Welcome!

On behalf of the Board and the entire community of researchers and supporting staff, I am delighted and honored to welcome you to the International Conference 2017 of the Protestants Theological University. With our 10th anniversary coming up next year, we are a young university with centuries of theological research flowing through our veins, yielding ever new inspiration and reflection. We hope to run this conference in that spirit of open communication which deepens scientific insight, widens cooperation, and finds wisdom.

The organizing committee has succeeded in attracting many scholars with widely differing views on the conference theme New Quests for God - Contributions of Theology to a Resilient Society. We will welcome thought provoking keynote speakers as well as many young talented presenters. Our working sessions will be lively with the input of all participants invited. We express our gratitude to all who have submitted meaningful papers and proposals on one of the three main questions: What is going on with God? How do we arrive at a resilience promoting God? And how to redefine the academic statute of theology?

We are very much looking forward to receiving you in the beautiful old city of Groningen. Please enjoy your stay with us, enjoy Groningen, the Netherlands. Our venue in walking distance of the train station is the Puddingfabriek - the Pudding Factory - and remember: the Proof of the Pudding is in the eating.

Prof. dr. Mechteld Jansen, professor of Missiology and rector of the Protestant Theological University
Keynote Speakers
The organizing committee is pleased to announce the following keynote speakers to you.

‘Signs of Life: Resilience as Promise and Problem in Theologies of Multiplicity.’
Laurel C. Schneider, professor of Religious Studies, Religion, and Culture at Vanderbilt University (USA)
The concept of resilience holds a growing place of importance in many fields of study from biology to urban planning to theology. What we mean by the term makes all the difference in its effects (and affective power) especially in thinking about God and society. This talk will take up the question “what are the marks of divine life in a frame of social resilience?” and sketch an answer.

‘From The Postmodern Turn and A New Kind of Christian to the Death of God and A New Kind of Atheist: Resisting the Resilience of God.’
Katharine Sarah Moody, research Associate, Philosophy of Religion at University of Liverpool (UK)
This lecture introduces the Emerging Church as a religious orientation and discursive milieu organized around the sociological and sometimes philosophical deconstruction of inherited forms of Christianity. Emerging Church publications like Brian McLaren’s (2001) A New Kind of Christian explore what Christianity might look like after social and intellectual life has taken a postmodern turn. But figures like Peter Rollins and Kester Brewin provoke this religious orientation to fuller engagements with continental philosophy and radical theology, pushing the Emerging Church conversation from merely superficial nods to postmodernism towards post-theistic, even atheistic, death-of-God theologies. It is from this more radical theological and philosophical vantage point that I propose a new kind of Christian to be also a new kind of atheist, for whom God is not simply dead but living on after death. I address the question of the resilience of God, asking whether the God resurrected after the death of God is, therefore, a resilient God, or whether (and how) this risen God might resist resilience.

‘The Courage to Hope: Resilience in the Context of Migration.’
Gemma Tulud Cruz Senior Lecturer in Theology at Australian Catholic University
This presentation will explore resilience in the context of migration. More specifically, the presentation will discuss the images of God that migrants refer, or turn to, to build and nurture resilience in view of reflecting on theologies that we need to understand to overcome the fear of migration. Images of God that will be discussed include the Crucified God (theologies on justice and solidarity), God as host (theologies on hospitality), God of the Eucharist (theologies on community and relationality), and the Risen Christ (theologies of hope).

‘From The Postmodern Turn and A New Kind of Christian to the Death of God and A New Kind of Atheist: Resisting the Resilience of God.’
Gerd Theissen, professor Emeritus of New Testament Studies at University of Heidelberg (Germany)
In earlier times, creation was a readable book, written by God, interpreted by the Bible as a second book. Today, a hermeneutic conflict splits the interpretation of both books: Both books are read without God and at the same time as the echo of God. Some interpret the natural laws as God’s thoughts, while they think that the Bible is a mere human product. Others think that the world can be interpreted without God, and that only the Bible is His revelation. Both books are ambiguous voices of God. The lecture points to a reciprocal relationship: faith is supported by the meaningful structure of the world in many experiences of resonance, but faith is crushed by the absurdity of the world. A faithful or resilient faith therefore needs the Bible to deal with suffering. But the Bible also contains a theology of creation: a revelation that does not open our eyes to God’s creation and all experiences of resonance is not consistent with the Bible.

