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AT FORUM WIEDENEST/GERMANY (NEAR COLOGNE)

26/27 August 2025

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1. BENTLEY, W.: FUNDAMENTALS, FUNDAMENTALISMS AND WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN.

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ABSTRACT

In recent times we have witnessed the rise of new forms of fundamentalism. These are not only limited to religious fundamentalisms, but ideological, political, ethnic and cultural aspects of our humanity are challenged by fundamentalist tendencies. Extremists in these fundamentalist camps are drawing their supporters/adherents into polarised positions that miss the humanity in the “other”. Fundamentalisms, in my opinion present the risk of humanity self-destructing, all in the quest to be proven right and the “other” wrong”. The aim of fundamentalisms is to set the scene for ingroups and outgroups, winners and losers. In the context of increasing polarisations in society, what role does theology play? What is fundamental to the Christian message that will humanise humanity and not divide it? Is being human more important than “being right”?

2. BERNHARDT, D.: THEOLOGY AFTER EUROPEAN COLONIAL MODERNITY?

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ABSTRACT

There has been much analysis of the essence as well as the discontent of modernity in the last decades, from different fields of scholarship: by philosophers, sociologists, and also theologians. Postcolonial and decolonial theory – including theology – has contributed a further aspect to the question by linking modernity with European coloniality.

How do postcolonial and decolonial theology see the “flexibility” of the Christian faith? Have they kept its “essence,” and have they, critically and constructively, added anything new in theological contents and formulation? If so, how is this related to the question about the relationship between modernity and colonization? Within the broader area of theology, which subdisciplines are affected the most by this different viewpoint, and how could that advance our doing of theology? These are the questions that I would like to address in my paper, by focusing on the example of recent indigenous decolonial theology.

3. BEYERS, J.: WHAT IS THE ESSENCE OF THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY? THE DANGERS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ESSENTIALISM

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ABSTRACT

When communicating the message of Christianity, it is required to pass the message on in a concise format that will make sense to the receiver as well as carry the intended meaning of the sender as accurately as possible. In order for the message to be understood, the context of the receiver must be taken into consideration. This is referred to as contextualization. During contextualization the quest is to retain the exact essence of Christianity while simultaneously adapting to a specific cultural context. The question arises, what needs to be retained unchanged and what parts of the message lies at the periphery and can be changed? How can one transfer the Christian message while going off the map, but not without direction? There are many attempts to identify the essence of Christianity. There are various models on how to approach this matter: some say there is no essence of Christianity, while some say there is an essence, while others say the essence is only conditionally identifiable. This contribution does not want to add a new model but attempts to reflect on what is the purpose of identifying the essence of Christianity? This question must be read against the background of the potential dangers and opportunities associated with identifying the essence.

4. **BVUMBI, A.E.:** A PROGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP: A PRINCIPLED THEOLOGICAL APPROACH EMBRACING ETHICAL ADVENTURISM THROUGH ACTS 15: 1-35.

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ABSTRACT

Changes in the 21st century led by challenging factors such as artificial intelligence are not new. Doing theology off the map but not without direction is not an insurmountable or “unhistoric” situation in the broad-based theological approach. The historicity of the Church generally unfolds the journey of encountering new terrains with contradictory practices and establishments. This article aims to demonstrate that theology at its best through ethical adventurism succeeded within a principled and progressive leadership outlook. Through a text-generated approach, Jerusalem Church council writings in Acts 15:1-35 carry a relevant, timeless lesson and case study fitting this methodology. The outcome is essential in positively impacting as its results unified beyond religious, regional, and cultural divides. This has been a strategic key to outcomes of difficult terrains and unwelcoming postures toward the Christian faith, as is still relevant in this era.

Keywords: Progressive leadership, Christian faith, Church, Jerusalem church council, principled theological approach, ethical adventurism.

5. DE BRUIN, D.: LET'S DO POSTFOUNDATIONAL-LITURGICAL THEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The need to do Theology from "somewhere" remains strong. The question is how to find the place from and towards theology can be done. Does it need to have an unchanging core from which we can take our stand to change the world, or is it a fool's errand to try and search for foundational truths that underlie our understanding of the world?

A further complication for theology is for it to find its place among the various other disciplines in the pursuit of... what exactly, is it truth, understanding, changing the world? Questions abound.

