



EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
THEOLOGICAL FACULTY

Comenius University  
Bratislava



# CONFERENCE PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 4, 2023

## The Leuenberg Agreement in a Multicultural and Multireligious Context



COMENIUS  
UNIVERSITY  
BRATISLAVA



50 Years Leuenberg Agreement



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Foto: Tomáš Madeja



COMENIUS  
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BRATISLAVA

# About Comenius University

Comenius University (CU) is the largest and oldest university in Slovakia. CU was founded on June 27, 1919 and follows the university tradition of the Academia Istropolitana which was established in Bratislava by King Matthias Corvinus in 1465.

Comenius University is the only Slovak university to be regularly placed in the international rankings of the best universities in the world. With thirteen faculties, it offers the widest selection of study programmes (over 900) at three levels, and several of these study programmes are the only ones of their kind offered in Slovakia.





# About the ELTF CU



Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty of the Comenius University in Bratislava (ELTF CU) is one of the thirteen faculties of the biggest, oldest and the most renowned Slovak university – Comenius University in Bratislava. ELTF CU continues in more than four hundred years of tradition of Lutheran theological education on the territory of contemporary Slovakia.

The first President of the Czechoslovak Republic, Tomas Garrigue Masaryk, supported the efforts of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession to found a state supported theological institution. A "theological school" in Bratislava was re-organized and named the Slovak Evangelical (Lutheran) Academy. Its first academic year began on the 20th of October, 1919, on Konventna Street 13 in the building of the former Evangelical Lyceum. This date marks the official founding of the current Theological Faculty.

Following the assumption of power by the communists in 1948, the faculty was severely restricted by administrative regulations and practices of the communist authorities.

Following the "Velvet Revolution" in 1989 and dissolution of the communist state, the faculty experienced rapid and significant changes.



# General Information

## Research purpose of the conference

1. critical evaluation of the fulfillment of past expectations,
2. current challenges of ecumenical cooperation and
3. crisis of the ecumenical movement in Protestant churches.

The main purpose of the conference is to constructively evaluate the Leuenberg Agreement from several research perspectives, primarily in a multicultural and multireligious context.

## Deadline - Collective Volume

Please send your conference articles by the end of January 2024 at the latest  
Contact: [maros.nicak@fevth.uniba.sk](mailto:maros.nicak@fevth.uniba.sk)



# We support theologians **IN SLOVAKIA**



**Wilma S. Kucharek**

*Bishop*

*Slovak Zion Synod*

*Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*

The Rt. Rev. Wilma S. Kucharek has served as Bishop of the Slovak Zion Synod-ELCA since 2002 and, previously, as co-chair of the synod's Ecumenical and International Relations Committee. She and the synod have provided support for ELTF's building, furnishings, library, and programs; sponsored international conferences at ELTF; provided guest lecturers; funded translations and/or publications of theological works; provided PhD student stipends in Slovakia; supported theological study in the United States and abroad; and sponsored the hosting of ELTF students in American congregations. Bishop Kucharek is honored to be part of such a vital program benefiting the church and academia, and especially values the relationships that have developed with ELTF leadership, faculty, staff, and students. She is pleased that many of these program participants serve as leaders in Central and East European churches and in ELTF itself.





# Keynote Speaker

Könnte die Leuenberger Konkordie etwas beitragen zu den Dialogen der EKD mit der orientalischen Orthodoxie oder ist sie ein Relikt vergangener Zeiten?

## Martin Tamcke University of Göttingen

Martin Tamcke's research focuses on the Christian cultures of the Near East and the Middle East, with a special focus on interreligious coexistence and oriental-occidental relationships.

Prof. Tamcke regularly teaches as a visiting professor at orthodox and Islamic faculties abroad. In addition, he is a member of various scientific societies and is involved in various functions for the Evangelical Church in Germany.

Prof. Tamcke has a well-developed network of international and interdenominational contacts with leading figures in religion, politics and culture. He maintains relationships with about 40 international universities and thus enables the institute to have a lively international exchange of students and teachers.

Furthermore, Prof. Tamcke is head of the international Master's program Intercultural Theology and Director of Studies in the Euroculture program. He co-founded both courses. Tamcke is deputy director at the Göttingen Center for the Cultures of Europe and the Mediterranean in Antiquity (KEMA).



