



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

14–17.05.2025

Theology in Context: Sources, Beliefs, and Practices

In the 13th **COMENIUS** conference explores the mutual influence between theology and their contexts, both past and present.

Theology as an interdisciplinary field navigates the space between revelation and faith, as found in Scripture and Christian traditions, and the contextual, cultural, societal, and ecclesial challenges it encounters. This position ‘in between’ raises several critical questions. To what extent have our theological understandings, interpretations, and experiences of sources, beliefs, and ecclesial and religious practices been influenced by the specific contexts? How have contextual challenges historically influenced or even transformed theological reflection in past and present? Conversely, how has theology maintained a distinct and critical voice concerning its context?



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

PROGRAM

14. MAY, WEDNESDAY

CEREMONY HALL

14.30 – 15.30 Registration

15.30 – 15.45 Welcoming: Prof. Dr. Sándor Kovács, The Rector of the Protestant Theological Institute of Cluj-Napoca
Prof. Dr. Olga Lukács, The Dean of the Department of Reformed Theology and Music

15.45 – 16.45 Keynote lecture and questions: Prof. Dr. Jenő Kiss: It is deemed worthy to be considered a challenging context
Moderation: Jurjen Zeilstra

16.45 – 17.10 Coffee break

I. SESSION

SECTION A

Moderator: Prof. Dr. Robert Schelander

BETHLEN ROOM

17.10 – 17.50

Dr. Dushka Matevska, Full Professor
Dr. Zoran Matevski, Full Professor
Religious conflicts in the World as a Consequence of the intertwined Relationship between Church and Politics

205. ROOM

SECTION B

Moderator: Dr. Gert van Klinken

17.10 – 17.50

Dr. Jurjen Zeilstra (Dr. theol., Dr. hist.)
The Value and Dangers of Syncretism: Case Suriname

16.45 – 17.10 Break

18.15 – 19.00 Cultural program

19.00 Standing reception



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

15. MAY, THURSDAY

II. SESSION	8.45 – 9.00	Morning devotion – Dr. Levente Horváth
	SECTION A	Moderator: Dr. Levente Horváth
	9.00 – 9.40	Andrea Tünde Varga: The Reformed Church under Communist Rule: Between Compliance and Resistance
BETHLEN ROOM	9.40 – 10.20	Viktória Cadena-Kóczyán The Revitalization of Religious Life as a Tool for Revolution: The Case of the Reformed Church in Timișoara, Romania

ROOM 205.	SECTION B	Moderator: Dr. Viktor Kókai-Nagy
	9.00 – 9.40	Drs. Boróka Beke: How the church could benefit from a networked approach
	9.40 – 10.20	Stefanie Arnold, MTh and lic. phil. hist: Why is Our Church Struggling to Survive if the Church Will Never Die? A Case Study from Switzerland
	10.20 – 10.45	Coffee break

III. SESSION	SECTION A	Moderator: Dr. K. W. de Jong
	10.45 – 11.25	Dr. Levente Horvath: When Pannenberg met Anticlimacus – a dialogue taken place in the future
	BETHLEN ROOM	
	11.25 – 12.05	Petra Laagland Winder: We do not have language for that, yet

ROOM 205.	SECTION B	Moderator: Drs. Éva Éles
	10.45 – 11.25	Dr. Lehel Lészai, Associate professor In Between Everyday and Eternal Life
	11.25 – 12.05	Dr. Marcin Zielinski. The Influence of Stoicism on Wisdom 1-9: a General Overview
	12.05 – 12.30	Coffee break



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

IV. SESSION SECTION A

Moderator: Beatrix Bíró

BETHLEN
ROOM

12.30 – 13.10

Dr. Gabriella Gorbai, Assistant professor
The Role of Christian Educators in
Promoting the Mental Well-being of
Children and Adolescents

SECTION B

Moderator: Dr. Hajnalka Kovács

ROOM
205.

12.30 – 13.10

Prof. Dr. Előd Hodossy-Takács
Interpret, but do not divert! subtitle:
Contextual Biblical Interpretation: A Case
Study

13.10 – 15.00

Lunch break (13.30 Lunch)

V. SESSION SECTION A

Moderator: Prof. Dr. Robert Schelander

BETHLEN
ROOM

15.00 – 15.40

Dr. Viktor Kókai-Nagy: Körper und Seele
im Judentum

15.40 – 16.20

Prof. Dr. Olga Lukács: Die Auswirkungen
der rumänischen Gesetzgebung auf die
Reformierte Kirche in Siebenbürgen in den
1920er Jahren

16.20 – 17.00

Dr. Sarolta Lengyelne Püsök: The changing
and constant components of the question
of authority/ Die wechselnden und
konstanten Komponenten der Frage der
Autorität

SECTION B

Moderator: Dr. Gert van Klinken

ROOM
205.

15.00 – 15.40

Dr. Tomáš Havelka: “Many do not read the
holy Scriptures, for its length.” Theological
Aspects of Comenius' Adaptation of the
Bible (Manualník)

15.40 – 16.20

Dr. Lenka Řezníková, (Mgr., Ph.D.)
Metaphors in Theological Understanding:
Early modern Rhetorica Sacra between
encyclopaedism and homiletics



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

V. SESSION SECTION B Moderator: Dr. Gert van Klinken

ROOM 205.

