

CALL FOR PAPERS

NOTRE DAME CENTER FOR ETHICS & CULTURE

8th ANNUAL FALL CONFERENCE



The Dialogue of Cultures

November 29-December 1, 2007

In his address at the University of Regensburg on September 12, 2006, Pope Benedict XVI made an argument whose crucial import was obscured by the unproductive furor that followed his speech. Pope Benedict argued:

While we rejoice in the new possibilities open to humanity, we also see the dangers arising from these possibilities and we must ask ourselves how we can overcome them. We will succeed in doing so only if reason and faith come together in a new way, if we overcome the self-imposed limitation of reason to the empirically verifiable, and if we once more disclose its vast horizons....Only thus do we become capable of that genuine dialogue of cultures and religions so urgently needed today.

Our world is characterized by a dizzying array of cultural conflicts. The news from Iraq that greets us every morning reminds us of the deep cultural conflicts between the West and the various Islamic cultures of the Middle East. Other cultural conflicts manifest themselves in the various efforts to secure basic human rights across the globe. And then there is the cultural crisis in Europe, where the Church, led by Pope Benedict, attempts to keep Europe from forgetting its Christian roots and sliding ever more deeply into secularization. This is not even to mention the deep cultural divides within our own polity, and even, most regrettably, within the Church Herself.

The solution to such widespread division, Pope Benedict urges us to realize, is a reconciliation of Christian faith and natural human reason that conceives of the latter according to the full capacities of its freedom; that is, as open to a reality that transcends the empirically verifiable. Only with such a conception of reason, Pope Benedict concludes, will human beings become capable “of that genuine dialogue of cultures and religions so urgently needed today.”

The Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture, concerned by the deep cultural divides that characterize so much of our world, has found inspiration in Pope Benedict’s Regensburg Address, and has decided to devote its eighth annual Fall conference to the theme: *The Dialogue of Cultures*. In interdisciplinary fashion, this conference will take up a variety of questions related to both the difficulties and opportunities involved in addressing cultural conflict. Contemporary political issues will certainly be on the table, as will philosophical and theological inquiries into the broader conception of reason of which Pope Benedict speaks, along with its relation to Christian faith. Legal theorists, also, will bring their perspective to the discussion, perhaps especially in regard to questions of natural law. And, if pattern holds, historians, literary theorists, artists, and people in business will make their own substantial contributions.

One of the key purposes of *The Dialogue of Cultures* is to help restore the richness in the notion of dialogue itself, which too often has devolved into a cultural cliché. But above all, the Center wants to follow the lead of Pope Benedict, who closes the Regensburg Address by declaring: “The courage to engage the whole breadth of reason, and not the denial of its grandeur—that is the program with which a theology grounded in Biblical faith enters into the debates of our time....It is to this great *logos*, to the breadth of reason, that we invite our partners in the dialogue of cultures.”

Distinguished speakers invited to the conference include:

- George Weigel
- Jean Bethke Elshtain
- Leon Kass
- Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev, Russian Orthodox Bishop of Vienna and Austria
- Russell Hittinger
- H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr.
- Ralph Wood
- Paolo Carozza

We welcome the submission of abstracts drawing on a wide range of moral and religious perspectives and academic specialties. Special consideration will be given to submissions of ideas for panel discussions that would bring together several people to discuss a focused theme. Possible issues to be explored are:

- The nature of dialogue itself: going beyond the cultural cliché
- Pope Benedict XVI’s Regensburg Address and his other writings on the dialogue of cultures

- The possibility of peace between Islamic nations and the democracies of the West
- The dialogue of cultures between European, Asian, and African cultures
- Terrorism
- The European crisis of secularization
- Universal human rights
- The natural law and cultural dialogue
- Cultural divisions within the Church
- The challenge of immigration
- Cultural issues affecting the dignity of women
- Models of peacemaking and fruitful cultural dialogue
- The Greek philosophical inheritance of Catholic theology
- The aftermath of the war in Iraq
- The role of technology in fomenting/overcoming cultural conflict
- Globalization
- Obligations to developing nations
- The dialogue of cultures and the specter of incommensurability
- Literature and the arts as vehicles of cultural dialogue
- Ecumenism

One-page abstracts for individual papers should include name, affiliation, address, and e-mail address (if available). Session presentations will be limited to twenty minutes for individuals, one hour for panels.

Deadline for submissions is **Friday, July 27, 2007**. Notification of acceptance will be mailed by **Friday, August 31, 2007**. One-page abstracts, along with your full contact information, should be emailed to ndethics@nd.edu or mailed to:

Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture
 8th Annual Fall Conference – The Dialogue of Cultures
 1047 Flanner Hall
 Notre Dame, IN 46556

Up-to-date conference information can be found on our web site:
<http://ethicscenter.nd.edu>.