‘The Experience of God and the world: On the reasons Christian theology has for considering Panentheism a viable option.’
Jan-Olav Henriksen, professor of Systematic Theology and Philosophy of Religion/Dean of Research at Norwegian School of Theology (Oslo)
What reasons and resources can Christian theology find for developing a panentheist position that is also able to engage with contemporary science? By taking its point of departure in basic human experiences, Christian theology can, even in a Trinitarian fashion, be developed as a way to understand God’s presence in the world as a presence where the actual occurrences points towards God’s own work. This point is especially related to the experience of love. Furthermore, God’s presence can be understood as sacramental in the Augustinian sense. Moreover, the contributions of the Danish philosopher of religion, K.E. Løgstrup on God’s presence and transcendence, as well as Niels Gregersen’s elaborations on deep incarnation prove to offer important reasons for considering panentheism as viable option for the articulation of Christian theology.
You aim to graduate and get your PhD-certificate. But how do you get there? And what happens next? Two academic life stories.

Each time, we invite women and men in our Graduate School who graduated in theology shorter or longer ago. We ask them to tell how they have experienced the time they were working on their PhD project, and how the doctoral degree has subsequently influenced their careers and lives. At the request of some students, this time we have invited two of our own staff members, so people who eventually have ended up as scientific professionals, working in the university: the Director of Education and the head of the Graduate School and chair of the Research Committee of PThU.

Both will tell in about 20 minutes about their way through university, after which there will be plenty of time for questions and answers about do’s and don’ts, recommendations and things to avoid.

Ciska Stark, PhD Theological Faculty, Practical Theology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2005: Proeven van de preek’. Een praktisch-theologisch onderzoek naar de preek als Woord van God.

Ciska Stark (Texel, 26 March 1963) is assistant Professor of Liturgy and Homiletics at PThU Amsterdam. Her research topics are the development of methods on sermon analysis, contemporary preaching practices and laypreaching. She has been working as a minister in the Protestant Church in the Netherlands and as lecturer and rector of the Mennonite Seminary in Amsterdam. She is currently Director of Education at PThU.

In her spare time, Ciska loves sporting, especially cycling and skating.

Marcel Barnard, PhD Theological Faculty, Dogmatics, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1987: Een weemoedige tinct. Agnosticisme en Esthetisme bij Allard Pierson (1831 – 1896)

Marcel Barnard (Leiden, 17 May 1957) is professor of Practical Theology at PThU Amsterdam, professor of Liturgical Studies at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, and Professor Extraordinary of Practical Theology at the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa). He is research leader of Practical Theology at the Protestant Theological University. Before, he has served the (predecessors of) the Protestant Church in the Netherlands as minister.

In his spare time Marcel Barnard loves painting and drawing, as well as Mediterranean cooking and winning (Professional Diploma Wine Knowledge) and running (10k. and half marathons).
### 17.00-17.40
**Johan Buiteman**
University of Pretoria, South Africa

The idea of the University and the ‘Pretoria Model’ Apologia pro statu Facultatis Theologicae Universitatis Pretoriensis ad secundum saeculum

The exposition of the paper is unfolded on the basis of Ricoeur’s threefold mimesis of prefiguration, configuration and reconfiguration. The earliest decisive statement with regard to the nature of the Faculty, and which is eagerly pursued, was made by the Rev. M.J. Goddefroy in 1888, epitomising theological training as of academic deference, that is as a Faculty at a university and not a seminary. This has been the fibre of Theology at the University of Pretoria and intellectual inquiry is an uncompromised value. The lecture is a critical reflection on the past century and an orientation towards the next hundred years, identifying the essence of what a real Pretoria Model could and should be and looking ahead to the next century.

### 17.00-17.40
**Thalia Gur-Klein**
Leiden Universiteit / Amsterdam University, The Netherlands

Feminist and Goddess Theologies Kick the Hebrew God to Antithetic Gates

The rise of feminist and neo-goddess theologies has revolutionised our time, but also precipitated propensities to corroborate self-identity by foiling on the Hebrew Bible, its society, culture and God. As an antithesis of the neo-pagan goddess and feminism, the Hebrew God emerges as a divinized model of androcentric patriarchy. So described, the biblical God is reconfigured as a cruel deity. Such feminist theology attributes to Judaism and its deity the birth of patriarchy and a contingent cruelty that had been ramifying from the Hebrew Bible to the bloody crusades, medieval witch hunting and western colonialism, eventually bringing the Holocaust upon the Jews themselves.

