire, Canberra, Prof. Dr. Niko Koopman, Stellenbosch)

Friday (June 24th): Looking at Contexts
09:00: South Africa (Prof. Dr. Etienne de Villiers, Pretoria)
09:30: Great Britain (Prof. Dr. Elaine Graham, Manchester)
10:00: Discussion
10:30: Coffee/Tea Break
11:00: Brazil (Prof. Dr. Rudolf von Sinner, Sao Leopoldo)
11:30: USA (Prof. Dr. Katie Day, Philadelphia)
12:00: Discussion
12:30: Lunch
15:00: India (Prof. Dr. J. Jayakiran Sebastian, Bangalore/Philadelphia)
15:30: Discussion
16:00: Coffee/Tea Break
16:30: Australia and New Zealand (Prof. Dr. Elaine Wainwright, Auckland)
17:00: Discussion
18:00: Boat Ride through Bamberg
19:00: Formal Dinner

Saturday (June 25th): Intercontextual Dimensions
09:00: Paper Sessions
11:00: Coffee/Tea Break
11:30: Intercontextual Essentials of Public Theology (Prof. Dr. Christine Lienemann-Perrin, Basel and Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Lienemann, Bern)
12:15: Discussion
13:00: Lunch
15:00: The Place of Dogmatics: Global Public Theology and Christology (Prof. Dr. Michael Welker, Heidelberg)
15:30: Final Discussion
16:00: Closing of the Conference

Paper Sessions
(Saturday, June 25th, 9:00 – 11:00)

Paper Session I:
09:00: Contextual and Intercontextual Features of Public Theology (Eneida Jacobsen, Sao Leopoldo)
09:30: Public theology in Central-Eastern Europe: looking at Hungarian context (Dr. Attila Borsi, Debrecen)
10.00: The role of the Presbyterian church of Taiwan in rights development and the Defence of Minority Identity in Taiwan (Dr. Stephen Lakkis, Taiwan)
10:30: How political is public? On differences and commonalities in “liberation” and “public” theologies in post-Apartheid South Africa (Dr. Kathrin Kuzmierz, Bern)

Paper Session II:
09:00: Practicing public theology between contexts: Considering impulses from global civil society (Dr. Willem Fourie, Pretoria)
09:30: A Theological Concept of Freedom through Cross-cultural discourse (Björn Görder, Berlin)

10.00: Public Theologies – Searching for a Typology of Contexts and Symbolic Forms (Prof. Dr. Günter Thomas, Bochum)
10.30: Public Theology facing globalization (Frederike van Oorschot, Heidelberg)

Paper Session III:
09:00: Kinship in Time and Space? Exploring the relation of Public Theology and Moltmann’s (early) Political Theology (Florian Höhne, Bamberg)
09:30: Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Theology as Source of Inspiration for an Orthodox Public Theology (PD Dr. Daniel Munteanu, Bamberg)
10:30: The Overlapping Consensus and Public Theology? (Dr. Jenny Anne Wright, Stellenbosch)

Paper Session IV:
09:00: Reflections on a modified profile of Public Theology (Dr. Christian Zünner, Regensburg)
09:30: Global Proclamation? An excursion into “Public Dogmatics” (PD Dr. Eva Harasta, Bamberg)
10.00: Apophatic Thought as the Missing Mean Between Secular and Post-secular Theology (Prof. Dr. William Franke, Vanderbilt)
10.30: Can we pray together in public? A Question of Context? (Prof. Dr. Helga Kuhlmann, Paderborn)

Paper Session V:
09:00: The Religious and Socio-Cultural Contexts of Africa and Public Theology: Ecological Theology in Focus (Ben-Willie K. Golo, Accra)
09:30: Religion and Caste as Dangerous portent: Changing Terms of Discourse of the Dalit Struggles in Public Theology (Prof. Dr. John Mohan Razu, Bangalore)