

Theological Society of South Africa
Annual meeting 2017: First Call For Papers

Between conflict and communion:
The reception of 16th century reformations in South Africa

Dates: Wednesday 21 June – Friday 23 June 2017

Venue: Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

The annual meeting of the Theological Society of South Africa in 2017 will be held at the Faculty of Theology of Stellenbosch University. Prof Dirkie Smit (Stellenbosch University) and Prof Willie Jennings (Yale Divinity School) have accepted invitations to speak during the opening plenary sessions of the conference.

Background to the TSSA conference theme for 2017

In 2017 Protestant churches the world over will be commemorating the Reformation, as the year that marks 500 years since Martin Luther nailed his ninety five theses to a church door in Wittenberg. The conference theme of the TSSA has in mind this 1517 event, as the catalyst for many church and societal reforms that would follow. On the one hand this event would be indicative of the conflict that accompanies reformation – that which pertains to the reformulation, reimagining, and rediscovery of a vibrant tradition and complex history. On the other hand this event points toward the imperative of ever deepening communion – that which pertains to the reconciliation, remembrance, and reunification of a common tradition and a shared history. The Reformation would continually need to be navigated between conflict and communion, in short, and therein provide a space for reflection on the significance of 16th century reformations.

Moreover, the South African reception of 16th century reformations would be deeply ambiguous, in that the Reformed tradition would play a myriad of roles in public life – not only as justification for the oppressive and divisive apartheid theologies in South Africa, but also as a wellspring for the church struggle against apartheid and rise of anti-apartheid theologies. In short, not only would conflict and communion provide a space for reflecting upon the Reformation itself, but it could also provide a basis for exploring the significance of the reception of 16th century reformations in South Africa. Herein there may be a myriad of possibilities.

One approach may be to explore the role of tradition – particularly the Reformed tradition, remembrance, and commemoration – in keeping the memory of the profound theological shifts and implications of the Reformation alive. It might be worthwhile to explore the very act of commemoration, of celebration, of communion, within this particular history and tradition. The role that memory and remembrance play may be of particular significance for commemorating not only the reception of 16th century Reformation in South Africa, but also in imagining new possibilities for commemorating and remembering 16th century reformations.

Another approach may entail a description or analysis of the ongoing reception of reformation within South Africa itself. Here the significance of reformation within church and society – within public life, and various public spaces – may be an important focus. It may be important to ask about the importance of the Reformation for a time such as this, wherein South Africa faces a myriad of political, economic, and societal challenges. Some would challenge the very term “reformation” and call instead for reconstruction, revolution, revival or renewal – or perhaps for transformation. Navigating between conflict and communion, between public dissent and social cohesion, between transformation and formation, may provide interesting and important ways to describe and understand how 16th century reformations may continue to challenge and shape public life in South Africa.

However, the public commemoration of the 16th Reformation also calls for acts of remembering forward, and extending the rich tradition and history toward future public challenges in church and

society. A reappropriation and reappreciation of 16th century reformations in South Africa may therefore very well need to find new theological language, and continue to develop a new moral vision, for life-giving and life-affirming future reformations.

Additional considerations:

- Papers on topics other than the conference theme, including reviews of recent publications by TSSA members, will also be considered for parallel sessions. We strongly encourage members to consider offering a critical review of any publications by members published recently.
- The programme for the conference will also include papers for three “sections”, namely on “Christian Ecotheology” (contact persons: Ernst Conradie, Andrew Warmback); Christian discourse on ethics, with specific reference to teaching applied ethics (contact persons: Louise Kretzchmar, Etienne de Villiers) and Revisiting African theology (contact persons: Xolani Sakuba, Thomas Resane).
- Any person may participate in the programme. You do not need to be a member of the TSSA. Scholars and post-graduate students from other countries in Africa and other continents are warmly encouraged to submit proposals.
- Proposals may be submitted in any language. However, only proposals in English will be considered for plenary sessions.
- The TSSA cannot support speakers financially, e.g. to cover costs for transport, accommodation or conference fees.

Future annual meetings

For the sake of planning the steering committee has agreed on the following venues and themes for future annual meetings:

20 – 22 June 2018: St Joseph’s

Theme: From Versailles (1918) to Codesa (1993): Theological and ethical reflection on peace and peace making

19 – 21 June 2019: Bloemfontein or UNISA

Theme: Technology and Theology: Cross-ing the digital divide in Africa?

2020: Joint Conference of Religion and Theology to be hosted by UWC.

Instructions for submitting proposals

Please send the title of your proposal, a short abstract of 100-200 words describing the content of the proposed paper and your personal contact details to the conference secretary at the address mentioned below. A second Call for Papers will go out in January 2017. Please note the following relevant dates in this regard:

- Final date for submission of proposals: 14 February 2017. Please send proposals to nadiah@sun.ac.za.
- Confirmation of accepted papers and pre-final draft of the programme: 28 February 2017.
- The first full draft of the conference programme will be distributed before 31 March 2017 together with practical details on the conference. This will enable participants to seek funding to attend the conference timeously.

We are looking forward to welcoming you at the 2017 Annual Meeting.

Sincerely,

Nadia Marais

(Conference secretary: Theological Society of South Africa)

Recent Publications by TSSA members (2014 – 2016)

Balcomb, Anthony 2014, *Journey into the African Sun: Soundings in Search of Another Way of Being in the World*, Pretoria: Unisa.

Conradie, EM, Bergmann, S, Deane-Drummond C & Edwards, D (eds) 2014. *Christian Faith and the Earth: Current Paths and Emerging Horizons in Ecotheology*. London: T&T Clark.

Conradie, EM & Klaasen, J (eds) 2014. *The quest for identity in so-called mainline churches*. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.

De Gruchy, John W. 2014. *A Theological Odyssey: My Life in Writing*, Stellenbosch: SUN Press.

De Vries, Willem & Vosloo, Robert (eds) 2014. *Godverlanger: 'n Huldingsbundel vir Gerrit Brand met 'n keur uit sy skrywes*. Stellenbosch: Sun Media.

Conradie, EM 2015. *The Earth in God's Economy: Creation, Salvation and Consummation in Ecological Perspective*. Studies in Religion and the Environment Vol. 10. Berlin: LIT Verlag.

Conradie, EM & Pillay, MN (eds) 2015. *Ecclesial Deform and Reform Movements in the South African Context*. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.

Vosloo, RR & Mary-Ann Van Huffel-Plaatjies, RR (eds) 2015. *Reformed Churches in South Africa and the struggle for justice: Remembering 1960-1990*, 251-266. Stellenbosch: SUN Press.

Ayre, CW & Conradie, EM (eds) 2016. *The Church in God's Household: Protestant Perspectives on Ecclesiology and Ecology*. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

Du Toit, C. & Veldsman, D. (eds) 2016. *Creation, Consciousness and Christology: Evolutionary Perspectives*. HTS vol 74, no 4.

Nünberger, K. 2016. *Faith in Christ Today: Invitation to Systematic Theology* (volumes 1 & 2). Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.

TSSA Committee: Prof Ernst Conradie (Chairperson)

Dr Wessel Bentley (Members Secretary)

Dr Manitza Kotzé (Treasurer)

Dr Nadia Marais (Conference Secretary) –

Additional members: Dr Jabob Igba (George Whitfield), Dr Xolani Sakuba, Dr Thomas Resane,
Prof Danie Veldsman, Prof Nico Vorster (NWU)

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