



**Friday July 17, 2015**

**Electives/Break Away Groups Number 1  
14:00 – 15:30**

**Graduate Centre 1-56**

**Practicing Ubuntu *beyond, against* or *with* Christian Texts towards Personhood and human Dignity beyond the injustice of the dominant Western [Christian] discourses on human dignity and personhood**

Prof Johann Meylahn, Department of Practical Theology, Faculty of Theology, University of Pretoria

The paper will seek to respond to two challenges. The first challenge is to think Ubuntu *beyond, against* or *with* the Christian text. Theories of Ubuntu are developed from oral traditions of African practices but developed in European languages, and therefore the terms used to describe ubuntu are informed and shaped by the Western heritage. The dominant role of the Christian Text in this heritage cannot be denied. The consequence of this is that ubuntu is interpreted in Christian language and it becomes very difficult to differentiate Ubuntu from certain interpretations of Christianity. Is it possible to think Ubuntu beyond or against Christianity or does one need to accept that it will be thought with the Christian Text as long as it is thought within a world that has been carried out to a large extent by the predominance of Christian texts? The second challenge is to then think personhood and human dignity, both terms that are part of the carried out world of the Christian-Western Texts, and the possible injustice of that predominant texts, as well as the alternatives that ubuntu might offer even if it is thought with the Christian Texts.

**Ubuntu in flames, people at odds with themselves: injustice and despair in post colonial Africa: towards carving a new path to personhood**

Prof Vhumani Magezi, Extra Ordinary Associate Professor at North West University, Vaal Triangle Campus, Vanderbijlpark

The dawn of democracy from colonial rule brought so much hope and promise to Africans. With ubuntu as one distinctive africaness feature, hopes for collective good and life improvement was the expectation of many people. However, these hopes are increasingly being dashed by corruption, oppression and schemes that put the *individual self first* at the expense of *everyone else*. These developments are in stark contrast to ubuntu. Hence African people can be characterized as 'people at odds with themselves'. Colossal injustice and rampant corruption is causing despair in post colonial

Africa. In such a situation, what options exist for new path that upholds, restores and instills personhood and dignity to people? A consideration of the practice of ubuntu that is moderated by the ecclesial context arguably provides a constructive approach to ecological justice thereby fostering human dignity and personhood.

<b>Graduate Centre 1-64</b>
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**Predictors for attitudes towards human dignity - Empirical research on a basic concept of human rights**

Prof. Hans-Georg Ziebertz, Institute of Practical Theology, University of Würzburg, Würzburg

For a long time in history the dominating understanding of human dignity was that dignity is dependent to people's behavior. Dignity could be acquired by moral and could be lost by immoral behavior. Since the enlightenment dignity is seen as inherent to human beings, which cannot be lost. Although there is a controversy in philosophy and law about the content and scope of the concept of dignity declarations of human rights and constitutions refer to human dignity as the foundation of rights. This paper shows how dignity is valued by German adolescents (N=2517) and which predictors are significant and relevant for their attitudes on dignity. The general assumption is that different understandings of dignity will be present among German youth. Religious belief and non-religious attitudes will be tested if they are relevant as predictors for the valuation of the adolescents' understanding of human dignity

**Reconfiguring Manidaneyam in the context of injustice, inequality and violation of personhood of manual scavengers**

Prof. John Mohan Razu, Adjunct Professor at Clark Theological College, Mokokchung, Nagaland, North-East India

Against the overarching theme of this conference, I intend to bring to the fore the plight of a community (manual scavengers) who are involved in manually clearing the human excreta from the private and public dry toilets/cesspools in India. They are faced with one of the most crucial challenges that confront their personhood. Their forcible occupation has been legitimized and reinforced by the heinous system of caste that continues to dominate the Indian social structure. Abused and deprived of their human dignity, their life's aspiration and hopes are also negated. Hence, this paper examines and analyzes the practical challenges that the manual scavengers face from a perspective of Manidaneyam. In Tamil language it means imbuing and cultivating humane-ness/humanization. Manidaneyam as such implies cultivating the right conditions for personal and communitarian meanings of life, within the equitable and egalitarian rubrics of institutional frameworks.

This paper, therefore, has three sections: the first asks whether there is an equal moral status for all as persons or not; the second, re-configures the

concept of Manida- neyam which is of central importance in the context of manual scavengers who have been living in sub-human and unjust conditions; and the third, nuances the dignity of individual and community within the strands of justice. Further, it reflects the notion of choices by taking the case of manual scavenging which is carried out not by choice, but by compulsion.

<b>Graduate Centre 1-68</b>
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### **Reimagining Theological Reflection in an Age of Diversity**

Prof. Edward Foley, Capuchin Duns Scotus Professor of Spirituality, Ordinary Professor of Liturgy and Music, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago

Practical Inclusivity beyond Christianity For decades scholars and practitioners have asserted the central role of theological reflection [TR] in practical theology. Some posit that it is the pivotal practice, not only of practical theology but of theology in general. As it is currently conceived and practice, however, TR is a decidedly Christian practice rooted in the thinking of key Roman Catholics (James and Evelyn Whitehead, Patricia Killen, Thomas Groome, Robert Kinast, etc.). On the other hand, the growing diversity in the religious identification of those entering divinity schools, seminaries, chaplaincy programs and the like suggests that this very Christian paradigm is no longer viable, and is a potential exercise in colonialization. This presentation will offer a new way of thinking about theological reflection (i.e., “reflective believing”) that makes a place for people no matter how they self-identify around religion, be they Hindu or humanist.

### **Towards a theology of governance for a global denomination.**

Dr. Helen Cameron, Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford Centre for Ecclesiology and Practical Theology, Oxford

The Salvation Army operates in 126 countries and yet has a unified form of governance in which all territories relate to an international headquarters and General in London. The paper explores how both unity and diversity can be sustained. Theologies of governance and accountability are underpinned by understandings of human personhood, including ubuntu. However, Western models of governance with a rational individualistic understanding of personhood tend to dominate global debates about governance. This paper will explore whether a wider range of theologies can be used and what the implications of them might be for practice.

<b>Graduate Centre 1-72</b>
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### **The impact of one's notion about ubuntu in defining and practicing interconnected personhood - a practical theological reflection**

Prof. Fritz De Wet, Professor in Practical Theology and Homiletics, Faculty of Theology, North-West University, Potchefstroom

In the post-apartheid South African landscape much is expected of ubuntu as an authentic expression of African life with the potential of merging South Africans into a 'rainbow nation'. As ubuntu is a concept that has to do with the very soul of Africa, a practical theology that focus its efforts on the African context will have to take note of the notions that different people work with regarding the functioning of this key concept in personhood and interconnectedness between human beings as well as of its unifying potential.

The popularity of ubuntu has resulted in it becoming 'anything to anyone who so wishes to deploy it', possibly hampering its unifying potential in the process. Should we accept that the fluidity, which comes with this concept, will not be helpful in assisting South Africans from various backgrounds to find consensus on the values that will lead to the enhancement of inter-connected life and dignified expression of personhood?

What role can religious communities (like for instance the Christian church) play in promoting wholesome expressions of personhood and in expressing a kind of interconnected life that finds a graceful way of treating all people as persons that are worthy of dignity? Can it be that mutual interpretation of Christian concepts regarding the inter-connectedness of life as found in canonical Scripture and communal expressions of Christian life under guidance of the Spirit of Christ will be able to lead us gradually to a surprising new, unifying definition of ubuntu; a definition that speaks of a richness of interconnected life than none of us could have imagined?

