

Protestant Political Thought

Call for Papers

Nationalism, populism and
Protestant political thought

University of Cambridge

15-17 April 2020

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Cambridge Institute on Religion and International Studies

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Many Protestant communities are divided over nationalism and populism. Some scholars have claimed that Protestant theological undercurrents legitimise support for right-wing populism, whereas others believe that their theology prohibits such associations. This international conference convenes scholars, church leaders and other practitioners to discuss ways in which Protestant political thought might be related to these burgeoning political movements. What strands within Protestant political thought have been and are being enlisted to legitimise nationalism or populism? Why has there been a close historical association between both Protestantism and the nation-state, and Protestantism and democracy, and do these associations persist today? What resources within Protestantism have been, are being or might be invoked to critique nationalism and populism? How does Protestant political thought compare with Catholic social teaching on this question?

CIRIS invites papers and panel proposals in three categories: 'Belief and belonging', 'Protestantism, neo-Babylonianism and democratic politics', and 'Responsibility of churches'.

Belief and belonging

1. Religion, national identity, and transnational affiliations
2. New identity cleavages and politics in a time of polarisation and (de-)secularisation
3. Protestant responses to diversity and the religious other(s): Muslim migration
4. Uses of history in right-wing populist movements

Protestantism, neo-Babylonianism and democratic politics

5. Right-wing populism and uses of theology and critiques thereof
6. Protestant conceptions of the 'common good', the 'good of the nation', and 'the will of the people'
7. Protestantism and the future of Christian democracy

Responsibility of churches

8. Lay participation and the building of democratic capital
9. Vatican II and the Benedict Option; 'counterculturalism' and role of the churches in contemporary democracy
10. New confessionalisation, intra- and interreligious dialogue

CIRIS invites proposals for papers and panels from scholars in any discipline, including politics, theology, history, religious studies, anthropology, philosophy, and law. Please send a proposed paper title, short abstract (c. 300 words), and short biography to ppt@ciris.org.uk by **18 November 2019**. Decisions will be released by 29 November 2019. Conference papers (c. 5,000 words) are due by **3 April 2020**. The convenors intend to prepare a special journal issue or edited volume, with full-length papers (c. 8,000 words) after the conference. All submissions and papers should contain original work that has not been committed elsewhere.

Funding and embedding

This conference is generously funded by the Harold C. Smith Foundation. Bursaries towards travel expenses and accommodation will be made available on the basis of need. Please indicate with your paper proposal if you would like to be considered for a bursary, and if so, your expected expenses. All bursary decisions are made independently of paper acceptances.

This conference is part of a two-year project on Protestant Political Thought at the Cambridge Institute on Religion and International Studies. This project features reading groups, a lecture series, workshops, and conferences. For more information about the project, email Mariëtta van der Tol (Project leader) mdcv2@cam.ac.uk or Judd Birdsall (Managing Director CIRIS) jbb44@cam.ac.uk.

A greener conference

Big changes happen through small choices. This conference intends to go greener by choosing environmentally-conscious catering, limitation of single-use plastics, and the use of eco-friendlier conferencing materials on-site. Please join this challenge by considering how your travel choices might be greener too.