Prof. Dr. Dr.h.c.mult.  
Martin Tamcke

### Research focus:

Christian-Islamic coexistence  
Syrian Church History  
Oriental-Occidental Interaction  
Orthodoxy and Europe  
Intercultural theology

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UNIVERSITÄT  
GÖTTINGEN

# What and who to expect?

## William Henn, OFM Cap. Pontifical Gregorian University

**The Leuenberg Agreement (1973) and Faith and Order's Convergence Text The Church Towards a Common Vision (2013)**

Forty years after the adoption of the Leuenberg Agreement of 1973, the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, representing the hundreds of member churches of the WCC as well as non-member churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, published its convergence statement entitled The Church Towards a Common Vision in 2013. While the purpose and length of these two ecumenical achievements can and must be clearly differentiated, nevertheless they exhibit a number of points of contact which this presentation will explore, as each seeks, in its own specific and even contrasting way, to further the realization and manifestation of communion among the various Christian communities so as to cooperate in the fulfillment of Jesus' prayer "that all may be one" (John 17,21).



Professor of Ecclesiology

Pontifical Gregorian University

Consultant to the Pontifical  
Dicastery for Promoting  
Christian Unity  
since 2002

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**PONTIFICIA  
UNIVERSITÀ  
GREGORIANA**



# What and who to expect?

## Thomas Drobená Slovak Zion Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

### Constructing a Theology of 'Reconciled Diversity'

The concept of 'unity in reconciled diversity' arose within the World Council of Churches in response to realization that unity within the Church need not eliminate confessional differences between bodies. The first formulation of this concept pointed to the previous year's Leuenberg Agreement as an example of such fellowship. In 1977, the Lutheran World Federation was the first worldwide communion to officially adopt this understanding of the ecumenical movement's goal. However, even as this concept gained traction in the years following Leuenberg, it was not self-evident that this could be a definitive vision of visible unity. In the midst of the history of Leuenberg's reception by the churches, we see an analog in its ecumenical vision to what Lutherans consider the chief doctrine of the Church, itself: justification. A vision of unity in which differences are not obliterated but are rather reconciled provides churches more than simply an attainable goal. An ecumenism in which 'condemnations no longer apply where consensus exists' is an exercise for churches to experience the mind of Christ and to live the apostolic experience of reconciliation, not removal, of differences. It is also a confession of the 'personal' nature of unity in the Church as the body of Christ, as especially revealed in Ephesians 4 and expounded in Augustana VII.



Graduate of Yale University  
(M.Div. and S.T.M.)  
Graduate of Cambridge  
University in England (PhD.)

**Research focus:**  
Intersection of Christology and  
anthropology in Patristic and  
Reformation thought  
Ecumenical theology

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# What and who to expect?

## Hans Schwarz University of Regensburg

### The Leuenberg Concord in the Light of the Present Crisis of the Protestant Church

The Protestant churches in Germany are losing members at a rapid pace. Not be marginalized, the churches in Germany need to present a joint witness to the world. Such a joint witness is signaled in the Leuenberg Concord between the Lutheran, Reformed, and United churches. Yet the Leuenberg Concord goes beyond Germany to witness to the world not a unified and uniform array of Protestantism but the Protestant churches in Europe in reconciled diversity. In the face of secularism, the churches need a joint witness to be heard in the world. Yet this witness cannot be restricted to the so-called professionals. We must rediscover that every Christian must be able to defend his or her faith. This implies not only professional statements of faith but educating all the faithful to give credible account of their faith.



Professor of Systematic  
Theology

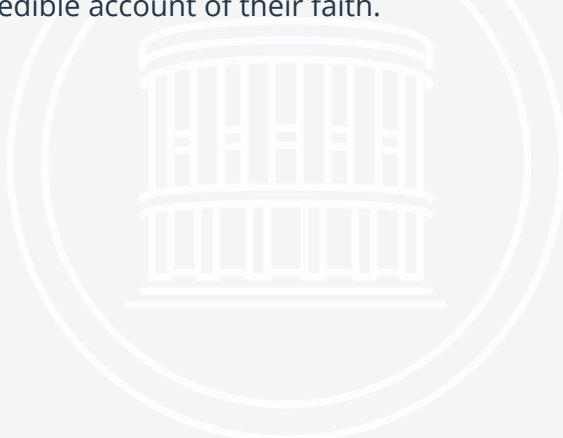
Institute for Protestant  
Theology

#### **Research focus:**

Relationship between theology  
and science  
History of theology of the 19th  
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Theology of the Reformers  
Young churches  
(especially in Asia)