### **An Ubuntu-inspired Approach to Organizational Spirituality**

Prof. Neil Pembroke, Associate Professor of Practical Theology in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at the University of Queensland, Brisbane

Organizational spirituality (OS) refers to a workplace which supports the quest for meaning and purpose, self-actualization, belonging, and sense of community. Given that the bulk of the work on OS has come from the North American context in which individualism is strongly established, it is not surprising that some leading approaches virtually ignore sense of community and concentrate instead on the inner life of individual workers and their experience of self-actualization. Ubuntu, in contrast, is a communitarian ethic. Social harmony, belonging, and solidarity are the great goods. The Ubuntu-inspired model of OS that is developed aligns in general terms with proposals by scholars who identify belonging and the experience of togetherness in the workplace as vitally important. There are good theological reasons for supporting a communitarian approach to OS. More precisely, theological anthropology (grounded in the doctrine of imago Trinitatis) indicates choosing Ubuntu or participatory humanism rather than self-realization as the cornerstone in a theory of OS. The model that is offered has three elements: consensus, dialogue, and good will (a readiness to engage in discretionary acts aimed at providing help with work-related tasks and problems).

## Graduate Centre 1-74

### **From Broken Webs, the Philosophy of Ubuntu and the Kingdom to Come**

Prof. Constanze Thierfelder, Theological Seminary Herborn, University of Marburg, Marburg

UBUNTU shares multiple communalities with the Feminist Theology of “Mutual Relationships” in Carter Heyward’s book “The Redemption of God. A Theology of Mutual Relations”. Both of these concepts start with the realities of injustice and denigration in society and its relations. Both have a vision of mutual relationship that will mend the broken webs and restore the values of personhood and dignity. Comparing both of these concepts, their roots and their background, their argumentations and the critiques they earned will give practical theological thinking new ideas and visions towards a church and a society where mutual relations, personhood and dignity will flourish, without denying the structures of power and the realities of evil.

### **Race, Religion, and Health among African Descended Young Women**

Prof. Evelyn Parker, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Professor of Practical Theology, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas

In 2013 the World Health Organization reported that adolescent girls and young women ages 15-24 were twice as likely to be at risk for HIV infection compared to boys and young men of the same age group. The high risk of HIV was associated with unsafe and often unwanted or forced sexual activity. This health fact is related to non-partner sexual violence and the larger health issue of violence against women and girls, which is in itself a global health concern. At the same time Christian religious institutions in Africa receive affirmation from medical professionals for their involvement in HIV/AIDS intervention, notably education, spiritual counseling, sermons, and dramas. Yet, there is no mention of the role of the churches in the intervention of gender-based violence and its connection to HIV/AIDS. This paper discusses the intersectional nature of gender-based violence and the health of African descended young women, ages 15-24 years, and proposes a vision for ecclesial practices in African descended churches in the USA and South Africa.

## Graduate Centre 1-76

### **Religious Pluralism and the Universal Validity of the Human Rights: The Theological Concept of Desmond Tutu For Tutu**

Prof. Wilhelm Gräß, Theological Faculty, Humboldt-University, Berlin

There is no conflict between human rights’ universal validity and the obligation of Christians to speak up for human rights out of their Christian belief. This is

not because Christianity might have invented human rights and their worldwide distribution would be more successful under the Christian prefix. Such a cultural imperialistic interpretation of the relationship between human rights and Christianity was far from what Tutu had in mind. It was rather his deep concern to win all religions for a universal enforcement of human rights in all his sermons and speeches, which he has delivered since the 1980's all over the globe. Tutu specifically points towards the African worldview of the 'Ubuntu'. The African worldview of Ubuntu together with the idea that human beings are made in God's image found in the Hebrew Bible and the Christian understanding of the unconditioned justification of the sinner altogether represent for Tutu an integral and universal religion of human rights.

### **In the Name of Humanity?**

#### **Belonging as Zimbabwean and as Human in Johannesburg**

Dr. Elina Hankela, Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa and Department of Theology, University of Helsinki, Helsinki

I present preliminary results of a research project that interrogates the ethics of humanity from the perspective of young Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg and Soweto. Using various ethnographic methods (interviews, participant photography, focus groups), I engage the research participants in thinking of their experiences of belonging in Johannesburg. I know most of the participants (18-25 y/o, male, Shona/Ndebele) from my previous involvement in empirical research in the area. In analysing the data, I concentrate on the moral and religious meanings that the young people attach to being human, and the ways in which they use these notions to negotiate their place as Zimbabwean migrants in Johannesburg, a metropolis that features both as a xenophobic city and as a city of economic opportunity in migrant narratives. Listening to these young people offers a contextual perspective to the meaning of ubuntu in the twenty-first century urban context.

<b>Economic and Management Sciences 1-18</b>
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### **How to Explore Churches in Secular Times?**

#### **Results of a Quantitative Study in German Primary Schools concerning Field Trips to the Church**

Prof. Ulrich Riegel, Professor of Religious Education, Department of Catholic Theology, University of Siegen, Siegen

In secular times many people are not familiar with churches any more. This challenges RE. The research project "Churches as an out-of-classroom learning environment" investigates the learning effects of field trips to churches in religious education at school. We therefore cooperated with 67 classes of third grade, summing up to a total of 1,143 students. All classes passed a curriculum about the church building. We divided the classes into four groups that vary in the number and timing of field trips. Before and after the curriculum we gathered information on the students' knowledge about the church. Our results reveal that doing field trips can indeed increase learning

outcomes compared to “traditional” learning inside the classroom. This is however only true if students are given the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the unusual learning environment before cognitive input is given. In secular context students have to get familiar with churches first.

### **“Theology made in dignity”. The Religious Education classroom as spiritual learning community**

Prof. Bert Roebben, Professor of Religious Education at the Faculty of Humanities and Theology of Dortmund University, Dortmund

On the basis of social, cultural, religious and educational shifts in schools in Western Europe this paper discusses the possibilities and boundaries of religious education (RE) as a comprehensive theological subject in the public realm of the school. Children and young people are able to and thus have the right to theologize about the religious and worldview issues they encounter at home, on the street, on the playground and in virtual reality. How can the school offer them a safe space to discuss and to reflect these items with their fellows? How can the school arrange ‘spiritual learning communities’ (Roebben 2014) and enhance the ‘learning in the presence of the religious other’ (Roebben 2013)? Based on the idea that young people do create and re-create, do use and re-produce theologies in interactive ways, the modern RE classroom can be seen as a place of public theology.

<b>Economic and Management Sciences 1-25</b>
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### **The quest for African identity in the de-colonisation of theological education**

Prof. Marilyn Naidoo, Department of Philosophy, Systematic and Practical Theology, University of South Africa, Pretoria

Since the history of theological education in this region has basically been characterised by Western intellectual and theological leadership, scholars have realised the need to take African culture seriously in order to produce a relevant theology for the African people (Mudimbe 1988; Ela 1986; Bediako 1992; Tienou 1984). Maluleke’s (2006) call to Africanise theological education explicitly illustrates one of the ways in which as a hermeneutical trope, Africa frames the possibility of discourse on identity, culture and theology. Africanisation seeks to dispel, exorcise and displace western paradigms of African identity through rethinking the entire ideological church apparatus of theological education from the standpoint of African questions and answers. Looking at post-colonial discourse as an attempt by Africans to create a Christian self-understanding that is informed by ‘anti-colonial’ recuperation (Anonio 2006) of their own varied cultural traditions, this paper will discuss the possibility of Africanisation within theological education; its essentialist notion of Africa, the use of indigenous knowledge and socio-cultural and epistemological frameworks together with its marginalization in theology.

## **Post Colonial Parallels: Practicing Ubuntu in a Divided Landscape**

Dr. Lynn Bridgers, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

This paper explores the post-colonial parallels in the divided landscapes of South Africa and the state of New Mexico in the United States. Both areas have more than one layer of colonial rule is a land of diverse indigenous peoples. New Mexico's indigenous peoples were colonized first by the Spanish, then by an Anglo American culture. South Africa's indigenous peoples were colonized first by the Dutch and later by the English. These histories create a dynamic post-colonial context as all three groups interact with each other and the layering effect of their colonial and religious histories. This paper will use contemporary post-colonial theory to explore parallels in those contexts and the need for Ubuntu to interact respectfully and create or continue a workable pluralism. The paper will be augmented by views of the spectacular landscapes of both areas.