The presentation will highlight missing components, and accordingly will develop according to the following: a) Abraham’s deity; b) the Patriarchs’ God; c) the Feminine Divine; d) relationality through and by the Hebrew Deity; e) what all this means for a Jewish woman in our time. As alluded above, the methodology relies on Jewish sources and exegesis, warranted biblical research and emic reading.

### 17.00-17.40
**Tjerd de Boer**
Lutheran Theological Seminary, Hong Kong

God is going global.

With the globalization of religion(s) God is going global. Going beyond historically and geographically defined borders, religions are unstoppable becoming world religions. Simultaneously however, being contextualized within the limits of national, ethnic or social identities, God is going local also. Based on the presupposition and definitions offered by Bert Hoedemaker, this paper describes and compares discourses about God and religious traditions, in the context of recent developments, experienced and perceived in China, (with its religious minorities), the Philippines and Brazil (with their religious majorities), where localist, populist-nationalist, ideologies and movements are increasingly threatening religious plurality. Stating that limiting God to local identities is a dead end, the globalization of God will be formulated in terms of a public, dialogical and contextual theology in which faith builds the bridges between religion and society.

### 17.00-17.40
**Riette Beurmanjer**
Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Dance as a quest for God.

Since the eighties of the twentieth century many Christian believers have found that dance serves their quest for God. Borrowing dance-styles from surrounding cultures they develop dance-practices for liturgy, pastoral care or spiritual guidance. In this paper Beurmanjer focuses on Christian dance-practices in the Netherlands: evangelical dance, sacred dance, ‘danskerk’ and bibilodance.

Beurmanjer maps out the characteristics of the dance-styles: movement vocabulary, use of music, the way they stimulate dancers to relate to each other, the Christian tradition and God. She sketches how they oscillate between the ‘bodily longing for the divine’ in holistic spiritual dance-practices and the age-old emnity towards bodily practices in churches.

### 17.00-17.40
**Rob van Waarde**
PThU, The Netherlands

The Iconic View: A Faith-based Contribution to a Resilient Society through Working with the Exposure Approach

While many appear to thrive in our super-diverse globalizing society, others are excluded and suffer from social inequality. Establishing new relations – bridging capital – that include marginalized groups and allow for development of their subjectivity contributes to the resilience of society. Such a contribution is made possible by the exposure approach, a part of which is integrated in the PThU ministeriale-education.

### 17.50-18.30
**Mirella Klomp and Marten van der Meulen**
PThU, The Netherlands

Resilience for a Spaanse Kerk in matters of resisting the Nazi occupation. Two sets of sources will be employed: the new biography y Herman de Liagre Bohl, which couples description and analysis with a wealth of autobiographical texts. Primary sources include the Bijbels ABC, [Biblical ABC] because this work, written during the war, provides a foundational entry into his understanding of theology as resistance.

### 17.50-18.30
**Eleonora Hof**
PThU, The Netherlands

Resistance as Public Theology: K.H. Miskotte’s (1894-1976) prophetic indictment of Nazism

In light of the call for a theology in the public domain to discern the signs of the times and in light of the growing xenophobia and islamophobia both domestically and abroad, a resilience-promoting theology will attend to the possibility of resistance, especially where the life of people with marginalized identities is violated. In this paper, Eleonora Hof uses a narrative approach to uncover the meaning of resistance for K.H. Miskotte (1894-1976). The hypothesis is that Miskotte has insights to contribute for the development of public theology, because he assumed the role of spoken-person in the Netherlands Hervormde Kerk in matters of resisting the Nazi occupation. Two sets of sources will be employed: the new biography y Herman de Liagre Bohl, which couples description and analysis with a wealth of autobiographical texts. Primary sources include the Bijbels ABC, [Biblical ABC] because this work, written during the war, provides a foundational entry into his understanding of theology as resistance.

### 17.50-18.30
**Rob Compaajan**
PThU, The Netherlands

Christ as exemplar and the question of God’s otherness.

