

AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION ALLIANCE

CONFERENCE

CALL FOR PAPERS

**Changing Worlds: Purposive formation, pluralism and
paradigm clash – past and present**

on

9-10 September 2021

at

EXCELSIA COLLEGE CAMPUS

69-71 Waterloo Road, Macquarie Park NSW 2113 Australia

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



DR STAN ROSENBERG

CCCU & Scholarship and
Christianity in Oxford



DR PERRY GLANZER

Baylor University,
Texas



DR BETH GREEN

Tyndale University College,
Toronto

Purposive formation is central to the functioning of social institutions, including the family, church and education. Yet the goals and processes of formation are contested, particularly under conditions of social plurality and when incommensurate paradigms are in focus. In particular, Christian higher education institutions face challenges relating to the development of students in the context of post-modern society. There is often a clash of worldviews and 'social imaginaries' between traditional Christian and secular members of western cultures (Charles Taylor, 2004; James K.A. Smith, 2012)^{1, 2}. Such contrasting ways of life have been described as 'cultural paradigm clashes' (Calabrese, 2013)³. In practice these clashes pose questions about living distinctively as Christians whilst maintaining genuine relationships 'in the world'; about engaging in social discourse whilst refraining from both arrogance and unthinking submission; about remaining true to one's Christian faith whilst learning deeply about the beliefs and practices of others.

1 Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).

2 James K.A. Smith, *Beyond Integration: Re-Narrating Christian Scholarship in Postmodernity*, Chapter 1 in *Beyond Integration: Inter/Disciplinary Possibilities for the Future of Christian Higher Education*, Todd C. Ream, Jerry Pattengale, and David L. Riggs (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2012), 19-48.

3 Joseph D. Calabrese, *Peyote, Cultural Paradigm Clash, and the Multiplicity of the Normal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

When the social world is pluralistic and 'others' are themselves sharply differentiated by cultural background, religion, ideology, sexuality and other ways of being in the world, then the work of Christian formation includes locating oneself within such diversity. Yet the context of formation, within the family, church, college or other institutions, will inevitably emphasize different foci of formation from the dimensions of personal, spiritual and professional formation and the domains of cognitive, affective and conative formation. Purposive formation, then, also raises questions about identity, wholes, and the integration of multiple selves for living in the world. These questions about formation are relevant for practitioners and also for researchers who work within an empirical paradigm that may itself clash with assumptions of the everyday world.

In this conference we will discuss the nature, goals and processes of formation, challenges to formation in pluralistic contexts, and problems of formation at times of paradigm clashes. The legitimacy of individually focused formation through higher education is not immune to question, given the social inequalities evident in access to enrolment and between graduates and non-graduates. The ethical implications of intentional formation of people in a social context that privileges autonomy are also worthy of close scrutiny. Some ethical questions include: Who has the right to attempt the formation of others? What legitimates formation activities? What are the benefits and harms of purposive individual formation in situations of pluralism? In considering these and related questions about purposive formation we reflect on the present and consider lessons that can be learned from the past.

INFORMATION FOR PRESENTERS

Papers are invited within the following themes:

Theme 1. Christian Higher Education

How can Christian higher education balance Christian formation and academic freedom? Can new technologies and pedagogies diminish paradigm clashes or mediate pluralisms in higher education? Which paradigms are clashing in contemporary Christian higher education?

Theme 2. Applied Theology and Ethics

What are some lessons from Christianity for formative endeavours? Can Christian theology give insights into contemporary paradigm clashes? Who has the right to attempt the formation of others? What legitimates formation activities? What are the benefits and harms of purposive individual formation in situations of pluralism?

Theme 3. Arts and Social Sciences

What are some contemporary challenges in the formation of performing arts students? Are there ways of embracing pluralism through the arts and performing arts? What insights can be gained from the social sciences into process of identity formation and social identifications? How can healthy identities and identifications be fostered?

Theme 4. Business

Can studies of organizations and leadership help us understand processes of formation? How do businesses negotiate pluralisms and paradigm clashes? Is there a place for Christian businesses in Christian formation?

Theme 5. Education

What are the dominant pluralisms in Christian schools and colleges? How are pluralisms negotiated? Which theories and perspectives help Christian schools negotiate our changing socio-political worlds? What is the place of Christian informed curricula and pedagogies in the wholistic formation of students?

Proposals for papers should include:

- A succinct explanatory title
- An abstract or summary: abstract by established researchers (approx. 150–400 words) or summary by student researchers (approx. 1000 words)
- Name/s and affiliation/s of authors
- Contact details, including phone and email
- Intending to lodge a written paper for peer review?

Presentations will be 20 minutes in length plus 10 minutes allowed for discussion. Prizes will be awarded for best theoretical, empirical and student papers.

Closing date for proposals: **15 December 2020**

Papers to be presented at the conference may be submitted in writing for peer review and potential inclusion in publications arising out of the Conference such as a themed monograph or journal issue in addition to electronic proceedings. These written papers will be approx. 5000 words in length. Papers will be selected for external publication by independent, blind peer reviewers.

Closing date for written papers for peer review: **15 March 2021**