<b>Economic and Management Sciences 2-150</b>
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### **Ubuntu-language. The expressing of nostalgia and/or the creation of new community in various South African contexts**

Prof. Julian C. Müller, Emeritus Professor, Senior Research Fellow, Co-Leader of Ubuntu Research Group, Centre for the Advancement of Scholarship, University of Pretoria, Pretoria.

Rev. Wonka Buqa and Rev. Lieze Meiring, PhD students and Co-Researchers in Ubuntu Research Group

It is possible to keep Ubuntu captured within the constraints of nostalgic language. In stead of the practical philosophy of "I am because we are", it then becomes a romantic nostalgic dream of "I long, therefore I am". This nostalgic longing can, on the one hand be a very important directive and corrective in a hard core, empirical research project. On the other hand, the nostalgic language, if it is not properly acknowledged and addressed, can be a source of confusion. The aim of this paper/workshop is to both address the complicated language of nostalgia and at the same time look for signs of ubuntu-nostalgia in two very different South African contexts.

The concept "ubuntu" has not only one meaning. It gathered associations and mutations of meaning as it has been used by preachers, politicians, philosophers, and academics through history. This article is an effort towards more differentiated ubuntu-language.

The question is how can we move from a nostalgic ubuntu-past to a future realistically determined by ubuntu?

The suggestion by Bradbury (2012:348) provided a directive for us to speak the language of nostalgia and at the same time be guided by the reality of local contexts: "I am suggesting that narratives of the past may serve not to restore an earlier time or the place of "home", but to dislocate our positioning in the present, to open not only windows on the world, but new ways of



viewing ourselves." <sup>1</sup>By telling and sharing the narratives of the (nostalgic) past we are turning towards the future. The stories might provoke us to seek connections and common purpose. The telling of stories is a way of constructing a preferred reality. A reality in which our individual hopes can be reconciled with the dreams of others.

Two contexts are described and explored as case studies.

### **What we can learn from a genre in discourse: Theological Notes on *(Relational) Autobiography***

Dr. Meike Sprecher, Scientific assistant in Practical Theology, Faculty of Protestant Theology, University of Tübingen

"A person is a person through other persons," seems to be a central notion of Ubuntu. Stressing relationality and community, this (southern) African view on personhood differs considerably from the general Western philosophical notion of an autonomous, self-determined self.

In my paper, I will trace this Western notion of the self in autobiographical theory, and I will show contestant views of a relational self or selves. Autobiography is commonly understood as the literature of the *I - I* meaning an individual, autonomous and linear self. However, in recent years a theory of *relational autobiography* has emerged, based on the view of collective, relational and nonlinear selves, supported by an accompanying text corpus that stresses the idea of *selves in relation*. Furthermore, I will explore the role religion and theology have played in establishing the autobiographical self, and what practical theology can learn from looking at Ubuntu and this discourse in genre, in general and relational autobiographies in particular.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Crewe, M. (ed). 2014. *Nostalgia. Aids Review 2013*. Centre for the Study of Aids, University of Pretoria.

<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that this is a highly contested term within the community itself. During the Apartheid era many coloured people preferred to be identified as 'black' (in solidarity with the liberation struggle) or termed themselves 'so called coloured' as they felt that they were 'so called' by the Apartheid state. It should also be noted that coloured people are not only a mixture



**Saturday July 18, 2015**

**Electives/Break Away Groups Number 2  
14:00 – 15:30**

**Graduate Centre 1-56**

## **The spirit of Ubuntu in African communities**

Prof. Maake Masango. Extra-ordinary Professor, Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria

Dr. Roger Tucker, Emeritus Pastor, Uniting Presbyterian Church, Research Fellow, Faculty of Theology, Bloemfontein

People living in a violent South Africa find themselves challenged by fear and uncertainty of the future. The rainbow nation is falling apart. It is time that we revisit the concept of Ubuntu; (the heart of African way of living together) is under attack by globalization, especially, since independence in 1994. This way of living among Africans has been an anchor of caring for each other, and the rest of the village. Violence, abuse and disrespect have become the order of the day. The paper will seek to respond and explore ways of capturing back this way of living (Ubuntu) so that people can care for each other, and pastorally restore human dignity (Ubuntu). This new life of having rights has caused African people to live a life of individualism. The main question to ask is, was oppression the main pillar that kept Africans to nurture the spirit of Ubuntu? (Or care for each other?) Is Freedom causing them to focus on themselves without worrying about the other? Has the global village affected them in such a way that they have to change from raising the African child together? Can modern villagers re-visit old concept of Ubuntu in order to correct the values and dignity of Ubuntu that is getting lost? The above questions will help the author in examining the concept of Ubuntu (humanity) and human dignity that is lost since post-apartheid. Restructuring of rainbow way of life will help us recapture the concept of the image and likeness of God in each other.

## **Dignity and Creativity: In search of an alternative ground for human dignity**

Dr. David Kirchhoffer, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Research Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry, Australian Catholic University, Brisbane

Various features of the human person have been offered as the basis for human dignity. Chief among these is rationality. However, as demonstrated by

feminist and post-colonial critiques, such conceptions of dignity have led to hegemonic oppression of those who are deemed 'irrational'. Using a correlational practical theological method (David Tracy), I propose that creativity, unlike rationality, is a characteristic of God and human beings made in God's image that encompasses the many dimensions of the human person as a meaning-seeking and meaning-making, historically situated, corporeal subject in relation to all that is. Such a conception of human dignity, grounded in creativity, is able to address both the worth of human beings as such, and the experience of this worth by individuals. It is able to identify situations that promote or violate dignity. And it is able to critique false conceptions of dignity that are used to maintain injustice.

<b>Graduate Centre 1-64</b>
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### **Ujamaa and human dignity among palliative care volunteers in Tanzania**

Prof. Auli Vähäkangas, Professor of Pastoral Theology, University of Helsinki, Helsinki

In this paper I analyze the experiences of volunteers (total number of interviewees 40, out of which 22 females and 18 males) at the Selian Hospice and Palliative Care Programme in Arusha, Tanzania, through the lens of African communalism, ujamaa.

Tanzania's first president Julius Nyerere's idealistic ujamaa (living together or living as one family) still influences Tanzanians' understanding of human dignity (Green 2010). The Time of ujamaa is now history, but some of its heritage still seems to influence how people in Tanzania regard family as well as community and how they act in their community, especially with regard to their values of human dignity and personhood of their dying neighbors. My research explores to the following questions:

- How do Selian volunteers understand the notions of human dignity and personhood in the context of their service to dying patients?
- Based on the views of Selian volunteers, what would it mean to practice ujamaa in the palliative care context?

### **Doing theology and development: Revisiting the conceptual promise of a sub-field for a theological-ecclesial contribution to enhanced personhood and human dignity amongst communities of the poor and marginalized**

Prof. Ignatius Swart, Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa, Pretoria

It could well be claimed that for the large majority of practical theologians the sub-field of theology and development represents a marginal if not non-existent enterprise in the disciplinary practice of theology, that is, despite this sub-field's deep concern with Christian social praxis and the related role of Christian agency in developing new and authentic solidarity relationships with communities of the poor and marginalized. Departing from such sense of marginality within the disciplinary practice of theology and even more

specifically the disciplinary practice of practical theology, in this paper I will seek to connect my own ongoing specialization in the sub-field of theology and development to the IAPT 2015 Conference's topical focus on the notions of personhood and human dignity. In particular, my dual aim will be to through an exploration of selected texts (1) revisit what I would like to refer to as the conceptual promise of this sub-field with respect to the challenges of more profound Christian social praxis and human solidarity and, through such revisiting, (2) present a perspective on what such conceptual promise may offer to a theological-ecclesial contribution to enhanced personhood and human dignity amongst communities of the poor and marginalized.