This paper would seek to bring the postfoundational practical theology gifted to Muller by Wentzel van Huyssteen with the impulse of Radical Orthodoxy within the frame of a liturgical theology to accept the invitation "to do theology!" as we are doing this in remembrance of Him.

6. HARTMANN, J.: LEARNING FROM CHRISTIANS IN CONTEXTS OF PERSECUTION: INSIGHTS INTO THEOLOGY-MAKING OF CHRISTIAN CONVERTS FROM ISLAM IN MUSLIM-MAJORITY REGIONS

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ABSTRACT

In the last few decades, in many Muslim-majority regions there have been large numbers of conversions from Islam to Christianity. Often, these converts exist as vulnerable religious minorities in contexts of restricted religious freedom. This paper seeks to shed some light on theology-making among converts as one way of ecclesial identity formation. This paper shows how theology-making engages with and builds on classical Christian theological topoi such as christology and ecclesiology. Moreover, theological discourses of converts take place in response to Muslim contexts, addressing issues such as converts' perceptions on Islam und Muslims, cultural contextualization, and historical dimensions of Muslim-Christian relations. Theology-making of Christian converts from Islam also includes the development of aspects of theologies of suffering and persecution. This paper argues that theology-making processes of Christians in contexts of persecution can offer lessons for the global Church. The findings presented are based on the voices of converts, gathered, and analyzed using empirical research methods as part of a doctoral research project.

7. HELLER, K.: FEMINIST THEOLOGY IN LIGHT OF THE SYNODAL PATH OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

Feminist Theology in Light of the Synodal Path of the Catholic Church in Germany: A Case Study for Doing Intersectional Theology within Limits and for the Sake of Breakthroughs

Intersectional Theology recognizes that all persons committed to doing theology exist in divergent relationships to power and hierarchy based on gender, status, nationality, sexual identity, age, and other forms of social difference. These differences place limits on doing theology insofar as no theologian can produce a theology that is universally applicable. However, they can also provoke innovative breakthroughs by offering transformative epiphanies to the whole of Christian theology. The experience of The Synodal Path undergone by the Catholic Church of Germany between 2019-2024, offers a case study in intersectional theology, which shares with the classical methodological recourse to scripture and tradition the appeal to human experience. My analysis will focus on the theologizing process leading to the final adoption of The Synodal Path's foundational text on Women and Ministries in Offices of the Church. It evaluates what doing theology could look like for the next several centuries as it makes women's experience, and not the supposedly universal experience of men, the hermeneutical lens through which scripture is interpreted, doctrines are formulated and liturgical practices renewed.

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https://www.synodalerweg.de/fileadmin/Synodalerweg/Materialien/HerderThema-SW-ENG_UniversalChurchinMotion-SynodalPaths.pdf

Since the rise of Feminist Theology in the 1960s, female and male theologians envisioned a different approach to classical theology, marked by a conscious attention to their social locations and the need of engaging issues of social justice. In contrast to theological systems envisioned as intellectual pursuits and unique source for conformation to doctrinal statements, for these theologians religion, faith, and Christianity can be a form of inequality that intersects with other forms of injustice.

In opposition to the classical top-down theological models of divine revelation with emphasis on intellectual pursuits and elaboration of intellectual belief systems, these theologians went the road of an intersectional model for doing theology.

8. HOEHNE, M.: TECHTOPIA OR THEOCENTRIC WORK? NAVIGATING THE IDOLS AND IDEALS OF 21ST-CENTURY TECH CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The dawn of the 21st century has seen rapid technological advancements and reshaping the global business landscape. Among the world's ten largest companies by market capitalization, eight have emerged in the United States, all in the technology or semiconductor sector. They were able to hire and motivate some of the brightest minds to drive rapid innovation and execute technology breakthroughs. Carolyn Chen (2022) partly attributes this success to "Techtopia"—a utopian corporate culture in the tech industry where individuals find fulfillment, meaning, and purpose without reference to God. This paradigm shift raises significant questions for Christian professionals navigating a professionally managed, data-driven, and meritocratic work environment.

This paper critically engages with the theological tension between continuity and discontinuity in the vocation of young Christian professionals amidst "Techtopian" values. Drawing on a biblical theology of work for the glory of God, it investigates the cultural ideals and potential idols embedded in this new work paradigm. By exploring the Tech industry's work culture, the paper offers constructive theological, practical, and spiritual guidance for Christians seeking to flourish while faithfully preserving the core essence of their faith.