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Universität Regensburg

# What and who to expect?

## Karl W. Schwarz University of Vienna

**Wilhelm Dantine - eine österreichische  
Perspektive zu "Leuenberg"**

The Lutheran systematist Wilhelm Dantine (1911-1981) was one of the fathers of the Leuenberg Agreement (1973), the half-century anniversary of which is reflected in Bratislava. He represented the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession and the Evangelical Church of the Helvetic Confession in the "Leuenberg Talks" and represented the "Evangelical Church A.a.H. Confession in Austria". He has repeatedly spoken of "the Austrian anticipation" of a communion between Augsburg Confession and Helvetic Confession acted "as a stimulating model" in the development of the Leuenberg Agreement. In my contribution I try to illustrate this thesis and to discuss "Austria's contribution to the Leuenberg Agreement".



Adjunct Professor for Church  
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Protestant Theological Faculty

**Research focus:**

Church and Religious Law  
Church History in Austria and  
Confessional History and  
Ecclesiastical Studies in the  
Danube and Carpathian Region,  
History of faculties and  
research

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universität  
wien



# What and who to expect?

## Robert Svatoň Palacký University Olomouc

### **The Leuenberg Communion of Churches as a Challenge to Protestant-Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue**

Ecclesiology has for many years been a key topic of dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the churches that claim the heritage of the world Reformation. On the one hand, a significant level of agreement has been reached, especially between Catholics and Lutherans, but on the other hand, there is no lack of voices that speak of the mutual incompatibility of Catholic and Protestant concepts of the Church. Since 2013 the Roman Catholic Church and the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe have been engaged in a series of consultations that have grown into an official theological dialogue. In light of these conversations to date, we can now ask: Is the idea of a differentiated and broadly articulated Roman Catholic-Protestant consensus in ecclesiology that would foster ecumenical communion among the churches a reasonable hope or a mere utopia? In seeking an answer, this paper will focus on three themes: the nature of the Church, the question of ministry in the Church, and the ecumenical model of unity.



Assistant Professor

Department of Pastoral and  
Spiritual Theology  
Institute of Intercultural,  
Interreligious and Ecumenical  
Research and Dialogue

Sts Cyril and Methodius Faculty  
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Palacký University  
Olomouc

# What and who to expect?

## Zdenko Širka Charles University in Prague

### Scripture, Confession, Church – (Un)Problematic Relation

In the protestant milieu the Bible as the Word of God has an uncontested position: carries, proves and discloses the Good News, at the same time serves as an authoritative text for various theological, ethical and social matters. But problems arise: lack of tradition or any central authority increases inclination toward subjective interpretation and focus on form ignores ecclesial reading i.e. acceptance that confession precedes the Scripture. This presentation will provide a hermeneutical analysis of the Leuenberg document "Scripture – Confession – Church" (2009) and compare it with WCC document "Treasure in Earthen Vessels" (1998).



Ecumenical Institute

Protestant Theological Faculty  
of Charles University

#### **Research focus:**

Hermeneutics  
Systematic theology Ecumenical  
theology  
Orthodox theology and  
Theological Ethics

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CHARLES  
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IN PRAGUE

# What and who to expect?

## Martin Vaňáč Charles University in Prague

**Nach einem Vierteljahrhundert noch ein Experiment: Synode der Leuenberger Kirchen in der Tschechischen Republik**

The lecture presents the Synod of Leuenberg Churches in the Czech Republic (founded in 2000), which was stimulated by the discussion about the formation of a pan-European synod of the Leuenberg Community in the 1990s. Its founder and first chairman was the evangelical lutheran theologian and ecumenist Prof. Pavel Filipi (1936-2015). Even after almost a quarter of a century of its existence, it remains an interesting experiment that can serve as an inspiration.



Ecumenical Institute  
Department of Practical  
Theology

Protestant Theological Faculty  
of Charles University

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Modern Church History  
History of Ecumenism  
Ecumenical Theology

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**CHARLES  
UNIVERSITY  
IN PRAGUE**



# What and who to expect?

## Pavel-Andrei Prihracki Comenius University Bratislava

### The Leuenberg Concord from the Point of View of Evangelical Lutheran Theology

This paper examines the Leuenberg Concord from the perspective of Lutheran theology. The Leuenberg Concord (1973) aimed to foster unity and cooperation among Protestant churches. The paper analyzes from a Lutheran standpoint the theological significance of the Concord, focusing on the doctrine of justification, sacramental theology, the authority of Scripture, and the implications for ecumenical engagement.

