

## 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 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 October 2014. 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 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 Monday, 20 October for the opening ceremony and the first session in the evening. Participants will depart after breakfast on Thursday, 23 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  
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(Moscow, Russia)



MONASTERY OF BOSE

(Magnano, Italy)

Invitation and Call for Papers

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

THEOLOGY OF COMMUNION

20–23 October 2014

Bose, Italy

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

## THEME OF THE CONFERENCE

The word *communion* is used in religious and secular discourses and embraces several meanings, all of which imply that those who are involved in communion have something they share, something in common. In its religious usage this word implies a “horizontal” and a “vertical” dimension, the former referring to the relations between people or communities, the latter to the relations between the human being and God.

People can share thoughts and feelings they have as well as actions they do, and in its religious or theological sense this kind of communion implies that these thoughts, feelings and actions are somehow related to the divine. Thus inter-human religious communion – be it communion between Christians or between representatives of different religions – is based on a common understanding of God or a common reverence for the divine mystery. This is the most fundamental level of inter-human communion, communion “at grassroots level” through which people – however different they are in their personal character, cultural background and religious views – can achieve mutual understanding or resolve their conflicts on the basis of love, compassion, tolerance etc. On a practical level, this can find its expression in common prayer, common works of charity, etc. This does not mean however that a deeper reflection on this kind of communion is not necessary. In fact, this kind of communion is in many aspects similar to ordinary, non-religious communion/communication between people, so that the theology of communion can learn a lot from secular discourse on the same subject. Yet any religious communion between people takes the idea of the divine, i.e. the “vertical” dimension, as its explicit presupposition, so this should be the starting point for theological meditation.

Communion between churches is another important aspect of the “horizontal” communion. This implies not only common sentiments towards God but also a *common faith* which is usually clearly formulated in credos and other authoritative statements. It is here that the theology of communion is often applied and has a long history going back to the first centuries of Christianity. However, ancient ways of solving the problem of division between churches (such as church unions between the Roman Catholic Church, on the one hand, and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches, on the other) are not usually considered today to be an appropriate model for the restoration of inter-church communion, so the theology of communion has to look now for new ways of overcoming existing obstacles and healing ancient wounds.

Both aspects of the “horizontal” dimension of communion – the inter-human and the inter-church ones – presuppose communion with God, “vertical” communion, as the basis that makes any communion between people and between churches possible. At the same time, it is the ultimate goal of any “horizontal” communion. Different forms of communion with God, from Eucharistic communion open to every Christian, to the communion which great mystics of Christianity and of other religions achieved through prayer, contemplation and ascetic exercises, always presuppose communion with other people. This is especially obvious in the case of liturgical communion but can be seen also in the case of solitaries who do not leave their cell, yet pray for the whole world. As 1 John 4:20 says, “those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen” (NRSV).

The aim of the forthcoming Conference is to reflect on different dimensions and forms of communion from a theological perspective, especially in view of ecumenical dialogue today.