16.20 – 17.00 Dr. CSc. Vera Schifferova: *Philosophia non erit dicenda... Theologiae ancilla, sed germana soror. On the relationship between philosophy and theology in Comenius*

17.00 – 17.25 Coffee break

VI. SESSION SECTION A Moderator: Dr. Marcin Zielinski

BETHLEN ROOM

17.25 – 18.05 Filip Taufer, Mgr.: *Ordinary, Artistic, Theological. Exploration of the Revelatory Potential of Art Through the Examination of its Boundaries*

18.05 – 18.45 Dr. Johnson Srigiri (Revd.): *Human Reception of Divine Revelation: The Cognitive Complexity Arising in the Minds of the Prophets and the Apostles in Receiving and Responding to Revelation*

SECTION B Moderator: Dr. Peter Morée

ROOM 205.

17.25 – 18.05 Dr. Gert J. van Klinken: *Theology and the rise of Abolitionism*

18.05 – 18.45 Dr. Balikó Zoltán, Associate Professor: *Signs of Imago Dei on AI?*

19:00 Dinner





COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

16. MAY, FRIDAY

8.45 – 9.00 Morning devotion – Dr. Jurjen Zeilstra

VII. SESSION SECTION A Moderator: Dr. Viktor Kókai-Nagy

**BETHLEN
ROOM**

9.00 – 9.40 Mgr. Zsolt Görözdi: Kriterien der Predigt versus Erwartungen der Gemeinde

9.40 – 10.20 Dr. Szabolcs Kató: Exodus in Kontexten. Neuinterpretationen in Hoseas prophetischem Diskurs

SECTION B Moderator: Dr. Jurjen Zeilstra

9.00 – 9.40 Dr. Mr. K.W De Jong
The Intercession for the Government: A Context-Dependent Element in an Official 16th-Century Dutch Prayer

**ROOM
205.**

9.40 – 10.20 Mr. Mihailo Milenkovic (Ph.D candidate)
Asceticism as a Path to Gender Equality: Examples from the Philotheos Historia.

10.20 – 10.45 Coffee break

VIII. SESSION SECTION A Moderator: Dr. Zoran Matevski

**BETHLEN
ROOM**

10.45 – 11.25 Dr. Peter Morée: Churches' Credibility in the Contexts of Current Generations. Exploring Generational Value Differences and Implications for Churches

11.25 – 12.05 Dr. Hans Bruno Frölich, Stadtpfarrer & Dechant – Autocephalous Ukraine and Romanian Orthodoxy

SECTION B Moderator: Dr. Gabriella Gorbai

10.45 – 11.25 Ao.Univ.Prof. Dr. Robert Schelander
Dealing with religious plurality in schools

**ROOM
205.**

11.25 – 12.05 Dr. Edit Somfalvi: Catechizing Z and ALPHA Generations - A methodological Response

12.05 – 12.30 Coffee break



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

IX. SESSION	SECTION A	Moderator: Dr. Lehel Lészai
BETHLEN ROOM	12.30 – 13.10	Dr. György Kustár: How to Deal with Money? – Changed Contexts, Changed Meanings. An Investigation into the Parable of the Unjust Steward in Lk 16,1-13.

ROOM 205.	SECTION B	Moderator: Prof. Dr. Előd Hodossy-Takács
	12.30 – 13.10	Dr. Enikő Hajnalka Kovács, SENIOR LECTURER – Theological Context of Apocalypticism as Challenges to Faith in the Old Testament
	13.10 – 14.30	Lunch break (13.30 Lunch)
	14.30	Excursion

17. MAY, SATURDAY

	8.45 – 9.00	Morning devotion – Dr. Johnson Srigiri
	9.00 – 10.30	Reports of the Theological Institutes Moderator: Prof. Dr. Robert Schelander
	10.30 – 10.55	Coffee break
X. SESSION	SECTION A	Moderator: Dr. Lehel Lászlai
	10.55 – 11.35	Drs. Éva Éles: „I urge you as aliens and strangers...” Theology in context: concern and encouragement for "soft difference" in 1Peter
BETHLEN ROOM	11.35 – 12.15	Beatrix Bíró: Ordinary, Artistic, Theological. Exploration of the Revelatory Potential of Art Through the Examination of its Boundaries

	SECTION B	Moderator: Prof. Dr. Előd Hodossy-Takács
	10.55 – 11.35	Dr. Ibolya Balla: The Role of תכּן in Isa 40:12-13 in the context of Deutero-Isaiah's creation theology
ROOM 205.	11.35 – 12.15	Dr. Jaap Doedens: Old Testament Theology in an Age of Mind Parasites



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

CEREMONY HALL

12.15 – 12.35 Award of the Golden Ring Doctorate in Theology to Prof. Dr. Zoltán Adorjáni
Moderator: Prof. Dr. Előd Hodossy Takács

12.35 – 13.00 Coffee break

13.00 – 14.00 Evaluation, Planning the next conference
Moderator: Dr. Ibolya Balla

14.00 Lunch, departure



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

Keynote lecture and questions – Moderator: Dr. Jurjen Zeilstra



Protestant
Theological
Institute of Cluj
Napoca

Prof. Dr. Jenő Kiss

It is deemed worthy to be considered a challenging context

The presentation starts from the following two observations, perceptions: European (and other) Christian theology and theologizing, which is most evident in the public manifestations of the churches, primarily considers European (and global) current and extraordinary social, economic, political, and historical events as contexts to which they must respond, ideally reflect upon. This approach significantly differs from the attitude outlined in the Bible, which primarily responded to religious, faith-based, intellectual, and philosophical processes. It is undoubtedly more reserved towards political, economic, and historical events by not explicitly addressing them.

European Christian theology mainly considers secular contexts when formulating responses from the perspective of revelation. In this, it is strongly guided by concepts of justice and humanity. In the Bible, we primarily read theological reflections that examine the impact of contexts on the life of God's chosen people and Christian congregations (church). Their primary goal is to interpret these contexts and mitigate or alleviate their harmful influence.

