



C H R I S T I A N I T Y

AD 2054

international conference on  
the future of Christianity

16 / 7 / 2024  
Zagreb, Croatia



International scientific conference  
**CHRISTIANITY AD 2054**

Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies  
Jordanovac 110, Zagreb  
16 / 7 / 2024

**Organizer:** Institute for Culture of Thinking

**Co-organizers:** Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies, University of Zagreb / Faculty of Orthodox Theology St. Clement of Ohrid, Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje / Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana

**Sponsor:** Rhema Foundation

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Institute for Culture of Thinking, 2024.



# INTRODUCTION

## International scientific conference **CHRISTIANITY AD 2054**

Christianity AD 2054 is an international conference on the internal and external problems of Christianity throughout history, today and in the world of the future. The conference marks the beginning of a thirty-year long project of the same name, which will focus on interdisciplinary and interconfessional exploration of old and new challenges for Christianity, in light of the millennial anniversary of the Great Schism in 2054. This is a unique project on the global level, and as such it will include, among other things, annual international conferences, an international think tank for interdisciplinary research of the project subject, as well as a number of related research and educational activities.

This year marks the 970th anniversary of the Great Schism of 1054. This event, although historically symbolic in weight, largely determined the future development of Christianity and its role in the world, especially in the West. Moreover, the processes associated with this year can reasonably be considered the beginning of the West as we understand it today.

This year's introductory conference will cover a wide range of topics, from the historical reconstruction of key moments for Christianity throughout history, through internal philosophical-theological and political-ecclesial challenges, to reflecting on contemporary challenges and developing a vision of Christianity in the future. Christianity AD 2054 will bring together historians, philosophers, theologians and other experts from across Europe and the world, including: Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Romania, the United States of America, North Macedonia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

The language of the conference is English. All times in the program schedule are in the Central European Time (CET).



# PROGRAM

11:00 AM  
11:15 AM

**Valentino Findrik** (*Institute for Culture of Thinking, Director*)  
Greetings & introduction

## I. Historical framework

11:15 AM  
11:35 AM

**Trpimir Vedriš** (Croatia)  
*Nos Latini, Vos Autem Graeci: The Origins and the Development of the Prejudices Between Latin and Greek-speaking Christians*

11:35 AM  
11:55 AM

**Ivan Santica** (Croatia)  
*The Relations Between West and Byzantium From 5th Until 15th Century*

11:55 AM  
12:15 PM

**Aleš Maver** (Slovenia)  
*Throne and Altar in East and West: An Overestimated Difference?*

12:15 PM  
12:45 PM

**Cyril Hovorun** (Ukraine / Sweden)  
*A Myth of 1054*

12:45 PM  
1:15 PM

Discussion

1:15 PM  
2:45 PM

Lunch break

## II. Philosophical-theological framework

2:45 PM  
3:05 PM

**Sava Kokoudev** (Bulgaria)  
*Power and Charisma: Eastern Perceptions of Roman Catholic Theology in XIII and XV Centuries*

3:05 PM  
3:25 PM

**Daniel Patafta** (Croatia)  
*The Church Schism of 1054. A Western Perspective*



# PROGRAM

3:25 PM	<b>Milan Đorđević</b> (North Macedonia)
3:45 PM	<i>The Culture of Dialog after Byzantium. Theological and Philosophical Reflections</i>
3:45 PM	<b>Edward Siecienski</b> (USA)
4:15 PM	<i>The Theological Issues that Divided East and West in 1054: Azymes, Filioque, Primacy, Beards, and Clerical Celibacy</i>
4:15 PM	Discussion
4:45 PM	
4:45 PM	Break
5:00 PM	
	III. Contemporary framework
5:00 PM	<b>Petar Tomev Mitrikeski</b> (Croatia)
5:20 PM	<i>Unifying Model for the Relationship Between Christian Faith and Positive Science</i>
5:20 PM	<b>Octavian Machidon</b> (Romania / Slovenia)
5:40 PM	<i>Christianity in the Technocratic Era: Theological Reflections on How AI Is Shaping Humanity</i>
5:40 PM	<b>Nikos Kouremenos</b> (Greece)
6:00 PM	<i>Reconciling Tradition and Secular Authority: An Eastern Orthodox Perspective</i>
6:00 PM	<b>John Strickland</b> (USA)
6:30 PM	<i>The Great Schism as Cultural History: How Ecclesial Division Contributed to the Crisis of Christendom Today</i>
6:30 PM	Discussion
7:00 PM	
7:00 PM	<b>Stjepan Štivić</b> (Institute for Culture of Thinking, Program Director)
7:15 PM	Concluding remarks