9. HOMBANA, M.: RETHINKING THEOLOGY FROM THE MARGINS IN POST-COLONIAL SOUTH AFRICA: MOVING BEYOND EUROCENTRISM

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ABSTRACT

Theological training in South Africa has traditionally been informed by Western Eurocentric frames, often disregarding indigenous epistemologies and lived African realities. For theologians from the margins—those shaped by both Western theological training and the realities of colonial and post-colonial South Africa—there exists both potential and limitations in rethinking theology outside colonial ideas. This paper critically examines how such theologians may navigate the tension between inherited Eurocentric theological constructs and the pressing need for contextualized, decolonized and Afrocentric theology. The study aims to employ a hybrid approach to navigate the possibilities and limitations of doing theology in post-colonial South Africa. Hence, both postcolonial optic and African biblical hermeneutics, aims to stress opportunities for reconstructing theology through indigenous knowledge systems. However, the limitations include structural constraints within academic institutions, lingering colonial epistemic dominance, and the challenge of integrating African spiritualities within Christian theological discourse. This paper calls for a theology that is both critically engaged with its Western heritage and deeply rooted in the South African post-colonial experiences.

Keywords: Post-Colonial Theology, African Biblical Hermeneutics, Decolonization, Marginalized Theologians, Eurocentrism

10. HOVE, R.: PRESERVING THE “ESSENCE” OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH: INTERROGATING THE IMPACT OF NEO-PENTECOSTAL THEOLOGY ON THE PREACHING OF SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST IN ZIMBABWE.

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ABSTRACT

Christianity and the church in Zimbabwe were born out of the work of different missionary groups. Since its inception in the 16th century, Christianity has grown to be the largest religion in Zimbabwe. It accounts for more than 80% of the population. Besides the establishment of the Roman Catholic church and other mainline denominations, there are other strands of Christian movements such as the African Indigenous Churches (AICs), as well as the old Pentecostal and evangelical formations. These ‘traditional churches’ strived to preserve the gospel of Christ and maintain the essence of Christianity. The rise of neo-Pentecostalism has led to shift of the landscape of gospel and Christianity in Zimbabwe. The main aim of this article is examining the impact of neo-Pentecostal theology concerning salvation through Christ in Zimbabwe. Neo- Pentecostal emphasis on miracles, material prosperity and the role of the prophet as the conduit of blessings seem to compromise the essence of the Christian faith centered around Christ. The article also focusses on the challenges of contextualization of Christianity from both the traditional churches and neo- Pentecostal movements. This article argues that the growth of neo- Pentecostal theology of prosperity heightens concern about the preservation of the essence of Christian faith in Zimbabwe. To interrogate this, the article utilizes the four tasks of theology conceptual framework. These tasks prompt four important theological questions that can assist in addressing the church and societal challenges. This article is based on literature analysis, using journal articles, books, dissertations, newspaper articles, and reports on religion.

11. KESSLER, M.: RECEPTION OF THE INDIVIDUAL-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACH IN CHRISTIAN-THEOLOGICAL COUNSELING

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ABSTRACT

Rezeption des individualpsychologischen Ansatzes in der christliche-theologischen Seelsorge

Der Seelsorgeansatz der Stiftung TS orientiert sich an der christlichen Theologie und nutzt als psychologische Grundlage die Individualpsychologie nach Alfred Adler. Dieser Beitrag überprüft daher die Kompatibilität zwischen christlich-theologisch seelsorglichem Denken mit individualpsychologischen Grundgedanken. Da Adler als Jude in einer ungarischen Minderheit in der Nähe von Wien aufwuchs und als 34-jähriger zum Protestantismus konvertierte, wird sein religiöser Hintergrund kontrovers diskutiert (z. B. wird er mal evangelisch, katholisch, taoistisch, atheistisch oder auch als genuin buddhistisch eingeordnet). Manche späteren, für die Individualpsychologie wesentlichen, Personen gehörten auch der Bahá'í-Religion an, andere, wie Ruthe verbinden individualpsychologische Beratung mit christlich-evangelikaler Frömmigkeit. Solchen Voraussetzungen bergen die Gefahr in sich, dass die aus einem anderen Hintergrund kommenden Inhalte mit Bibelversen zu „taufen“ und für kompatibel mit christlicher Theologie zu erklären (dazu gibt es einige Beispiele). In diesem Beitrag geht es nicht um eine oberflächliche, theologisierende Adaption, sondern um einen theologisch adäquaten Umgang mit der Individualpsychologie.

