

## VOLOS ACADEMY FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

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Volos, September, 15, 2015

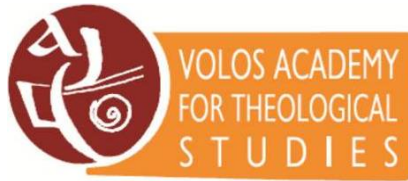
Dear Alexei

Dear colleagues of St. Andrew's Biblical Theological Institute

On behalf of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies, its Board of Directors and the Academic team, I'm very pleased to send you my cordial congratulations for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Andrew's Institute.

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century and even more in the early 21<sup>st</sup>, Orthodoxy has been confronted with many unprecedented challenges which call for a radical re-evaluation of its identity. The various transformations and rapid changes at the political, social and spiritual levels during those years have highlighted the need for a sincere meeting of the Orthodox Church and theology with the quests of the postmodern pluralist society (liberal democracy, language of human rights, etc), which often seems to move without a compass. The necessity of a meeting and dialogue between Orthodoxy and the surrounding world is a demand that has been successfully addressed by St. Andrew's Institute all these years.

Besides our close friendship, mutual respect with the founder of this Institute, Dr. Bodrov as well as our participation in various conferences respectively, many years now, since 2010, on the occasion of the epoch-making conference on "post-patristic theology and contextuality", the Volos Academy had an initiative to form an unofficial network of Orthodox institutions all over the world in order to better foster the ecumenical character of Orthodoxy and interreligious understanding of modern society, by opening Orthodox Church and theology into a constant and creative dialogue with various facets of contemporary world. St. Andrew's Institute and its Rector Dr Alexei Bodrov embraced and openly supported this initiative since the beginning. This did not come out of the blue, since this unique in kind theological Institute in Russia in the course of his 25 years history has decisively contributed to the Orthodox renewal in Russia, carving new paths towards closer cooperation with all the other Christian traditions in Europe in a perspective of mutual



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understanding. By being today a renowned educational institution which develops academic and publishing programs (more than 300 books) to promote high level theological education, interconfessional and interreligious dialogue in Russia, St. Andrew's combines the best of confessional and secular educational institutions, realizing in an age of conflicts and various political-social and ideological turmoil the ecumenical character and dialogical nature of Orthodoxy.

I would like then, to wish the institute and all members of St. Andrew's a fruitful future, hoping that we will be able again to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis

Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies |