



UNIVERSITY  
OF PUBLIC  
SERVICE  
LUDOVIKA



# Christian Realism

## *Squaring the Circle?*

International conference organized by  
the **MCC Center for Constitutional Politics**  
and the **Ludovika University of Public Service**

keynote speakers

**Robin Lovin** *(Southern Methodist University)*

**Lord Biggar** *(University of Oxford)*





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The resurgence of Christian realism in recent years is not a coincidence; as if the international crises and the changing world order would automatically entail a growing discourse on this perspective and its leading figure, Reinhold Niebuhr, in the United States. In these perplexing times, especially in the conflicts that arise (e.g. the Russian-Ukrainian war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict), the idea of human sinfulness is plausible, and the realistic understanding of the social and political situation is much more significant. The latter is not in order to represent an amoral or cynical stance in politics, but rather to have the ability to comply with the principle of Christian social responsibility.

Christian realism has been conceptualized in several ways. Apart from Robin W. Lovin's comprehensive assessment about the "combination of different 'realism' – political, moral and theological," Roger Shinn clarifies the term by interpreting the words "Christian" and "realist" separately first and then connects them. But is it indeed possible to reconcile Christianity and realism? If yes, is it a harmonious relationship, or hidden tensions are present? And what is realism in this sense? A political realism? Which political realism?

This conference explores both theoretical inquiries into the relationship between Christianity, realism, and Christian realism, as well as historical analyses. It will examine Christian realism as a policy perspective, particularly in the context of foreign affairs, and discuss its contemporary significance.

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### May 28, Wednesday

Venue: Mathias Corvinus Collegium (1113 Budapest, Tas vezér utca 3-7.)

14.00 Welcome speech

14.15 Keynote speech

■ **Robin Lovin** (Southern Methodist University):

**Human Nature and the Irony of History**

15.30 Coffee break

15.45 **Tracing the Roots: The Evolution and Essence of Christian Realism I.**

■ **Mark Edwards** (Spring Arbor University):

Christian Realism or Christian Realisms? Contesting a Concept

■ **Eric D. Patterson** (Regent University):

Christianity and Power Politics: Change and Continuity in Three Generations of Christian Realism

16.45 Coffee break





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### 17.00 Tracing the Roots: The Evolution and Essence of Christian Realism II.

- **Matt Andersen** (University of Oxford):  
Christian Realism: The Need for a Genealogical Approach
- **Ferenc Hörcher** (Ludovika UPS):  
Traditions of Catholic Political Realism

18.00 – Closing

### May 29, Thursday

Venue: Ludovika University of Public Service / Side Building  
(1083 Budapest, Ludovika tér 2.)

### 9.30 Keynote speech

- **Lord Biggar** (University of Oxford):  
**The Christian Marriage of Morality and Reality: Just War Thinking**

10.45 – Coffee break

### 11.00 The Niebuhr Perspective on Christian Realism

- **Dallas Gingles** (Southern Methodist University):  
Christian Realism and the Irony of American Postliberalism
- **Ádám Darabos** (Ludovika UPS):  
The Making of a Realist Augustine: Niebuhr's Interpretation of Augustine

12.00 – Lunch

### 13.00 Christian Realism Across Eras: the Amsterdam School and the Cold War

- **Robert Joustra** (Redeemer University):  
Middle Power Christian Realism: The Curious Case of Abraham Kuyper and the Amsterdam School
- **Andrew Finstuen** (Boise State University):  
Christian Realism and Neo-Evangelicalism in the Cold War Era

14.00 – Coffee break





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### 14.15 Divine Diplomacy: Exploring Christian Realism in Global Affairs

- **Joseph Capizzi** (Catholic University of America):  
Christian Realism and International Law
- **Joshua Mauldin** (Center of Theological Inquiry):  
America's Role on the World Stage: Insights from Christian Realism

15.15 – Coffee Break

### 15.30 Tradition and Belief: Conservative Realism and Political Religions

- **Gergely Szilvay** (PPCU):  
Conservative Christianity: Between Political Idealism and Realism
- **Tamás Nyirkos** (Ludovika UPS):  
The Realist Critique of Political Religions

16.30 – Closing

If you haven't done so yet,  
**Please register here**



The conference has been organized by the  
**MCC Center for Constitutional Politics** and the  
**Research Institute for Politics and Government of the Ludovika**  
**University of Public Service,**  
and is supported by the **Danube Institute.**

Organizing committee:

**Ferenc Hörcher** (Ludovika University)  
**Ádám Darabos** (Ludovika University)  
**Kálmán Pócza** (MCC Center for Constitutional Politics)





Online program

**28 May 2025**

**Mathias Corvinus Collegium**

Tas vezér utca 3-7., Budapest 1113

**29 May 2025**

**Ludovika University of Public Service**

(Side Building)

Ludovika tér 2., Budapest 1083