



Call for Papers 2

A conference on: "Bible, churches and spirituality in a (non?-)secular world"

26 - 27 September 2018
Stellenbosch (near Cape Town), South Africa

The discipline of Christian Spirituality at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Volos, Greece invite proposals for the first of three international conferences on: "Bible, churches and spirituality in a (non?-)secular world".

The global rise of religion has seen the centre of gravity of Christianity move into the global south, as numerous sociologists and religion theorists attest. Christian theology internationally has an important mission to fulfill, despite its devaluation and assumed unimportance in the policies of many states and institutions. With the demographic trends currently and over coming decades of a rising tide of confessionality over against non-religiosity, such assumptions of unimportance are becoming ever more untenable.

One of the main tasks of Theology, particularly after the fall of Communism in Central and East Europe, is to reassert the dignity and worth of human persons, as it was ravished by Soviet communism. In South Africa, the same search for renewed human dignity characterises the post-Apartheid period. In both contexts, such dignity is now ever more under threat by the commodification accompanying consumer capitalism and neoliberal education policies that are oriented solely toward the market place, without much sense of the human and spiritual experience – which lies at the foundation of every single human being.

These conditions provide Theology with the opportunity to witness to its core contributions. In doing so, different theologies will have to reconsider their doctrinal, ethical, homiletic and pastoral narratives, and hence the often-neglected role of the Bible and spirituality; the latter, not only in the light of the particular histories, but, also, in the light of the present and emerging contexts.

With this rise in the global interest in religion, the Bible in particular and spirituality in general have considerable roles to play - apart from theologically, also phenomenologically and sociologically. On the one hand, the Bible is clearly recognised as the common ground and heritage of the main Christian traditions and of Christian-heritage societies, upon which deeply irenic and fruitful encounters take place. On the other hand, spirituality, as the essential means by which religious life is concretely expressed, is the common existential experience of all people, irrespective of particular religious or national origins. Spirituality brings together.

This means that Bible-and-spirituality could be considered as a widely-applicable language by which the major Christian traditions, like Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestant Churches, in their own immediate contexts and more broadly within Christian-heritage societies, could facilitate understanding for shared visions for the wider world.

To this end, paper proposals are invited on aspects of the theme:

"Bible, churches and spirituality in a (non?-)secular world".

Of particular interest would be proposals from or on aspects of the Eastern Orthodox and Protestant traditions. However, papers would be welcomed from other perspectives too.

Proposals for papers should include:

- A succinct title
- A brief abstract (± 150 words)
- The name/s and (where applicable) institutional affiliation/s of the author/s
- Contact details

Papers may be proposed and delivered in any language.

Closing date for proposals: 1 February 2018
Acceptance of proposals: Before 1 March 2018
Confirmation of attendance: 5 April 2018

Programme in outline:	
26 September 2018	27 September 2018
15:00 Registration table opens	09:00 Academic sessions
16:00 Guided Stellenbosch walk and talk	10:30 Refreshment break
19:00 Main conference speaker (<i>public lecture</i>)	11:15 Academic sessions
19:45 Respondent	12:45 Lunch break (at various restaurants)
20:00 Discussion time	14:00 Academic sessions
20:30 Depart for meal (at various restaurants)	15:30 Refreshment break
	16:15 Academic sessions
	17:00 Conference closes
	19:00 Conference dinner

Conference fees (payable in cash upon registration at the conference desk): South African Rand 650. (Fee includes conference dinner, coffee and tea. Food preferences can be indicated on the conference registration form.)

Accommodation advice, as well as sightseeing suggestions for before and after the conference in the Cape Town area, will be made available.

For further information, please contact: 2xSAConferencesSept2018@gmail.com

Registration forms (sent upon receiving enquiries) should be sent to the same e-mail address: 2xSAConferencesSept2018@gmail.com

Travel arrangements (as well as special conditions for travelling in South Africa) will be sent to colleagues expressing interest.