Die individualpsychologische Grundlage wird die Zusammenfassung der Individualpsychologie von Ondracek sein. Mit ihr werden einzelne individualpsychologisch wichtige Aspekte, wie Gemeinschaftsgefühl, Selbstwertgefühl, Macht- und Geltungsstreben, Veränderungsfähigkeit u.a. auf die Vereinbarkeit mit christlich-theologische Aussagen überprüft werden, um erkennen zu können, ob oder wie diese aus der Psychologie kommenden Inhalte, angemessen mit christlich-theologischen Inhalten vereinbar sind und wo sie gegebenenfalls unverträglich zueinander sind.

Reception of the individual-psychological approach in Christian-theological Counseling

Counseling characterised by individual psychology is oriented towards Christian theology and also uses Alfred Adler's individual psychology as a psychological basis. This article therefore examines the compatibility between Christian theological counseling thinking and basic ideas of individual psychology. As Adler grew up as a Jew in a Hungarian minority near Vienna and converted to Protestantism at the age of 34, his religious background is the subject of controversial debate (e.g. he is sometimes categorised as Protestant, Catholic, Taoist, atheist or even genuinely Buddhist). Some later people who were important for individual psychology belonged also to the Bahá'í religion, while others, such as Ruthe, combined individual psychological counselling with Christian evangelical piety. Such assumptions harbour the danger of 'baptising' content coming from a different background with Bible verses and declaring it compatible with Christian theology (there are several examples of this). This article is not about a superficial, theologising adaptation, but about a theologically adequate approach to individual psychology.

The individual psychological basis will be the summary of Ondracek's individual psychology. This will be used to analyse individual psychologically important aspects such as a sense of community, self-esteem, striving for power and recognition, the ability to change, etc., will be examined for compatibility with Christian-theological statements, in order to be able to recognise whether or how these contents, which come from psychology, are appropriately compatible with Christian-theological contents and where they may be incompatible with each other.

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12. KESSLER, V.: THE GAP BETWEEN TRUTH AND PROVABILITY

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ABSTRACT

For Martin Luther the bible was the “norma normans”. This is still hold up in bible movements like the Evangelicals. For example, in their definition of Practical Theology Stadelmann and Schweyer (2017:2) stress the fact it should be a “biblically normed theory of church practice”. Among Evangelicals there is often the tendency to accept a theological statement as true if and only if it can be deduced directly from the bible or at least from other statements which were drawn from the bible.

There seems to be a parallel in the history of mathematics. As a result of the mathematical crisis in the 19th century mathematicians tried out three ways to provide a better foundation for mathematics. One of these attempts was the formalism, strongly advocated and promoted by the Göttingen mathematician Hilbert. The idea was to set up a formal system of axioms so that each mathematical formula in the system can either be proved as true or wrong by means of logical deductions from the axioms. Hilbert was quite optimistic concerning this plan: “We must know, we will know” (Hilbert 1930)

However, one year later the young Austrian mathematician Kurt Gödel destroyed Hilbert’s dream. Gödel proved that in each formal system which covers the natural numbers there will be a true statement which cannot be proven within the system. This discovery is nowadays known as Gödel’s Theorem. It had implications on disciplines far beyond mathematics, like for example epistemology.

At the conference I would like to discuss its implications for theological reasoning. Of course, one must be cautious not to abuse Gödel’s Theorem (Franzén 2005:90-95). But at least, one has to acknowledge that there is a gap between truth and provability.

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13. KRÖCK, T.: DOING THEOLOGY IN THE ERA OF THE ANTHROPOCENE

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of the 21st century, scientists have established the term “Anthropocene” to describe the current geological era, which is characterised by the growth of the human population and its impact on the planet. The human activities have resulted in the modification of the surface of our planet, changed its physical and chemical properties and are causing the extinction of other species. In order to address these challenges, a “great transformation” of our lifestyles and the economic system is required, based on transformed worldviews and values. Theology may contribute to these necessary changes by providing answers to the questions we face today. This may require a new reading of Biblical texts and a rethinking on theological formulations related to anthropology, cosmology, eschatology, ethics and spirituality. This paper intends to highlight some of these questions and encourage discussions on how Christian theology may support the great transformation.

