

Conference Programme

Reconciliation: Christian Perspectives – Interdisciplinary Approaches

30–31 August 2017

Tuesday, 29 August 2017

19.00: Dinner and informal welcome at Bahnhofstraße 1, 51702 Bergneustadt

Wednesday, 30 August 2017

7.30-8.30: *Breakfast (at FW)*

8.00-9.00: Registration

9.00: Welcome and opening of the conference (Horst Afflerbach, Christoph Stenschke)

9.30-10.15: Plenary paper 1

The gospel of reconciliation in the Gospel of Mark (Morten H. Jensen; chair: Bernhard Ott)

10.15-10.45: Coffee break

10.45-11.30: Parallel session 1

1. *Is there peace without retribution?* (Hans-Georg Wüch)
2. *Inner-Christian conflicts and their resolution in Acts* (Christoph Stenschke)

11.45-12.30: Parallel session 2

1. *Building leaders for peace: a missiological case study within a christological framework* (Randy Friesen)
2. *Open source theology, as a liberation of theology, empowering reconciliation as an unprecedented facilitator* (Johannes A. Nortje)

12.45: Lunch

14.30-15.15: Plenary paper 2

Noble lies, Augustinian lies and the post-modernist black hole: truth, reconciliation and the church (Catherine Morris; chair: Volker Kessler)

15.30-16.15: Parallel session 3

1. *Reconciliation meetings in Egypt: A critical appraisal of a problematic practice* (Jonathan Andrews, Christof Sauer)

2. *Violence, trauma, and reconciliation – the role of the church after community trauma in Guatemala* (Marcus Weiland)

16.15-16.45: Coffee break

16.45-17.30: Parallel session 4

1. *Knowing the other: a first step towards unity in Christ in a post-western Christianity* (Matthias Ehmann)

2. *Theological plurality in the theological struggle against apartheid* (Cobus van Wyngaard)

17.45-18.30: Plenary paper 3

Sustainability - reconciliation with creation, global neighbours and future generations (Thomas Kröck; chair: Bernhard Ott)

18.30: Conference dinner at FW (Arthur Rempel)

Thursday, 31 August 2017

7.45-8.30: Breakfast (at FW)

8.45: Devotion (Christoph Stenschke/Elsabé Kloppers)

9.00-9.45: Parallel session 5

1. *The idea of reconciliation in the age of Western-centred modernity: the case of post-Apartheid South Africa* (Morgan Ndlovu)

2. *Inter- und (verdeckt) transsexuellen Menschen versöhnt begegnen* (Martina Kessler)

10.00-10.45: Parallel session 6

1. *Male-female reconciliation: "Is woman included in the image of God in man?" as a crucial question throughout church history and its implications for today's controversies* (Debora Sommer)

2. *The advocacy of Africanity as justice against epistemicide* (Rothney Tshaka)

10.45-11.15: Coffee break

11.15-12.00: Plenary paper 4

Gender-based violence in South Africa: seeking to bridge the growing chasm between women and men
(Zuze J. Banda; chair: Volker Kessler)

12.00: Evaluation of the conference, conference resolution (?), publication of the contribution. Further conferences

12.45: Lunch at FW

14.00: Start of the annual GBFE Master and Doctoral Students Seminar

Chairperson for group 1 papers on Wednesday: Tobias Faix

Chairperson for group 2 papers on Wednesday: Debora Sommer

Chairperson for group 1 papers on Thursday: Christoph Stenschke

Chairperson for group 2 papers on Thursday: Christof Sauer

Gender-based violence in South Africa: Seeking to bridge the growing chasm between women and men

Prof. Dr. Zuze J. Banda, Department of Christian Spirituality, Church History and Missiology, University of South Africa, Bandazj@unisa.ac.za