**Trpimir Vedriš** (Croatia): *Mos Latini, vos autem Graeci: the origins and the development of the prejudices between Latin and Greek-speaking Christian*

Among the oldest and most poisonous non-theological factors that played a role in causing and deepening the great West-East schism, were prejudices based on the differences (whether real or perceived) between the Latins and the Greeks. The division is older than Christianity itself and it is by exploring its deep roots and centuries-long survival that one can comprehend the complexity of the historical circumstances surrounding the schism. Taking into consideration the most recent developments in imagology, the historiography of identity and identity formation in both Western Latin and the Greek Byzantine world of the Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, the threefold aim of the paper is to reconstruct how this mutual distrust came into being, explore the ways it grew and finally assess its role in the Schism.

**Ivan Santica** (Croatia): *The relations between West and Byzantium from 5th until 15th century*

The unity of the West and East of Europe during the Roman Empire came to a definitive end in the 5th century with the formal fall of the Western part of the Empire. The collapse or transformation, remains an eternal topic of historiographical debates. The Eastern Roman Empire continued to exist as the legal successor of Rome, but in its cultural and religious expression as a Greco-Oriental civilization. The presentation will describe the relations between Eastern and Western Europe, which varied over the centuries, from laying claim to all the territories of the former Western part of the Empire to accepting the new reality, especially with the restoration of the Empire in the West during the reign of Charlemagne. In the shadow of religious, political, and social conflicts, there was hope for the restoration of Christian unity, but attempts to achieve this were always burdened by calculated politics. However, conflicts over icons, wars over dominance in the Mediterranean, the struggle for religious and political supremacy between the pope and the emperor, the church schism, the Crusades, and ultimately, the deepening distrust between the two societies showed an increasing divide between the two conflicting civilizations. This state of affairs lasted until the end of the Eastern Roman Empire, with the fall of Constantinople into the hands of the Ottomans in 1453.



**Aleš Maver** (Slovenia): *Throne and Altar in East and West: An Overestimated Difference?*

My paper will discuss the much debated question of the historical differences in understanding of the relationship between the Church and political authorities in East and West. In it, I will argue that the starting point of the development is not very different. Christians in both the eastern and western part of the Roman empire experienced a quite long period when Christian communities were almost entirely ignored (or in worst case persecuted) by Roman authorities. This certainly formed a solid base for understanding of the Church and the Empire as two separate entities. On the other hand, there is a tendency, already visible in Romans, to declare absolute loyalty to the emperor. Also two important texts regarding this relationship from late antiquity, one written by pope Gelasius I and the second by the emperor Justinian the Great, don't show signs of very different understanding. Yet the practical political development surpassed the theory here. Whereas imperial power in the East remained strong even when nominally held by weak rulers, the secular power in the West was much weaker during certain times in the early middle ages. Thus, space opened for a more self-conscious appearance of the Church leaders, particularly bishops. Although the empire as well as powerful kingdoms were renewed in the West, the Church was able to retain a more independent profile ever since. Nevertheless, the ideal of "symphony" was never really abandoned.

**Cyriil Hovorun** (Ukraine / Sweden): *A Myth of 1054*

The paper will argue that the schism of 1054 was of little importance to its contemporaries. It grew large in the consciousness of Eastern Christians only after the Crusades and the fall of Constantinople. The year 1054 became mythologized in the era of confessionalism, which also framed the lifting of anathemas in 1965.

