

Monday, 28.03.2022 16:15 - 18:00 CEST

Peter Gemeinhardt, University of Göttingen:

"Did late ancient Christianity depend on classical *paideia*, and did it ever get rid of it?"

Abstract:

What has education to do with dependency? In a famous letter, Jerome (d. 419) narrates that, in a dream vision, he was called before Christ and accused of still using "pagan" education: "You are not a Christian but a Ciceronian!" Why hadn't Jerome got rid of this heritage? The lecture approaches Christianity and classical (grammatical, rhetorical, philosophical) education from a praxeological point of view: while theologians claimed that Christianity should not use such education, Christian life depended on practices of reading, writing, and speaking. Was such dependency on previous tradition and practice of tradition really inevitable? Did Christianity not get rid of *paideia*, or did it consciously put it to good use? Struggling with such dependency contributed to a thorough transformation of classical education and enabled Christianity to survive the dramatic changes of its surrounding world.

Bio:

Peter Gemeinhardt (b. 1970) studied Protestant Theology in Marburg and Göttingen. In 2001 he received his doctoral degree from the University of Marburg ("Die Filioque-Kontroverse zwischen Ost- und Westkirche im Frühmittelalter") and was awarded his postdoctoral habilitation degree by the University of Jena in 2006 ("Das lateinische Christentum und die antike pagane Bildung"). Since 2007, he has been professor of Church History of the University of Göttingen, where he also served as director of the DFG-funded Collaborative Research Centre "Education and Religion" (2015–2020). Currently (2021–2023) he acts as Dean of the Faculty of Theology. His research interests include the interdisciplinary study of education and religion in Late Antiquity, the history of dogma from early Christianity to medieval times (especially Trinitarian theology) and Christian hagiography. His latest publication is "Geschichte des Christentums in der Spätantike" (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming March 2022)..