The presentation outlines contemporary and biblical attitudes towards contexts, compares them, and seeks theological guidelines to determine which context is worthy of being considered a challenging context and what is the theologically appropriate way of relating to this context.





COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

I. SESSION



Ss.Cyril and
Methodius
University in
Skopje, North
Macedonia

Prof. Dr. Dushka Matevska | Prof. Dr. Zoran Matevski

Religious conflicts in the World as a Consequence of the intertwined Relationship between Church and Politics



Ss.Cyril and
Methodius
University in
Skopje, North
Macedonia

No holy book has ever given rise to, let alone provided the basis for, any conflict, let alone war. However, although war and religion have always been extremely contradictory phenomena, they have been able to intertwine and support each other countless times. Every religion, regardless of the content of its teachings, becomes completely identical to all other religions when it enters into the dangerous game of inciting, justifying, or serving politics. Moreover, religion can give an even more terrible and sinister stamp to political violence, intolerance, self-interest, cruelty, and conflicts if it begins to be permeated by the spirit of perverse religious persistence and sick fanaticism. In this case, we are dealing with a meeting of perverted politics and false religion. Behind almost all conflicts to date were exclusively economic, political, territorial, and demographic motivations, and religion served only as a justification, and never as a real motive. Political and military leaders, driven by extra-religious motives, adapt original religious teachings for the purposes of manipulation for nationalist and war purposes. The paradox of the connection between religion and nationality arises from the fact that religion is linked to a universal heavenly community, while the nation is identified as an earthly community, so religion in itself cannot be a support for national differentiation. However, every religion also contains an ideological aspect, and whenever ideology is at work, politics is always involved. Since religious differences are stronger and more permanent than political, economic and ethnic differences, political leaders arm themselves with references to religious symbols in order to make their own language more effective in mobilizing their citizens. Unfortunately, religious rhetoric is often offered to politics as a last resort to convince the masses that it is right to kill others. Political leaders, when they run out of other convincing and rational arguments, often appeal to the people's sacred values that are the basis of national consciousness, i.e. past suffering and avenging that suffering, for which they find religious justification. By manipulating emotions in this way, they strongly encourage conflict. In some circumstances, the function of religion becomes the defense of national or interest identity, so that faith in conflicts becomes important, and often the only element of confirmation of common identity. Politics uses this, because precisely when it is hidden by the "mask" of the sacred, it better conceals its goals and therefore manipulates more successfully. Thus, a conflict that has nothing to do with religion at its core is exacerbated by the interference of religion. Religion becomes a repertoire of symbols that various political and social actors use when talking about a threatened identity and the enemy who threatens that identity. Collective identity and religious symbols are glorified to the extreme, until identity begins to be understood as an ideal in contrast to that of the enemy. Individuals identify with a group that gives them a sense of belonging, self-respect, and distinction from another group. If members of a group believe that they are positively different from another group, a sense of superiority is created in relation to that group. In such cases, the parties involved perceive the conflict as the only possible solution, within which each party seeks to defend or impose its identity on the other, most often by violent methods. Religion as a war ideology makes the conflict longer and more intense, and this is precisely what social and political movements need in order to achieve their goals.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES



Kerk in Actie
Nederland

Dr. Jurjen Zeilstra

The Value and Dangers of Syncretism: Case Suriname

It is time to re-evaluate the stigma attached by missionaries to animistic forms of African rooted religion such as Winti in Suriname. For hundreds of years enslaved people, robbed of their identity, found strength to survive in their encephal beliefs. Perhaps the revival of this religion has more in common with the Christian faith than often estimated. In any case the interpretation of Christ the colonial imperialism cherished should be unmasked. Is there a special value in Winti as far as the future of the former Dutch colony of Suriname is concerned?

II. SESSION



Legato
Foundation for
the Transylvanian
Hungarian
Culture

Andrea Tünde Varga

The Reformed Church under Communist Rule: Between Compliance and Resistance

Interwar Romania mostly ignored the Reformed Church, but after 1945 the regime branded it subversive, nationalized its schools and charities, and forced leaders to balance collaboration with covert resistance. Under tight surveillance clergy kept Hungarian identity alive through small acts of defiance; pastor László Tóké's refusal to yield his Timișoara pulpit ignited the 1989 revolution. Therefore, the Church's story is central to understanding how Romanian society outlasted totalitarian rule. Its legacy proves that even under iron regimes, communities can defend dignity and prepare freedom.



Legato
Foundation for
the Transylvanian
Hungarian
Culture

Viktória Cadena-Kóczyán

The Revitalization of Religious Life as a Tool for Revolution: The Case of the Reformed Church in Timișoara, Romania

The revitalization of the Reformed Church in Timișoara under Pastor László Tóké illustrates the role of religious renewal as a catalyst for political revolution. Amid systemic repression by the Ceaușescu regime, Tóké fostered spiritual and civic awakening, transforming a marginalized community into a center of resistance. This case highlights how religious institutions, through revitalization and community mobilization, can act as agents of profound political change.



