

The European Society for the Philosophy of Religion

20th Biennial Conference

28th – 31st August 2014, Münster (Germany)

Transforming Religion

Keynote Speakers

- JÖRG DIERKEN (Halle-Wittenberg)
- STEVE FULLER (Warwick)
- NIELS HENRIK GREGERSEN (Kopenhagen)
- DAPHNE HAMPSON (St. Andrews)
- SIMO KNUUTTILA (Helsinki)
- KLAUS MÜLLER (Münster)
- TAEDE A. SMEDES (Nijmegen)
- WALTER VAN HERCK (Antwerp)

Organisers: HANS-PETER GROSSHANS and KLAUS MÜLLER (Münster)

Theme

In recent years religion has been interpreted with a new emphasis on its being part of the cultural evolution of human beings. The basic questions are: Does religion result from the evolution of humankind? How *has* religion contributed and how *does* religion contribute to the evolution of humankind, to its survival, to its reproduction and to its cultural development? Should religion be described as a natural result of cultural evolution and the evolution of humankind in general? In what ways might the understanding of religion, philosophical reflection on religion, and all academic research on religion be expected to change, if religion is seen as an aspect of the socio-cultural evolution of humankind? Philosophers of religion have an important contribution to make to the discussion of these questions.

The conference seeks to address this topic within a wider horizon, which is expressed in the conference title “Transforming Religion”. The term “transforming” is used ambiguously: From one perspective, religion can be seen as an object of transformation, development and even of evolution, but, from another perspective, religion can be regarded as playing an active role in socio-cultural transformations and developments.

The overall subject will be discussed in four sections, each one with a specific focus.

1. Transformation of Religion (in the history of religion).

Has there been a development of religion within history? Do religions stand for a solid and substantial metaphysical order of natural and moral reality amidst a world which is permanently changing, or are religions themselves in a process of inner (essential) transformation? How do religions integrate the concept of transformation in their own doctrines? How is religion related to history and change? How does the differentiation of religious symbol systems proceed?

PROF. DR. JÖRG DIERKEN (Halle-Wittenberg), PROF. DR. SIMO KNUUTTILA (Helsinki)

2. Evolution and Religion.

In what sense do we have to understand religion as being part of the evolution of humankind (of evolutionary history)? What follows from such an analysis of the origin of religion? What kind of critique of religion emerges from this understanding (for example, a genetic critique of religion)? What is the significance of such a critique for a contemporary concept of religion?

PROF. DR. STEVE FULLER (Warwick), DR. TAEDE A. SMEDES (Nijmegen)

3. The Concept of God and Evolution. What are the implications of our understanding of the evolution of humankind, of creatures and of the universe for our reasoning about and conceiving of God? Does it make sense to think of God as evolving? How do process theology and panentheism in general contribute to answering this question?

PROF. DR. NIELS HENRIK GREGERSEN (Kopenhagen), PROF. DR. DR. KLAUS MÜLLER (Münster)

4. Dynamics of change.

How can religions contribute to transformations, development and progress in societies? Does religion restrain or promote transformation, development and progress in societies? Can and do religions include a dynamic of their own transformation and development?

PROF. DR. DAPHNE HAMPSON (St. Andrews), PROF. DR. WALTER VAN HERCK (Antwerp)

Call for Short Papers

Short papers (with a reading time of 20 minutes) are invited from young and experienced scholars on any issue connected to the conference theme. Please submit a title and short abstract (max. 15 lines) – indicating to which of the four sections the proposed paper is relevant – by e-mail to the chairman of the conference, Hans-Peter Grosshans (grosshans@uni-muenster.de). The deadline for receipt of submissions is 31st March 2014.

Conference Program

The conference begins on Thursday, 28th of August 2014 at 16.00 and ends on Sunday, 31st of August at 12 noon. The detailed program will be on the website of the *European Society for the Philosophy of Religion* (www.philosophy-of-religion.org).

Conference Location

The Conference will take place in the main building of the University of Muenster (www.uni-muenster.de), the castle of Muenster (address: Schlossplatz 2)



Travelling to Muenster

Muenster has a small airport (<http://www.fmo.de>).

Better flight connections may be to Dusseldorf airport (<http://www.dus.com/dus/>), which has its own train station with direct trains to Muenster. For trains to Muenster see: www.bahn.de

Accommodation and Meals

Participants of the conference are asked to organize their accommodation by themselves. On the conference website hotels and hostels will be recommended. A Youth Hostel is close by.

Arrangements will be made for the opportunity of joint meals at lunch and dinner in a restaurant. A conference dinner is planned.

Registration

Registering by emailing Petra Christophersen at the conference office: systheol@uni-muenster.de.

The registration fee is 50 Euro.

Registration will close on July, 31.

For further information, please see our website: www.philosophy-of-religion.org