



# Christianity and the Future of our Societies

15 - 19th August 2016 - Leuven, Belgium

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## Call for Papers **Extended Deadline**

The Association of Reformational Philosophy and the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit will organize a conference on 'Christianity and the Future of Our Societies', from August 15-19, 2016, in Leuven (Belgium). We invite academic submissions from different disciplines regarding this topic.

### Introduction

The focus of the conference is to analyze philosophically and theologically what Christianity can contribute to the well-being and flourishing of our societies and of the people within them in light of current challenges, and in very diverse contexts.

### *Challenges facing our world today*

Our world and the nations and societies that are part of it, face many challenges. Democracies often prove fragile or are in turmoil and new political structures and cultures must be formed. New geopolitical constellations are developing, raising the question as to what the chances are for a more just, peaceful, and sustainable future of our world. The financial crisis in the Western world, and ongoing corruption in many countries worldwide, call for a new economic and business morality. Poverty and deprivation are still very much with us, despite the progress that has been made in formulating 'Sustainable Development Goals'. The depletion of our world's natural resources is causing massive ecological problems that are often neglected and relegated to an uncertain future. New technologies harbor new possibilities for improving the human condition, but also require an assessment of their moral and social implications. Communication technology raises questions about its effects on human relations and communities. Civil society organizations, that by definition aren't part of either political or economic structures, must redefine their goals and strategies if they are to be a channel for shalom in our world. Religious radicalism and fundamentalism threaten to tar all religions and worldviews, making it difficult for them to be an influential force for the good.

### *The New Christianity*

The 20th century has seen a massive shift in global Christianity – the center of gravity has moved from the North to the South. In many countries and regions where Christianity was once just a tiny minority, tolerated at best, it has grown into a sizeable presence. At the same time, many of these countries have embarked

on a process of modernization, searching for new political, economic, intellectual and scientific structures and practices, connecting themselves to the global world, while at the same time struggling to keep their identities. In the last decades thousands of 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation Christians in Southern countries (as, of course, in Northern countries too) have entered universities, businesses, politics and the media; it is to be expected that thousands or even millions will continue to do so over the next couple of decades. With what central ideals will these 'new' Christians-with-public-responsibility enter the public domain?

### *'Be reformed in your thinking...'*

Christian communities worldwide have a unique opportunity and responsibility to develop a 'shalom-enhancing attitude' among their own and future members, many of whom will be leaders in society. The biblical call 'to be reformed in your thinking' needs a fresh application in every age and context. A host of earlier thinkers and leaders – from Augustine in early Christianity, to Abraham Kuyper in modern times – can be a source of inspiration. They teach us to use two lenses: one directed at contemporary challenges, the other at sources and insights from the broad Christian tradition. The central question to be asked is how we can develop a 'Christian mind', enabling us to be both critical of and loyal to our context, our particular societies, businesses, educational practices, caring institutions, family practices, as well as our local natural environments. In answering this question, it is crucial for Christians worldwide to be mutually connected, exchanging experiences in order to learn from each other's practices. This global learning community can then truly help to nurture a new generation of leaders.

## Potential Topics

Scholars are invited to submit an abstract on the significance of religion in general and Christianity, Christian theology or Christian philosophical thinking in particular for contemporary societies in very different contexts, around the globe (i.e. in philosophy or theology of culture).

However, papers may also address certain specific domains or issues like:

- Political theory or political theology (focusing on, e.g., human rights, international relations, tasks of states and governments, good governance, justice, etc. )
- Philosophy or theology of technology
- Philosophy or theology of economics
- Civil society in a philosophical or theological perspective
- Philosophy or theology of education and 'Bildung'
- Philosophical or theological ethics
- Philosophy or theology of medicine and health
- Environmental philosophy or theology
- Philosophy or theology of arts and literature
- The contemporary significance of earlier 'public theologians' like Abraham Kuyper
- Etc.

## Abstracts and Deadline

Abstracts should be maximum 500 words, and should fall within the theme of the conference, described above. Abstracts can be submitted by email to

[papers@cfs2016.org](mailto:papers@cfs2016.org)

Please attach two separate Word documents to your email:

- Document 1: Your paper proposal, include key bibliographic sources consulted (max. 5). In this document, all identifying references to the author should be removed.
- Document 2: Your name, first name, email address, institutional address, the title of your abstract, the topic under which your paper proposal falls, as well as a short CV (1 page max.).

Deadline (extended): **March 1, 2016**

You will receive a response before **April 1, 2016**.

Proposals will be assessed blindly by experts. If your proposal is accepted, you are invited to submit a draft of your paper by **July 15, 2016**.

Your paper will be made available to all conference participants in advance of the conference, so as to enable a fruitful exchange of ideas.

## Publication

A special issue of the journal *Philosophia Reformata* will be dedicated to publish selected philosophical papers presented at this conference. In addition, a volume of the series *Christian Perspectives on Leadership and Social Ethics* (Peeters Publications) will be dedicated for the publication of selected theological papers.

## Date & Location

The conference will be hosted from August 15-19, 2016, in the Leuven Center of Christian Studies, part of the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit. The address is: St. Jansbergsesteenweg 95, 3001 Leuven, Belgium. Registration information is available on the website [www.cfs2016.org](http://www.cfs2016.org)

## About the Congress Partners

### The Association of Reformational Philosophy (ARP)

has its roots in the 16th century Reformation and its direct origin in the 19th neo-Calvinist revival (in which Abraham Kuyper was a pivotal figure). One of the goals of the ARP is 'to contribute to the deepening of philosophical insight in created reality, and to make these insights fruitful for academic studies and for society'. Key founding fathers of the movement were the Dutch philosophers Herman Dooyeweerd and Dirk Vollenhoven. The movement has grown, and is today globally engaged in academic dialogue between Christianity and the contemporary world, and its animating intellectual, political and economic ideas and leaders. It does so in the expectation that Christianity has important and timely insights to offer.

### The Evangelische Theologische Faculteit (ETF)

in Leuven, Belgium, has developed into an important European education and research center for Christian theology that seeks relevance to the contemporary world and its concerns. In ETF's international master's and doctoral program, students and professors from a wide variety of cultural and denominational backgrounds come from all over the world to engage in stimulating dialogue.

