

# LANDAU PEACE LECTURE

## Walls around Trees?

## How to Protect Ethiopia's Church Forests

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The LANDAU PEACE LECTURES is a series of events organized by the Peace Academy Rhineland-Palatinate



Free admission – a link to the event will be sent to you shortly before the start of the event!

**Prof. Dr. Peter Klepeis**  
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\* You do not need a webcam or microphone, your picture will not be visible, only your login name of your choice

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Church forests are special places. For the local communities in Ethiopia the forests surrounding churches and monasteries are sacred as they are used for religious ceremonies and serve as burial grounds. Scientists, non-governmental organizations and governments are interested in the forests because of their socio-ecological value. The forests face several pressures, including population growth, expansion of agricultural land, cutting of trees for firewood and building material as well as intrusion by livestock.

To protect the forests against these “threats” of modernity, it has recently become common to build stonewalls around the church forests. But is this really the right approach? Who pursues it and what does that tell us about the assumptions that different actors make about nature-society relationships in Africa? The presentation addresses these questions and makes us rethink church forest protection.

Peter Klepeis is a Professor of Geography at Colgate University. His research and teaching focus on nature-society relationships and sustainable development. Drawing on perspectives from cultural and political ecology and environmental history, he studies land-use and land-cover change and natural resource management. Case studies include tropical deforestation in Mexico, land degradation in Chile, the spread of invasive weeds in Australia, forest recovery processes in the United States, and church forest protection in Ethiopia.

