



Religion and Modernity in a Secular City

Katholische Akademie in Berlin

16 – 18 September 2010

Theme:

Writing from Vichy, France in early 1940, Walter Benjamin articulated what many theologians secretly feared in his *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* by portraying theology as the hunchback that must keep out of sight. However, Slavoj Žižek has recently suggested that it is time to reverse Benjamin's first thesis on the philosophy of history: "The puppet called 'theology' is to win all the time". This startling reversal reveals that the extent to which Enlightenment secularization imagined it could map the rational world onto a manipulable grid, manifested in the global spread of political, economic and social structures that have attempted to inscribe the sacred within a strictly private sphere, is increasingly being called into question by the continuing public presence of political theologies. However, the question of what this new visibility of religion might mean in the context of the supposedly secular city remains less than clear. The conference will address this broad theme from an interdisciplinary perspective drawing on the fields of theology, philosophy, political theory, economics, sociology, as well as cultural and biblical studies. Our keynote speaker will be Professor Graham Ward.

Venue and Registration:

The conference will take place in the centre of Berlin at the Katholische Akademie, which features impressive meeting facilities and on-site accommodation. Participants are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from Berlin. Conference costs are as follows:

Registration and meals: €60 (includes lunch on Thursday through lunch on Saturday)

Accommodation at Hotel Aquino: €70 (2 nights) or €105 (3 nights)

For further information please contact the conference organizers: Martin Knechtges (knechtges@katholische-akademie-berlin.de) and Kyle Gingerich Hiebert (kyle.gingerichhiebert@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk).

This conference is co-sponsored by the Katholische Akademie in Berlin, the Program on Religion and Politics at Humboldt University and the Centre for Religion and Political Culture at The University of Manchester.