***Magna Carta, Religion and the Rule of Law***

***An International Conference at the Temple, London***

***Saturday 7 June 2014***

***Convenors:***

***Robin Griffith-Jones and Mark Hill QC,***

***with Professor Robert Blackburn***

The Temple Church, in association with the Institute of Contemporary British History, the Dickson Poon School of Law and the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at King’s College, London, invites you to this international conference in preparation for the 800th Anniversary of *Magna Carta*, 2015.

Irreducible constraints on governmental authority were articulated in *Magna Carta* 800 years ago. The defence of individual liberty will be addressed through time and across countries, with historical and contemporary contributions from the United Kingdom and overseas. The focus of this conference, however, is the importance of *Magna Carta* for religious communities both historically and today.

King John sealed *Magna Carta* ‘for the honour of God and the exaltation of Holy Church and the reform of our realm’. His advisors included two archbishops and seven bishops. The Charter guaranteed the freedom of the English Church, the principle of fair trial under the rule of law, and enforceable restraints on the king’s power. Eight hundred years later, these principles secure the rights of every individual to enjoy religious freedom and safeguard the institutional independence of all religious organisations. The two billion people in the world who live in Common Law jurisdictions are the Charter’s direct heirs; and every modern constitution and human rights document has adopted its content.

The Charter challenges today’s faith communities to examine the part they might play in the development of a liberal democracy. Hence the conference-speakers, from many traditions, consider how the principles enunciated in *Magna Carta* have influenced the State’s approach to religion, and how religions can and should be participants in civil society. The landscape has changed beyond recognition, from the universality of the ‘English Church’ in 1215 to the religious diversity and multi-culturalism of the twenty-first century; but ‘the honour of God and reform of the realm’ are still close to the heart of every religious community.

The Temple was King John’s London headquarters in 1214-1215. From here he conducted vital negotiations and issued a succession of preliminary charters. We look forward to welcoming you to the Temple in June for this important discussion of *Magna Carta* and religion; and we hope that the day will provide a springboard for the Charter’s celebration by all the UK’s religious communities in 2015.

We will be glad to offer any further help we can, before or at or after the Conference, towards your own commemoration of the Charter.

Venue: Inner and Middle Temple Halls

Time: 9.00am – 6.00 pm.

CPD points confirmed – 6 hours.

Conference Fee: £45, Students: £15 (to include coffee, lunch and tea).

Lunch menu: halal chicken, poached salmon or vegetarian casserole.

Booking: [Magna Carta, Religion and the Rule of Law Tickets, London - Eventbrite](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/magna-carta-religion-and-the-rule-of-law-tickets-10851652585)

Map: [The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple](http://www.innertemple.org.uk/getting-here)

Access to the Temple on Saturdays via Tudor Street.

Enquiries over the papers: Robin Griffith-Jones, Master of the Temple,

master@templechurch.com 0207 353 8559

Enquiries over logistics, dietary requirements, etc: Catherine de Satgé,

catherine@templechurch.com, 0207 353 8559

Programme: see page 2.

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**Programme**

Keynote Address:

*Magna Carta*

*The Rt Hon. The Lord Judge of Draycote, former Lord Chief Justice of England and Wales*

*Magna Carta* and the Law of Nations

*Richard Helmholz, Chicago University*

‘The Freedom of the English Church’: From Langton to the Tudors:

*Margaret McGlynn, Western University, Ontario*

Freedom of Belief in an Age of Religious Pluralism: The Legacy of History for the Rule of Law

*David Little, Harvard University and Georgetown University*

Personal Liberty: Changing Conceptions in English Jurisprudence

*Sir John Baker QC, Cambridge University*

Democracy and Religions: Lessons from the Indian Sub-Continent

*Sudipta Kaviraj, Columbia University, New York*

The Development of Human Rights Thought from *Magna Carta* to the Universal Declaration on Human Rights: *Sir Rabinder Singh, Justice of the High Court, London*

Accommodating Religious Law in the UK:

*Maleiha Malik, King’s College London*

From ‘the Freedom of the English Church’ to ‘Defender of Faith(s)’: Establishment and Equality:

*Simon Lee, Belfast University and Cambridge Theological Federation*

*Concluding Remarks*

Strengthened by the Rule of Law: The Message of *Magna Carta* for Religions Today

*The Rt Hon. Lord Dyson, Master of the Rolls*