



Between Cosmology and Community: International Conference on Religion and Sustainable Development

02 to 06 July 2019, Humboldt University Berlin

Call for Papers

Deadline for the submission of abstracts: 15 March 2019

We kindly invite the submission of abstracts for the international conference *Between Cosmology and Community: Religion and Sustainable Development*. The conference seeks to contribute to the academic and policy discourse on religion and development from an interdisciplinary perspective. It is organized by the Research Programme on Religious Communities and Sustainable Development at the Faculty of Theology of Humboldt University Berlin.

Cosmology and Community highlight a field of tension and constitute two foci: On the one hand, religious communities are social entities, whose constitutive factor is the interaction among their members and with wider society. On the other hand, the distinctive feature of religious communities is their reference to cosmology. They are agents of world view production, identity formation and values synthesis. With respect to sustainable development, *Community* indicates active contributions by religious agents to processes of social, economic, ecological and cultural transformation. *Cosmology* refers to the ideological dimension, the impact of the formation of mind-sets, belief and knowledge systems, attitudes and behaviour on these processes of transformation. Ideally, the presentations at the conference will make reference to both dimensions.

The objective of the conference is twofold. **First, relating to the realm of *Community*, the aim is to investigate the contribution of religious communities to processes of sustainable development in different contexts and from different disciplinary perspectives.** The main focus will be on the role of **new religious movements such as African Independent and African Pentecostal Churches.** While the conference is open for contributions focusing on communities of all religions, those contributions focusing on these movements will be particularly welcome.

Sustainable development is understood as such development that produces sustainable change. The **United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are a key frame of reference. Coherent with the SDG Agenda, the contributions can focus on all world regions. Preference will be given to presentations on the following three themes:

- **Equality** (SDG 5: gender equality, SDG 10: reduced inequalities)
- **Economy** (SDG 1: no poverty, SDG 8: decent work and economic growth)
- **Ecology** (SDG 12: responsible consumption and production, SDG 13: climate action, SDG 14: life below water, SDG 15: life on land)

Second, related to the realm of *Cosmology*, the aim will be to investigate notions of development both of (western) development cooperation and religious communities and their respective ideological presuppositions. The current discourse on religion and development largely takes place within a secular framework. This is challenged by the perspective of religious actors

themselves, for whom development is part of religion, i.e. professional and academic experts' notions of development represent only one dimension in a more comprehensive human and social transformation. Hence, under the theme of **Cosmology**, the conference will analyse notions in religious communities as the good life, human flourishing and transformation in relationship to dominant western and secular notions of development and modernity.

- The conference seeks to facilitate mutual dialogue between **academia, policy and practice**. Non-academic experts and practitioners are encouraged to submit contributions and to participate.
- The conference is **interdisciplinary**. It seeks to bring together scholars from various disciplines (inter alia theology, religious studies, anthropology, economics, sociology, politics). Qualitative and quantitative approaches are welcome; all contributions are expected to be open to interdisciplinary conversation.
- We especially encourage **excellent young researchers** to bring forward innovative findings and ideas in a multidisciplinary and international forum.
- A limited number of **travel and accommodation grants** will be available for those participants who do not receive funding from their institution. If you would like to apply for a grant, kindly indicate whether you will require full or partial funding (e.g. accommodation only).
- Part of the conference is the annual “**Lecture Series on African Independent and Pentecostal Approaches to Theology and Development**”. Four high profile African church leaders will hold key note lectures in the evenings of the conference days.
- The conference is organized by the **Research Programme on Religious Communities and Sustainable Development** (organizing committee: Philipp Öhlmann, Marie-Luise Frost, Wilhelm Gräb, Madlen Geidel, Gina Krebs) with the following international collaborators: Prof. Dr. Olufunke Adeboye (University of Lagos, Nigeria), Prof. Dr. Babatunde Adedibu (Redeemed Christian Bible College, Nigeria), Prof. Dr. William Storrar (Center for Theological Inquiry, Princeton, USA), Prof. Dr. Cas Wepener (University of Pretoria, South Africa).
- The conference will take place from **02 to 06 July 2019 at the Faculty of Theology of Humboldt University, Burgstraße 26, 10178 Berlin**.
- Kindly submit your abstract (300 words) to Ms Madlen Geidel (theorcsd@hu-berlin.de) by **15 March 2019**. Notice of acceptance will be sent out shortly thereafter. Accepted contributors will be asked to submit their full papers and/or presentations until 15 June 2019.

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