Debrecen
Reformed
Theological
University

Drs. Boróka Beke

How the church could benefit from a networked approach

In many ways, network thinking can help the church respond more effectively to the challenges of the world, just as it has helped in many other academic and practical areas. I will highlight three possible outcomes of network thinking in the church - the importance of modularisation, the potential for reducing redundancy, and the potential of diversity. I will argue that network thinking fosters a more open, flexible, fault-tolerant and inclusive church, while leaving the foundations of faith intact.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES



University of
Berne, Institute of
Old Catholi
Theology

Stefanie Arnold

Why is Our Church Struggling to Survive if the Church Will Never Die? A Case Study from Switzerland

This paper examines the theological challenges arising from the tension between the church's proclaimed "immortality" (Matt 16:18) and the experience of declining congregations in Western European countries. As a case study, I will analyze the pastoral letters by Hans Gerny, bishop of the Swiss Old Catholic Church from 1986 to 2002. Gerny was faced with declining membership numbers, dwindling funds and an increasing exhaustion of volunteers and clergy. How do these challenges shape the way Gerny conceptualizes church? The paper tries to illuminate the dynamics of translating and contextualizing ecclesial identity in secular contexts.

III. SESSION



Protestant
Theological
Institute of Cluj
Napoca

Dr. Levente Horváth

When Pannenberg met Anticlimacus – a dialogue taken place in the future

Creation or Kingdom serves for the context of the imago Dei and of 'Menschenbild'? Can we perceive creation as a whole in which symbol and reality are conjoined, or we should propose rather that symbol and the Kingdom of God are conjoined? Can we understand not the real, but the Kingdom as an entity which actualizes itself through the symbolic? Isn't true that imitatio Christi is not about imitating Christ, but following Christ in his own 'body-context'? There is no "imitatio Christi", but I say this not to the sorrow of Thomas Kempis, but to the sorrow of you who you are as I and Thou, as a compound Self in the context of the Body of Christ. Because if in the I-you relationship Jesus is Thou and I am I, then Jesus is inimitable. He took a body, as his proper 'context' and yet did not become 'an object'. How we are offered different contexts for both the imitatio Christi and imago Dei in Christ's sacramental body as mystical versus his ecclesial body as true?



Protestantse
Theologische
Universiteit (the
Netherlands)

Petra Laagland Winder

We do not have language for that, yet

This paper discusses findings from ethnographic work on individual religious experiences and communal language in the Dutch context. After briefly illustrating the Dutch ecclesial and societal context, the paper then focuses on the (in)effability of religious experiences from a systematic-theological perspective. Some empirical findings from the fieldwork, conducted in a liberal Christian community, will be shared. The paper ends with an exploration of a new language and non-language as (im)possible suitable expressions of experiences in a post-secular context from a hermeneutical-theological and empirically informed perspective.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES



Babeş-Bolyai
University, Faculty
of Reformed
Theology and
Music

Dr. Lehel Lészai

In Between Everyday and Eternal Life

God presented humankind with his revelation to be a torch in the darkness, a lighthouse at the shore of a stormy and gloomy sea; an orientation point in the fog of this messed up world. The help is welcomed, but sometimes the divine compass in our shaky hands is difficult to read. The original sin blurs our clear vision, and the human desires do not really help the orientation. In addition, we do not have yet mentioned the human will, which has its own course during a lifetime. A Christian is torn and tormented between what he believes to be just and true, coming from above, and what he experiences in everyday life. One of the oldest problem mentioned in the Scriptures is the sex life, and its boundary, the marriage.



John Paul II
Catholic
University of
Lublin

Dr. Marcin Zielinski

The Influence of Stoicism on Wisdom 1-9: a General Overview

The author of the Book of Wisdom wants to demonstrate that the spiritual heritage of the Israelites should be rediscovered. He emphasizes that this heritage is at many points compatible with the philosophy that shapes the way of thinking, and in certain aspects it definitely surpasses any philosophical thinking. The purpose of this study is to show how the author seeks to dialogue with Stoic philosophy, which proposed a lifestyle in accordance with the logos, encouraged control of emotions and self-improvement. The paper will focus on Wisdom 1-9 and will try to show the relevance of this teaching in the 21st century.

IV. SESSION



Babeş-Bolyai
University, Faculty
of Reformed
Theology and
Music

Dr. Gabriella Gorbai

The Role of Christian Educators in Promoting the Mental Well-being of Children and Adolescents

In our increasingly alienated modern world, the number of people struggling with mental health issues continues to grow—children and young people are no exception. There is an ever-growing need for the presence and work of helping professionals—such as pastors and religion teachers—in supporting the mental well-being of those they are connected to. This presentation explores how we can provide the most appropriate attitudes, methods, and tools to support children and youth in this especially challenging period of their lives—focusing on sustaining their emotional and spiritual well-being.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES



Debrecen
Reformed
Theological
University

Prof. Dr Előd Hodossy-Takács

Interpret, but do not divert! subtitle: Contextual Biblical Interpretation: a Case Study

What shapes our theological and prophetic voice? A sort of unidentified "common sense," or do we still insist on our Scriptures? In my paper, I am focusing on the history of interpretation of the challenging story of Lot and his daughters (Gen 19:30-38). The biblical narrative depicts an abandoned family, a father with his two desperate daughters in a remote cave. A baffling story followed by diverse interpretations; however, the paper goes beyond the supposed manners of ancient people. I will try to show the limits of a context-dependent interpretation of the biblical text.

V. SESSION



J. Selye University
and Debrecen
Reformed
Theological
University

Dr. Viktor Kókai-Nagy

Körper und Seele im Judentum

In meinem Vortrag möchte ich der Frage nachgehen, welche Vorstellungen sich im Judentum über das Jenseits von Körper und Seele entwickelt haben. Die Frage ist deshalb spannend, weil davon auszugehen ist, dass dieses Problem für das Judentum dort grundsätzliche Bedeutung erlangt, wo es mit dem im Hellenismus verbreitete dichotomen Menschenbild begegnete. In der Vorlesung werde ich zwei dominante Typen unterscheiden. Die erste Gruppe knüpft an die „traditionelle“ Vorstellung an und sieht den Menschen auch nach dem Tod als eine Einheit, zu der sein Körper aufgrund seiner Schöpfung ebenso dazugehört wie seine Seele. In der zweiten Gruppe finden wir Texte, in denen nur das Schicksal der Seele wichtig ist und die Auferstehung des Körpers überhaupt nicht erwähnt wird.