Today many of those who consider themselves as Christians (as well as quite a number of those who do not (or no longer) consider themselves to be Christians) tend to view Christ as exemplar. Although there seems to be a certain unease with talking confidently about God, there seems to be little hesitation with conceiving Christ as the paradigm of what it means to live a (or: the) good life. Nonetheless, conceptions of Christ as exemplar do imply certain ideas about (how we conceive of) God. In this lecture Rob Compaajan aims to illuminate the idea of Christ as exemplar and explore what our views about that idea imply with regard to how we think about God, and especially about God’s otherness.

### 21.00-22.00
**Martin Walton et al**
PThU, The Netherlands

Light with a Lustre of its Own. Resiliently requesting God

‘Light with a lustre of its own’ is a bricolage performance with storytelling and poetry, theatrical elements and projections, songs and instrumental music. The performance circles around various manners of thinking and imagining God, pondering the theological production of propositions on God and engaging biblical figures in their responses to God’s absence and presence. The title is taken from a poem by Rajzel Zychlinsky. The duration of the performance is about one hour.

Performers
Martin Walton, professor by special appointment in chaplaincy studies, PThU Groningen & part-time performer.
Elisabeth Posthumus Meyjes, singing theologian & pastor of the Clooster Church in Ten Boer, in the province of Groningen.
Mirek Walton, a multi-faceted musician as guitarist, pianist, composer, recorder, teacher & coordinator at the Amsterdam School of Music, with an ever growing repertoire in Tango ensembles and music theater.
April 25, 2017

09.30-10.00
Inspiration
Hanna Rijken

10.00-11.00
The Courage to Hope: Resilience in the Context of Migration.
Gemma Tulud Cruz
Catholic University, Australia

11.30-12.30
From theory to practice: How to be an identity-based organization in every day life?
Public session with societal partners
Dorottya Nagy
PTHU, The Netherlands
Corrie van der Ven
Kerk in Actie, The Netherlands
Helmer Roelofs
INLIA, Groningen, The Netherlands

13.30-14.30
The Experience of God and the world: On the reasons Christian theology has for considering Panentheism a viable option.
Jan-Olav Henriksen
Norwegian School of Theology, Oslo, Norway

14.30-15.30
Academic debate session

15.30-16.10
Can God save Human Rights?– Advantage and threat of introducing a transcendental dimension in international human rights discourses
Alfons Brüning
PTHU, The Netherlands

* In the main place, coffee and tea is available all day
** Afterwards dinner in the city
Theology, education and resilient society: the case of Devotio Moderna

The Devotio Moderna of the 15th century belongs to the earlier strata of theological reflection in the Netherlands. When it comes to the question of the possibility of arriving at a resilience-promoting God, the approach of Johannes Cele (ca. 1350-1417), Thomas a Kempis (ca. 1380-1471), Wessel Gansfort (1419-1489) and others tends to stress a matrix in which faith (theology) and education (school) are mutually dependent.

While the importance of Biblical theology is clearly understood, the same can be said the other way round: education and school have lots to say that is relevant for the Church. A further point to be noted in Devotio Moderna is its Neoplatonism, and thus its restraint in advocating the use of violence.

The subject will be discussed during a reading of relevant chapters in De Imitatione Christi, focusing on the question how this particular quest for God might contribute to a resilient society in present society.

God is the Creator of all Life and the Energy of the World: German Intersex Christians' Reflection on the Image of God and Being Created in God's Image

Stephanie Budwey has conducted interviews with German intersex Christians for her post-doctoral project “Letting the Entire Body of Christ Speak: Practical Theological Reflections on Intersex Christian Narratives.” One of the themes found in the interviews is that they were told they were not human beings because they did not neatly fit into the categories of ‘female’ and ‘male.’ Christianity enforces this model of sexual dimorphism with the notion that to be a human being means to be created clearly ‘female’ or clearly ‘male’ in the image of God. Yet intersex individuals, and all who are non-binary conforming, challenge us to expand Christianity's binary vision of what it means to be created in the image of God, requiring new or reclaimed metaphors, symbols, and narratives of God. Budwey will explore how these individuals—categorized by some as those who are not made in the image of God—imagine God to be. Who or what is God for them?

A suffering God. God as seen by Berlindde de Bruyckere and Paloma Varga

Anne Marijke Spijkerboer

Starting point of a new quest for God in the 21st century is a crisis of shared stories, standards and beliefs, the loss of a prevailing Christian orientation grounded in Christian tradition and in generally accepted ways of reading the Bible. In recent decades new, non-traditional manners of speaking and thinking of God, and of experiences of God, have developed in western culture in the fields of literature, visual arts and music.