14. LEPHOTO, M.B.: CONTEXTUALIZING THEOLOGY TO AFRO-CENTRIC CHRISTIANITY: APPLICATION OF BIBLICAL JUSTICE FROM BASOTHO CULTURAL AND TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

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ABSTRACT

The most critical subject in the age of technology is methods, approaches, and principles that guide the execution of a specific task and religious practices performed by various African cultures. The move towards contextual Christianity in Africa is an essential venture if Christianity is to communicate with the African cultural heritage. As a universal religion, this paper suggests that Christianity must find an expression within the cultural context. However, the contextualization of Christianity in the pan-African region seems to have permitted the practice of syncretism. It has resulted in the emergence of African Christianity, the amalgamation of Christianity and African Traditional Religion. The amalgamation of Christianity and African Traditional Religion seems to overlook the essence of both religions, as there is currently no clarity on how Christianity can best be expressed within the African cultural and religious heritage. This paper intends to utilize the document review method to examine the intermediary biblical elements that advocates of contextual Christianity may have overlooked concerning the African cultural and religious heritage. These elements focus on the practical aspects of the Basotho religious traditions, as well as their initiation practices such as 'infant rain initiation' (ho behella nngwana puleng), mpepo – mokubetso (incense), a robe around the waste. All the examples will be harnessed together with other types of Christian beliefs.

Keywords: contextualization, African Christianity, Tradition, culture, and heritage.

15. LETŠOSA, R.: NAVIGATING FAITH BEYOND THE FAMILIAR: IS OUR REFORMED LITURGY STILL RELEVANT TODAY?

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ABSTRACT

As much as the history of liturgical traditions is considered an essential aspect of human religious life, its successful navigation within the past and the future comes with poor prediction or assertion of what the future holds, except there are alterations between the contents and contexts of liturgical practices. Such alteration of traditional liturgies to sustain contemporary relevance requires raising questions on the relevance of familiar traditions through history. In the context of the reformed tradition, this article raises concerns about the risk of sustaining the historical past of reformed liturgical traditions without the consideration of the required flexibility and reviews of ancient practices. It seeks to query what is being done, how it's being done, and its future implications. Through these questions, this paper seeks to ask if the reformed liturgy is still inclusive, relevant, contextual and dynamic in its current context. While attempting to answer these questions, this paper aims to reveal the gap between the past and present liturgical content in the context of the future, especially as it affects inclusive practices that may accommodate the youth. In the end, the paper brings forward recommendations in required areas of liturgical flexibility to accommodate contemporary contexts.

16. LORENCIN, I.: RITUAL EMBODIMENT: IS DOING THEOLOGY ONLY COGNITIVE AND RATIONAL ISSUE?

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ABSTRACT

When we are considering doing theology, we tend to reduce it to a cognitive task. It is all about our thinking, and it is done with our ratio. We need to understand it rationally and logical thinking is the most important tool in accomplishing our theological task. But can we separate our theological venture from our talk about and understanding of God? Is our concept of God strictly theoretical, or do practical issues play a role? Practical encounters and personal experiences shape our theological thinking. Experiencing God embodied with all five senses enables us to do theology. If more senses are included in an encounter, then embodiment is stronger. The place where we encounter God with our senses on the regular basis, and where embodiment is happening, is in ritual. What is the role of rituals, embodiment and personal experience in shaping our thinking? How is our practical ritual involvement contributing to shaping our theological thoughts and identity? My thesis is that doing theology starts with practical issues and cannot be completely understood without ritual embodiment.

17. LUNDBERG, M.D.: PLOT LINES AND PLOT TWISTS: NARRATOLOGICAL NORMS FOR THEOLOGICAL INNOVATION

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ABSTRACT

While sola scriptura has served as a central slogan for the Protestant Reformation, it has rarely been an accurate characterization of how theological reasoning works. There are always additional inputs for theology, as well as norms directing theological judgments, beyond and distinct from the biblical text. What we hold to be true about the world in general, regardless of its source (culture, the sciences, philosophical commitments, tradition, experience), informs how we theorize theologically.