Babeş-Bolyai
University, Faculty
of Reformed
Theology and
Music

Prof. Dr. Olga Lukács

Die Auswirkungen der rumänischen Gesetzgebung auf die Reformierte Kirche in Siebenbürgen in den 1920er Jahren

Nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg wurde 1923 die Verfassung des neuen Großrumäniens akzeptiert. Im Königreich Rumänien gehörten 95 % der Bevölkerung der orthodoxen Kirche an. Das Wachstum der neuen Territorien brachte Spannungen zwischen den Kirchen und der Orthodoxen Kirche mit sich. Das neue Grundgesetz mit einer Reihe von diskriminierenden Maßnahmen legitimierte die Möglichkeit der Aushöhlung aller Minderheitenvölker und gab der herrschenden Nation die Möglichkeit, missbräuchliche und minderheitenvernichtende Maßnahmen im Sinne ihrer nationalen politischen Strategie durchzusetzen.

Das Religionsgesetz von 1923 wurde durch das Kulturgesetz von 1928 ergänzt. Sie erklärte die orthodoxe Religion zur vorherrschenden Staatsreligion und räumte der griechisch-katholischen Religion eine privilegierte Stellung gegenüber den anderen Konfessionen ein, mit der Begründung, dass sie auch die Religion der Rumänen sei.

Der Vortrag beleuchtet die Maßnahmen, die vor allem die reformierten Kirchen in Rumänien betrafen und gegen die die Kirchenleiter wiederholt ihren Protest äußerten.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES



Babes-Bolyai
University, Faculty
of Reformed
Theology and
Music

Dr. Sarolta Lengyelne Püsök

Die wechselnden und konstanten Komponenten der Frage der Autorität
(The changing and constant components of the question of authority)

Klassische theologische Definitionen werden in der Regel vor allem in den biblischen Texten, in den Schriften der Kirchenväter und der Reformatoren gesucht, aber darüber hinaus müssen wir uns vor allem auf die zeitgenössische Situation konzentrieren. Im ersten Teil des Vortrags werden die Veränderungen und neuen Einflüsse aufgezeigt, die in einer postkommunistischen Region in den letzten dreißig Jahren zu beobachten waren. Auf wen hören die Menschen von heute? Wen respektieren sie? Auf wen hört er? Wo ist der Platz der Kirche, der Schulen, der Theologie in der heutigen Gesellschaft? Welches sind die natürlichen Folgen des Wandels der Autorität, die wir getrost akzeptieren können, und welches sind die pathologischen Symptome, die wir bekämpfen müssen, um die ewigen Werte zu bewahren?

Im zweiten Teil des Vortrags werden die Ergebnisse einer praktischen Untersuchung in der reformierten Gemeinschaft in Siebenbürgen vorgestellt.



Institute of
Philosophy, Czech
Academy of
Sciences

Dr. Tomáš Havelka

“Many do not read the holy Scriptures, for its length.” Theological Aspects of Comenius' Adaptation of the Bible (Manualník)

Johannes Amos Comenius, trained in theology at Herborn and Heidelberg, was not primarily a biblical scholar. His key biblical work is the Manualník, an abridged Bible he edited twice—first in 1623 as a Bohemian manuscript, then in 1658 in Amsterdam for exiles after Leszno's burning. This abridgment raises theological questions: how to justify and approach shortening Scripture without distorting it? Comenius tackled this by modifying the Kralice Bible, especially Genesis and Exodus, later reverting to the canonical text in print. This paper explores these theological implications.



Institute of
Philosophy, Czech
Academy of
Sciences, Prague

Dr. Lenka Řezníková

Metaphors in Theological Understanding: Early modern Rhetorica Sacra between encyclopaedism and homiletics

This talk explores how early modern Protestant communities, particularly the Unity of Brethren, approached the metaphorical language of the Bible. Drawing on texts by Alstedt and Comenius, it examines how preachers and scholars dealt with the ambiguities of biblical metaphors, which were seen both as a challenge and a key to spiritual insight. The study argues that in churches like the Unity of Brethren, where regular Bible reading was central to religious life, special emphasis was placed on interpreting metaphors as a means of guiding believers toward understanding divine truth and securing their salvation.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES



Filosofický ústav
Akademie věd
České republiky

Dr. Vera Schifferová

Philosophia non erit dicenda... Theologiae ancilla, sed germana soror. On the relationship between philosophy and theology in Comenius

For Comenius, the close connection between philosophy and theology is characteristic. If we discuss any component of Comenius' thought, i.e. his philosophy, we must always keep in mind his lifelong theological anchoring, not take his philosophical ideas out of context and clarify them outside of their theological framing. However, even conversely, we will not properly understand Comenius as a theologian if we do not consider him as a philosopher. For Comenius, triadism is a striking manifestation of such a characteristic closeness of the theological and philosophical aspects. Attention will also be paid to triadism in Comenius' texts on metaphysics.

VI. SESSION



Protestant
Theological
Faculty, Charles
University, Prague

Filip Taufer

Ordinary, Artistic, Theological. Exploration of the Revelatory Potential of Art Through the Examination of its Boundaries

The presentation explores the role of context in shaping the meaning of religious, artistic, and everyday objects. It examines the transitions between these semantic fields, focusing on the blurred boundaries between the sacred and the secular, as well as between art and daily life. The argument is that dissolving the perceived absoluteness of these categories opens a space for introducing a vertical distinction—between creator and creation, the divine and the human. By juxtaposing these horizontal categories, art can draw the attention to this foundational relationship.



