



International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague IBTS DIRECTORS' CONFERENCE JAN 30TH - FEB 3RD 2012

DESPISE NOT THE COUNSEL OF THE POOR: CONVICTIONS ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, THE POWER OF STATES AND THE STATE OF THE POWERS

1612 marks the 400th anniversary of the first publication of Thomas Helwys' book *A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity*, often cited as the first publication to address issues of religious freedom.

To celebrate this, the Thomas Helwys Centre for Religious Freedom is holding a conference from Jan 30th - Feb 3rd 2012 at IBTS in Prague. The title of our conference comes from Helwys' dedicatory handwritten note to the King, where he calls on the King to allow freedom of conscience for all his subjects. Since then freedom of religion has been a key Baptist conviction. In the conference we will address questions such as the following.

- What does this conviction mean today and what are the theological grounds for it?
- How are we called to witness to the State, and what practical and theological tools do we have to help us?
- What are the practical and theological threats to religious freedom today?
- What are the implications for the life and mission of the church today of a commitment to religious freedom?
- Is this an ultimate freedom and if not, what are its limits?

Among confirmed speakers at the Conference are Professor Malcolm Evans, a leading international expert on the legal dimension of religious freedom, and Raimundo Barreto, head of the Division on Freedom and Justice of the Baptist World Alliance.

We welcome further submissions for papers on the theme of this conference. Please contact in the first instance Dr Tim Noble, co-director of the Thomas Helwys Centre on tnoble@ibts.eu. If you would like to take part in the conference, you can book a place by contacting reception@ibts.eu