Affirming that prima scriptura (rather than sola) is a more appropriate description for Christian theology, including Protestant theology, this paper will offer a narratological account of the function of scripture in relation to other sources and norms involved in theological understanding. Drawing upon theories of continuity and development from philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre and biblical scholar N.T. Wright, this paper will analyze the theological innovations apparent in Acts chapters 8-15 to argue for a plot-based narrational understanding of how Christian theology can venture boldly off the map while preserving biblical direction. As in the story-worlds of literature and film, plot twists depend for their credibility on plausible (albeit initially surprising) resonance with the central plot line from which they twist. So also with the doing of theology.

18. MBATHA, Z.O.: REIMAGINING NEW PERSPECTIVE(S): BLACK THEOLOGY AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR BOSADI THEORISATION.

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ABSTRACT

To properly address the concept of Black Theology, it has emerged as a vital discourse withing theology and social justice, fundamentally addressing the intersection of faith, culture, and identity in the black experience. However, this article aims to explore the implications of Black Theology for Bosadi theorisation a framework that emphasises the role of women in African cultures and societies highlighting how these strands of thought can mutually reinforce each other in the pursuit of social justice, empowerment and identity affirmation. One of the interesting aspects is that Bosadi, as term derived from Setswana language, refers to womanhood or femininity, encompassing the experiences and roles of women withing African societies. Bosadi theorisation advocates for a deeper understanding of gender dynamics in African contexts, critiquing patriarchal structures and affirming the value and contributions of women. A comprehensive description can be found in Bosadi theorisation which illuminates the experiences of women, particularly black women, with societal constructs that often marginalise their voices and contributions. In light of reported discourse Bosadi's theorisation posits that African culture must be critically engaged to understand the complexities of gender, and the socio-political roles woman play.

Definitions: Sociology, Bosadi Theorisation, Spirituality and Leadership.

19. MPOFU, B.: ELECTION, ETHICS AND MISSION: REIMAGING MISSIO-DEI IN THE CONTEXT OF SHIFTING GLOBAL TRENDS

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ABSTRACT

This study considers post-coloniality as a lens for reimagining Missio-dei in the context of the shifting global landscapes and new challenges for a Sustainable World. Given that the current global and socio-economic architecture presents us with unprecedented challenges that demand a level of global and ecumenical cooperation, there is also a need to explore how these developments shift theological paradigms and concepts which undergird participation in the mission of God in order to assess whether these shifts present continuity or discontinuity with the existing concepts. Given that these paradigmatic changes present an opportunity for innovative theological work, this missiological study will utilise a postcolonial lens to interrogate the notion of Missio-dei as a contribution to the development of public theologies that offer Christian solutions in secular contexts within the broader array of viable answers to the questions we are confronted with in our contemporary times.

Key words: Ethics, election, mission, missio-dei, post coloniality, changing world

Short Biography

Buhle Mpofu is a senior lecturer with the department of Practical Theology and Mission studies at the faculty of Theology and Region, University of Pretoria and is also an ordained minister with the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA). Mpofu has a background in ecumenical work and served as the Secretary of the African Communion of Reformed Churches (ACRC), a regional body of the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC). My research focuses on Church and Society by interrogating the interface between Christian mission, migration, cultures and borders through trajectories such as poverty, development, race and identity. These intersecting themes are explored through the lens of the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), life affirming values, missiology, decolonization and socio-economic transformation.

20. OTT, B.: CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN EVANGELICAL/POST-EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The topic of this conference is currently evident in the discussions about post-evangelical theological proposals. Ever since Dave Tomlinson coined this term in his book *The Post-Evangelical* (1995), the controversial debate about the future of an evangelical theology has been going on. Thirty years later, we are seeing increasing polarization and heated controversy, particularly in English- and German-speaking countries, not least on social media.

Analyzing these developments and controversies from the perspective of theories of change can contribute to a better understanding and assessment of these developments. This study aims to contribute to this by interpreting post-evangelical developments in the light of Alasdair MacIntyre's theory of the "rationality of traditions" and the "reconstruction of narratives".

Based on MacIntyre's epistemological theory, the classical markers of evangelicalism (Bible, cross, conversion and mission) can be understood as parts of a narrative. MacIntyre's theory helps us to interpret the crisis into which this tradition has come in the 20th century and to identify healthy paths into the future.

After an introduction to MacIntyre's theory, examples of post-evangelical authors (and their opponents) are used to show how the evangelical narrative is currently defended, reconstructed or even abandoned.