Samavesam of
Telugu Baptist
Churches, India

Dr. Johnson Srigiri

Human Reception of Divine Revelation: The Cognitive Complexity Arising in the Minds of the Prophets and the Apostles in Receiving and Responding to Revelation

The presentation probes and estimates the probable cognitive complexity that must have arisen in the minds of the prophets and the apostles in their experiences of receiving and responding to revelation as well as reducing it to writing. The heightened use of cognitive capabilities for perception, belief and language as well as the cognitive concerns such as grasping reality, propelling relationality and caring for rationality are shown as being evident among those who claimed to have received revelation. The unique responses such as reverential fear and emphasising the moral imperatives found only in Christian Scripture reinforce the truthfulness and sensibility that ought to underly any true revelation.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES



PThU Utrecht

Dr. Gert J. Van Klinken

Theology and the rise of Abolitionism

Can theology and philosophy critically influence contextual developments? The question is relevant for the discussion about Slavery in the former Dutch Colonial Empire, and its impact on society in the present day. The Mennonite Marten Douwes Teenstra (1795-1864) was a Colonial administrator with extensive experience in both South Africa, Indonesia, Surinam and the Netherlands Antilles. Teenstra became a leading figure in the first generation of Dutch Abolitionists, intent on ending Slavery. Teenstra was interested in Bible exegesis. In the early nineteenth century it was still common in Dutch churches to refer to Genesis 9:25 (the curse of Ham) to justify enslavement of Black Africans especially. Teenstra would fight that assumption from a background in Enlightenment ('natural') theology. Simultaneously, he faced a new form of hegemonistic thinking: the claim that the 'White race' was superior to all others, considering Black Christianity (let alone native Black religions such as Winti) as intrinsically less rational and developed than its White counterpart. Interestingly, in opposing this latter proposition, Teenstra increasingly moved from the Enlightenment to the Evangelical position. Only conversion of the heart could alter the interaction between church and culture.



Pápa Reformed
Theological
Seminary

Dr. Zoltán Balikó

Signs of Imago Dei on AI?

The numerous technical innovations of the past few decades have led to significant social changes. The spread of household appliances, the evolution of transportation means, gene research, and the mass adoption of digital communication are signs of this accelerating world. Although research on artificial intelligence dates back several decades, the breakthrough that enables its everyday use is only a few years old. It raises many questions for the practitioners of Christian theology, along with other changes. How can we teach about this current social environment based on Scripture? What analogies can be used to make any connection at all? With the phenomenon of artificial intelligence, it is inevitable to consider if it could become person, and if it possessed such attributes, how it could be related to the Imago Dei concept. This presentation addresses these questions.

VII. SESSION



Reformed
Theological
Faculty of
University J. Selye,
Komárno

Mgr. Zsolt Görözdí

Kriterien der Predigt versus Erwartungen der Gemeinde

Die Homiletik definiert verschiedene Kriterien für das Prinzip und den Inhalt der Predigt. In diesem Zusammenhang bereitet der Prediger seine Predigt für die jeweilige Gemeinde vor, deren Wesen und Auftrag ebenfalls durch die Offenbarung bestimmt werden. Die aktuellen (z. B. politischen, gesellschaftlichen) Einflüsse prägen die Erwartungen der Gemeinde an die Predigt. Die Predigt kann die kontextuellen Entwicklungen nicht ignorieren, muss jedoch an der Offenbarung festhalten. In der Vorlesung soll diese Frage anhand der Homiletik des Buches der Offenbarung des Johannes diskutiert werden.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES



Protestant
Theological
Institute of Cluj
Napoca

Dr. Szabolcs Kató

Exodus in Kontexten. Neuinterpretationen in Hoseas prophetischem Diskurs

Der Exodus ist der identitätsstiftende Gründungsmythos Israels, des Nordreiches. Darin treten die siegreichen Aspekte der nordisraelitischen Gottesvorstellungen zu Tage. Hos macht sehr oft von dieser Motivik Gebrauch, wenn er eine Vision der Liebe Gottes zum Volk in der Wüste entwirft (Hos 2,16-17), wenn er vor einem zweiten Exodus warnt und die assyrische Krise mit der ägyptischen Sklaverei vergleicht (Hos 9,3; 11,4). Darüber hinaus berichtet er von der Ablehnung der prophetischen Kreise (Hos 8,4; 9,7), die er auch durch die Erwähnung von dem Propheten des Exodus, Mose, zu unterdrücken sucht. Der Vortrag analysiert, wie die Exodustradition in den prophetischen Diskurs aufgenommen und neu definiert wird, insbesondere in diesen beiden Bereichen. Damit wird im Rahmen der Konferenz aufgezeigt, wie alte Motive an aktuelle Kontexte angepasst, modifiziert und erneut wirksam gemacht werden.



PThU Utrecht

Dr. Klaas-Willem De Jong

The Intercession for the Government: A Context-Dependent Element in an Official 16th-Century Dutch Prayer

There is a time to come and a time to go. This holds true for every human being – and likewise for those in power. Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that an intercessory prayer for the government changes over time. At one moment it is "God save the Queen," so to speak, and at another, "God save the King."

In 1566, the Dutch minister Petrus Dathenus (ca. 1531–1588) had his collection of metrical psalms printed in Heidelberg, along with the Heidelberg Catechism and texts for liturgical use. One of these prayers, intended for the Sunday morning service, includes an intercession for the government. After the Reformed Church established itself in the Netherlands in the early 1570s, it began to adopt and supplement Dathenus' Liturgy. The number of alterations made was generally limited – except in the intercessory prayer for the government.

