

Considering the significance of preaching globally, the exceptional status of the sermon is quite evident. Yet, preaching conveys claims to power and (consciously) exerts influence on the audience in highly diverse manners. Preaching is embedded in sociocultural patterns of power distribution and the legitimization of authority claims, which vary locally, culturally, and politically. The relationship between politics and preaching with its claims to (interpretive) power, thus, turns out to be highly ambivalent and can range from explicit separation between the religious and the political sphere, to mutual instrumentalization by different agents, or even critical engagement.

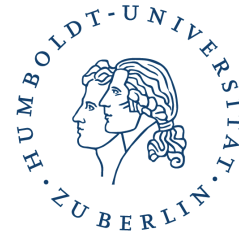
The conference seeks to discuss political rhetoric in religious discourse but also investigates religious rhetoric in political discourse. Adopting a multi-disciplinary perspective, the conference seeks to analyze the rhetorical interplay between religion and politics through the lens of preaching. Scholars from fields including theology, history, literary and cultural studies, as well as the social sciences and anthropology, will come together to explore how (political) preaching can serve as a powerful instrument for influencing culture and politics.

## Participation and Registration

Participation in the conference is only possible upon prior registration.

Please register by 30 June 2026 by contacting Vanessa Huth: [vanessa.huth.1@hu-berlin.de](mailto:vanessa.huth.1@hu-berlin.de)

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UDO KELLER STIFTUNG  
FORUM HUMANUM

## Pulpit and Power Rhetorics at the Crossroads of Religion and Politics

Conference hosted by  
the **Chair for Practical Theology with a focus on Homiletics, Liturgy and Church Theory, Humbolt University of Berlin**  
and the **Chair for Comparative Literature, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg**

**16 – 18 July 2026**

Humbolt University of Berlin  
Faculty of Theology  
Burgstraße 26, 10178 Berlin

## Thursday, 16 July 2026 Room 117

14:00 Welcome by the Dean of the Faculty of Theology *Torsten Meireis*

Introduction: *Ruth Conrad* (Berlin)

### Politics and Preaching

Chair: *Florian Bock* (Bochum)

14:30 *Oliver Hidalgo* (Passau)

Political Speech, Sermon, Bully Pulpit? Historical Reflections on the Intertwining of Religion and Politics in the Field of Rhetoric

15:30 Coffee break

16:00 *Arnulf von Scheliha* (Münster)

What is a Political Sermon? Reflections from the Perspective of a Protestant Ethics of Politics

17:00 *Dietmar Till* (Tübingen)

The Sermon as a Moral Authority: Margot Käßmann's New Year's Sermon in 2010

18:30 Public Keynote:  
Room *Ted A. Smith* (Emory University)  
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### Prophetic Preaching in Polarized Times

Welcome by CiTRS

Moderation: *Ruth Conrad* (Berlin)

Reception

## Friday, 17 July 2026 Room 117

### Language of Preaching

Chair: *Amrei Kempendorf* (Berlin)

09:00 *Fatemeh Taheri* (Berlin)

Linguistic Means of German for the Self-Expression of Shiite Scholars on Global Events

10:00 *Ruhan Fourie* (Stellenbosch)

Like Father, like Son: The Politics of the Poor in the Preaching of Jozua and Beyers Naudé

11:00 Coffee break

11:30 *Amir Engel* (Berlin)

Revealing the Torah's Secrets: Rabbi Kook and the Making of Jewish Political Theology

12:30 Lunch break

### Preaching & Nationalism

Chair: *Daniel Weidner* (Halle)

13:30 *Charles Gallagher* (Boston)

The Seeds of Christian Nationalism: Father Charles E. Coughlin's Preaching on the Jews, 1932-1942

14.30 *Claudia Jetter* (Berlin)

When Politics invade Religion: Beth Moore and the Precarious Preaching of a Female Bible Teacher

15:30 Coffee break

16:00 *Matthew D. Taylor* (Washington D.C.)

Room 206 An American Jehu: The Prophetic Parallelism of Jonathan Cahn and the Construction of Modern Spiritual Propaganda  
digital Lecture

17:30 Guided tour through the Berlin Cathedral ("Berliner Dom") with *Stefan Scholpp* (Cathedral Preacher)

19:30 Conference dinner

## Saturday, 18 July 2026 Room 117

### Performing Preaching

Chair: *Claudia Jetter* (Berlin)

09:00 *Regina Elsner* (Münster)

"With One Voice?" Constructing Unity amidst Political Fragmentation in Russian Patriarchal Sermons in the 20th and 21st Centuries

10:00 *Cas Wepener* (Stellenbosch)

Preaching Within the African Worlds of Power. Researching Religion and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa as a Challenge to Homiletics

11:00 Coffee break

11:30 *Giovanni Maltese* (Erlangen)

Pentecostal-Charismatic Pulpits amid Autocratization: Power and Performance in the Philippines

12:30 Concluding Remarks:  
*Roland Hardenberg* (Frankfurt)  
Moderation: *Ruth Conrad* (Berlin)