

## PAPERS AND PUBLICATION

Those who wish to present a paper should send a summary (500 words at most) by email to St. Andrew's Institute by 1 August 2015. 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 October 2015. The working language of the conference will be English.

Upon arrival at the conference every participant will receive summaries of all the papers and the conference programme. Papers are scheduled for 20 minutes each. Some of the papers will be published in St. Andrew's quarterly *Pages: Theology, Culture, Education*. Registration form can be found on St. Andrew's website [www.standrews.ru](http://www.standrews.ru). Registrations, summaries and papers should be sent to:

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## ORGANIZATION AND ACCOMMODATIONS

The Conference will assemble on Wednesday, 21 October for the opening ceremony and the first session in the evening. Participants will depart after breakfast on Saturday, 24 October.

The Conference will be held in the recognised spiritual and academic centre – the Monastery of Bose. Accommodation and meals will be provided by the organizers.

### St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute

PATRONS: METROPOLITAN KALLISTOS OF DIOKLEIA, LORD RICHARD HARRIES,  
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ST. ANDREW'S  
BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL  
INSTITUTE

(Moscow, Russia)



MONASTERY OF BOSE

(Magnano, Italy)

Invitation and Call for Papers

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

HISTORY AND THEOLOGY:  
HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS  
AS A WAY TO CHURCH UNITY

21–24 October 2015

Bose, Italy

Visit our web-site  
[WWW.STANDREWS.RU](http://WWW.STANDREWS.RU)

## THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

The emergence of historical consciousness in the early modern era and its steady rise in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries raised a serious question for the Church: how should one interpret traditional Christian texts and teachings today, in view of the critical methods used by contemporary historians? The field of biblical studies turned out to be more flexible here: it managed (at least in Protestantism and Catholicism, but gradually also in the Orthodox Church) to fully integrate scholarly approaches and to become an inter-confessional (or even non-confessional) area. The dogmatic sphere, however, remains much more conservative in this regard.

The concept of developing doctrine, crystallized in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by John Henry Newman in his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, was adopted in Western theology, although it is understood in somewhat different ways among Protestant and Catholic theologians. This more or less common historical approach to theological issues opened a new way for inter-confessional dialogue over dogmatic controversies of the past, especially after Vatican II.

In the Orthodox (and Oriental Orthodox) Churches, however, the tension between theology and history remains much more acute. Attempts to reinterpret ancient dogmatic statements have always been perceived very painfully in the Orthodox Church that sticks to the definitions of the first seven Ecumenical Councils which took place in the first millennium of the Christian era. The Orthodox Church still thinks, as it did in the Middle Ages, mainly in the categories of universality and immutability. Even though some thinkers (such as the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev in his *Dogmatic Development of the Church in Connection*

*with the Issue of the Unity of the Churches*) raised the question of developing doctrine, they were rather hesitant about it and regarded development mostly as a logical explication of what had already been given in the divine revelation rather than a real historical process in all its complexity.

A lack of historical consciousness in the Orthodox Church and its weak self-perception as a historical (and not only a heavenly) entity often creates difficulties in developing theological dialogues with other churches. To be fruitful, dialogue should imply a shared method of discussing the issues of disagreement. A sober and honest historical approach, even if it cannot fully resolve an ancient problem that has many different aspects apart from the historical one, can nevertheless provide a firm ground for serious consideration of the problem and pave the way to a real dialogue. The 5-volume *Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (especially its second volume, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom*) by Jaroslav Pelikan, a famous church historian who became Orthodox late in his life, is a good example here.

Is it possible for the Orthodox Church to fully embrace contemporary historical approaches to theology or this can be destructive to its very teaching? To what extent can western and eastern theologians agree on the concept of developing doctrine? How is this development understood in different traditions? The aim of the forthcoming Conference is to discuss the historical consciousness in the Eastern and Western churches (especially today, when the world is rapidly changing and the Church constantly faces new challenges) and to clarify how this affects their theology and what possibilities for ecumenical dialogue can be opened here.