South Africa has recently been plagued by gender-based violence. One of the most harrowing incidents was that of Karobo Mokoena whose death touched the most, from the ordinary person on the street to parliamentarians. Recurring incidents of similar nature crammed the news tabloids, social and electronic media, creating the impression that South Africa was in the middle of a war. Of great concern was that, at the centre of these killings, men were alleged perpetrators. This then unleashed national protest campaigns, the famous which went by the name, #menaretrash, led by activists, mostly women, who angrily voiced their disquiet against men. It was soon followed by its counterpart, #notinmyname, led by those, mostly men, who said notwithstanding the leading perceptions of the day, there are many good and proud men who will not allow the image of manhood to be tarnished. This paper, then, seeks to ask hard-core questions on the source of gender-based violence, its manifestation in the public, the reactions it induces and how society should not only confront the scourge of gender-based violence, but also to seriously find ways of mending the growing rift between women and men through Christian reconciliation models suited to this kind of estrangement.

Knowing the other: A first step towards unity in Christ in a post-western Christianity

Matthias Ehmann MTh, Lehrbeauftragter Missionswissenschaft und interkulturelle Theologie, Theologische Hochschule Ewersbach, Ewersbach, Germany

After an era of supremacy of western Christianity, the interest in non-western shaped Christianity seems to be the first step towards a global Christendom united as the one body of Christ. In order to approach unity, a deep interest in and a growing knowledge of the different shapes of the 21st Century Christianity has to develop. In Europe, diaspora congregations, reverse mission workers and a Christianity increasingly shaped by migration is a growing reality of Christianity. Ethnocentrism, suspicions and serious failure of churches in the past are major obstacles on the way to a new ecumenical paradigm of mission. The knowledge of the yet other could be the first step in a process of healing of memories and could create a new way of community as the one body of Christ. The session points out main concepts and voices concerning the phenomena of diaspora, migration and mission. It concentrates on those voices, which seem to have the biggest impact on a future debate about diaspora congregations and global mission in Europe as a way to ecumenical reconciliation.

Building Leaders For Peace:

A Missiological Case Study within a Christological Framework

Dr. Randy Friesen, General Director – MB Mission, Abbotsford, BC Canada

In August of 2016, several kilometres from the Syrian border, 25 North Americans, 35 Syrians and 15 Turks (ages 18-25) met for a week to share their life stories and aspirations for peace. Both Muslims and Christians were drawn by the living presence of Jesus and His

peace. The transforming impact of that week has spawned other “Building Leaders for Peace” (BL4P) programs in conflict zones such as Turkey, Iraq, Ukraine and Colombia.

The vision of Isaiah 2:1–5 of the nations’ streaming to the mountain of the Lord’s temple in the last days is a vision of the transforming impact of Christ’s gospel of the Kingdom. Nations arrive with swords and leave with plough shares. When the gospel is reduced to a personal sin exchange we too fail to understand that it is also good news for Lebanese widows and Syrian Generals (Luke 4), and the many nations outside of our covenant community.

This paper will draw from both Isaiah’s vision (Isaiah 2:1–5) and Paul’s vision of “one new man” (Eph 2:15) in describing the reconciling dimensions of the gospel. Case studies from the Building Leaders for Peace program will offer rich illustrations of Christ’s reconciling presence in conflict zones today. The Church is called to be good news not just verbalize good news. The world’s conflict zones have never needed that good news more than now!

The Gospel of Reconciliation in the Gospel of Mark

Prof. Dr. Morten H. Jensen, Lutheran School of Theology, Aarhus, Denmark

What does the Gospel mean – and what does it imply? The answer to this question lies at the bottom of Christian reconciliation. As it turns out, there has been a long-stretched discussion in New Testament research on this issue. One trajectory reads it “subjectively” in the sense of God’s Kingdom coming to earth entering into battle with oppressing empires (ie. the Roman) establishing a new community. Another reads it “objectively” in the sense that it is the message of God’s salvific work in Christ. One battleground for this discussion has been the Gospel of Mark, which prefixes the notion of “gospel” (1:1). In the minute details, both readings can be established from the very first verses (1:1–15). In this paper, I wish to present the discussion of the meaning of “gospel” in Mark as an important ingredient to our modern understanding and praxis of Christian reconciliation. My thesis is that “gospel” in Mark means neither exactly “new community” nor “atonement” (or the like), but in essence is relational in character denoting “the proximity of God in Jesus”, which combines both trajectories.