**Sava Kokoudev** (Bulgaria): *Power and Charisma: Eastern Perceptions of Roman Catholic Theology in XIII and XV centuries*

How does Eastern Orthodox Christianity perceive Medieval Western Christianity? What dogmatic and ethical principles strike against each other in defining and defending the Christian faith and identity? Two eminent



# SUMMARIES

hierarchs – John X Camaterus and pope Innocent III – argue about the meaning and structure of the Church itself, its unity, oneness and catholicity. Pope Innocent III has the ambition to unite the *Orbis Christianus* by two major axes – politically through the Crusades, theologically by the idea of *Primatus Romanus*. In dialogue Innocent III imposes his structural view by the idea of *ecclesia generalis* and *ecclesia universalis*, the One Church of Jerusalem, that is growing in space and time, later transferred to Rome, remaining one by nature and number, as it contains all universal churches beneath its patronage. The Universal Church has the ability to transfer its main core by migration of *primatus* and its *plentitudo potestatis* – the fullness of divine power that guarantees the unity of all. To Camaterus this scheme looks as a quite eloquent sign of power – a secular one – juxtaposed to the power to serve, demonstrated by Jesus Christ, and bequeathed to the disciples and apostles as a charisma of the Holy Spirit. The controversy power-charisma is penetrating the depths of the ecclesiological debate, showing us the permanence of its message through the centuries. The epiclesis debate is known as a marginal feature of the Eucharistic debate at the Council. However a further analysis of its core dogmatic grounds shows it as a quite profound topic to be discussed. The Roman Catholic position is based on the idea of divine power, transmitted to the bishops by a transfer of privileges, one of which is the ability to perform transsubstantiation of Holy gifts into Body and Blood of Lord Jesus Christ. This transsubstantiation is performed by the priest in the Mass at the words of *Institutio*, claim the theologians around John de Torquemada at the Council of Ferrara and Florence. The priest is acting in *persona Christi*, according to pope Eugene IV, which implements again the idea of divine powers, acting sacramentally through the personal representation and mediation of the cleric. On the contrary – st. Mark *Eugenicos* (of Ephesus) is elaborating the notion and usage of epiclesis – the Invocation of the Holy Spirit, Who is actually transmuting the Holy Gifts into a New Creation. The power of the words of the Lord, pronounced at the Last Supper, is only a prelude to the divine action of transmutation (*metabole*) – a charisma of the Holy Spirit for the united multitude of the Church of Christ. The two points of the Christian East-West debate show that the concepts of power and charisma have the potential to participate in the further dialogue and self-reflection of our way of confession of faith in the Holy Trinity and the Church as a Body of Christ.





**Daniel Patafta** (Croatia): *The Church Schism of 1054. A Western Perspective*

The year 1054 remains marked in the history of Christianity by the Great Schism of the Church into Eastern and Western branches. The processes that led to the schism lasted several centuries, and after the schism, both Churches became increasingly distant and often competitive with each other. Each developed its own perspective on the schism, as well as on the teachings and discipline of the other. This presentation will outline the perspective of the Western Church, that is the Catholic view of Orthodoxy, examined through several different historical phases: the period before the schism (up to 1054), the age of Latinization (12th – 16th century), the period of formation of unions (16th – 20th century), and a brief insight into the changes that occurred after the Second Vatican Council.

**Milan Đorđević** (North Macedonia): *The Culture of Dialogue after Byzantium. Theological and Philosophical Reflections*

Despite recent challenges faced by multiculturalism, the notion that dialogue inherently contributes to the internal cohesion of society persists as an accepted axiom. Dialogue is seen as a tool for reconciliation and building society, whereby its questioning and problematization are often dismissed as reactionary attempts for reinstating borders and for an alleged apocatastasis of power hierarchies of some dark ages from the past. In the upcoming exposition, I will diverge from this perspective and position the discussion in the field of religion within the areas of the former Eastern-Mediterranean empires – the Byzantine and the Ottoman. Namely, it is precisely in these areas that we notice an exceptional diversity in the religious sphere over many centuries. At the same time, this interreligious paradigm categorically rejects the prevailing notion of dialogue, construed as “discovering and experiencing the religious values of others to enrich, deepen, renew, and correct one's own faith”. Apart from the fact that the religious inclusivism dominant in the last half century remains absolutely inapplicable to the epoch in question, it itself suffers from such internal inconsistency that it functions de facto as a typical religious ideology. In this discussion, I will critically assess contemporary endeavors to portray the interreligious dynamics of past eras as a foundation for present-day multiculturalist-based dialogue between religions. Contrary to prevailing trends, I will demonstrate that attempts to engage in dialogue on doctrinal matters from the past are contingent upon the redistribution of



power positions within society. Nonetheless, the contemporary concept of dialogue is primarily rooted in the dialectic of power rather than in declarative expressions of goodwill and mutual acceptance. Finally, I will pose the question of whether it is at all possible, in the context of *conditio humana*, to establish a dialogue between religions that is free from ideological influences and the social hierarchy of power.