It also presents some critical stances from within the Lutheran Church and examines their validity.



Department of Systematic  
Theology

Evangelical Lutheran Theological  
Faculty

#### Research focus:

Natural Law  
Martin Luther

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BRATISLAVA

# What and who to expect?

**Daniel Rossa**  
**University of Bonn**

**“The Way to a Human's Heart is through Their Stomach” – or: Augmented Communion. Transcending the Logic of Doctrinal Agreement via Practices of Shared Meals**

In a first section, the paper briefly evaluates The Leuenberg Agreement as a paradigm shift from the logic of status confessionis to the logic of diplomatic pathos formulas and sees the 50 years of development from the logic of doctrinal agreement to practices of table fellowship as ecumenical success story. Nevertheless, a second section will outline that the concept of doctrinal agreement basal to ecumenical theology became a deadlock for ecumenism as well as for a theology and Christian life open to conviviality in a multid denominational, multireligious, multicultural, partly post-denominational and majoritarian secular or non-denominational society like in Germany. Instead, the (multi- and cross)cultural relevance of meal culture will be identified as a peaceable point of departure for celebrating communion and the transgressing and unifying dynamics of shared meals between denominations and ‘bubbles’ in which the Biblical meal narratives, the Jesus movement and the early church will be remembered. From this perspective a third section assembles some best practice examples of analogue and digital shared meal practices in trans-Leuenberg registers and highlights the aspects of staging (Inszenierung) and design (Gestaltung) as relevant.



Doctoral Student

Department of Systematic  
Theology

Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät

**Research focus:**

Negative theology  
Gregory of Nyssa  
Theology and aesthetics  
Hermeneutics of Worship and  
Liturgical theology

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# What and who to expect?

## Oliver Engelhardt

### Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe

#### Unity in Changing Diversity

During 50 years since the Leuenberg Agreement work, scope and focus of the Church Communion changed. Whereas in the first years doctrinal conversations were the only common work of the participating churches, today ethical topics, work on liturgy and diaconical issues are also addressed by the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe (CPCE). The changes in the Church Communion shall be analyzed with respect to the current strategy of the CPCE. A following overview of ways how to include the younger generation into governing church structures and international/ecumenical work of churches may give an outlook on future changes.



Church Relations

Communion of Protestant  
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(CPCE)

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50 Years Leuenberg Agreement



# Academic Section

September 04, 2023



**08:00 – 09:00 Registration**

**09:00 – 09:30 Opening of the conference**

**09:30 – 10:30 Keynote Speaker - Martin Tamcke (University of Göttingen)**

*Könnte die Leuenberger Konkordie etwas beitragen zu den Dialoge der EKD mit der orientalischen Orthodoxie oder ist sie ein Relikt vergangener Zeiten?*

**10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break**

**11:00 – 11:30 William Henn (Pontifical Gregorian University)**

*The Leuenberg Agreement (1973) and Faith and Order's Convergence Text The Church Towards a Common Vision (2013)*

**11:30 – 12:00 Thomas Drobena (Slovak Zion Synod,**

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America)**

*Constructing a Theology of 'Reconciled Diversity'*

**12:00 – 13:30 Lunch**

**13:30 – 14:00 Hans Schwarz (University of Regensburg)**

*Die Leuenberger Konkordie angesichts der gegenwärtigen Krise der evangelischen Kirche*

**14:00 – 14:30 Karl W. Schwarz (University of Vienna)**

*Wilhelm Dantine - eine österreichische Perspektive zu "Leuenberg"*

**14:30 – 15:00 Robert Svatoň (Palacký University Olomouc)**

*The Leuenberg Communion of Churches as a Challenge to Protestant-Roman Catholic Ecumenical Dialogue*

**15:00 – 15:30 Coffee Break**

**15:30 – 16:00 Zdenko Širka (Charles University in Prague)**

*Scripture, "Confession and Church - (Un)Problematic Relation"*

**16:00 – 16:30 Martin Vaňáč (Charles University in Prague)**

*"Nach einem Vierteljahrhundert noch ein Experiment: Synode der Leuenberger Kirchen in der Tschechischen Republik"*