<b>Graduate Centre 1-68</b>
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### **Practicing Ubuntu among International Students (a case study)**

Prof. Darren Cronshaw, Researcher with Baptist Union of Victoria, Head of Research and Associate Professor in Missiology with Australian Colleges of Ministries (SCD), Honorary Research Fellow with Whitley College (University of Divinity), and pastor of AuburnLife Baptist Church, Hawthorn

This paper uses the concept of Ubuntu to analyse the experience of international students studying in Australia with the "Auburn Hub" initiative of AuburnLife Baptist Church. The Hub was instituted to cater to international students' need for community, hospitality and conversational English. We propose that "I am because we are" is a valid way of understanding being. Moreover, international students, dislocated from their previous networks, present both an opportunity for churches to practice Ubuntu (in providing community-building initiatives) as well as an opportunity to investigate the utility of this understanding of being. Auburn Hub presents a model for a Western application of Ubuntu in a globalised context, an example of a pastoral approach centered on a community building ethos/theology that is independent of the beliefs of those within the community we have facilitated.

### **Practicing ubuntu amongst mineworkers in South Africa who are affected by HIV and the trauma of strikes**

Prof. Christina Landman, Research Institute for Theology and Religion, University of South Africa, Pretoria

This paper presents the results of 300 interviews done with mineworkers in areas around Rustenburg in the North West Province of South Africa, about a 120 kilometres to the northwest of Pretoria. The mineworkers have suffered the trauma of (often violent) strikes in recent times, which included the loss of property and, especially, the loss of human dignity and personhood through police brutality and lack of income. A majority of the research population – who are mainly men and Tswana-speaking – are also infected with HIV. They have not received their Anti-Retroviral Treatment during the strikes since ARTs are usually provided by the mines themselves, government not being in a position to provide full treatment to all. The interviews aim at disclosing the discourses that hold the mineworkers captive in low self-esteem and lead to

excessive drinking and domestic violence. The paper describes how these discourses are deconstructed towards stories of hope and dignity, and focuses on the role of religion in rescoping a life of human dignity for the mineworkers. More than 90% of the research population belongs to one of the 65 African Independent Churches that are working amongst the mineworkers in these areas where the mainline churches show no interest of entering. While a majority of the mineworkers believe that misfortune and illness are caused by evil, spells, demons and Satan, or are punishments from God, a practical theological perspective on their experiences is needed that will assist them towards healing ... in a theologically healthy way.

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<b>Graduate Centre 1-72</b>
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**Damned if You Do and Damned if You Don't: Singing Global Music in Seminary Chapel Services**

Prof. Pamela Couture, Jane and Geoffrey Martin Chair of Church and Community, both at Emmanuel College of Victoria University in the University of Toronto, Toronto

Ms. Becca Whitla, PhD Student in the Pastoral Department, specializing in worship and music, Emmanuel College of Victoria University at the University of Toronto, Toronto

Damned if You Do and Damned if You Don't: Singing Global Music in Seminary Chapel Services. At their best, seminary chapel services model Christian worship leadership for today's map of complex ecclesial settings. Since this task is undertaken in the context of globalization and its accompanying postcolonial concerns, music leaders must wrestle with whether or not to sing "global" music. Questions like "Who represents whom?", "Who owns the music?" and "Is this cultural appropriation?" loom large, along with definitions of "global" or "world" music(s) which often come to represent simply anything other than "traditional" or "contemporary" Euro-North American hymnody. Does singing global music really open up the possibility for a more diverse and inclusive repertoire? Or, is it rather a means to control which songs are allowed and to re-exoticise an "other"? An analysis of the complicated dynamics involved in leading and singing global music at two chapel services at Emmanuel College in Toronto will foreground postcolonial issues related to power, epistemology and theology and propose preliminary parameters for a praxis of global song leading.

### **The long road to practicing Ubuntu leadership: Practical theological perspectives from a Malawian case study**

Prof. Ian Nell, Dept. of Practical Theology and Missiology, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch

In discourses on leadership within the African context one regularly finds that scholars make a contrast between the so-called Western and African approaches to leadership. African leadership approaches are then often linked to notions of an African value system in which one of the first concepts that surface is the loaded notion of Ubuntu. Scholars then point to the fact that in the understanding of Ubuntu one finds a preference for a kind of spiritual collectiveness rather than for individualism with rational thinking as a central feature of Western thought. Applied to leadership, one therefore finds a consensus-seeking and problem-solving approach in Africa, rather than dissension that is typical of Western styles of leadership. The purpose of this paper is, firstly, to illustrate that this dualistic approach to leadership does not only underwrite a lot of contestation around the notion of Ubuntu leadership but that such an oversimplified understanding of African leadership can easily contribute to gender discrimination. Secondly, this problematic situation will be illustrated by referring to a recent case study on the absence of women from leadership positions within a specific denomination in Malawi. Some of the underlying factors contributing towards this problematic practice will be scrutinized. Lastly, the paper concludes with the trust that a more nuanced approach to leadership from an Ubuntu perspective can indeed make a contribution towards the position of women in leadership. According to the understanding of the researcher, this can happen if the notion of Ubuntu is placed within the broader discourses of critical humanism, where the focus is on shared humanity.

**A contextual ecclesiology: to rediscover the social responsibility of congregations – a South African perspective**

Prof. Kobus Schoeman, Head of Department of Practical Theology, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein

Prof Malan Nel, Extra-Ordinary Professor, Department of Practical Theology, University of Pretoria, Pretoria

Congregations within the South African context find themselves currently in a different position in the society than thirty or twenty years ago. This movement can be described with different concepts: from Christendom to post-Christendom; from colonial to post-colonial – and in the case of South Africa from apartheid to post-apartheid. This movement could also be described, for the church and congregations, as a movement towards powerlessness and vulnerability. A contextual ecclesiology is inevitable open to these changes and should lead to the reconstruction of the identity, mission, culture and ministry of the congregation.

Practical theology uses a hermeneutical epistemology and, at least, two lenses can be used to look for the critical positioning and description of a contextual ecclesiology:

- A Biblical voice: a New Testament text like Gal 3:28 may contribute to the demarcation of a contextual ecclesiology;
- An empirical analysis of the positioning of the members of congregations within society (the DRC attender- and congregational surveys of 2006 and 2010 will be used as a case study).

Congregations are in need of a prophetic voice and the discovery of its social responsibility to create a space for the other and the marginalised. Could a contextual ecclesiology contribute to the restoration of human dignity and social justice in the South African society?

**The social embeddedness of religious practices: The impact of a network perspective**

Prof. Birgit Weyel, Faculty of Protestant Theology, Department of Practical Theology, University of Tübingen, Tübingen

A network analysis approach and its impact. In this paper, I will present the main results of an empirical study in a German congregation which we based on network analysis. It is an approach to the social embeddedness of religious communication in local church facilities as well as in secular affiliations. The network analysis explores the perspective of Ego-centered networks. Questions are for example: With whom does Ego talk about religion? With whom does he or she go to church services? Who does he or she meet at the choir? And with whom is he or she closely associated? It also shows the structure of the social network in respect of religious practice: the reciprocity

of religious practice, the density and degree of centrality of players. The network approach shows how important the perspective of practicing Ubuntu is because its focus is on intersubjectivity and reciprocity.

