

PROGRAM OF
TEYLERS GODGELEERD GENOOTSCHAP
AT HAARLEM

FOR THE YEAR 2008

THE DIRECTORS OF TEYLERS STICHTING (TEYLER'S FOUNDATION) AND THE MEMBERS OF TEYLERS GODGELEERD GENOOTSCHAP (TEYLER'S THEOLOGICAL SOCIETY) announce an essay competition to be answered before May 1, 2011:

SUBJECT

An investigation into the changes in thinking about the unity of churches from around 1970 till the present time.

FURTHER INFORMATION

During the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century the number of member churches of the World Council of Churches (WCC) increased rapidly, among other reasons because several Orthodox churches joined the WCC as well as churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America (including Pentecostal churches). Originally the discussions about the (visible) unity of the churches took place mainly within the *Commission of Faith and Order* in which the Roman Catholic Church (itself not a WCC member church) participates fully. After earlier reports this Commission published in 1982 the so-called Lima-declaration on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, as well as a 'Lima Liturgy'. The basic assumption was, that the universality of the church can be visibly expressed in the form of ecclesial structure and liturgy. For the time being this basic assumption was even maintained when because of the growing influence of the Orthodox churches more emphasis was laid upon concepts such as *koinonia* and conciliarity.

Because of, among other factors, the above mentioned increase of member churches from Asia, Africa and Latin America, large political changes on a global level, and the rise of postmodern forms of culture in the West, the attention shifted from (visible) institutional and liturgical unity to the recognition of plurality and interest in inculturation and contextuality, and therefore to the area of tension between global and local aspects of the church and the relation of Christianity and the pluralist human society. Next to and sometimes instead of institutional ecclesiological unity during this phase of reorientation, notions came into being about eschatological and spiritual forms of unity. At the same time the Roman Catholic Church once again expounded its official position as to the universal unity of the church in an *Ecumenical Directory* (1993), in the papal encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* (1995) and in the declaration *Dominus Iesus* (2000) of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. At this moment several organs within the World Council of Churches cooperate as to the theme 'unity'; yet simultaneously it has to be acknowledged that many churches in the so-called Third World have other, more urgent priorities. As a consequence the discourse about the unity of churches seems to be a diffuse process at the moment.

The answer which is requested should describe and evaluate the developments in thinking regarding the unity of churches. Since the theme is comprehensive and can be approached from historic, theological or empirical-practical perspectives, if desired the answer can be restricted mainly to the developments within a specific country or region (in as far as this carries a general interest), or to the changes of the thinking within a particular denomination.

Entries should consist of either one extended study, in the form of a text prepared for publication, or of several publications, most of which should have appeared in the three years prior to May 1, 2011. In the latter case entrants should also submit a hitherto unpublished text, written especially for the competition, in which the earlier publications are placed in a broader academic context.

Still pending is the following essay competition to be answered before May 1, 2010:

SUBJECT

We request a piece of research on the question whether Martin Heidegger in *Being and Time* already implicitly accords an important role to the theme of *sacrifice*.

FURTHER INFORMATION

“And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son” (Gen. 22:10) – referring to Abraham's action, it is not uncommon in our times to claim with the greatest certainty that the possibility of folly, immorality and violence has from the very beginning been implicit in monotheism. And yet it is precisely this horrific figure of Abraham who is presented with a measure of enthusiasm by Søren Kierkegaard (*alias* Johannes de Silentio) as the prototype of religious man. The type of action which in Kierkegaard's estimation is the core of Abraham's faith he terms “sacrifice”. With the greatest insistence he emphasizes, however, that sacrificing Isaac does *not* mean that Abraham *gives up* on Isaac. Much the contrary – the religious worth of Abraham in this view lies in the fact, presupposed by Kierkegaard, that Abraham expects he will be given back the Isaac which he lets go. Kierkegaard says these things in his work *Fear and Trembling* (1843). This book was published precisely fifty years after *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, the book in which Kant advocates a “moral religion”. In such a religion there can no longer be room for an Abraham such as Kierkegaard sees him.

From Kant to Levinas, philosophers have proclaimed this Abraham “unacceptable”, often without sparing Kierkegaard in the process. Yet exactly one hundred years after *Fear and Trembling*, as a sort of memorial, it seems, for the difficult theme with which Kierkegaard had confronted philosophers, Martin Heidegger published his *Postscript to What is Metaphysics?* [McNeill]. In this short text Heidegger identifies his most important subject, i.e. thinking, with “the freedom of sacrifice”; and Heidegger likewise remarks that “sacrificing” is not the same as “giving up”. Yet in the scholarly literature on *Fear and Trembling*, the *Postscript* hitherto remains unmentioned.