Inter- und (verdeckt) transsexuellen Menschen versöhnt begegnen

(this presentation will be in German)

Dr. Martina Kessler, Akademie für christliche Führungskräfte, Gummersbach; Stiftung Therapeutische Seelsorge, Germany

Die Anteile von Menschen, die sich als Intersexuelle, Transsexuelle oder einfach Trans* bezeichnen, wächst. Das ist fremd, irritiert und verwirrt. Konkrete Fälle in christlichen Kirchen/Gemeinden und Werken führten zu Ratlosigkeit, Distanz und Verletzungen. Daher soll die gesellschaftliche Entwicklung gerade im christlichen Umfeld reflektiert werden. Dabei geht es weder um Ideologisierung noch um Verteufelung, „queer identities“ sollen nicht unreflektiert gefördert, aber auch nicht negiert werden.

Mit dem 5-Facetten-Modell können Christen die verschiedenen Lebenskonzepte nachvollziehend verstehen. Ebenso wird verständlich, welche Schritte einzelne Menschen sowohl körperlich als auch sozial gegangen sind und welche Anteile der Persönlichkeit durch die Veränderung betroffen sind. Das 5-Facetten-Modell zeigt die Veränderungen des biologische Geschlechts, der sexuelle Identität und Orientierung, des rechtsgültige

Geschlechts und die kulturspezifischen Erwartungen an Geschlechterrollen. Es wird eine Diskussion angeregt, um zunehmend aus der Sprachlosigkeit und Handlungsunsicherheit oder -fähigkeit heraus zu kommen, damit die Betroffenen in christlichen Gemeinden und Werken versöhnt leben können. Die von Eckstein geforderte „Toleranz aus Glauben“ dabei eine wesentliche Hilfestellung geben. Ziel ist es Intersexuellen und (verdeckt) Transsexuellen versöhnt, mit Sprachfähigkeit und Handlungssicherheit, begegnen zu können.

Sustainability - Reconciliation with creation, global neighbours and future generations

Dr. Thomas Kröck, Akademie für christliche Führungskräfte, Gummersbach, Germany

Climate change, loss of bio-diversity and depletion of natural resources are considered major challenges for humanity in the 21st century. To a large extent these changes have been caused by the economic production and consumption patterns that developed in the global North during the past 200 years. Their detrimental effects threaten in particular the lives of millions of poor in the global South as well as those of future generations. Therefore sustainability is not only a matter of technological mitigation and adaptation, but of global justice. Although the Christian worldview has been seen as an underlying cause of the ecological destruction, the Bible has much to say about caring for creation. The biblical idea of reconciliation is discussed as a theological perspective on the issue which can motivate and guide the church to support changes towards more sustainable patterns of living.

Noble Lies, Augustinian Lies and the Post-Modernist Black Hole:

Truth, Reconciliation and the Church

Prof. Catherine Morris, Professor in the Faculty of Law and the School of Public Administration at the University of Victoria, Canada

Psalms 85:10 provides a striking metaphor for the biblical concept of *shalom*: “Mercy and truth have met each other: justice and peace have kissed.” Accordingly, this paper proposes a framework for peace and reconciliation that recognizes and respects truth, justice, forgiveness *and* peace. The necessity of truth for authentic reconciliation is singled out in light of churches’ engagements with a “post-fact” world. Questions about truth are nothing new. When Jesus told Pilate that he came to testify to truth, Pilate retorted, “What is truth?” (John 18:37f). The paper explores contemporary concerns about truth and lies in light of biblical concepts and statements of Jesus. Are churches adopting Pilate’s approach by falling into the post-modern “black hole” into which truth may be relegated? Are we slipping into acceptance of Plato’s “noble lie” (sometimes known as propaganda)? Are we even accepting and repeating bare-faced lies of the sort Augustine (and Kant) decried? The paper explores how North American church leaders risk entrapment in falsehoods that deny God’s image, how untruths subvert Jesus’ Ministry of Reconciliation and how to encourage engagement with truths that foster reconciliation.