**16:30 – 17:00 Daniel Rossa (University of Bonn)**

*"The Way to a Human's Heart is through Their Stomach" – or: Augmented Communion. Transcending the Logic of Doctrinal Agreement via Practices of Shared Meals*

**17:00 – 17:30 Coffee Break**

**17:30 – 18:30 Ecumenical Worship Service with Lord's Supper**

**18:30 Reception**

# Practical-pastoral Section

September 04, 2023



**08:00 – 09:00 Registration**

**09:00 – 09:30 Opening of the conference**

**09:30 – 10:30 Keynote Speaker - Martin Tamcke (University of Göttingen)**

*Könnte die Leuenberger Konkordie etwas beitragen zu den Dialogen der EKD mit der orientalischen Orthodoxie oder ist sie ein Relikt vergangener Zeiten?*

**10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break**

**11:00 – 12:00 Presentation** of the translation of the Leuenberg Agreement into the Slovak language

Lord's Supper in Ecumenical Discussions within the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe

**12:00 – 13:30 Lunch**

**13:30 – 14:00 Pavel-Andrei Prihracki (Comenius University Bratislava)**

*The Leuenberg Concord from the Point of View of Evangelical Lutheran Theology*

**14:00 – 14:30 Monika Beňová and Ľuboslav Beňo**

*Mission Strategies in Work with the Roma Community*

**14:30 – 15:00 Marián Kaňuch**

*Postmodern Mission in an Urban Environment*

**15:00 – 15:30 Coffee Break**

**15:30 – 16:15 Zuzana Matzová**

*Mentally Challenging Periods - what helps and what doesn't help to manage them better*

**16:15 – 17:00 Platform "You are in my heart", Diaconia of the Evangelical Methodist Church**

**17:00 – 17:30 Coffee Break**

**17:30 – 18:30 Ecumenical Worship Service with Lord's Supper**

**18:30 Reception**

# Youth Section

September 04, 2023



**08:00 – 09:00 Registration**

**09:00 – 09:30 Opening of the conference**

**09:30 – 10:30 Keynote Speaker - Martin Tamcke (University of Göttingen)**

*Könnte die Leuenberger Konkordie etwas beitragen zu den Dialoge der EKD mit der orientalischen Orthodoxie oder ist sie ein Relikt vergangener Zeiten?*

**10:30 – 11:00 Coffee Break**

**11:00 – 12:00 Presentation** of the translation of the Leuenberg Agreement into the Slovak language

Lord's Supper in Ecumenical Discussions within the Communion of Protestant Churches in Europe

**12:00 – 13:30 Lunch**

**13:30 – 14:00 Icebreaker Activities** - Getting to know each other

**14:00 – 15:00 Oliver Engelhardt (CPCE)**

*Unity in Changing Diversity*

**15:00 – 15:30 Coffee Break**

**15:30 – 16:15 Marianna Sláviková and Olga Kaňuchová**

*Ecumenical cooperation in the preparation of children and youth camps and events*

**16:15 – 17:00 Video** of young theologians who collaborate with the CPCE;

**Video interview** with a young theologian

**17:00 – 17:30 Coffee Break**

**17:30 – 18:30 Ecumenical Worship Service with Lord's Supper**

**18:30 Reception**





# Contact



## Maros Nicak

*Vice Dean, ELTF CU*

Maros works as a Vice Dean for Research, International Relations and Development at the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Faculty (CU). Maros studied evangelical theology at the Comenius University and catholic theology at the pontifical universities in Rome and the Vatican, did his doctorate in the field of oriental church history at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Göttingen and Post-Doc in Salzburg, Åbo and Uppsala. Within the European project ENLIGHT, he is responsible for WP5 (Outreach), within which he is also the main organizer of the Winter School: Fake News. Among other things, he is also the founder of the Regional Academy of the Comenius University.

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## Eva Guldanova

*Chair of the Ecumenical Committee*

Eva works as a Secretary for Foreign Relations at the General Bishop's Office of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Slovakia. After graduating at the Comenius University in Bratislava, she studied at the WCC's Ecumenical Institute in Bossey, then in Rome with the Melancthon Centre, and at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. She was a Co-President of the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women, a member of the CPCE's study group on social justice, and recently part of the editorial group of the CPCE document on the Lord's Supper.

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**2023**