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- In addition, various websites and YouTube videos as primary sources.

21. REIMER, J.: THEOLOGY AS COMMUNITY THEOLOGY. INSIGHTS FROM ANABAPTISM TO A MODERN APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Next year we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of Anabaptism. One of the basic tenets of the Anabaptists was the practice of theology as a theology of community. It was not the task of individual theologians, but of the congregation as a “discerning community” to critically examine how the Word of God should be interpreted and what theological foundations should guide the community of faith. In my paper I explore these ideas and critically evaluate them. Can we learn from the Anabaptists how to do theology in a way that is relevant to everyday life? And what outstanding aspects of their approach differ from and can enrich contemporary theology? The search for new way of doing theology is underway around the world today because academic theology, in the words of the American-Croatian theologian Prof. Miroslav Volf, is suspected of having lost both the academic community, in which it is produced and the church, its primary consumer. Whereas a few decades ago most pastors were prepared for ministry in theological colleges, today congregations are more likely to choose their young men without theological training. And what is the way out? This paper delivers a contribution.

22. STENSCHKE, C.: “RISE PETER, KILL AND EAT ...” (ACTS 10:13): GETTING BACK ON THE MAP IN EARLIEST CHRISTIANITY

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ABSTRACT

With the note in Mark 7:19, the Mark's Gospel emphasizes (in hindsight) that Jesus had declared all food to be pure. However, for the first followers of Jesus, the implications of Jesus' teaching and behaviour were not all that clear ... at least at the beginning. While they apparently kept adhering to Jewish purity practices with full conviction, their encounters with non-Jews and the challenges of including them into the (so far) Jewish people of God raised new issues. Peter was perplexed when a heavenly vision demanded him to slaughter and consume unclean animals ... against all he knew from the Law and had practiced all his life. The divine command clearly led him “off the map”, but he and others were “not without direction”. Peter soon came to understand that God had recalled the distinction between pure and impure and knew how to apply it to the situation at hand. After further events and a longer process, decisions were taken and clearly communicated; the community was back “on the map”. Direction came in the form of direct divine guidance, a fair amount of “experience”, the words of Jesus and Scripture interpreted in view of God's recent interventions in history (Acts 10–15). Later at Antioch, the issue appeared again and was fiercely disputed in the so-called Antiochene incident summarized in Galatians 2:11–14. What was a practical compromise for some (withdrawing from sharing the food of non-Jews), was interpreted by others (Paul) as a fundamental attack on the truth and validity of the Gospel. Thus, there were different positions and levels of clarity on the matter. This presentation describes and analyses the account of these processes in the Book of Acts and in Paul's letter to the Galatians. In closing, it suggests some implications for situations when Christians in our day and age find themselves “off the map” and seek direction.

23. SUMPTER, P.: HISTORY AND ONTOLOGY IN THE IMMANUEL SIGN OF ISAIAH 7:14

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ABSTRACT

Christian orthodoxy has always affirmed the normative canonical status of the Old Testament as an abiding word of God for the Church. Yet the struggle to interpret that Old Testament word in relation to the Gospel and the ongoing life of the church is as old as theology itself. In many respects, modern historical and historical-critical approaches to interpretation have exacerbated the sense that there is a gulf separating the two Christian testaments. Conservative affirmations of the historical accuracy of the Old Testament and its synchronic coherence do not tend to solve the problem of how these texts reveal Christ, either for dogmatic formulation or Christian preaching. This paper addresses this problem demonstratively by interpreting a theologically central and exegetically challenging text, the “Immanuel sign” of Isaiah 7:14, in light of what might be called an “ontologically calibrated canonical approach.” The aim of such an approach is to deepen and enrich our faith by deepening and enriching our Christian engagement with the Old Testament as Scripture.