### Graduate Centre 1-76

#### **How to perceive human dignity?**

Prof. Hans-Günter Heimbrock, Prof-Em. for Practical Theology at the Faculty of Protestant Theology, Goethe-University Frankfurt, Frankfurt/M

The paper tries to give a contribution to the conference main theme “Practical Theological Perspectives on Injustice, Personhood and Human Dignity”. The leading question I deal with, are these: Given the self-evidency of the ethical call from the theme, is there a particular Practical Theological challenge beyond applying ethical norms in religious practice? And what are preconditions for this practice to match illusionistic attempts and to develop realistic hopeful theological perspective? To answer these questions I focus on human practice of perceiving the other and related theories (E.Lévinas; M. Merleau-Ponty, B. Waldenfels). A starting passage will deal with a case study on racism, connected to the presentation of an advertisement photo in the department store in Peru (Ferabella). Further steps will deepen the case via theoretical attempts to conceive this event and other forms of violations of human dignity. The concluding part will be about a paradox at the bottom of perceiving human dignity in human practice: the inevitability as well as the impossibility to perceive the alien.

#### **Can the subaltern speak and experience a theological dignity?**

Prof. Trygve Wyller, Professor in the study of Christian Social Practice. Faculty of Theology, University of Oslo; Hon. Professor, School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics, University of Kwazulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg

Undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers increase in number and in public appearance, both in the South and in the North. South Africa has recently experienced a new wave of public xenophobia, and every day (and night) people from the South die in the Mediterranean and on the oriental borders. The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben names the nameless of the Auschwitz Muselmann, because they cannot testify the cruelty any more. The Muselmann is the person, who lives in the non-place and die as the “homo sacer”, the victim set out to be killed by anyone. The Muselman live in the non-place. Is it possible for theology, practical theology to be meaningful in such a context? What does it mean – in Practical Theology - to perceive the other without othering the other one more time? The paper will give a very simplified draft of response to these mega issues by presenting some short fieldwork done among Pentecostal services with Congolese refugees in South Africa. A first practical theological hypothesis for an interpretation of this material is that may be the best contribution from the churches might be to reduce their significance as churches. Then the people of the non-place can



become subjects in their own place. And so the church becomes really church for other subjects.

## Economic and Management Sciences 1-18

### **The logic and impact of economics as a challenge to Practical Theology**

Prof. Bernd Schröder, Chair of Practical Theology, focus on Religious Education, Faculty of Theology, Göttingen University, Göttingen

The paper looks into economics as challenging Practical Theology. It focusses on the identification and description of those aspects of both, economic theory and practice, which are calling for practical-theological reflection and commitment: for example, the tension between efficiency-orientated thought on the one hand and a religious perspective on the other, the anthropological and societal paradigm which implicitly forms the basis of economic doing and thinking, the increasing global imbalance in determining as well as using terms of trade, the ambivalent role of formal literacy as a 'tool' for the allocation of people.

While people living in Western or westernized countries learn to adopt the logic of economically successful thought and behavior via socialization and modeling, the range of religious logic and norms decreases. The question, which is to be answered, therefore is: In which way should Practical Theology and RE refer to the logic and impact of economics? Combatting – adopting – looking for harmony – ignorance might be options which should be taken into account.

### **“Ma se kind”<sup>2</sup>: Rediscovering personhood in addressing socio-economic challenges on the Cape Flats**

Dr. Nadine Bowers Du Toit, Department of Practical Theology and Missiology, Faculty of Theology, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch

The Afrikaans saying “ma se kind” – if directly translated means “mother’s child”. It is a colloquial term used within sectors of the ‘coloured’ (mixed race)<sup>2</sup> community in South Africa to refer to anyone within the community whom they regard as family (biological or otherwise). Despite such terminology, which indicates the recognition of interconnectedness within this community, ‘coloured’ identity is nevertheless highly contested and fragmented. This contestation is in large part as result of both Apartheid ideology and policy (one such policy resulted in the forced removal of ‘coloured’ people in Cape Town from their homes and their relocation to the wastelands of the Cape Flats). Many scholars have, in fact, argued that this uprooting of families and communities and the resultant loss of identity and community, played a key role in the rise of gangsterism and many other socio-economic issues within

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that this is a highly contested term within the community itself. During the Apartheid era many coloured people preferred to be identified as ‘black’ (in solidarity with the liberation struggle) or termed themselves ‘so called coloured’ as they felt that they were ‘so called’ by the Apartheid state. It should also be noted that coloured people are not only a mixture of the black and white inhabitants of South Africa, but have indigenous as well as slave ancestry.

the 'coloured' community. This paper seeks to explore ways in which a theological understanding of personhood could engage this community to rediscover its interconnectedness as a means of addressing the socio-economic issues faced on the Cape Flats.

<b>Economic and Management Sciences 1-25</b>
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### **Teaching Ubuntu in a White Theological Institution in the US: "Black Lives Matter" Protests and Non-Orientalist Practical Theologies**

The Rev. Boyung Lee, Associate Professor of Practical Theology, Education and Spiritual Formation, Director, Changemaker Fellowship Program Director, API Program Initiative Core Doctoral Faculty Pacific School of Religion & Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley

In the wake of Ferguson Decision, US society is now more explicitly and intensely engaging race discourse. "Black Lives Matter"; protests are happening throughout the US including theological campuses far away from Ferguson. Although I wholeheartedly welcome this much-needed racial justice movement, and actively participate in it, as an Asian American practical theologian, I also join other minoritized theologians in voicing concerns about problematic white allyhood within the movement. In this paper, using a case from my own campus where 16 students and faculty were arrested during the height of the protests, I will first analyze the whitewashed elements of the movement, unintended results generated by many well-intended white participants. Then I explore possible ways that practical theology can help them to learn authentic allyhood grounded in cultural humility. For this I first argue that practical theology itself should be a non-orientalist/tokenistic theology. I will conclude with pedagogical strategies informed by non-tokenistic practical theologies for teaching racial justice in classrooms. For all of these I will use the work of Andrea Smith, a Native American religious scholar who identified capitalism/slavery, colonialism/genocide and orientalism/war as three pillars of white supremacy/ideologies.

### **The role of the church in today's society. Practical-theological reflections**

Prof. Uta Pohl-Patalong, Professor for Religious Education and Practical Theology, Kiel University, Kiel

In late modernity, the tasks of the church are openly discussed: What exactly does it mean to communicate the liberating gospel in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Answers to this question should not only be sought in local congregations. Rather, it is the task of Practical Theology to come up with criteria and scenarios, which provide orientation for ecclesiastical practice.

One way of doing so is by distinguishing ecclesiastical practice into three dimensions: "topic", "subject" and "world". These dimensions can be further differentiated into direct and indirect action, respectively. Thus, six main tasks of the church in today's society can be identified: communicating and interpreting the Christian message; creating spaces for religion; providing

individual life assistance in general as well as in specific situations; creating community; and fulfilling the function of advocacy in society.

I would like to discuss this model – which had been developed in the context of German Protestantism – in a global context and with regards to the approach of Ubuntu.

**Electives/Break Away Groups Number 3  
16:00 – 17:30**

<b>Graduate Centre 1-56</b>
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**New Developments in Practical Theology: Human Dignity, Religious Freedom, and their Ultimate Consequences**

Prof. Solange Lefebvre, Chair Holder Religion, Culture and Society, Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Montreal, Montreal

My presentation will reflect on the consequences of the pluralization of students studying theology and religious studies and the secularization of public institutions as conduits towards discussing an emerging “politics of spirituality.” These phenomena have occurred in Canada, but also elsewhere. What kind of training can we provide in these contexts? My teaching experience points toward providing a combination between intercultural studies and interreligious studies, thus taking into account a complex interaction between a denominational approach and a neutral or impartial approach regarding beliefs and faiths.

