

## 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 15 November 2014. 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 2014. The working languages of the conference will be Russian and English.

Papers are scheduled for 30 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 Thursday, 11 December for the opening ceremony in the evening. Participants will depart after breakfast on Sunday, 14 December.

Accommodation and meals will be provided by the organizers.

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### St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute

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BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE  
(MOSCOW, RUSSIA)



at the



Faculty of  
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St. Thomas Institute  
(Moscow, Russia)

Invitation and Call for Papers

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

INTERCONFESSIONAL AND INTERRELIGIOUS  
DIALOGUE IN RUSSIA  
AND THE POST-SOVIET SPACE

11–14 December 2014  
Moscow, Russia

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

## **THEME OF THE CONFERENCE**

The dialogue between different religious communities in a multireligious and multicultural country such as Russia is indispensable today. Freedom of belief is one of the fundamental principles of any civil society (which Russia and other post-soviet countries claim to build today). Civil society guarantees lots of freedoms, including freedom of belief, but at the same time all religions put their own limitations on their adherents which often come into conflict with liberal freedoms.

Many religious communities in Russia (including the largest ones such as the Russian Orthodox Church) are under a strong influence of fundamentalist ideas. Those who hold such ideas often occupy high positions in their churches (bishops, priests, pastors, etc.) and actively spread their views among ordinary believers. This leads to intolerance and even open hatred towards other confessions and religions. In attempt to suppress their weaker religious “rivals”, larger and more influential communities often want to use the state. They denigrate other religious communities portraying them as those who undermine certain “national traditions”, or as “agents of foreign influence”, or simply as semi-criminal organizations that brainwash and rob their adherents. Needless to say, this kind of rhetoric engenders the situation of religious intolerance and poses a major menace to civil society, especially if this rhetoric is used in the situation of political crisis or religious/ethnic conflicts.

Equality of all religious communities before the law is one of the basic foundations of civil society. This equality, however, cannot be achieved solely by means of certain legal procedures. Religious communities consist of living people who may disagree with the civil law

considering their own opinions (be it fundamentalist or nationalist ones) to be sanctioned by God, by “national interests”, etc., and thus placing them above the law. The only way to eradicate this kind of attitude and to eliminate this conflict is to show such narrow-minded believers that their religious “foes” are also living people and not monsters, that their communities have their own history and the right to adhere to their own views and beliefs. In other words, it is a real dialogue between religious communities – interconfessional or interreligious one – that can contribute the most to resolving this problem.

In the course of the Conference, it is intended to address the following questions:

- The state of interconfessional and interreligious dialogue in today’s Russia and other post-soviet countries.
- Levels and principles of interreligious and interconfessional dialogue.
- Theological dialogue between different religions and confessions in Russia and other post-soviet countries.
- Which religions can claim to be “traditional” in Russia? Should such be given certain exclusive rights in this country? Is it possible to reconcile this with the principles of civil society? Is the term “traditional religion” correct at all?
- “New religious movements” and their relations with the “traditional” ones in Russia.
- Religious and secular discourses: how can they interact? Should religious discourse and rhetoric be allowed in politics, education and other “secularized” spheres of societal life?