As regards Heidegger, the question is whether this remarkable and, in the context of philosophy, eccentric association (i.e., that of thinking and sacrifice) is an incidental one within the body of his work. If sacrifice can in the above-mentioned *Postscript* be used for the most important sort of activity which, in Heidegger's view, makes man truly man, it is necessary to consider whether the structure of the sacrificial act can already be found in his earlier main work, *Being and Time* (1927).

The term “sacrifice” cannot be found in *Being and Time*. Yet we do find phrases like “die Entschlossenheit [...] ist die Freiheit für das [...] Aufgeben eines bestimmten Entschlusses” (391, italics M.H.). Man should be able to entrust himself to this possibility “sich selbst auf zu geben” (264, cf. 308: “sich selbst zurück zu nehmen”) and to receive himself back in a modified way (179: “ein modifiziertes Ergreifen”; cf. 169: “neu zueignen”), and precisely in doing this he would give proof of his freedom. Continuing this train of thought one might ask whether this whole process lies encapsulated already in the term “Freigabe” (“etwas freigeben auf”), one of the key terms of *Being and Time*. The question is therefore whether it is worthwhile to see in this term, which step by step *Being and Time* unfolds with greater precision, a structure akin to that of the sacrificial movement.

Requested is a piece of research on the question whether “Freigabe” as Martin Heidegger speaks of it in *Being and Time* can be associated with the theme of sacrifice. Such research might take as its point of departure the theme of sacrifice in Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* or Heidegger's *Postscript*, though the weight should be on careful consideration of the question whether a related theme is found in *Being and Time*.

[As regards *Being and Time* one might build on Gerben Meynen's dissertation *Vrijheid en tijd. Het begrip herhaling in Heideggers Sein und Zeit* (Radbout Universiteit Nijmegen, 2006).]

Entries should consist of one extended study, in the form of a text prepared for publication.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Pieter Teyler van der Hulst (Haarlem, 1702-1778) was a Dutch merchant. In his will he stipulated the founding of an important museum together with *Teylers Stichting* (*Teyler's Foundation*). Part of this Foundation are two learned societies, each of which presents a yearly essay competition. *Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap* (*Teyler's Theological Society*) is one of these learned societies. It organizes essay competitions in the field of theology, philosophy of religion and religious studies.

PROCEDURE

In order to qualify for the competition, candidates should submit four copies of their entry to the Directors of *Teylers Stichting*, Spaarne 16, 2011 CH Haarlem, Netherlands, before May 1, 2011, and May 1, 2010 respectively. Entries received after that date will not be taken into consideration. The essays must be in English, French, German or Dutch. Because of the stipulations of Pieter Teyler's will, the essays may not mention the author's name but should be identified only by a motto. The entry should be accompanied by a sealed envelope containing the author's name and address, with the motto on the outside. To avoid a long wait before hearing the result of the evaluation, in case an award has not been made, authors are required to send together with the sealed envelope an open envelope containing the name and full address of a person with whom Directors of *Teylers Stichting* may enter into correspondence confidentially.

EVALUATION

The evaluation will be carried out by the members of *Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap* (Prof. Dr. H.L. Beck, Dr. A.G. Hoekema, Dr. V. Kal, Prof. Dr. M.J.J. Menken, Prof. Dr. E. Noort, Prof. Dr. E.G.E. van der Wall) and will be communicated within seven months from the final date of submission in the form of a recommendation to the Directors of

Teylers Stichting, who will decide within one month whether or not to give an award. This decision is final. All candidates will be notified by the Directors as soon as a decision has been made.

AWARD

The award consists of a gold medal struck from the seal of the Godgeleerd Genootschap. In addition, a foundation that does not wish to be publicly identified will grant the sum of € 4500 to the author or authors of the winning entries to use as they see fit. The medal will be awarded to the winner(s) at a special ceremony in the *Teylers Museum* at Haarlem. Professional journals and the press as well as other interested persons and institutions will receive ample advance notice of the award ceremony.

PUBLICATION

The authors themselves will arrange for publication of their work, mentioning that it has received an award from *Teylers Stichting*. If desired, *Teylers Stichting* and its theological society may consider lending assistance.

Editors of scientific journals as well as other bodies wishing to draw the attention of their readers to the essay competition, are urged to advise interested candidates to consult the program for full details.

The program of Teylers Godgeleerd Genootschap is available free of charge on request from Directors of Teylers Stichting, Spaarne 16, 2011 CH Haarlem, Netherlands, or can be consulted on: www.teylersmuseum.nl.