The Idea of Reconciliation in the Age of Western-Centred Modernity: The Case of Post-Apartheid South Africa

Morgan Ndlovu, Senior Lecturer, Department of Development Studies, University of South Africa. ndlovnm@unisa.ac.za or morgan@highveldmail.co.za

The question of whether reconciliation is possible under the condition of a Western-centred modernity is a problematic one. Thus, the fact that the advent of Western-centred led to the emergence of a parasitic modern world system within which human beings are divided into those who benefit from the system and those who are crushed by the system makes it impossible to achieve reconciliation without transcending the very system that has locked human beings into a perpetual state of warfare. In this paper, I argue that the theological idea of reconciliation is not possible within the current modern world system predicated on a paradigm of war—a paradigm that privileges warfare an ideological instrument of conflict resolution and management of human relations instead of peaceful means. Thus, I deploy the case study of the South African reconciliation project to unmask the limits of the idea of reconciliation within a hierarchical-ordered world system that divides human beings into those who benefits from being modern subjects and those who are reduced into objects of colonization, exploitation, domination and oppression.

Open Source Theology, as a liberation of theology, empowering reconciliation as an unprecedented facilitator

Dr. Johannes A. Nortje, independent scholar, Germany, South Africa

Typical for any philosophical endeavour is the proliferation of vocabulary, and so this paper can be no exception to the rule to be in any way a new aha or wow moment that can promote and materialise reconciliation as a theological endeavour with tangible outcomes. One such abstract social construction is Open Source Theology that promotes a liberation of theology itself, instead of being just a liberation theology. Reconciliation, as the qualifier of this debate being put forward, is for this angle of theology obviously to ask what the alienation or antagonism is that should be reconciled, which in terms of deconstruction and post-structuralism can become very multifaceted and even problematic, although, on the other hand, can exactly add just the next level, or even an otherworldly level, that can assist reconciliation to take shape with methods never dreamed of before. The job description of a facilitator is also exactly the contrast being insinuated that the role of theology take in this endeavour.

Reconciliation Meetings in Egypt: A critical appraisal of a problematic practice

Jonathan Andrews, MA (pseudonym) researcher and writer on Middle East issues, Cheltenham, UK, part time affiliated with the International Institute for Religious Freedom and **Prof. Dr. Christof Sauer**, Professor of Religious Studies and Missiology, Evangelical Theological Faculty Leuven, Belgium, professor extraordinary, Stellenbosch University, South Africa (Missiology), Co-Director, International Institute for Religious Freedom, (Bonn – Cape Town – Colombo - Brasilia)

In recent years there have been numerous incidents of sectarian violence involving Christians and Muslims in parts of Egypt. A common local response is to hold a reconciliation meeting involving those involved in the incident, normally with the assistance of local community leaders. Such meetings have no official standing in law and therefore neither fulfil nor remove

the State's obligation to file cases against perpetrators of assaults and threats where there is clear evidence that a criminal act has been committed.

What is understood by reconciliation in this context? It means that harmony will be restored if the minority community agrees to live with whatever conditions the majority stipulates. Right and wrong, lawful and criminal, is a secondary consideration. It is establishing peace in the sense of an end to overt conflict by the unconditional surrender of the weaker party. It is not peace and harmony in the sense of a mutual respect that recognises and affirms distinctions and differences and seeks to allow everyone to flourish.

Male-Female Reconciliation: “Is Woman Included in the Image of God in Man?” as Crucial Question Throughout Church History and its Implications for Today's Controversies

Dr. Debora Sommer, Theologisches Seminar St. Chrischona, Basel (CH)

The debate on the role of men and women in marriage, church and ministry is a millennium topic. When examining the various arguments in this debate, it is striking that the interpretation of Gen 1:27 plays a crucial role. “Created in God's image as male and female” – what does this mean? And are women included in the image of God in man? Throughout church history there have been many heated debates about this issue and they result in opposing conclusions. The lack of full recognition (or even denial!) of female God-likeness by influential church leaders has shaped the discussion and hardened the fronts over the centuries. Based on various interpretations of this crucial question throughout church history it becomes evident that the discussion did not stop up to now. In present times it is evident that reconciliation between men and women in this respect is so much needed in order that a complementary ministry will become reality.

