

A Christian University: Christianity and the Disciplines

The project began with Gavin D'Costa's book, *Theology in the Public Square* (2005) which was an exploration of the role of a Catholic university in the public square and the importance of theological discourse. The book was ecumenically intended, acknowledging that different Christian traditions had developed differing approaches, often overlapping, regarding this matter. The Reformation had also generated an important set of arguments taken up by theologians and philosophers in the USA and Europe. D'Costa's book tried to recover the Catholic perspective on this matter but drew from Reformed theologians and philosophers. His leading lights in this work were Stanley Hauerwas, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Pope John Paul II. He sought to show that the development of the University had Christian roots and its secularization was not inevitable. He also tried to argue that the idea of a Christian university was an important contribution to public debate on a wide range of matters.

The next step was to engage with two groups: philosophers, who were traditionally seen as handmaidens to theology; and non-theologians specialist academics to reflect on what their subjects might look like if they were theorised and practiced in a Christian university or within secular universities that permitted intellectual pluralism. This led to four editors developing the project: Professors: Oliver Crisp (succeeded by Billy Abrahams), Gavin D'Costa, Peter Hampson; and Dr Mervyn Davies RIP (succeeded by Dr Zoë Lehmann Imfeld).

Bloomsbury accepted this project as a series with two initial books related to the two groups mentioned above: philosophers; and those from various disciplines. This resulted in two edited collections that have been well received: *Theology and Philosophy. Faith and Reason* (2011) and *Christianity and the Disciplines: The Transformation of the University* (2012). Both had a foreword from Archbishop Rowan Williams. In the light of this process, it was clear that complex and detailed challenges lay ahead in three particular ways: to show that this project was not a sectarian concern, but one that could contribute to the public good of secular democracies and other forms of social arrangement; to give as much narrative detail to the plausibility of engaging different disciplines from a Christian perspective both in intellectual and methodological terms, within Christian or secular universities; and to develop the ecumenical base of the project.

To further this end, two of the editors developed an existing project which has just been published: *Theology and Literature after Postmodernity* (2015; eds. Lehmann Imfeld, Hampson & Alison Milbank). We also have a forthcoming volume from Andrew Sloane, *Christianity and Medicine*. We are keen to develop the series to engage with what has been traditionally called: the humanities; social sciences; and natural sciences - and to engage self-consciously denominational-specific approaches when appropriate, as well as ecumenical approaches, to the subject. The audience intended are both Christians and secular intellectuals concerned with the future of knowledge, its transmission, meaning and purpose.

Please do contact us if you have projects that might fit under this broad umbrella. It will also help establish a series which will get the particular books more noticed and well known.

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