

CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM, WAR AND HOSPITALITY

Christians in the Borderlands of Central and Eastern Europe in Times of Global Tension

18–19 September 2026

18.00 h – 16.15 h

Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Science, Pilies St. 8, Vilnius, Lithuania



Lithuanian
Koinonia
Foundation

Across the world, political movements are increasingly drawing on religious language, Christian symbols and claims to sacred authority in order to define national belonging, reinforce political power and, at times, legitimize exclusion, hostility or war. The resurgence of Christian nationalism is therefore not a problem confined to any one country or region. Russia's war against Ukraine, conflicts in the Middle East, growing political polarization and other global tensions demonstrate how closely questions of faith, identity, nationhood and political power have become intertwined.

Against this global background, the conference will approach these questions from the perspective of Central and Eastern Europe—a region shaped by intersecting histories, cultures, churches and political projects, and one in which the consequences of war and geopolitical tension are felt with particular immediacy. The experiences of its societies, churches and academic communities offer an essential contribution to the wider European and global discussion.

The conference will examine how Christianity can be transformed into a civil or political religion, how religious belonging and sacred authority are reshaped in wartime, and how Christian narratives, symbols and even alleged prophecies may be used to justify nationalist ideologies and military aggression. At the same time, it will consider the resilience of religious communities, the responsibility of churches in defending democracy and human dignity, and the ways in which Christians respond when their faith is mobilized for political purposes.

Rather than treating national identity or patriotism as inherently problematic, the conference will ask how legitimate forms of national belonging can be distinguished from ideologies that merge Christianity with exclusionary nationalism and political power. How is Christian nationalism expressed in different countries and cultural contexts? Is Russian civilizational exceptionalism a unique phenomenon, or does it reveal a broader danger—the transformation of Christianity into an instrument of civil and political religion? How should churches, religious organizations and wider communities respond?

Hospitality provides the conference with an alternative theological and practical perspective. It signifies more than the welcoming of a stranger: it is a way of resisting fear, polarization and the logic of exclusion. What can Christian hospitality mean in a time of war, forced migration and religiously framed conflict? Can it help communities listen across national, ecclesial and political boundaries, preserve their capacity for dialogue and build forms of solidarity that do not depend on uniformity? The program will combine academic presentations with panel discussions and structured dialogue in international groups. Contributions will address the global re-emergence of Christian nationalism, its local manifestations, religious belonging and endurance in Ukraine, the construction of sacred authority, and the responsibility of Christians when faith is invoked in support of nationalism and war. The aim is not only to analyze the problem, but also to identify possible forms of Christian and civic response.

The conference is being held in the context of the 2026 General Assembly of Oikosnet Europe, an ecumenical network bringing together Christian academies and laity centers from Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox traditions across Europe. This context will enable academic reflection to enter into direct conversation with the experience of institutions engaged in Christian education, social dialogue, reconciliation and the renewal of church and society.

The conference is organized by Oikosnet Europe, the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Science, the Orthodox Christian Institute for Education and Research, and the Lithuanian Koinonia Foundation. We are looking forward to an inspiring Discussion!

Katerina Karkala-Zorba (Oikosnet), Povilas Aleksandravičius (Catholic Academy), Fr. Gintaras Sungaila (Christian Institute), Fr. Vladimiras Seliavko (Koinonia)

Friday, 18. September 2026

From

17.30 h Arrival and Entrance

18.00 h **Welcome from Oikosnet and Hosts**

18.15 h **CHRISTIAN NATIONALISM, WAR AND HOSPITALITY**

Christians in the Borderlands of Central and Eastern Europe in Times of Global Tension
Keynote

Rev. Prof. Dr. Cyril Hovorun, *Sankt Ignatios College, University College Stockholm | Huffington Ecumenical Institute, Loyola Marymount University*

19.00 h **Russian Civilizational Exceptionalism and the danger of the Transformation of Christianity into Civil and Political Religion**

The Alternatives Christian Hospitality can offer in Wartime

Panel, Small Group Dialogue, Questions and Answers

Rev. Prof. Dr. Cyril Hovorun

Katerina Karkala – Zorba

Povilas Aleksandravičius

Fr. Gintaras Sungaila

Moderator: Heinz-Joachim Lohmann, *General Secretary of Oikosnet.Europe, Berlin*

20.30 h Conference Dinner at Lutheran Hall, Vokiečiu g. 20, Vilnius 01130 Lithuania

