



## **The Public Relevance of Religion**

Since the turn of the millennium, the awareness in liberal democratic societies has grown that religion cannot simply be regarded as a private matter, but that it has an indispensable public dimension. Unfortunately, the religious context of terrorism and of violent conflicts have more strongly reinforced this awareness than the many positive, constructive contributions by religions to the common good. There is also an increasing appreciation, however, of how much liberal democratic societies gain from the political and social engagement of NGOs, institutions, groups and individuals – among which religious groups and religiously inspired people play an important role. Thus, for example, in recent decades the significance of interreligious communication and cooperation for community building and peace in the world has repeatedly been pointed out. At global, regional and local level representatives of different religions commit themselves to working for peace, justice, human rights, integrity of creation as well as for the solution of pressing problems, such as integrating migrants.

## **Education – Dimension and Subject Matter of Religious Contributions to the Common Good**

In general, the contributions by religions to the common good imply an educational aspect: They aim to stimulate processes of perception and thinking that uncover new perspectives and help to discover new opportunities for action. Thus, on the one hand, education is an integral part of the public dimension of religion, and on the other, it is the realm of public education that constitutes an important subject of social debate to which religions can make substantial contributions. From both perspectives, promoting the ability to deal with plurality and to work towards an inclusive society are major objectives of education – and interreligious education is of substantial significance in this context. The fundamental acknowledgment of the Other, precisely in his or her remaining otherness and strangeness, can be an important result of religious and interreligious education that contributes to a successful social coexistence, especially including immigrants.

## **Christian Public Theology and Public Responsibility in Other Religions**

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

## **The Nuremberg Forum as Context for Interdisciplinary and Interreligious Discourse**

Thus, the Nuremberg Forum 2016 intends to draw attention to the contribution of religions to the common good, with a focus on educational aspects and stimulated by the Christian concept of ‘public theology’. By promoting interdisciplinary and interreligious academic and social discourse it aims to strengthen the religions’ public responsibility, especially with respect to public education, and their public visibility as resources for the humanization of societies. This aim is in line with the now 30-year-old tradition of the Nuremberg Forums to facilitate intercultural and interreligious dialogue and learning in a pluralistic society.

## The Young Researchers' Workshop

Besides presenting renowned academics in keynotes and paper sessions, the conference includes a "Young Researchers' Workshop" that starts one day earlier. Doctoral students and post-doc researchers are invited to submit a paper and can apply for financial support to cover travel and accommodation costs.

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

### Conditions for Application & Financial Support

Young Researchers are eligible to apply for being accepted as presenters at the Young Researchers' Workshop, if they are below 40 years of age and in the process of writing a doctoral dissertation, conducting a post-doctoral research project or doing similar qualifying research above Master level in the thematic field of "public theology – religion – education" as outlined on the "introduction" page. The approach of the research project may be theoretical, historical or empirical. It may refer to any religion. Application requires the submission of

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

Applications should be sent via Email to [nuernberger-forum@uni-erlangen.de](mailto:nuernberger-forum@uni-erlangen.de)

**Extended deadline: 15 May 2016.** You will receive a confirmation of receipt within two weeks.

Applicants without financial support by their own university or academic institution can apply for the reimbursement of the conference fee as well as travel and accommodation expenses of up to 1,500 Euros. In this case, the form "Financial Support Application" should be completed and



submitted along with the documents listed above. If you are accepted as a presenter of your research project you will receive notice about the financial support granted along with the letter of acceptance.

### Criteria of Selection

Criteria for assessment of submissions include

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

<http://www.nuernberger-forum.uni-erlangen.org/young-researchers-workshop>



[Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct. 2016: Pre-conference workshop for young researchers]



Tuesday, 4<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2016

**[9:00 Young researchers' workshop – paper session V (till 10:30)]**

11:00 Start of the 12th International Nuremberg Forum -  
Welcome and greetings

**11:30 Opening Lecture: Chair of the Protestant Churches in Germany  
and Bishop of the Protestant Church of Bavaria Professor Heinrich  
Bedford-Strohm; "Public Theology and Interreligious Dialogue.  
Fundamental Perspectives"**



13:30 Panel "The Contribution of Religions to the Common Good in a Pluralistic Society."

