

CIHEC (*Commission Internationale d'Histoire et d'études du Christianisme*)

announces a **call for papers** for its annual conference in 2012:

**Religion and Resistance in Europe from Middle Ages to 21<sup>st</sup> century.**

**University of Tartu, Estonia, 11-13 June 2012**

A tendency to divorce religion from power was a product of unique Western post-Reformation way of thinking, as Talal Asad reminds us, while conceptualisation of it primarily as a symbolic system deprives religion of its historical character. While, historically, the role of religion in sustaining existing power relations cannot be denied, one should not underestimate the potential of religion to mobilise resistance and protest, challenge political power and endure attempts at bringing non-conforming individuals and communities in line with the mainstream. Resistance could be based on tradition, the Bible, or be inspired by millenarian beliefs and eschatology. Churches could effectively organise or inspire resistance to foreign invasions. Attempts to impose a religion of colonizers over the native one, or the religion of the majority over the religion of the minority could also trigger robust resistance to attempts of assimilation. The forces of modernity and secularisation have affected most mainstream churches triggering conservative response and affirmation of faith by church authorities and ordinary people. Resistance to dictatorships and totalitarian regimes could often come from a religious community. Liberalisation, pluralisation of society, immigration and political affirmation of human rights too led to strong disapproval from the conservative religious groups.

The conference organisers solicit contributions that would engage on the theme of religion and resistance in specific historical and cultural contexts and would address (but not limited to) any of the following aspects of the conference theme:

- unique means of religion, its symbolic repertoire to mobilise social protest (prophecy, sermons, apocalyptic imagery, public processions, etc.);
- Church reforms (Protestant, Catholic or Orthodox) and resistance;
- the role of religion in dissidence and resistance to dictatorships and totalitarian regimes;
- various forms of resistance: non-conformism, civil disobedience, "everyday resistance", violent resistance, or self-inflicted violence;
- resistance to secularisation and to changing values in society;

The papers that address contemporary developments will be accepted as long as they also provide a historical perspective.

The language of the conference is English. The length of papers 30 minutes.

***Please send abstracts of papers of 300 words maximum to the organisers: Riho Altnurme [riho.altnurme@ut.ee](mailto:riho.altnurme@ut.ee) and Irina Paert [irina@paert.com](http://irina@paert.com) before 01.01.2012.***

The organizers will publish the papers that succeeded in the peer-review process in the special issue of the journal "Usuteaduslik Ajakiri / Theological Journal" ([www.usuteadus.ee](http://www.usuteadus.ee)).

CIHEC, founded in 1952, is the international organisation of historians of Christianity, and is affiliated to CISH – the International Congress of Historical Sciences. CIHEC comprises thirty-one national commissions. More: <http://www.history.ac.uk/cihec/>

**Tartu** is a home to one of the oldest universities in Eastern Europe. It was founded by the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus in 1632. Today University of Tartu is the only classical university in Estonia. It is a leading centre of research and training, being counted among the 400 best universities of the world by Times. The city of Tartu is a charming university town whose relaxed and sophisticated atmosphere creates a perfect environment for scholarly conversations. Tartu is well-served with bus and train connection with the city of Tallinn and its Lennart Meri Airport. There are also flights to Tartu from Tallinn (Estonian Air) and Helsinki (Flybe, in connection with Finnair). More: [www.tartu.ee](http://www.tartu.ee); [www.ut.ee](http://www.ut.ee).