In this paper, I examine how different local contexts and shifts in the political constellation influenced the wording of this prayer. Although the identities of those responsible for the textual changes remain unknown, it is possible to identify the printer who facilitated a significant portion of them. The author or authors are likely to have been part of his immediate circle.



The Faculty of
Orthodox
Theology,
Belgrade, Serbia

Mr. Mihailo Milenkovic

Asceticism as a Path to Gender Equality: Examples from the Philotheos Historia.

This paper examines the motivations behind Theodoret of Cyrrhus's presentation of holy women in his seminal work. His approach is shaped by the broader Classical literary tradition, which generally conveyed unfavorable views of women. Theodoret seeks to overcome these prejudices by promoting asceticism as a means through which women could attain spiritual authority and leadership. Furthermore, he draws on key theological insights from the baptismal theology of the Antiochian tradition, demonstrating the depth of his own theological formation.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

VIII. SESSION



Protestant
Theological
Faculty of Charles
University

Dr. Peter Morée

Churches' Credibility in the Contexts of Current Generations. Exploring Generational Value Differences and Implications for Churches

Churches are key actors in the value system of many Western societies. However, they face a significant loss of relevance and credibility among their members and within society. For churches to maintain (or regain) cultural and social relevance, it is therefore crucial to understand which values are personally important to individuals. In autumn 2024 we conducted a representative survey of 2,035 German and 2,094 Czech citizens asking about drivers of credibility of churches. The younger the respondents, the more important are values like adventure, high living standards, creativity, personal success, but also religion. Health, justice, respect for others, security, and family are the most important across generations, while religion is the least important.

Our findings indicate that pastoral attention for the person and her individual life is the strongest impetus for a positive evaluation of the church. This means that churches have a lot to gain in focussing more systematically on the younger generations.



Department für
Evangelische
Theologie im
Rahmen der
Fakultät für
Geisteswissenschaften
in der Lucian Blaga
Universität
Hermannstadt

Dr. Hans Bruno Frölich

Autocephalous Ukraine and Romanian Orthodoxy

The recognition of the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 2019 has marked an irreconcilable dividing line between Russia and Ukraine in the ecclesiastical sphere too.

Yet, this intra-orthodox development has effects that reach far beyond Ukraine and Russia, impacting neighboring countries such as Romania.

While Romania expresses its full sympathy for Ukraine in this war of aggression, the Romanian Orthodox Church has not (yet) confirmed its recognition of the autocephaly of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

This article aims to provide some background details.



University of
Vienna, Faculty of
Protestant
Theology

Prof. Dr. Robert Schelander

Dealing with religious plurality in schools.

The religious situation in Austria is characterized by increasing plurality. The appropriate handling of religious diversity in schools is a much-discussed topic in educational debates. It is becoming clear that religion is an issue for schools as a whole and not just for the sub-ject of religious education. The presentaion refers to an empirical survey carried out at public schools in Vienna and presents the results.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES



Protestant
Theological
Institute of Cluj
Napoca

Dr. Edit Somfalvi

Catechizing Z and Alpha Generations - a methodological response

Catechizing the new generations in the 21st Century became a mission almost impossible, because of the changed ways and styles of communication. Digital immigrants teach digital natives to be able to teach younger digital natives in a post-postmodern era. We need new ways of handing over information, competences to share efficiently the keys of becoming a Christian. My lecture presents a newly adopted Dutch-Hungarian method, where the starting point for teaching/coaching is the psycho-social-cultural level of the young person and the catechizing work targets not only the individuum, but it's whole social network.

IX. SESSION



Reformed
Theological
Academy of
Sárospatak

Dr. György Kustár

How to Deal with Money? – Changed Contexts, Changed Meanings. An Investigation into the Parable of the Unjust Steward in Lk 16,1-13.

The redactional and tradition-historical evolution of the texts can shed some light on the changing context, and the changing scope of a teaching uttered by Jesus. I chose a parable that caused considerable turbulence among New Testament scholars and still does not have a satisfying solution to its meaning, the Parable of the Unjust Steward in Luke 16,1-13. The original parable, that reflects the first Century A.D. Palestinian context, has an application in verses 11-13 that undoubtedly shifts the original meaning: Though the parable itself does not speak of the "righteous use of money, the Lucan interpretation shifts the intention of the text to this direction. An even more perplexing question is still to be answered, that is, whether the crucial verse 10 belongs to the original parable or must be taken as secondary inclusion. If verse 10 is a later development, the parable becomes even more frustrating, because no summarium is given. The corruption of the stakeholders were commonsense in Roman times, and Jesus builds on that certain topos, but makes a surprising twist, without releasing the hearer from the frustration of the moral tension inherent in the text. Although the original parable reflects a Palestinian milieu and might answer a question of a "would be disciple", the reworking of Luke is more to a gentile and diaspora Jewish audience, and the rationale of the text becomes focused on the correct dealing with monetary funds.