24. UNDHEIM, K.: DIALOGUE: A VISION AND CHALLENGE FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

There are various expressions of religious education (RE). Religious freedom and parental rights, form the basis on which European educational systems relate to religion. In religious diverse RE classrooms, questions concerning Christianity arises. This article explores how the “essence” of Christianity can be made known in dialogue with people of other faith traditions in the RE classroom. It is not the aim of this paper to grapple with questions concerning the essence of Christianity, per se. Rather, to analyze and synthesize recent research on values and dialogue in the RE classroom and suggest how the essence of Christian faith (within the frame of Norwegian public elementary education) might be contextualized and conveyed didactically. Varhaug (2024) and Hauan and Anker (2021) documented the challenges that arise with RE dialogue in Norwegian classrooms. Alfdal (2020), Løken and Stubø (2020) have looked at challenges related to the basic values in the national syllabus, and Helskog (2021) suggests philosophical dialogue as incorporate forgiveness in classroom culture. Iversen (2024) pointed out how play-based dialogue, might represent a risk in RE. Combined they form a foundation on which to suggest a “what” and “how” for Christianity in the Norwegian RE classroom.

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25. VELDSMAN, D.: LET'S DO THEOLOGY TOGETHER BY REFLECTING ON BOTH **IMAGO DEI** AND **HOMO SAPIENS**

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ABSTRACT

For the sake of the credibility of theological reflection and for the integrity of all our scientific endeavours, our best insights on **imago Dei** and **homo Sapiens** must be constructively integrated. It will enable us from our propensity for metaphysical reflection as embodied consciousness / personhood to pursue from our deeply relational embeddedness the clues to Transcendence within our contexts. Most importantly, it will forcefully and radically move our anthropological reflection from the twilight zone of abstraction and unjustified speculation to reflection on our concrete existence as vulnerable human beings of flesh and blood **coram Deo**. Together we will then be able to put together directives for making interdisciplinary (cognitive-affectively) sense as epistemic communities in our diverse mapping endeavours on both our transcendental relationality and the (complex) territory of life's eventualities.

Keywords

Imago Dei
Homo Sapiens
Embodied personhood
Coram Deo
Sensemaking

26. WENK, P.: TERTIUS USUS REGULAE THEOLOGIAE?

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ABSTRACT

The context of Western Christianity is undergoing a fundamental change. After an era of the so called Christendom that lasted over 1,000 years, we are moving into a time that is sometimes referred to as the post-Christian era (Paas 2019). In such a situation, the need to preserve our own identity takes on particular urgency (:140). This is also reflected in the aim of this conference to clarify the normative standards for theological work.

In my paper, I first present different attempts to orient theological work – structured by the triad of *orthodoxy*, *orthopraxis* (Nessan 1989) and *orthopathos* (Solivan 1998) – possibly supplemented by *orthoesthesia* (Duns 2024). These attempts are then critically evaluated with the help of the Lutheran *duplex usus legis*. And finally the question is discussed to what extent an understanding in the sense of a *tertius usus legis* is conceivable for these approaches and what this means for the normative orientation of theology.

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27. WINTER, M. & KNOETZE, H.: DOING THEOLOGY AND GIVING DIRECTION: THE CHALLENGES OF SUPERVISION IN INTER-CONTEXTUAL, INTER-CULTURAL POST-GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL PARTNERSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

In this research article we attempt to present and discuss the contrasting contexts that supervisors must learn to recognize and manage in not only supervising students, but also in co-supervising with other theologians of other contexts. The partnership of the Network for Education and Research in Europe together with the University of South Africa and the University of Pretoria is used as the basis for this research article. The cultural, ecumenical, generational, societal and theological-educational aspects are discussed. In recognition of the contrasts and similarities of the contexts, the questions arise: How can supervisors be made aware and be prepared for the challenge of giving direction? How can discussions be encouraged and stimulated to optimize the supervision-co-supervision relationships? How can the next generation of potential supervisors learn from the present generation and be prepared for taking up the task of supervising inter-contextually?

28. WÜNCH, H.G.: THE UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW IN EZRA-NEHEMIAH

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ABSTRACT

The book of Ezra-Nehemiah is pivotal in understanding the transition to Second Temple Judaism. It emphasizes the importance of written texts, particularly the Torah, which is referenced at least 25 times throughout the book. Ezra-Nehemiah highlights a shift from oral to written traditions, with the Torah becoming a binding norm. The book also marks a change in the understanding of the law, with a focus on genealogical purity and the exclusion of non-returnees from the community. This demarcation is reinforced through various laws and practices, such as the prohibition of mixed marriages and the emphasis on ritual purity. Ezra-Nehemiah thus serves as a precursor to later Jewish practices and beliefs, laying the foundation for the development of Judaism in the Second Temple period by a reinterpretation of biblical texts and adaptation to a new situation.