13:30 From a Christian perspective – Dirk J. Smit (*South Africa*)

13:50 From an Islamic perspective – Sahin Abdullah (*UK*)

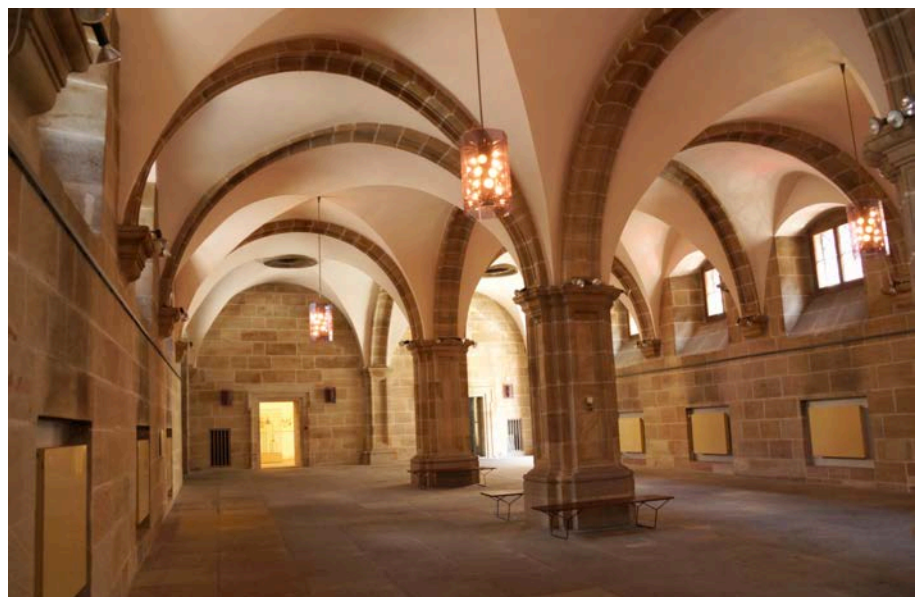
14:20 From a Jewish perspective – N.N.

14:40 From a Buddhist perspective – Heesoon Bai (*Canada*)

15:10 From an empirical sociological perspective – Gert Pickel (*Germany*)

16:00 Panel discussion with the statement presenters and Prof. Bedford-Strohm

19.30 Reception by the Mayor of  
the City of Nuremberg in the  
"Beautiful Hall" („Schöner Saal")



**Wednesday, 5<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2016**



**9:00 Elaine Graham (UK): Public Theology and Education.  
Exploration of a Multidimensional Relationship (keynote)**

10:15 Peter Schreiner (*Germany*): The Comenius Institute – Promoting Educational Discourse and Practice in the Framework of Public Theology

10:15 Bernhard Grümme (*Germany*): Educational Justice as Subject Matter of a Public Religious Pedagogy

10:15 Thomas Schlag (*Switzerland*): Public Education and the Public Church

10:15 Liam Gearon (*UK*): Public Religious Education as a Contribution to the Common Good

11:45 Mouhanad Khorchide (*Germany*): Islamic Contributions to the Common Good of Public Education

11:45 Bernd Schröder (*Germany*): Public Religious Pedagogy and Interreligious Learning

11:45 Willem Fourie (*South Africa*): Leadership Development in a Professional Context – a Field for Public Theology?

11:45 Sebastian Kim (*UK*): The Biblical Wisdom Tradition for Public Theology and its Consequences for Public Education

14:00 Jenny Berglund (*Sweden*): Islamic Education in Europe, an Opportunity for Equal Rights or a Way to Control Islam?

