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**Liberation Theological Seminar:  
'living together'  
Criticism & alternatives to the division of society**

Date: Thursday, April 23, 2020, 5:00 pm to  
Saturday, April 25, 2020, 5:00 pm

Place: Cardijn house, Kapuzinerstraße 49, 4020 Linz

- The divisions in our society are growing - in much of Europe, including Austria.
- Feelings of threat and anxiety also spread in the former well-secured middle class. The future is uncertain.
- Neo-liberal and right-wing populist politicians bring these sentiments home by blaming the most vulnerable in society for the threat situation: refugees, members of minority protection, etc.
  
- Along with the threat, populist and divisive narratives have come far into the middle of society.
- At the same time, neoliberal capitalist policies promote actual division from above: cuts in social benefits, austerity driven budget savings and tighter social security controls, tax breaks for large corporations and private property owners, and continued high freedoms for international financial speculation keep the gap between (super) rich and poor grow, worldwide, in Europe and Austria.

From a committed, Christian, liberation-theological perspective urgent questions arise for us:

- ? How can we respond in solidarity and commitment to these intensified social developments?
- ? How can we create understanding and conversation across populist divisions?
- ? How can we live well together, today and in the future, and what can we do in concrete terms?

In the seminar we aim to develop a radical critique of the divisive forces in our contemporary European societies. We will analyze the effects of the capitalist economy on the basis of Christian principles. This analysis influences our talk of God and the good life for all.

The role of churches in contemporary societies and these developments should be critically examined.

Beyond criticism and analysis, our seminar will explore practical alternatives and strategies for social change. **Throughout the process, we will discuss what political theology can contribute to critique, vision, and practice in our society.**

Speakers:

Prof. DDr. Nikolaus Dimmel studied law, political science, sociology, worked, as a carpenter, defense lawyer, debt and tenant consultant, social service manager, GmbH - Managing Director etc. and is a university teacher at the University of Salzburg and at a number of colleges. He focuses on poverty / wealth / inequality, social and migration management and special sociology (labor, criminal and legal sociology).

Dr. Julia Lis is a theologian and co-founder of the Institute for Theology and Politics and co-founder of the network Kirchenasyl in Münster. Her work focuses on: church asylum, theology in the context of social movements, flight and migration, church of the poor, crisis protests.

Niall Cooper is director of Church Action on Poverty (CAP) in the UK, an ecumenical network dedicated to tackling the causes of poverty. In campaigns as well as supporting practical action, grassroots groups and projects in church parishes on the ground. CAP deals with unfair policies, reinforces the voices of people affected by poverty in society and calls the Christian churches to their responsibility. The work is aimed at making British society fairer and more equitable in the long term.

*"A crisis is the state in which the old dies, but the new cannot yet be born. There are many dangers in such a time of intermediate rule, and all sorts of symptoms can come out - it's the time of the monster. "*  
(Antonio Gramsci)

*"It is right and important that societies help those in need. That alone is not enough. Our projects address the underlying causes. "*  
(Church Action on Poverty)

**NOTE:** At the moment the conference language will be German, and participants will have to make their own arrangements for interpretation. This is a question of funding which may be resolved.

## ReferentInnen:

**Prof. DDr. Nikolaus Dimmel** studierte Rechtswissenschaften, Politikwissenschaften, Soziologie, war u. a. als Tischler, Strafverteidiger, Schulden- und Mietrechtsberater, Sozialamtsleiter, GmbH – Geschäftsführer tätig und lehrt als Hochschullehrer an der Universität Salzburg sowie an einer Reihe von Fachhochschulen. Seine Schwerpunkte liegen in den Bereichen Armut/Reichtum/Ungleichheit, Sozial- und Migrationsmanagement sowie speziellen Soziologien (Arbeits-, Kriminal- und Rechtssoziologie).

**Dr.in Julia Lis** ist Theologin und Mitarbeiterin am Institut für Theologie und Politik und Mitbegründerin des Netzwerks Kirchenasyl in Münster. Ihre Arbeitsschwerpunkte sind: Kirchenasyl, Theologie im Kontext sozialer Bewegungen, Flucht und Migration, Kirche der Armen, Krisenproteste.

**Niall Cooper** ist Direktor der Church Action on Poverty (CAP, deutsch: Kirchliche Aktion zu Armut) in England, einem ökumenischen Netzwerk, welches sich mit der Bekämpfung der Ursachen von Armut befasst. In Kampagnen genauso wie in praktischen Aktionen, Basisgruppen und Projekten in Kirchengemeinden vor Ort setzt sich die CAP mit ungerechten Politiken auseinander, verstärkt die Stimmen von armutsbetroffenen Personen in der Gesellschaft und ruft die christlichen Kirchen zu ihrer Verantwortung. Die Arbeit ist darauf ausgerichtet, die britische Gesellschaft langfristig gerechter und solidarischer zu gestalten.

*„Eine Krise ist der Zustand, in dem das Alte abstirbt, aber das Neue noch nicht zur Welt kommen kann. In einer solchen Zeit der Zwischenherrschaft gibt es viele Gefahren, und es kann zu allen möglichen Krankheitserscheinungen kommen – es ist die Zeit der Monster.“*

(Antonio Gramsci)

*„Es ist richtig und wichtig, dass Gesellschaften denen helfen, die in Not sind. Das allein ist jedoch nicht genug. Unsere Projekte setzen an den darunterliegenden Ursachen an.“*

(Church Action on Poverty)