

Theme Description - International Conference 2019

Resident aliens | What can churches contribute to the wellbeing of their society?

Theme and content of the International Conference 2019

Motto 1: Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country – John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Motto 2: What the soul is in the body, Christians are in the world – Epistula ad Diognetum.

Theme

Christians have a dual citizenship: they are members of their society, but in the meantime their citizenship is in heaven (Phil.3:20). Does this celestial citizenship influence the way in which Christians are members of their earthly society? In which way does (or should) it affect their attitude? And what are ways to contribute to the wellbeing of society? How do Christians respond to God's commission in Jeremiah 29: Seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile ?

Many Christian leaders ask themselves: in what way can I – or can my church – contribute to the common good in my country? This is a recurring theme in international contacts of DVN, Viaa and TUK. Though contexts can vary enormously (from post-christian secular west, post-communist Christian east, Christian minority in a hostile Hindu or Muslim context, to a Christian majority confronting extreme poverty and a failed state), the longing for a Christian presence in and contribution to society is there.

To make this contribution tangible it is fruitful to look to that areas where there is considerable tension in society, where the divides are. In this conference we will examine four of such divides (i.e. economic injustice, ethnic or racial division, religious opposition and gender inequality) and ask the question: what does the Gospel say to these issues? And what could and should a Christian attitude be regarding these divides full of tension?

With the insights of these four areas of interest we will ask the broader question: what is a Christian commitment to the city or the country where I live?

Conference

The different subjects will not only be introduced by experts in biblical, systematic, practical and missional theology, we will as well engage in encounters with Christians and organisations who are present in society. Above all, the conference will offer a platform for exchanging experiences and knowledge from very different contexts. Participants will be challenged to share their insights, wisdom, questions and doubts. In this way the International Conference seeks to encourage and equip its participants to engage as a Christian in their own society.



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