

PAPERS AND PUBLICATION

Those who wish to present a paper should send a summary (400–500 words) by email to St. Andrew's Institute by 1 November 2018. The Organizing Committee selects papers for the Conference and sends invitations to the speakers. The full texts of all selected papers will have to be submitted by 1 December 2018. The working languages of the conference will be Russian and English.

Papers are scheduled for 20 minutes each. Some of the papers will be published in St. Andrew's quarterly *Pages: Theology, Culture, Education*. The registration form can be found on St. Andrew's website www.standrews.ru. Registrations, summaries and papers should be sent to:

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ORGANIZATION AND ACCOMMODATION

The Conference will assemble on Wednesday, 12 December for the opening ceremony in the evening. Participants will depart after breakfast on Saturday, 15 December. The organizers can assist the speakers in finding suitable accommodation in Moscow. Some scholarships to cover part of the cost of participation in the conference might be available upon request.

St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute

PATRONS: METROPOLITAN KALLISTOS OF DIOKLEIA, LORD RICHARD HARRIES,
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CULTURAL CENTRE
«POKROVSKIE VOROTA»
(MOSCOW, RUSSIA)

Invitation and Call for Papers

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

RELIGION AND NATIONALISM:
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

12–15 December 2018
Moscow, Russia

Visit our web-site
WWW.STANDREWS.RU

THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

Nationalism, understood as a striving for a nation's self-determination in political, cultural and other spheres, is a relatively modern phenomenon. Although some early examples of it can be found in ancient history, the prevailing model of sociopolitical life before the modern era was universalistic and usually took the form of empires which brought under one rule different peoples with different languages, cultures and often different religions. The latter factor, however, began to cause serious problems already in antiquity, when certain religions sought to become dominant and tried to suppress other religions, often forcing their adherents to convert to the "only true" faith. However, these imperial state religions were not normally perceived in ethnic or national terms, so all those who accepted the dominant official faith were usually considered equal in a religious sense, regardless of their ethnicity, language and cultural peculiarities.

With the formation of nation states in Europe, religion was often seen as the basis of national identity, as a central point around which the nation should be built. However, the identification of religion with nationality and the attempt to clothe it in national or ethnic dress, is self-contradictory for a religion like Christianity, which has universalist claims as a faith open to everyone and transcending all boundaries, including ethnic and national ones. That is why the emergence of "national" Orthodox churches led to a significant transformation of Orthodox ecclesiology, with the idea of "national church" replacing that of "local church". This sometimes gave rise to unacceptable tendencies such as *phyletism*, condemned by the 1872 Synod in Constantinople and the 2016 Pan-Orthodox Council in Crete.

Some extreme forms of nationalism in the 20th century proved to be very dangerous and led to horrific consequences. Nationalism is closely linked with violence, and this is another reason why religion should not identify itself with nationality or ethnicity, especially today when we see growing nationalisms in different parts of the globe and attempts to exploit religion as part of "national identity".

The idea of *nation* and *nation state* remains prevalent in the sociopolitical reality of the contemporary world. Indeed, today one can hardly think of this reality in other terms, despite the fact that the idea of the nation is mainly a modern development and that in today's globalized world the idea of the nation state is becoming somewhat vague, as we can see in the case of supranational associations such as the European Union. Like any ideology, nationalism is a transient historical phenomenon and is unlikely to prevail forever all over the globe.

Moreover, nationalism does not seem to be compatible with the central message of religions such as Christianity, Islam or Buddhism that have universalist claims and essentially do not define themselves in ethnic or national terms. But are these claims really substantiated? Can religion in fact transcend national limitations and exist in forms that are not determined by or derived from the concept of nation? Or, to put it theologically, is there such a thing as a "Christian nation" or a "Muslim nation"? Can a nation have a God-given religious mission? And does not the idea of religious "national mission" actually suppress free individual efforts to serve God in one's own way? What can theological reflection on the relation between religion and nation suggest here? These are the main issues to be discussed at the forthcoming conference.