**Religiosity and Leadership among university youths**

Prof. Clélia Peretti, Professor in Master’s and Doctoral Program in Theology at Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná, Paraná

This article presents the results of research conducted with youths on religiosity, citizenship, and human rights among young people. This study sought to understand religiosity and its relevant aspects, map values, dynamics, and religious experiences, and investigate leadership among university students between 18 and 29 years old. The results show that youths are an important research target for Brazil, both for understanding the growing concern with the construction of their identity and for training future professionals. Religiosity has been modified by increased mobility, growing syncretism, and religious bricolage. Intolerance and religious manipulation are the greatest points of criticism and main problems among those studied. Leadership is revealed through manifestos and engagement in social projects aimed at ensuring the fundamental rights and human dignity and duties inherent to individuals.

### **Religion, Human dignity and Right to life**

Prof. Francis-Vincent Anthony, Fundamental Practical Theology; Director of Pastoral Theological Institute, Director of Interfaculty Committee for Research Salesian Pontifical University, Rome

An empirical study among Christian, Muslim and Hindu students in the multi-religious context of Tamil Nadu, India. The multi-religious context of Tamil Nadu, India, can render the relationship between religion, human dignity and right to life a complex one. The question that we wish to address in this paper concerns the role religions and understanding of human dignity can play in soliciting and legitimizing right to life. Do religions differ in doing this? We focus on the factors of personal religious attitude, contextual religious attitude, individual values, particularly that of human dignity, and analyze their impact on the perception of right to life, namely, in the case of euthanasia, of pregnancy, and of crime against humanity. With regard to the background variables, besides the personal characteristics, aspects of religious socialization and psychological traits have been taken into account. The paper presents the significant findings emerging from the data collected from 1215 respondents in Tamil Nadu, among Christian, Muslim and Hindu students.

### **Spiritual Care As Palliative Care: Human dignity and the right-to-die**

Prof. Isabelle Noth, Institute for Practical Theology, University of Bern, Bern

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Swiss Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) consider spiritual care an integral element of palliative care for both patients and their relatives (WHO 2002; Bundesamt für Gesundheit 2009). This paper seeks to discuss and analyse different concepts of human dignity and dying in the development of spiritual care and in right-to-die-organizations. My examples are drawn mainly from Switzerland, where assisted suicide has been legal since 1942 and is attracting more and more foreigners. Right-to-die protocols developed in Switzerland thus have implications beyond Swiss borders themselves and can shed light on larger questions concerning human dignity, the nature of qualified spiritual accompaniment for terminally ill and dying humans, and the role of pastoral caregivers in providing such support.

### **Practicing Ubuntu within urban South African youth ministry contexts?**

Dr. Shantelle Weber, Lecturer in Youth Work, Department of Practical Theology, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch

Practical theology gives youth ministry the language and direction to describe how youth construct their faith. Youth ministry takes the faith formation of youth seriously because these youth are called to participate in every aspect

of Christian ministry. Youth faith formation is an aspect of youth ministry that cannot be discussed apart from the societal or cultural contexts in which the youth exist. An important part of faith formation is helping young people discern the tensions between dominant cultures active in their lives (faith community, family, etc). South Africa is classified as a young country in which more than 40% of its people are between fourteen and thirty-five years of age. A diversity of cultures opens South Africa to a variety of African traditional cultures including the philosophy and worldview of Ubuntu. This paper is aimed at investigating how active and relevant the African worldview of Ubuntu has been when reflecting on the impact that culture has on the faith formation of youth specifically in urban contexts.

### **Teachers of Religion and Social Competencies: challenges of Eastern European social circumstances to Education of the Teachers of Religious Education**

Prof. Ana Thea Filipović, Associate Professor of Religious Pedagogics and Catechetics; Director of the Institute for Catechetics, Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Zagreb, Zagreb

The ethnic, worldview, social, cultural and other differences in the contemporary world which is marked by a greater connectedness and interdependence, often produce tensions, conflicts, exclusions. Competitiveness in the labor market, increasing individualism and materialism as well as the restructuring of meaning of the family and other community groups influence the reflection on tasks and goals of both school and education. Learning to live together is seen as one of the pillars of lifelong learning as recommended by the UNESCO International Commission on Education in the 21st century. How does religious education contribute to the acquisition of social competencies needed for a harmonious coexistence, for eliminating stigma and prejudice and for building social sensitivity? What competencies are required by teachers of religion? This presentation will show the specific requirements of the Croatian, but also of the wider Central and Eastern European socio-political and ecclesial context and it will examine the different anthropologies and common patterns of theological thought.

<b>Graduate Centre 1-72</b>
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### **Youth, Religion, and Confirmation Work in the Perspective of Practical Theology: The Second International-Comparative Study**

Prof. Friedrich Schweitzer, Faculty of Protestant Theology, Department of Practical Theology, University of Tübingen, Tübingen

Prof. Dr. Thomas Schlag, Faculty of Theology, Department of Practical Theology, University of Zurich, Zurich

In 2012, the second empirical study on confirmation work in nine European countries has started (with a parallel study in the United States that began in 2013). The focus of this study is on the adolescents taking part in this program offered by the Protestant churches in the participating countries

(Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland). With its sample size of more than 25.000 young people it is one the largest studies on youth and religion that have become available so far. Moreover, the study also included the workers—professionals as well as attitudes of young people or their responses to the program offered by the Churches volunteers—who are active in this program. The first study was carried out in 2007/2008. The results from the two studies can be evaluated comparatively in order to identify continuities and changes, for example, in the religious.

The presentation at IAPT will give a general overview on the study and its approach. The two parts of the session will offer first results from the participating countries—from Germany and from Switzerland.

In a final section of the presentation the authors raise the question what the results of the study could mean for practical theology and what the perspective of practical theology could add to interpreting the results.

<b>Graduate Centre 1-74</b>
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### **Ubuntu or Into? Preaching (in)dignity**

Prof Johan Cilliers, Department Practical Theology and Missiology, Faculty of Theology, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch

Recognising the complexity of a pluralistic South African society, and taking our fragmented history into account, this paper attempts to identify some ethical movements in preaching in the past, as well as the present. Sermons from the time of apartheid are presented as examples of an ethics of exclusion, and in effect, degrading of human dignity. In this regard, the role of shaming and stereotyping is viewed as of particular importance. Cognisance is furthermore taken of the sermons, speeches, and letters of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, as representing an Ubuntu-theology, with ethics of inclusion, and the fostering of human dignity. The paper concludes with a discussion of a classic South African artwork.

### **Personhood and community in sermonic discourse**

Prof. Gerrit Immink, Professor of Homiletics, Protestantse Theologische Universiteit. Campus Groningen, Groningen

In Sunday worship services personhood and community are mutually supportive. Although worship is a gathering of the community, human subjectivity is nevertheless addressed in a very fundamental way. Not only in expressions of prayer and singing, but also in preaching. From a rhetorical perspective preacher and listener are both personally involved in the interaction process. The sermon, however, also appeals to the listener(s) in a religious manner: preaching evokes and cultivates the faith. Listeners become both existentially and religiously involved. The sermon creates moments of attention, and sometimes these moments are subjective and personal, at other times these moments display interconnectedness and common insight

or values. In my paper I will reflect on sermonic discourse and investigate how the community and the individual are addressed and involved.

<b>Graduate Centre 1-76</b>
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**Because we are: Practical Theology, Intersubjectivity and the social brain**

Prof. David A. Hogue, Professor of Pastoral Theology and Counseling, Director, PhD Program, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston

Continuing my work exploring the contemporary neurosciences and their implications for practical theology, I intend to review several recent discussions emerging from the interdisciplinary field of cognitive social neuroscience, or interpersonal neurobiology. U.S. psychologist Allan Schore observes that psychotherapeutic models are undergoing a paradigm shift from individualized notions of patient and therapist to “a relational two-person psychology.” He notes that “more so than the cognitive mechanisms of interpretation and insight, relational-affective processes between patient and therapist are at the core of the change mechanism.” Such shifts parallel important changes in other disciplines, including practical theology. Social contexts and intersubjective space both shape, and are shaped by, human brains. Such claims show promise of underscoring, as well as being informed by, theological anthropologies that embrace belonging, mutuality and reciprocity as central dimensions of human identity.

