

# Search for Resonance: the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church's quest for relevance and resonance amidst the complexities of contemporary societal discourse.

## Content

University of Latvia  
Conf.28-29, 2024  
Exploring Conservatism, Liberalism and Religion.

Janis Melnikovs  
Janis.melnikovs@gmail.com

Abstract for the Conference at the University of Latvia:

Search for Resonance: the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church's quest for relevance and resonance amidst the complexities of contemporary societal discourse.

In a world increasingly shaped by war, political tensions, economic challenges, and the rise of populism, societies are witnessing a notable shift toward both conservative and liberal values. This evolving landscape prompts a critical question: What role does religion play in shaping these dynamics? Recent trends reveal a resurgence of religion in political and public arenas, often bolstering conservative ideals. At the same time, the discourse on liberalism—particularly surrounding individual rights and social structures—remains a powerful counterforce.

My investigation examines the role of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in shaping Latvia's political debates, revealing diverse opinions within the church about its influence on public policy. While some members actively oppose specific engagements and others prefer to avoid polarising issues, the church continues to assert itself as a moral compass in society. Drawing on Rosa's theories of public discourse and resonance, this study frames the church as a forum for deep, meaningful engagement with faith and society, suggesting that resonant experiences within the church can contribute to individual and communal well-being.

Analysis of interviews reveals the church's ongoing struggle to maintain its values in a modern, secular world, where tensions between individual and institutional beliefs emerge. These findings highlight the church's quest for relevance and resonance amidst the complexities of contemporary societal discourse. I seek to explore the intersections of neoconservatism, liberalism, and religion, offering a platform for discussing how these forces shape our collective future. We invite participants to reflect on how religious influences and contrasting values continue to mould societal dynamics.

invite participants to reflect on how religious influences and contrasting values continue to mould societal dynamics.

**Primary author:** MELNIKOVS, Janis (University of Latvia)

**Presenter:** MELNIKOVS, Janis (University of Latvia)

Submitted by **MELNIKOVS, Janis** on **Wednesday, October 16, 2024**