Károli Gáspár
University of the
Reformed Church
in Hungary,
Faculty of
Theology,
Department of
Old Testament
Studies

Dr. Enikő Hajnalka Kovács

Theological Context of Apocalypticism as Challenges to Faith in the Old Testament

Apocalyptic literature is a specific prophetic genre. The expectation of end-time events led to a transformation in outlook, the result of which was apocalypticism. Post-exilic prophecy became concerned with God's judgment and the problem of salvation. I am interested in the way in which apocalyptic texts shape faith and hope. My intention is to examine how apocalypticism uniquely contributes to the faith. Why do people write supposed revelations in this kind of a style? Why is it such a sudden increase in the interest in apocalyptic after exile? Why it becomes apocalyptic dominant? Is there a point that can even be called a turning point? What does apocalypticism contribute to the survival of marginalized faith communities and what does giving to them? What kind of changes developed apocalyptic? Faith and hope could be a unifying element in this genre as God's Judgment is never the last word for Israel or other nations. Apocalypticism embraces a new genre, the post exilic reality. Apocalypticism help people to go through hard times, as well as to hold up hope. Key words: rise of apocalyptic, faith, hope.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

X. SESSION



Protestant
Theological
Institute of Cluj
Napoca

Drs. Éva Éles

„I urge you as aliens and strangers...” Theology in context: concern and encouragement for "soft difference" in 1Peter

The First Letter of Peter points out that Christian communities existing within the larger context of Greco-Roman culture faced a twofold danger: loss of internal cohesion resulting in the disintegration of the group, and the rise of external suspicion on the part of non-Christians that could lead to hostility and active oppression. There were two opposing ways Christians could react to this situation, given their powerlessness to change the structures of external society. They could either withdraw as far as possible from all contact with external society, forming as it were a “Christian ghetto” (Paul J. Achtemeier), or they could adapt themselves to prevailing cultures to the extent that they no longer presented a threat. In the former case, the community would surrender its missionary role as witness to the gospel; in the latter case, it would lose its core values. The *modus vivendi* presented by the First Letter of Peter reflects both a theological concern and encouragement that wishes to surpass this twofold reaction by providing – as Miroslav Volf states – a “soft difference”. This paper seeks to analyze first the dynamics of faith and culture as it appears in the situation of those believers who live scattered throughout the Roman provinces of Asia Minor mentioned in 1Peter. Secondly, it will be explored the possible theological interpretations of Christians as “aliens and strangers” by focusing on those elements that enrich and inspire our current discussions on revelation and context.



PThU

Beatrix Bíró

From “Myth” To “Magic” - A Comparative Study Of Exegesis And Bibliolog With The Text Of 2 Kings 4:1–7

The ever-renewing and changing religious-cultural context of modern people necessarily gives rise to new methods and approaches to give the message of biblical texts a foothold in this context. Navigating this complex theoretical landscape of modern interpretations of biblical texts, which take into account the contextual factors, one is soon confronted with the approach of bibliolog. My work explores the hermeneutical background of the bibliolog through a case study. The results suggest that the complex interpretative dynamics of the bibliolog operate along a new concept in the field of hermeneutics - that of identification.



Pápa Reformed
Theological
Seminary

Dr. Ibolya Balla

The Role of תן in Isa 40:12-13 in the context of Deutero-Isaiah's creation theology

The topic of creation is significant in Deutero-Isaiah, and one of the most important passages treating this theme is Isa 40:12-13. The text contains the verb תן, the translation and interpretation of which is complicated. The present study will include the textual analysis of Isa 40:12-13 in order to establish how the author understood and used this word, and how it contributes to our understanding of Deutero-Isaiah's theology, especially because the wider context, Isa 40–41 reflects the essence of the message of the prophet amidst significant challenges for the ancient Israelites' belief system: to proclaim the imminent delivery of the exiles from Babylon.



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES



Pápa Reformed
Theological
Seminary

Dr. Jaap Doedens

Old Testament Theology in an Age of Mind Parasites

In 2020, evolutionary biologist Gad Saad published his *The Parasitic Mind: How Infectious Ideas Are Killing Common Sense*. He describes how in the postmodern Western world many ideas gradually arose that received a dogma-like status, that can only be criticized or renounced at the cost of being censured or even cancelled. In fact, Saad views these ideas presenting themselves as uncontradictable axiomatic principles as idea pathogens, comparable to how viruses and other parasites invade their hosts in order to take control of it and eventually destroy that host. Those who do conform, lose their freedom of thinking through being invaded and taken over by these pathogens. Those who do not conform, similarly lose their freedom of speech by being silenced and de-platformed. However, Saad sees opportunities to use multi-stranded reason derived from as many diverse disciplines as possible (logic, history, different cultures, biology) to stimulate a philosophical immune system that will fight these idea pathogens. In this paper I will compare idea pathogens mentioned in the canonical texts of the Hebrew Bible and the way these texts fought these pathogens, to the ideas Saad mentions as mind-parasites in the modern and post-modern worldview and his way to address the problematic nature of these ideas.



Cultural Program – Ceremony Hall

- Manuscript from Levoča: Táncszvitt
Noémi Miklós, piano
- Anonymous: Ciacona in B-flat major
Noémi Miklós, piano
- Franz Schubert: Der Doppelgänger
Szilveszter Kovács, vocals
Piano accompaniment by Noémi Miklós
- Martin Schneider: Arioso und Sonate
Noémi Miklós, piano
- Robert Schumann: Im wunderschönen Monat Mai
Francesco Paolo Tosti: Luna d'estate
Szilveszter Kovács, vocals
Piano accompaniment by Noémi Miklós
- Claude Debussy: 6 Épigraphes antiques – Pour invoquer Pan,
dieu du vent d'été
Performed on piano by Szilveszter Kovács and Noémi Miklós
- Claude Debussy: Suite bergamasque – Prélude
Performed on piano by Krisztina Sallai



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY IN CONTEXT: SOURCES, BELIEFS, AND PRACTICES

NOTES



COMENIUS-SOMEF CONFERENCE

For questions related to the conference, please contact Dr. Somfalvi Edit.
Phone number: +40744479972

For general questions, please contact Bancea Mátyás, theology student.
Phone number: +40733962604