**Asking why. God’s justice in Pastoral Care**

Prof. Isolde Karle, Chair of Practical Theology, Evangelisch-theologische Fakultät, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, Bochum

People who suffer seriously cast doubt on the justice of God. They ask: Why doesn’t God intervene? Why does such a serious fate target me? The theodicy question is a central pastoral care question for people who believe in a theistic tradition. Based on empirical studies the paper analyses the connection between the image of God and the enduring of suffering in concrete suffering situations. It points out that there are different forms of dealing with theodicy in the present (especially compassion- and plan-theodicy) and why and how they are legitimate in view of their difference. In spite of various dogmatic paradoxes they should not be played out against each other. Different images of God can complement each other and help people to hold onto their hope for justice. What this means for those who give spiritual counsel to sufferers is also reflected upon.

<b>Economic and Management Sciences 1-18</b>
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**Suffering for Nothing or Suffering for You**

Dr. Terry Veling, St. Paul's Theological College, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University, Banyo

This paper addresses the question: “How do we relate the African worldview of Ubuntu with our Westernised theological anthropologies?” It does so by exploring the philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, a survivor of the Nazi Holocaust. Much of his work is an extended meditation on the question that plagues many survivors: “What right do I have to survive, to live, to be, when so many have suffered and died?” In facing the trauma of suffering, Levinas suggests that rather than seek a meaning or reason for suffering, we may be better to admit that suffering is “useless” and amounts to nothing. A question nevertheless arises. Is all suffering useless? Or can we speak, for example, of “redemptive suffering?” Not so much as “useful” suffering, but as non-useless love for another (*Ubuntu*). Levinas transforms “suffering for nothing” into “suffering for you.”

### **Reconciliation in Contexts of Colonization: Toward a Decolonial Practical Theology of Reconciliation**

Prof. Michel Andraos, Associate Professor, Department of Intercultural Studies and Ministry, Catholic Theological Union, Chicago

Indigenous peoples in many parts of the world are demanding peace with justice and dignity. After a brief description of three contexts where churches have become involved in processes of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in situations of protracted colonization, namely the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, Palestinians under occupation, and the Indigenous peoples in Chiapas, Mexico, the paper will then discuss some of the main features of these emerging practical theologies of reconciliation and the challenges they present to traditional theologies and to the churches. Drawing on sources from decolonial thought and analysis, the paper will conclude with a critical theological reflection. It contends that these emerging practical theologies of reconciliation, which are unique in each context, call for radical rethinking of the role and self-understanding of the churches in these contexts and for a new decolonial pastoral theology and practice.

## **Economic and Management Sciences 1-25**

### **Filipino Labor Migration and Human Trafficking in the United States**

Prof. Faustino Cruz, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Associate Professor of Practical Theology and Leadership, School of Theology and Ministry, Seattle University, Seattle

This theological reflection exposes the plight of foreign-born Filipino/a “guest workers” in the United States who become victims of “trafficking in persons.” Skilled workers and professionals alike are systematically exploited, many of whom have precarious immigration status and work in poor, unsafe conditions. For fear of deportation or retaliation from employers engaged in organized crimes, they rarely report such heinous acts against humanity. Despite governmental efforts for the prevention of exploitation, protection of migrants, and prosecution and conviction of both labor and sex trafficking offenders, the Philippines, like 43 other Tier-2 countries, has not



been in full-compliance with the minimum international standards for the elimination of trafficking. Intentional participation in education, advocacy, vigilance, reporting, and institutional mobilization remains to be a critical, ethical responsibility of all members of church and society toward a slave-free world, one city at a time.

### **Religion and Human Dignity – an Inter-Faith Praxis against Caste Discrimination**

Prof. Roy Lazar, Department of Christian Studies, Madras University, Chennai

Religion and Caste are interwoven in Indian society and Christianity seems to be helpless vis-à-vis caste hegemony. “Untouchable Catholics in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu on Monday urged the Vatican to eradicate caste discrimination within the Indian Church” - these headlines in the recent edition of a newspaper confirm the continued practice of unjust and inhuman caste discrimination even within the Christian communities. It is my long pending desire to undertake a comprehensive research to study the historical development of caste discrimination and the struggles of the dalit people (Dalit literally means broken; the so-called ‘untouchable people’ prefer this word to indicate their plight in the society) for human dignity and self-assertion and with a focus on the attempts of Christian Dalits for self-respect and justice. Hence, in the first part I have done a historiographic study of the problem of caste and the second part analyses the struggles of the Dalits especially the Christian dalit communities to obtain dignity and justice that had been denied to them for ages. And in the third part of the research I intend to do an empirical research on the target groups to collect the data on Christian faith and practice in reference to caste discrimination and finally to explore the practical theological impulses for building up egalitarian communities in a multi-religious context. It is an ambitious project but a very much needed and desired attempt by the followers of different faiths. Inter-disciplinary research methods are employed in this study in order to arrive at authentic and effective impulses for a genuine inter-religious praxis for human dignity, justice and peace.



# International Academy of Practical Theology (IAPT)

Practicing Ubuntu: Practical Theological Perspectives on **Injustice**, **Personhood** and **Human Dignity**

**Monday July 20, 2015**

**Electives/Break Away Groups Number 4  
13:30 – 15:00**

**Function Hall**

## **“Practicing Ubuntu Across Borders: Feminist Practical Theology and the (un)making of Violence against Immigrants”**

Dr. Susanne Johnson, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas

This paper explores recalcitrant challenges to the practice of Ubuntu and spirit of kinship across international borders posed by life-and-death, push-pull dynamics of immigration as one consequence of neoliberal globalization—especially as current immigration paradigms inflict insidious, violent assaults on the human dignity and bodily integrity of female immigrants, and on the wellbeing of immigrant families. I adapt Johan Galtung’s “violence triangle,” suggesting that structural violence and cultural violence give rise to direct violence—in return, reinforcing structural and cultural violence. Theologically, a major interlocutor is Marjorie Suchocki who rejects traditional views of sin as rebellion against God through pride—proposing instead that, regardless of consent, sin fundamentally is participation in violence against the wellbeing of the earth and/or its inhabitants. In a relational universe, violation of Ubuntu is violation against God who co-suffers with creation.

## **"So I Lost Africa": Personhood, Dignity, and Multiple Identity Politics**

Dr. Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner, Professor of Pastoral Care, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas

"So I Lost Africa." Mike said this with such sadness that it seemed he had lost part of himself. Mike was the child of two cultures, born to Caucasian North American missionaries who founded a small African mission school in the 1970s. Mike attended this school and grew up through late adolescence with Africans as his closest friends. Mike sat at the intersection of race, gender, religion, and youth. Yet, he had gradually been elevated to the position of elder in the village, even in a culture where age was usually required for such authority. At age seventeen, his parents told him to "start acting like a white man." He was expected "to become 'white'" which implied more responsibility.

He sat where the tribal elders sat. He was later sent to the States to come to terms with his American identity. As a young adult, Mike returned to Africa: "I became malnourished because of the guilt I had of being able to feed myself when kids I had known as a child were going hungry. I couldn't reconcile my rank." He "lost Africa." Based on field interviews, multiple identity politics are examined in relation to personhood, human dignity, and injustice. The odyssey of a bicultural child like Mike offers practical theological challenges/perspectives on the practice of or absence of Ubuntu.