“And there arose a sharp disagreement” (Acts 15:39):

Inner-Christian Conflicts and Their Resolution in Acts

Prof. Dr. Christoph Stenschke, Biblisch-Theologische Akademie, Forum Wiedenest, Bergneustadt, Germany and Department of Biblical and Ancient Studies, University of South Africa, Pretoria, South Africa

This presentation builds on W. Mayer's reminder that the current focus on conflict and violence in the popular and academic study of religious conflict must not detract from instances of de-escalation and resolution of conflict. In view of this, the paper examines the origin and course, but also the de-escalation and resolution of the inner-Christian conflicts in the Book of Acts (6:1–7; 11:1–18; 15:1–41; 21:17–26). How was reconciliation achieved and the unity of the community retained? What kind of resources is available to the community for resolving its conflicts? How are these conflicts and their resolution related to other relevant material and the conflicts between Jews, Christians and Gentiles in the book? Should all of Acts be understood as an exercise in achieving reconciliation within early Christianity as has been argued by F. C. Baur in the 19th century? A final section reflects in how this portrayal can be applied to inner-Christian and other conflicts in the present day world.

The Advocacy for Africanity as Justice against epistemicide¹

Prof. Dr. Rothney Tshaka, Acting Director for the School of Humanities and Professor of Theological Ethics and Systematic Theology at the University of South Africa.

Isicatshulwa/English

Ngenxa yekhwelo lokwenza ikharithyula yaseYunivesiti eMzantsi Afrika ibe yeyase-Afrika, iye yayinto engxamisekileyo into yokuba isifundo sobu-Afrika sifakwe phakathi kwale ngxoxo. Le nto isicebisa ukuba sifakele iingxaki zobukoloni ali nezocalucalulo ezibe negalelo elibonakalayo kwidabi lokulwela ulwazi lwase-Afrika. Ubukoloni ali buphumelele ekoyiseni i-Afrika njengenye yeenjongo zabo kunye nokuthoba umgangatho wabantu bayo ube kwimeko yokuba ngabantu abangagqibelelanga.

Ngokwenza oko, bufune ukubonakalisa i-Afrika nabantu bayo “njengabasebumnyameni” kwaye “besemva ngempucuko” ngokulandelelanayo. Yiyo loo nto *Indlela ihlabathi elibajonga ngayo* abantu base-Afrika yaye yayekwa njengebubuvuvu nabantu bayo beswele inkcubeko kunye nengqiqo yobuthixo. Amagama ezithixo zabantu base-Afrika aye aguqulwa ngenjongo ukuze abhekiselele kuthixo wobuKrestu basentshona ukuze kulahlekiswe ama-Afrika. Izifundo ngenkolo yobuKrestu yaseNtshona ngokungathandabuzekiyo zidlale indima ebalulekileyo ekuqinisekiseni ukuba injongo yokoyiswa yiNtshona ifezekiswe ngokugqibeleleyo. Eli nqaku lixoxa ngokuba naziphi na iinzame eziphikisa umgangatho wokubhangiswa kweenkqubo zokufumana ulwazi zoMzantsi Afrika kufuneka zikhatshwe liqondo elinengqiqo lentshisekelo yezopolitiko, kwaye kufuneka kucingelwe into yokuba uluvo lweYunivesiti ese-Afrika yindlela edlulisa umyalezo wokubhangiswa kweenkqubo zokufumana ulwazi zaseNtshona nto leyo ikhuthaza *uluvo* lokuba ubukho bolwazi oluvela eYurophu lukumgangatho ophezulu kwaye luninzi kuzo naziphi na iindlela zokuba ngumntu kwihlabathi lonke.