14:00 Henrik Simojoki (*Germany*): Public Space 2.0? Religious Education after the Digital Revolution

14:00 Katie Day (*USA*): Public Theology and Public Education in the City

14:00 Annette Scheunpflug (*Germany*): The Contributions of Christian Schools to the Common Good

15:00 Bruce Grelle (*USA*): Public Religion and Public Education. Perspectives and Experiences from the U.S. Context

15:00 Johannes Lähnemann (*Germany*): The Contribution by Religious NGOs to Public Education

15:00 Florian Höhne (*Germany*): "You Shall not Make to You any Graven Image." The Culture of Images in the Media and Public Religions - from a Public Theology Perspective

15:00 Andreas Nehring (*Germany*): Engaged Buddhism – Public Theology in Practice

**16:30 Poster presentation and talks with young researchers**

**18:30 Reception and opening celebration of the "Research Unit for Public Religion and Education"** (Forschungsstelle für Öffentliche Religionspädagogik)

**20:00 Guided Exploration of the Ancient City of Nuremberg (optional)**



*A Public Discussion (Foto: Dan Etherington)*

Thursday, 6 Oct. 2016



9:00 Hanan A. Alexander (*Israel*): Liberal Education and Public Religion (keynote)

10:15 Zehavit Gross (*Israel*): The Contribution of Public Religious Education to Promoting Peace – Perspectives from Israel



*Religions and the public: What's on top? (Foto: Ulysses Rj)*

10:15 Manfred L. Pirner (*Germany*): Overlapping Consensus and Complementary Learning – A Framework for Public Religious Pedagogy with Reference to Rawls and Habermas

10:15 Peter Bubmann (*Germany*): Culture of Remembrance as Place and Shape of Public Theology and Public Education

10:15 Andrea Roth (*Germany*): The Situation of Apprentices as a Challenge for Public Theology and Religious Education

11:45 Mohammed Nekroumi (*Germany*): Islamic Contributions to the Common Good in Pluralistic Societies

11:45 Philip Barnes (*UK*): Public Theologies or Religious Studies? Deliberations on the Basis of Multifaith RE

11:45 Thomas Wabel (*Germany*): Lost in translation? Talking religion in the public space

11:45 Werner Haussmann (*Germany*): Mindfulness and Appreciation – a Religious Contribution to Public Education

14:00 Jan Assmann, (*Germany*): **Monotheistic Religions as Curse or Blessing – A Matter of Critical Education? – Keynote**  
and panel discussion with Jan Assmann

16:00 Concluding remarks and farewell



*Jan Assmann (Foto: Rama)*



# 12th International Nuremberg Forum 2016

## "Public Theology - Religion - Education.

### Interreligious Perspectives"

3 - 6 October 2016



Conducted by the **Chair of Religious Education at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg** (Germany):  
Professor Manfred L. **Pirner**, Professor Johannes **Lähnemann** & Dr. Werner **Haussmann**

together with Professor Peter **Bubmann** (Practical Theology, Erlangen), Dr Florian **Höhne** (Systematic Theology, Humboldt-University Berlin), Professor Andreas **Nehring** (Religious Studies, Erlangen), Professor Henrik **Simojoki** (Protestant Theology/Religious Education, University of Bamberg) and Professor Thomas **Wabel** (Systematic Theology and director of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Research Center of Public Theology, University of Bamberg)

in cooperation with the **Global Network of Public Theology** (chaired by Professor Elaine Graham, Practical Theology, University of Chester, see: [GNPT-Website](http://www.gnpt.org)) and in connection with the **Office of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD)**.

The conference is supported by the German Research Foundation (DFG), the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria (ELKB), the Roman-Catholic Archbishop of Bamberg, the City of Nuremberg (Kost-Pocher Foundation and Human Rights Foundation), Religions for Peace Germany (RfP), the Institute for Anthropology of Religions (ZAR) and the Centre for Human Rights Erlangen-Nuremberg (CHREN), the latter two at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg.



#### Location:

Villa St. Paul,

Dutzendteichstrasse 24,

D-90478 Nuremberg, GERMANY

*Religion in the public sphere. How are the interrelationships?*

[www.nuernberger-forum.uni-erlangen.org](http://www.nuernberger-forum.uni-erlangen.org)