### Conference Room 3

#### **Communal Identities and Collective Trauma: A Practical Theological Exploration into Indonesia's 1965-67 Anti-Communist Pogrom**

Dr. Joyce-Ann Mercer, Professor of Practical Theology and the Arthur Lee Kinsolving Professor of Pastoral Theology, Virginia Theological Seminary, Alexandria

Might the same dynamics often lauded as underlying the positive relational, collectively based cultures that make up Indonesian society also play a role in sustaining collective trauma and preventing reconciliation? I explore this practical theological question through narrative research with survivors of Indonesia's 1965-67 massacre, in which nearly a million people died during the Suharto government's actions against the Communist Party of Indonesia. Some Christian churches were complicit, benefitting from these events. Even today, neither churches nor the government have engaged in significant efforts toward reconciliation in the aftermath of the tragedy. Survivors only now are beginning to tell stories of devastating harm suffered forty years ago, and of ongoing oppression subsequently experienced. Successful creation of a national culture of stigma around them meant that survivors frequently did not even tell their stories to their own family members. The paper inquires about the possible conditions for reconciliation in such a context.

#### **Community Prosperity and Individual Flourishing: The Contributions of Common Good Theory, Healthcare Partnership, and the Ubuntu Challenge**

Prof. Raymond Webb, Chair and Professor of Pastoral Theology, University of Saint Mary of the Lake, Mundelein

The diaconal aspect of practical theology rightly concerns itself with the theory of group and individual flourishing. How do the rights of the individual not become selfish individualism? How does "community cohesion" or "community progress" not stamp out the rights of the members? This paper draws on three perspectives to offer a response. David Hollenbach, who has some experience in Africa, has developed an ethic of the common good. Physician and anthropologist Paul Farmer asserts that a community context focus is the path to effective healthcare for each individual, but individual treatment must not fall victim to the grand plans and concepts of "outsiders." Ubuntu stresses our interconnectedness as constitutive of our

very identity as persons. Awareness of inter-relationship is the only path to knowing who we truly and paradoxically “can be.” The wider import of Ubuntu is discussed.

<b>Conference Room 5</b>
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**Connected or disconnected?**

**A practical theological tracing of the *Ubuntu* concept on *Twitter***

Prof. Jan Albert van den Berg, Associate Professor Department of Practical Theology, Faculty of Theology, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein

Describing the character of *Ubuntu* in an evolutionary virtual world, dimensions of a connected as well as a disconnected existence are portrayed. Exploring this theme of research, *Twitter*, a highly popular social media platform, provides for a relevant and important praxis terrain, encapsulating the revealing dynamics of a digital world, social media and popular culture. In an endeavour of tracking and describing these dynamics, a suggestion is made for a practical theological tracing of the *Ubuntu* concept on *Twitter*. Suggestions are made for the use of an innovative, relevant and accountable research methodology in order to enter the indicated praxis terrain. Following the outcome of the empirical research, coordinates with new content and meaning are mapped out in a variety of categories. Through the on-going dynamics of tracing and mapping the *Ubuntu* concept on *Twitter*, relevant contributions to descriptions of lived spirituality are sounded out and verbalised.

**Rural, Urban, virtual: transforming religious identities and communities**

Prof. Ruard Ganzevoort, Professor of Practical Theology, Free University, Amsterdam

Dr. Johan Roeland, Assistant professor of Religion and Media, Free University, Amsterdam

To understand the transformations of religious identities and communities, it is helpful to look at intersections of three intersecting cultural spheres of contemporary societies: the rural, urban, and virtual. The rural sphere is arguably the oldest one, characterized by small communities with higher levels of interdependence and lower levels of social complexity. The evolution of the urban sphere marks the beginning of history, but it has become dominant in the modern era, with since 2008 more than half of the world population living in cities. The urban sphere is characterized by higher levels of differentiation and specialization and lower levels of traditionalism, although cities also show pockets of traditionalism and interdependent communities. The virtual sphere did not emerge until the past few decades, but is by now a third powerful social sphere, characterized by higher levels of volatility and accessibility and lower levels of commitment. Just like urbanization was a key factor in the development of a modern society and the concomitant rationalization helped shape modern religion, identity, and community,

virtualization is a key factor in the reshaping of religion, identity, and community today. Building on a three year international research project (Transforming Religious Identities and Communities at the Intersections of the Rural, Urban, and Virtual), this paper reflects on the intersections of these three spheres in order to foster understanding of the transformations of religious identities and communities.

## Breakaway Room 1

### **The Complexities of Practical Knowledge**

Prof. Bonnie Miller-McLemore, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of Religion, Psychology, and Culture. The Divinity School and Graduate Department of Religion, Vanderbilt University, Nashville

In the last few decades, theological scholars have recognized the value of practice but have often been careless, sloppy, or optimistic about the ease with which practice is incorporated into theology. People use all sorts of adjectives to characterize the complex relationship—“integrally related,” a “deeper reciprocity,” “bound up in thickly intertwined ways.” But connecting the two is not as easy as these words suggest. This paper returns to the age-old question about the relationship between theory and practice. But it studies this from the angle of practice. Although many scholars have analyzed the distinction between theory and practice as it functions conceptually, few have examined challenges in relating the two as they emerge in practice. The paper argues that the discipline of practical theology adds a distinctive angle on this discussion because it considers how the concepts function practically.

### **Public Theology in a Secular Age: Implications for Theological Education and Ministerial Practice**

Prof. Nancy Ramsay, Professor of Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Care, Brite Divinity School, Fort Worth

Voices as diverse as Charles Taylor, Martha Nussbaum, Nancy Ammerman, Craig Calhoun, and Elaine Graham offer emerging insights about the pluriform shape and character of religion and religious experience in a North American secular public sphere which suggest possibilities for shaping a shared, deeply ethical telos for public theological engagement. Their insights offer valuable guidance for theological educators. They also prioritize developing capacities for interreligious public witness by clergy and laity: a. developing multilingual capacities for articulating faith commitments, b. developing skills such as empathic fluency to construct overlapping consensus with religiously diverse partners to achieve goals; and c. developing strategic skills for analysis and articulation of common goals that advance the welfare of the common life. This presentation will briefly summarize the insights noted above and then invite collaborative conversation about implications for theological educators regarding interreligious public practical theology.

### Breakaway Room 3

#### **Repairing the world (*tikkun odam*): on becoming a caring community in a practical theological approach to a pastoral praxis of civil society engagement**

Prof. Daniël Louw, Emeritus professor of Practical Theology, University of Stellenbosch, Stellenbosch

The challenge in civil society is not only create forums to articulate the needs and concerns of citizens. The challenge is how to create safe places and havens of refuge wherein people can be helped to articulate their needs and concerns. The challenge to a practical theological approach is how to contribute to the establishment of a 'compassionate society'. In order to switch from 'theological zombie categories' to appropriate paradigms to interpret the engagement of God with citizens in need and to communicate a kind of xenophilia instead of xenophobia, the metaphor of God as partner for Life is proposed. A pastoral engagement in civil society should use the metaphors of hospice and paraclete in order to stay within the parameters of a practical theological mode of engagement (theological credibility) in differentiation from other modes of civil societal engagement. It is envisioned that these metaphors can opt as indicators in the attempt to establish a public virtue: *hospitium publicum*.

#### **Frontier thinking and Practical Theology: a dialogue with the *buen vivir***

Prof. Valburga Schmiedt Streck, Practical Theology, Faculdades EST, Sao Leopoldo/RS, Brazil

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To discuss issues of social justice, peace and social change in Latin America one has to look at the Liberation Theology movement that has the understanding that God helps to liberate people from political and social oppression. In the last decades the concept of liberation has been broadened to include sexual oppression, environmental injustice and racial issues. One of the theologians that contributed to this enlarged understanding is Leonardo Boff, who calls for a transformation in the economy, in politics and in ecology. This has led to listen to the different cultures in our continent, as the *Bien Vivir* of the Andean indigenous people, where social and political justice is interwoven with spirituality and the ecological perspective. The purpose of this paper is to reflect on the contribution of these knowledges to Practical Theology, relating them to the African understanding of Ubuntu