Drawing from Richard Kearney (Anatheism, Returning to God after God), I would like to explore the extent to which works of art by the artists Berlindde de Bruyckere and Paloma Varga Weisz could contribute to a new understanding of God.

15.30-16.10
Gert van Klinken
PThU, The Netherlands

15.30-16.10
Stephanie Budwey
Kirchliche Hochschule in Wuppertal, Germany

15.30-16.10
Rein Brouwer
PThU, The Netherlands

15.30-16.10
Anne Marijke Spijkerboer
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, The Netherlands

16.20-17.00
Wojciech Szczepan
Evangelical School of Theology, Warschau, Polen

16.20-17.00
Frits de Lange
PThU, The Netherlands

16.20-17.00
Justin Tanis
Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley (CA), USA

16.20-17.00
Rick Benjamins
PThU, The Netherlands

The concept Imago Dei and the refugee crisis. A Polish/Central European Perspective.

There is no question that refugee crisis constitutes one of the major problems of XXI century, called so often ‘the age of migration’. According to the 2016 report of UNHCR, there are more than 65 million forcibly displaced people in the world. On average every minute there are 24 people displaced from their homes. 51% of them are children.

How theology can help in the assessment of the refugee crisis? How can it complement studies of other fields? The paper focuses mainly on the concept of Imago Dei in a broad theological perspective (both diachronic and synchronic) not restricted only to Christian thought (also referring to Judaistic, Islamic and Greek concepts).

Pilgrims without God. The Pilgrim 2.0 as a Paradigm of New Faith

Frits de Lange

The popularity of the ancient pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella is unprecedented. In 1989 only 9000 walked the Camino, in 2015 250 000. Many of the new pilgrims are not or no longer religious in the traditional sense. Their motives are various: they are in search of themselves, looking for new encounters, explore their physical limitations, wanting to experience unity with nature, or just have interest in medieval Christian culture. Still they consider themselves a pilgrimage, that is: homines viatores on a holy, whole-making journey. ‘God’, however, is notably absent in their narratives. The text from Derrida will help us to compare the theologies of the liberal, modern German theologian Wilhelm Herrmann and the radical, post-modern philosopher of religion John Caputo. It is Benjamins’ claim that each of them exemplifies one of the sources of religion that Derrida distinguishes.

Loving Me As I Am: The Appearance of God in Transgender Biographies

Justin Tanis

What does it mean when God unexpectedly appears, particularly to those on the margins of society, and how are we to interpret that revelation? In transgender biographies, there are often pivotal moments of epiphany in which the individual moves from a place of profound uncertainty to one of self-acceptance. Some of these occur in the midst of emotional upheaval, even the brink of suicide. The person may be deciding whether to disclose their gender identity to a loved one, take an important medical step, or simply go on living in the face of anti-transgender oppression. In a surprising number of the accounts, this crisis is resolved by the sudden appearance of God, experienced as an affirming, loving presence, facilitating emotional healing and empowering the person to move forward. God is described as literally life-saving. In this paper, Justin Tanis will examine these divine interventions how this pilgrim 2.0 can function as a paradigmatic metaphor for a new a/religious faith.

Derrida's two sources of religion: Wilhelm Herrmann and John Caputo

Rick Benjamins

In Faith and Knowledge, a notoriously difficult and important text on the nature of religion, Derrida points out that religion has two sources and consequently is an ambiguous, hybrid or ambivalent phenomenon. If that is correct, we can never simply defend or reject ‘religion’, because these equivocal responses to religion are not appropriate to its complexity.

Derrida claims that both sources are related to each other because of a universal structure of the promise. Religion promises to keep life, the self or the community holy and pure, safeguarded and protected from the outside and the other. But in order to believe this promise and to witness its truth, believers are related to the outside or the other from which they want to protect themselves. The ambiguity, hybridity or ambivalence of religion results from its two sources.