With continued calls for the Africanization of the University curricula in South Africa, it has become urgent that the subject of Africanity be placed centrally in this discourse. This suggests that we engage the colonial and apartheid baggage that essentially contributed to African epistemicide. Colonialism had as one of its objectives the goal of conquering Africa and relegating her people to the status of being sub-humans. In doing that, it needed to present Africa and her people as “dark” and “backward” respectively. Thus African *Weltanschauungen* were dismissed and her peoples deemed to have no culture and a conception of god. Yet, the names of the gods of the African peoples were deliberately translated to refer to the god of western Christianity and this confused the Africans. Western Christian theology no doubt played a pivotal role in ensuring that the goal of total and comprehensive conquest by Western colonialism would be attained. This article argues that any attempt at countering the extent of African epistemicide must be accompanied by a degree of deliberate political will, and must reckon with the fact that the university in Africa thus far is but a transmission belt of Western epistemologies which reaffirm the myth that European existence is qualitatively superior to any forms of being-human-in-the-world.

¹ The abstract is submitted here both in Isixhosa and English. This is important since the article engages the subject of African epistemicide.

Violence, trauma, and reconciliation – the role of the church after community trauma in Guatemala

Marcus Weiland, Lecturer and Coach at Bildungszentrum Bienenberg, Switzerland, Director ComPax Institute

This paper discusses reconciliation efforts after events that caused community trauma. The paper focuses in particular on a case study conducted in Guatemala in 2012. The paper shows that traumatised communities are often caught in a circle of violence that could last for centuries. The paper begins with a definition of individual trauma and community trauma. After that it tries to define reconciliation and discusses its specific challenges in an environment of community trauma. The question will be raised whether reconciliation is a realistic option or if mere co-existence might be an intermediary aim that is more adequate to the inflicted injuries. The case study that was conducted in Guatemala will then show how diverse the opinions are about the best way towards reconciliation. People who are actively involved in churches emphasise forgiveness as a key to reconciliation. Non-church actors prefer talking about (transitional) justice. The study shows that both groups have significant insights into understanding the prerequisites of a reconciled community. In the end the paper shows that in order to leave the circle of violence it is necessary to talk about safety and non-recurrence, truth, justice, grace and forgiveness. It will be necessary to acknowledge the victims' feelings of revenge and their need to get rid of the "demons" of the past. Simultaneously, the offenders' needs also need attention, to also get rid of their "demons" of the past that lead to self-justification, shame and fear.

Is there peace without retribution?

Dr. Hans-Georg Wüch, Theologisches Seminar Rheinland, Wölmersen, Germany

This paper wants to shed some light on the concept of "shalom" in the Old Testament. Of special interest is the basic meaning of the Hebrew verb *shalom*. Traditionally the Hebrew term *shalom* as well as the verb *shalom* are understood in light of the concepts of "wholeness" or "completeness". Gerleman and others have questioned this understanding. According to them the basic meaning of the verb *shalom* is much more concrete. It must be understood as "to repay" or "to recompense". This understanding sheds light on the question how the state of *shalom* can be reached. Is there peace without retribution? Can there be reconciliation without the double action: to repay the evil deeds on the one hand and to compensate the evil done on the other hand.

Theological plurality in the theological struggle against apartheid

GJ (Cobus) van Wyngaard, University of South Africa and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
vwynggj@unisa.ac.za

South Africa, with its history of apartheid and the transition to democracy, remain a key case study in the study of reconciliation. The role of Christian theology in supporting injustice and struggling against injustice is often acknowledged. However, the idea of a single theological struggle against apartheid risks ironing out the different theological positions in opposition to apartheid. The plurality of responses to apartheid is critically noted in the 1985 Kairos document distinction between church theology and prophetic theology and has often been

noted in discussions on the tension between liberation and reconciliation. However, more remains to be said on the plurality within the theological struggle against apartheid. This paper will explicitly focus on the different theological arguments made in response to the question why apartheid is a particularly theological problem. Noting how apartheid was described as a problem of, for example, ecclesiology, soteriology, or anthropology could allow a richer understanding of the theological struggle against apartheid. Of particular significance for the argument in this paper is that noting this plurality of theological analyses allow us to rediscover theological resources which might be of particular significance as race and racism take on new forms in either democratic South Africa or the contemporary world.