



ST. ANDREW'S
BIBLICAL THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE
(MOSCOW)



POKROVSKIE VOROTA
CULTURAL CENTRE
(MOSCOW)

Invitation and Call for Papers

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

RELIGIOUS VALUES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

13–14 December 2023

Moscow, Russia

THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

Separation between religious and secular spheres of life has been considered the best way of avoiding religious conflicts in contemporary societies, often called post-religious. Religion is allowed to be present to a certain degree in different areas of public life but it is not allowed to impose its norms and institutions on a society that proclaimed secularization one of its major ideals. However, full separation is hardly possible both at a personal and a social level.

As one and undivided person, a believer cannot be separated into his or her “religious” and “secular” parts that would peacefully coexist with each other. When a believer’s religious values come to conflict with the secular ones, the former usually predominate because the believer associates them with the sacred and the eternal and considers them to be more important than secular values that refer to what is mundane and transient.

At a social level, it is also difficult to peacefully separate the religious and the secular. Religion can approve or tolerate certain secular values insofar as they do not go against religious values. But once a conflict occurs, religion will stick to *its* values and norms because it believes they are above secular ones.

As a rule, religious tradition sanctifies the values, norms and institutions it has produced. They often have a patriarchal, hierarchical and closed character, and seem hardly compatible with a contemporary secular society that seeks to defend gender equality, minority rights, openness, etc. Any possible changes in these values, norms and institutions religion considers to be a betrayal of its tradition and opposes such changes as much as it can, for which reason it is often difficult to reconcile religion with contemporary society. Despite the fact that many secular values themselves have roots in the Bible and Christian tradition, religion often perceives them as alien to it and even antireligious.

On the other hand, however, there are religious traditions that have succeeded in changing or modifying their norms and institutions in order to adapt themselves to the society in which they now exist, and this does not seem to have led such traditions to the loss of their identity. Moreover, such changes may help religious traditions reassess their past and look at their heritage with a critical eye. This can even strengthen their identity as they discard what has turned out to be a burden rather than a valuable heritage (e.g. antisemitism and nationalistic sentiments deeply rooted in some Christian traditions).

The aim of the forthcoming conference is to discuss to what extent the values of different religious traditions are compatible with the secular values of contemporary society and, if in some respects this compatibility is impossible or difficult to achieve, what can be done, on the part of both religion and society, to alleviate this problem and to allow religion to be a real part of contemporary society.

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 2023. 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 2023. 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 a book on the theme of the conference. The registration form can be found on St. Andrew's website www.standrews.ru. Registrations, summaries and papers should be sent to the Organizing Committee at bbi.standrews@gmail.com or standrews@yandex.ru.

ORGANIZATION

The working days of the Conference are 13 and 14 December. *It will be possible to present a paper online (via Zoom).*