

PROGRAMME OF
TEYLERS GODGELEERD GENOOTSCHAP
AT HAARLEM

FOR THE YEAR 2009

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, 2012:

SUBJECT

A study on the critical elements connected with the divine gift, the way of life and the removal from the land in the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Israel's settlement in Canaan is elaborately described in the narrative books of the Hebrew Bible (Numbers; Joshua; Judges). By including the patriarchs (Genesis 12-36) this divine gift of the land is not portrayed as a historical coincidence, but as the realisation of a former promise. Later responses further strengthen this view as an 'oath that JHWH has sworn'. In the twentieth century research was primarily focused on historicity. Did the conquest happen as described in the so-called 'historical books'? The gap between the reconstruction of historical events at the beginning of the Iron Age and the narrated violent conquest made up the greater part of the discussion.

A certain consensus was reached on the view that the settlement in the hill country was a mainly peaceful event. It differed from region to region and could partly be reconstructed by archaeology. Hence, the question, why all biblical narratives concerning the conquest were violent in character, became central. Several answers have been given. Most of them were connected either to the Assyrian occupation after 745 BCE or to the actions of the ideal king Josiah, a David redivivus. Most recent literature regards Israel's settlement in Canaan as exemplifying a new society in the Persian Period.

The self-criticism in the assessment of Israel's biblical writers, in addition to the destruction of the Northern State in 722/21 BCE and the Southern State in 587 BCE, have played a major part in the radicalisation of the view of foreign nations. They had to be destroyed. Such an assessment became important for the new beginning after the Babylonian Exile. It was part of the myth of the empty land. The land represented much more than a geographical set of data. Land is a divine gift, dependent upon the life in the land as modelled by the Torah, especially by Deuteronomy. Land and possession of land became a pawn in a religio-ethical dispute. Theologically, in Israel's self-understanding, the loss of the land is a result of religious and social failure. In a unique self-indictment they place the responsibility on themselves: 'Not YHWH was defeated by the gods Assur or Marduk, but we ourselves are the reason that we have lost the land'. By means of the interconnectedness between Torah, land and the theological interpretation of history, land became a critical factor in how Israel viewed itself. The central focus was no longer the land

as a divine gift, but became instead the realisation of a society that reflected the religio-social rules of a newly formulated covenantal theology.

However, in addition to the narrative literature and the laws, there is also poetic literature on the conquest, the settlement and the exile. Its most important source is the psalms, i.e. especially the historical psalms 78, 105, 106 and their elaborate reworking of the Pentateuch and early Prophets. But also Pss 44, 80, 135, 136 (among others) use the theme of the gift and the settlement of the land. The explanation for the exile turns the theology of the land into a critical and ethical theology. We are seeking a study, which focuses on the theme of the land in the Psalms, with special reference to the relation between divine gift and human responsibility.

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, 2012. 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, 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.

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, 2012, and May 1, 2011 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.