The text from Derrida will help us to compare the theologies of the liberal, modern German theologian Wilhelm Herrmann (1846-1922) and the radical, post-modern philosopher of religion John Caputo. It is Benjamins' claim that each of them exemplifies one of the sources of religion that Derrida distinguished.
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<td>16.20-17.00</td>
<td>God Does not Die and I will Never Die: Review of the Literature on God in African Philosophical Thought and Experience.</td>
<td>J. Kwabenya Asa-moah-Sijadu</td>
<td>Trinity Theological Seminary, Legon, Ghana</td>
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<td>17.10-17.50</td>
<td>The central question of this lecture is: how do life stories of transgender people witness to the redemptive transformation of human nature – the narrative of fall and redemption, death and life, cross and resurrection - that is held central to Christian faith?</td>
<td>Heleen Zorgdrager</td>
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<td>God undocumented: Exploring migration God talk for systematic theology</td>
<td>Dorottya Nagy</td>
<td>PThU, The Netherlands</td>
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<td>17.10-17.50</td>
<td>Ordinary Ecclesiologies shaping the Ecclesial Response to Vulnerability.</td>
<td>Henk de Roest</td>
<td>PThU, The Netherlands</td>
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<td>17.10-17.50</td>
<td>Silence is a sound. In pursuit of restorative silence when sound betrays.</td>
<td>Charlene van der Walt</td>
<td>Stellenbosch University, South Africa</td>
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**God Does not Die and I will Never Die: Review of the Literature on God in African Philosophical Thought and Experience.**

In Europe there is talk of God ‘return’, but in Africa, as the Akan proverb used as the title of this proposal indicates, ‘God does not die.’ Precisely because God does not die the soul, which constitutes the divine in the human person does not also succumb to death. Reflections on the existence of God have been part of religious discourse in Africa for sometime. In 1944 J.B. Danquah a barrister and philosopher of the Gold Coast wrote The Akan Doctrine of God. One of the assumptions underlying Danquah’s thinking was that the Akan of Ghana had an understanding of God that gives the West no basis for a feeling of superiority. God as Supreme Being is an eternal reality in the African imagination. God is immortal and this reflects in the immortality of the soul. This paper discusses the resilience of God in African thought using the books written by African scholars.

**God undocumented: Exploring migration God talk for systematic theology**

Recent theological approaches of migration phenomena worldwide have been engaged in developing a migration terminology for (re)describing God for and in systematic theology. One of the major arguments in applying migration terminology for talking about God is that every day experiences of migration phenomena create contexts in which God explained through different migration metaphors can become meaningful for people puzzling with (the issue, questions on, notion of) God. Within this logic God is seen in the person of Jesus, the refugee, the migrant, the homeless, to name but a few examples.

The paper, while exploring and analysing identifications of God with the undocumented, addresses the question about the manner in which every day experiences are being transposed into coherent (systematic) talk on God.

**Ordinary Ecclesiologies shaping the Ecclesial Response to Vulnerability.**

In his book Ordinary Theology (2002), Jeff Astley explores the philosophical, theological and educatio-nal dimensions of the concept of ordinary theology, its significance for the work of the theologian as well as for those engaged in the ministry of the church. Since 2002, empirical research has sprouted, inspired by this groundbreaking publication. In his earlier empirical research on the evangelical movement, Henk de Roest found that there is an intricate connection between one’s convictions about God, salvation, Christ, man and the church.

Theology and ecclesiology are closely related and the same goes for Christology, anthropology and soteriology. They form an amalgam. The same is likely to be true for ordinary theologies, ecclesiologies, soteriologies, etc. In this paper I will argue that ordinary theological convictions about a resilience-promoting God are likely to have consequences for local faith communities in both their missionary and their diaconal dimensions.

**God in Transition: How Transgender People Make Sense of Their Lives**

The central question of this lecture is: how do life stories of transgender people witness to the redemptive transformation of human nature – the narrative of fall and redemption, death and life, cross and resurrection - that is held central to Christian faith? What happens with “God” in transition? Heleen Zorgdrager will present the results of her qualitative empirical research among religious trans*people (from Protestant backgrounds) in the Netherlands. She will argue that the specific insights that trans*stories of healing reveal, shed new light on what it means to receive the “life in fullness” (John 10:10) for which human beings are destined. They face in unique ways the darkness of the night of the soul, and expose sinful structures of a religiously undergirded gender regime. They tell in their own voices and images about contemplative purgation as the necessary means of redemptive human transformation.
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<td>Not Being Content With God: Contestation and Contradiction in Communities under Duress</td>
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<td>The Relational God. Theo-Logical steps towards a “political theology of vulnerability”</td>
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<td>13.30-14.10</td>
<td>The Controversy over Theology Among Jewish thinkers in the Middle Ages and Its Meaning for the Understanding of Faith</td>
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April 26, 2017

Israel

Raphael Shuchat
Bar-Ilan University, Israel

The concept of resilience holds a growing place of importance in many fields of study from biology to urban planning to theology. What we mean by the term makes all the difference in its effects (and affective power) especially in thinking about God and society. This talk will take up the question “what are the marks of divine life in a frame of social resilience?” and sketch an answer.