Saturday, 19. September 2026

09.30 h **Challenges in Times of Global Tension**

Perspectives from Germany and Northern Ireland

Just Peace Today

Protestant Peace Ethics in a time of global Disorder

Keynote

Dr. Friederike Krippner, *Protestant Academy of Berlin*

In the Face of Christian Nationalism: Learning

from the Past with Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Maria Biedrawa, *Church and Peace, Diemelstadt-Wethen*

Buzz and Questions and Answers

10.30 h **How is Christian Nationalism expressed in our countries?**

Small Groups

10.55 Uhr **Plenary and Feedback**

11.10 h Coffee Break

11.40 h **Christianity and Nationalism**
Perspectives from Central Europe

The War in Ukraine and Orthodox Christianity

Mapping the Narratives, Examining the Causal Factors, Understanding Teleology
Hybrid Keynote

Assoc. Prof. Tornike Metreveli, *University of Lund*

Global Trends, Local Realities

Interrogating a 'Christian Nationalism' concept

Keynote

Dr. Rosita Garškaitė-Antonowicz, *Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science*

The Fabrication of Sacred Authority

The "Prophecies" of St Lawrence of Chernihiv, Christian Nationalism, and Russia's War against Ukraine

Keynote

Dr. Serhii Shumylo, *University of Vilnius*

13.00 h Conference Lunch at Lutheran Hall, Vokiečių g. 20, Vilnius 01130 Lithuania

14.45 h **Christian Nationalism, War and Hospitality:**

Christians in the Borderlands of Central and Eastern Europe in Times of Global Tension

Final Panel and Plenary Discussion

Dr. Friederike Krippner

Fr. Vladimiras Seliavko

N.N., *Oikosnet.Europe*

Dr. Rosita Garškaitė-Antonowicz

Moderator: Deividas Zaicevas

End around 16.15 h

Speakers

Short biographies compiled from official institutional profiles

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Rev. Prof. Dr Cyril Hovorun

Sankt Ignatios College, University College Stockholm | Huffington Ecumenical Institute, Loyola Marymount University

Ukrainian Orthodox theologian and scholar of ecclesiology, ecumenism and public theology. He is Professor of Ecclesiology, International Relations and Ecumenism at Sankt Ignatios College and Director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount University. He completed doctoral studies at Durham University and has written extensively on church structures, political religion and the public role of Christianity.

SOURCES [Biography](#) | [Photo](#)



Dr Friederike Krippner

Director, Evangelische Akademie zu Berlin

Literary scholar and Director of the Evangelische Akademie zu Berlin since 2020. Her work brings together literature and culture, church and politics, and the practice of constructive public debate. She studied German literature, Protestant theology and history in Münster and Lund, earned her doctorate at Humboldt University, and serves in the synods of the EKBO and the Evangelical Church in Germany.

SOURCES [Biography](#) | [Photo](#)



Colin Craig MBE

Co-director, Dialogue for Peaceful Change Global | Peacebuilding practitioner

Northern Irish peacebuilding practitioner with more than fifty years of experience in reconciliation and conflict management. Together with Jaap van der Sar, he designed and piloted the Dialogue for Peaceful Change methodology in 2005 and has delivered training in more than twenty-two countries. His leadership experience includes the Corrymeela Community. He received an MBE in 1996 for his contribution to peace and reconciliation.

SOURCES [Biography](#) | [Photo](#)



Assoc. Prof. Tornike Metreveli

Lund University | European Studies and Sociology of Religions

Associate Senior Lecturer in European Studies and Associate Professor (Docent) in Sociology of Religions at Lund University. He earned his doctorate in sociology at the University of Bern and was a Research Fellow in Ukrainian Studies at Harvard University. His research examines the intersection of nationalism and Christianity in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, including Orthodox churches in Ukraine, Georgia and Serbia.

SOURCES [Biography](#) | [Photo](#)



Dr Rosita Garškaitė-Antonowicz

Assistant Professor, Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science

Political scientist working in comparative politics and political sociology, with research interests in religion and politics, Euroscepticism, the radical right and interpretive methods. She defended her award-winning doctoral dissertation on the role of Catholicism in everyday thinking about the European Union in Lithuania. She is also a researcher in the RELIDEM project on religious responses to geopolitical crises and democratic resilience.

SOURCES [Biography](#) | [Photo](#)



Dr Serhii Shumylo

International Institute of the Athonite Legacy | University of Exeter | Institute of History of Ukraine

Ukrainian historian of religion whose research focuses on the Orthodox Church in Ukraine and Eastern Europe and on the Slavic spiritual and cultural heritage of Mount Athos. He is Director of the International Institute of the Athonite Legacy, an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Exeter and a Research Fellow at the Institute of History of Ukraine. He has published widely on Athonite and church history.

SOURCES [Biography](#) | [Photo](#)