

Protestant Political Thought

Call for Papers

Christian Identity in National,
Transnational and Local
Space: Perspectives from
Protestantism, Orthodoxy
and Roman Catholicism

University of Oxford
4-5 April 2022

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Christian traditions have historically negotiated their relationship to the nation within paradigms of the universal and the particular: holding together the idea of the one body of Christ with a variety of public expressions in local, regional, national as well as transnational spaces. Christian traditions can draw on this multi-layered sense of theo-political identity when they critically engage populist claims to Christianity which single out the national space.

The concept of the nation itself represents an ambiguity between the universal and the particular; providing a universalist political imaginary framed around the sovereignty of political communities, whilst also remaining profoundly dependent on its reception in particular social and political contexts. What remains underexplored, is how different Christian traditions – Protestant, Orthodox, and Catholic – articulate and critique the relationship between Christianity and the nation; how theo-political interests shape their response to politicised appeals to culturalised ‘Christianism’; and how alliances with populist movements reflect on the multi-layered character of Christian identity.

Papers and panel suggestions are invited from scholars in political theory, sociology, theology and religious studies, politics, history, anthropology, philosophy and law, and may refer to any of the nine categories below. Applications from early- and mid-career scholars are especially encouraged.

1. Nation between ‘church’ and ‘world’: liturgical and biblical references
2. Cultural references to Christian symbols and biblical narratives
3. Countercultural confessionalism and Christian ‘self-othering’
4. Civilisational and European ‘Christianism’ vs transnational religious identification
5. Apparatuses: networks, resources, activism, solidarity
6. Unholy alliances: populist movements and Christian religious and political leadership
7. ‘Love your enemies’: ‘Good people’ vs ‘bad people’ in the local context?
8. Interfaith and ecumenical partnerships in urban and rural contexts
9. The congruence and incongruence of local, regional, national and transnational spaces of identity formation

Please send a proposed paper title, short abstract (c.200 words) and short biography to marietta.vandertol@bsg.ox.ac.uk by **8 November 2021**. Decisions will be released by 30 November 2021. Short conference briefs of ca. 2,000 words are due by 7 March 2022. The convenors intend to pursue collaborative publications after the conference. All submissions and papers should contain original work that has not been committed elsewhere.

Covid-19

We intend to hold this year's conference in person at New College, Oxford. Up to 30 rooms have been pre-booked between New College and The Buttery on Broad Street to enable speakers and attendees who are considered vulnerable to limit their exposure during the conference. Please make yourself known to the conference organisers if you require a booking.

Due to rapidly changing circumstances in the UK and elsewhere, the organisers reserve the right to postpone the conference up to 4 March 2022. Please bear this in mind if you decide to make travel arrangements at an earlier stage as there are no funds available to reimburse travel or accommodation costs in the event of cancellation. We recommend that those travelling to the conference ensure they have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

Funding and embedding

This conference is generously funded by the Harold C. Smith Foundation. A limited number of subsidised rooms will be offered to speakers on the basis of need. Cost of travel will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and applicants must make a strong case that no other funding is available to them.

The conference is part of the project on Protestant Political Thought, now a collaboration between the Blavatnik School of Government and the Cambridge Centre for Geopolitics. This project features a series of workshops and conferences, many of which have led to collaborative publications, including in *The Journal of the Bible and its Reception* (forthcoming 2021); *Religion, State, Society* (forthcoming 2022); and the *International Journal of Religion* (forthcoming 2021). For more information about the project, email Mariëtta van der Tol (marietta.vandertol@bsg.ox.ac.uk) or Sophia Johnson (srcj2@cam.ac.uk)

This project is non-partisan and non-sectarian.