The main aim of this paper will be to reflect on the discipline of Practical Theology with its Western background as it is practiced in current day (South) Africa. In the paper Wepener and Maylahn will present examples of experiences whilst conducting qualitative ritual-litururgical research in different parts of South Africa in both traditional churches in Africa (previously known as mainline churches) and also African Independent and neo-Pentecostal churches. Based on these examples they will look towards the future and develop some initial ideas for the future of Practical Theology in Africa. The most basic question pertains to whether Practical Theology in South Africa is prepared to also embrace a bodily based epistemology and a pneumatological ontology which is essential for the study of faith practices in Africa, the continent of the Spirit and the spirits.

The title of this paper is derived from John Caputo’s recent book The Folly of God: A Theology of the Unconditional (Polebridge Press, 2016). In this book, Caputo makes the claim that it is “in the best interest of theology not to be content with God” (p1). He shows the importance of challenging what he calls “weak theology that gives words to God, to what is going on in the name (of) God (p53).”

With this contemplation on new quests for God in mind, this paper proposes that it is exactly in communities under duress that new language for God emerges that forms a necessary aspect of survival. By drawing on recent insights from Trauma Hermeneutics, this paper seeks to investigate the contradictory images for God found in the story of Jeremiah in prison (Jeremiah 20), which reflects the deep paradox of faith experienced by the prophet that quite likely also belonged to the people during the time of the Babylonian Invasion and Exile.

In an age of crisis Europe (and beyond) is at the crossroads. Facing the rise of populist and fundamentalist actors both in the political and the religious arena (including alliances between these), we need to reflect the roots of these developments and draft a new, inclusive vision of what Europe can and should be. The paper will focus on the possible contribution of theology to this vision by enhancing the idea of a relational God and its consequences for a new political theology of vulnerability supporting peaceful coexistence and solidarity in a culturally and religiously plural Europe.

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The main aim of this paper will be to reflect on the discipline of Practical Theology with its Western background as it is practiced in current day (South) Africa. In the paper Wepener and Maylahn will present examples of experiences whilst conducting qualitative ritual-litururgical research in different parts of South Africa in both traditional churches in Africa (previously known as mainline churches) and also African Independent and neo-Pentecostal churches. Based on these examples they will look towards the future and develop some initial ideas for the future of Practical Theology in Africa. The most basic question pertains to whether Practical Theology in South Africa is prepared to also embrace a bodily based epistemology and a pneumatological ontology which is essential for the study of faith practices in Africa, the continent of the Spirit and the spirits.

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14.20-15.00
Joseph Bosco
Bangura
North-West University, South Africa

14.20-15.00
Jacoline Batenburg
PThU, The Netherlands

14.20-15.00
Marnus Havenga
Stellenbosch University, South Africa

14.20-15.00
Joyce Rondaij
PThU, The Netherlands

15.10-15.50
Maaike de Haardt
Radboud University, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

15.10-15.50
Nikoalas Deketeleare
University of Oxford, UK

15.10-15.50
Viateur Habarurema
Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies of the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIAAS), Butare, Rwanda

15.10-15.50
Visions of cosmopolitan conviviality, practices of resilient divine presence.

15.10-15.50
God, Wealth Provider and Healer: Experiences from Pentecostal Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa

16.30-17.00
Closing Address

14.20-15.00
Joyce Rondaij wants to discuss the complex aftermath of human and divine ‘reawakening’ by perfor-
and the troubled border between right and wrong.

14.20-15.00
How does the Accra confession (2004) arrive at a resilience-promoting God for society?

14.20-15.00

14.20-15.00
The War is Never Over –‘Chaos’ in Primo Levi’s The Reawakening as an Indicative f
or a Theology of Becoming

14.20-15.00
Holding my anchor in turbulent waters: God, Pentecostalism and the African Diaspora in Belgium.