**Edward Siecienski (USA):** *The Theological Issues that Divided East and West in 1054: Azymes, Filioque, Primacy, Beards, and Clerical Celibacy*

The issues that brought about the schism between the Orthodox and Catholic churches are not necessarily the same issues that maintain it. In the weeks before July 16, 1054 more was written about azymes than about the filioque, and the primacy of the pope was not even mentioned by Keroularios as a reason for breaking communion with Rome. What was mentioned was the fact that the Latin priests wanted the Greeks to shave their beards, and that they despised marriage because they forbade priests to wed. Although today we might be tempted to think that these issues were only raised to justify the growing jurisdictional divisions that resulted from the Papal Reform Movement, for those involved in the dispute theology mattered, and thus the "other side" was worthy of condemnation for believing or doing the wrong thing. Thus, to understand both the genesis of the schism and its continuation, one must first come to grips with the theological issues that caused it and which have, for a thousand years, bedeviled all attempts to heal it.

**Petar Tomev Mitrikeski (Croatia):** *Unifying model for the relationship between Christian faith and positive science*

Scientific realism and Christian philosophy both acknowledge the Universe as real, rendering its material makeup amenable to science. However, naturalism deprives the Universe of any teleology defining its pertaining teleonomy as a product of an initial accident followed by continuous evolution (the ultimate contingency). This bears on a belief that nothing transcends the Universe that is upheld by scientifically predictable natural laws. In contrast, relying on Revelation Christian philosophy equalizes such naturalistic teleonomy with theistic teleology and sustains the concept of a Divine Creator Who upholds



all reality, observable or not. However, since positive science (supporting the naturalistic model) possesses no metaphysical abilities and metaphysics (backing the theistic model) conducts no scientific experimentations one can argue that both models bear no full epistemic justifications – each stance partially relies on beliefs. This makes the two models philosophically comparable and consequently poses a dilemma as to whether the naturalistic model dethrones the theistic one or theistic super(im)poses the naturalistic. Replacement of the theistic model with the panentheistic concept plausibly solves the dilemma since the latter easily super(im)poses the former provided that the naturalistic model can be super(im)posed by the theistic one. Such a unifying model links the metaphysical suppositions – epistemically justified through Christian faith (ontological level), to positive knowledge – justified by science (ontic level). Under such scholarly circumstances, faith becomes an epistemic tool.

**Octavian Machidon** (Romania / Slovenia): *Christianity in the Technocratic Era: Theological Reflections on How AI Is Shaping Humanity*

In this talk, I will analyze, from the standpoint of Christian theology, the challenges of AI increasingly shaping human identity and development. Drawing on Pope Benedict XVI's warnings against a technocratic worldview and technological misuse, among other theological and philosophical sources, I will examine the ethical and anthropological implications of AI's pervasive influence on contemporary society. Finally, I will reflect on how Christian spirituality can help maintain our humanity and freedom while living in an AI-augmented world.

**Nikos Kouremenos** (Greece): *Reconciling Tradition and Secular Authority: An Eastern Orthodox Perspective*

This presentation explores the complex relationship between Orthodox theology and secular authority, tracing historical interactions from the Byzantine era through the challenges posed by modernity and secularization. It examines theological foundations, such as the Church's eschatological perspective and its dual role as a spiritual and temporal authority. By analyzing case studies of different Orthodox Churches' responses to secular states, the paper highlights efforts to reconcile tradition with contemporary democratic



principles. Ultimately, it suggests pathways for maintaining Orthodox traditions while engaging constructively with modern secular societies.

**John Strickland (USA):** *The Great Schism as Cultural History: How Ecclesial Division Contributed to the Crisis of Christendom Today*

In the dissolution of modern Christendom, the Great Schism occupies a place as significant as the sexual revolution, the so-called Enlightenment, and the Protestant Reformation. What is more, such later developments were in no small way outcomes of that earlier and primordial division. By viewing modernity from the perspective of the first millennium, we are better equipped to offer healing and renewal to Western culture.

# NOTES