15.10-15.50
Barry Hartog
PThU, The Netherlands

15.10-15.50
(Re-)Inventing Religion in a Globalised World: Jews, Greeks, and Romans in Philo’s Embassy to Gaius

15.10-15.50
Philosophy of Alexandria was one of the most prolific Jewish writers in the Roman Empire. Perhaps best known for his biblical commentaries and philosophical treatises, Philo also composed several historical or political treatises. The Embassy to Gaius is one of them. It describes an embassy of Alexandrian Jews, headed by Philo, to the emperor Gaius Caligula.

The Embassy to Gaius is a complex work, in which Philo (re-)invents the intricate relations between Jews, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. Through a careful reading of the Embassy I intend to argue that Philo is not unequivocally positive or negative about the Romans. Whilst he criticises aspects of Roman behaviour, he also acknowledges the value of being a faithful Roman citizen and describes the Jews in those terms.

Although one can hardly speak of the re-appearance of God after his death and the waves of seculariza-
tion in Africa, the vitality and rapid growth of contemporary Pentecostalism remains an astonishing
phenomenon on the continent. It is increasingly reshaping the understanding of God as it integrates
vital elements of African Traditional Religions especially with regard to healing and deliverance. Against
the metaphor of the God for whom piety is often associated with material poverty and suffering,
against the metaphor of the God who is beyond every moral, political and social context.

14.20-15.00
Butare
Sciences (PIASS), and Social
Institute of Arts
Religious Studies
Theology and
Faculty of
Viateur
Deketelaere

15.10-15.50

15.10-15.50
Saren Kierkegaard’s Fear and Trembling is a rather controversial book. Some scholars detect a sense of religious fanaticism in it, since the book hails Abraham as the supreme example of faith because he was willing to sacrifice his son, suspend ethics, “in virtue of the absurd.” Their problem is that Abra-
ham’s faith is not merely beyond reason, but directly opposed to it. Deketeleare uses this problem to
frame and develop an ontology of religious truth, drawing on Kierkegaard’s Post script and Jean-Luc
Nancy’s Being Singular Plural, in order to then return to Fear and Trembling with a more sophisticated
understanding.

16.30-17.00
Mechteil Jansen
PThU, The Netherlands

15.10-15.50
God, Wealth Provider and Healer: Experiences from Pentecostal Christianity in sub-Saharan Africa

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Organizing Committee

Prof. dr. Marcel Barnard
Chair – Professor of Practical Theology

Drs. Albert Nijboer, international Officer
(issues regarding international travel)
+ 31 640939548 in case of emergency only

Drs. Sanne van Dijk, communication & events
(issues regarding accommodation, conference site, transport and other practical issues)
+31 611784489 in case of emergency only

Dico Baars, research assistant
(issues regarding conference programme)
+31 648467062 in case of emergency only

To eat & to drink

Recommended by PThU colleagues and students!

Restaurant ‘De Branderij’ – Tasteful dishes from around the world – Poelestraat 55, Groningen

Grand Café-Restaurant ‘Land van Kokanje’ – Global biological kitchen
Oude Boteringestraat 9, Groningen

Grand Café-Restaurant ‘Mr. Mofongo’ – Global food & cocktails
Oude Boteringestraat 26, Groningen

‘Humphrey’s Restaurant’ – Cosy dining!
Vismarkt 42, Groningen

Grand Café-Restaurant ‘De Biechtstoel’ – Heavenly meals, heavenly decorations

‘Eetcafé Stadtlander’ – Easy food and special beers on the students’ favorite square
Poelestraat 35, Groningen

Grand Café ‘Time Out’ – From lunch to late drinks
Poelestraat 34-36, Groningen

Asian bar & restaurant ‘Imono’ – Fresh, Asian tapas
Gelkingestraat 18, Groningen

‘Eetcafé Ugly Duck’ – Classic Dutch diner
Zwanenstraat 28, Groningen

Restaurant ‘Thai Jasmine’ – Authentic Thai Food
Gedempte Zuiderdiep 19, Groningen

In case of emergency (ambulance, police, fire brigade): 112

Police (no emergency): 0900-8844
Taxi Groningen: +31 505494940 (payment with bank card possible)

Important Addresses

De Puddingfabriek
Viaductstraat 3-4
9725 BG Groningen

Protestantse Theologische Universiteit Groningen
Oude Ebbingestraat 25
9712 HA Groningen