

# Faith in Higher Education

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A Church of England Vision

March 2020



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
EDUCATION OFFICE

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Our vision is of a humane education, inspired by wisdom, community, virtue and the common good.

# Foreword



As a nation, we value higher education more highly than ever. Yet alongside considerable growth and success many detect a widespread loss of purpose. *Faith in Higher Education* offers a hopeful vision of what higher education is for.\*

Our vision is of a humane education, inspired by wisdom, community, virtue and the common good. It is a vision of an education in which religion, faith and spirituality take their proper place. Above all, it is a vision of hope. That hope is in God's future for the world, ongoing love and compassion for all people, and for the whole of creation, and in the promise of life in all its fullness.

The Church of England has a long-standing involvement in higher education. European universities were founded as Christian institutions. The oldest English universities still have Anglican chapels, and the Church supports chaplaincies across the sector. Some universities have an Anglican foundation; some use their local cathedral as a suitable place for graduation and other major events in their collective life. Many current members of the Church of England are staff or students in a higher education institution.

*Faith in Higher Education* is offered to all involved in higher education, especially those who lead and work in it. This vision complements the *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good* (2016). Along with our forthcoming *Vision for Further Education*, these three documents represent a restatement of the value of education at every level. Each has its own distinctive focus. All are inspired by our Christian faith.

The main part of this document sets out the key ideas. Annexe A provides a brief survey of the context of British higher education for readers who would find this helpful.

A document like *Faith in Higher Education* can not address pressing matters of practical concern. However, underlying these common challenges are fundamental questions about the nature and value of higher education. We offer this vision as a contribution to national debate about the purpose of higher education today.

## **The Rt Revd Tim Dakin**

The Bishop of Winchester  
Bishop for Further and Higher Education



# 1. Humanising higher education

Recent years have seen major changes in British higher education, changes which have been variously experienced as beneficial and detrimental. Yet there is little consensus about its future direction.

The vision offered here is a contribution to the debate about the future of higher education. It is rooted in our fundamental convictions about the nature of the world and the truth of the Christian story. We inhabit a universe which is essentially good and generally intelligible because it is the work of a God who is good and who communicates. At the same time, we experience alienation from this God and continual frustration in all our knowing and doing. Yet in Jesus Christ, God has broken through such barriers, overcoming sin and evil. Through the death and resurrection of Jesus and by the power of his Holy Spirit we live in the hope of the restoration of all things to perfect harmony. This is the good news of the Christian gospel. To be called to higher education is to

be called to use our minds to explore and seek the renewal of all of God's creation.

This means that higher education is about seeking and celebrating wisdom, which is multifaceted knowledge pursued and used well. This requires the development of character, of personal and institutional virtues such as self-discipline, honesty, humility, respect for evidence and for the understanding of others. Such virtues make the attainment of wisdom possible. And it means that all our endeavours will be carried out in a context of constant dialogue about what is conducive to our collective flourishing, that is, our common good.<sup>1</sup>

Institutions of higher education should therefore be communities which are deeply *humane*. Humane not only in their concern for all aspects of human wellbeing, but humane in their treatment of each person distinctively involved in the common enterprise. They will recognise that we are not mere 'brains in vats', but embodied souls with physical and spiritual needs. This vision of a humane higher education is not limited to institutions formally directed to such ends. We might say that higher education takes place wherever communities form in order to seek wisdom, grow in virtue and pursue the common good. That is both what higher education is for, and what it truly is.

This vision has developed as we have sought to understand higher education in the light of faith in the triune God who is love, and whose love extends to all. We recognise that not all share in that faith. But we offer this vision to be a blessing and in hope that all who read it will find their own vision enlarged and enlightened.



## 2. Wisdom

**The purpose of higher education is often said to be the generation and transmission of knowledge. But this is attenuated and misleading: knowledge is never merely abstract. It originates in traditions of understanding and has an inevitable social impact.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, the pursuit of knowledge cannot be divorced from its social dimension, which is to say, from ethics. Instead of simply the generation and transmission of knowledge, it is more helpful to think about higher education in terms of wisdom.**

We call ourselves *homo sapiens*, wise humanity. Yet we are not born wise; we acquire wisdom over time.<sup>3</sup> We wake up to the world, becoming aware of our place within it and learning how to trace our paths through it.<sup>4</sup> As the *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good* recognises, at the heart of good education is ‘a delight in wisdom and a passionate pursuit of it’.<sup>5</sup>

Wisdom is an important category in many cultures, ancient and modern.<sup>6</sup> The exhortation to seek wisdom is found in a number of biblical traditions, where it is not abstract or theoretical, but concrete and practical. It is about aligning all our ways – our thinking, acting, belonging – with those of God. The Bible’s Book of Proverbs offers a panoramic vision of the creative action of God in the natural world.<sup>7</sup> It presents a rich, comprehensive understanding of wisdom which covers every area of knowledge: the natural sciences,<sup>8</sup> the social sciences and the humanities.

### **What light does wisdom shed on higher education?**

Wisdom rejects simplistic reductionism. The world and human affairs cannot be explained in terms of one level or type of description, whether social construction, evolutionary processes, neuronal responses, or molecular interactions. If we are wise, we will be comfortable with, and celebrate, thick, multi-layered and complementary descriptions of reality. Higher education should aspire to be comprehensive, with each discipline respecting the distinctive insights of others. It should also encourage interdisciplinarity.

Wisdom also rejects economic instrumentalism. Although from the perspective of wisdom knowledge is never without a purpose, that purpose is much broader than material prosperity. It can also serve aesthetic, environmental and political ends. For example, Christian engagement with the environment is motivated by a sense of the intrinsic value of God’s creation, not simply its utility for people. Christians affirm that there is joy in contemplating all the works of God. Finding and communicating some of that joy is the most precious part of the privilege of learning and teaching. Higher education should aspire to a fully-rounded understanding of its ‘impact’ which addresses the whole of human experience.

Wisdom also rejects the suspicion that knowledge itself is futile. The fear is that there are merely competing perspectives on inaccessible ‘realities’, and as often as not perspectives offered in pursuit of oppressive goals: unmasking the power-struggle is all we can do; and even then we find it is mask upon mask, an infinite regress of surface. We believe that such despair is unnecessary.<sup>9</sup> Granted there is human corruption and self-interest, granted the route to knowledge is full of blind alleys and wearisome detours, yet we can still hope to make progress in knowledge because scholarship presupposes a God who is there.<sup>10</sup> Far from being oppressive, this optimistic theocentrism means that higher education should value contestation within and between disciplines, since there is *something* worth arguing about. It also means that academics can offer genuine expertise with humble confidence.

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## 3. Community

**Universities are academic communities. But sometimes it seems as if the modern university is less an *alma mater* (that is, a ‘nourishing mother’) and more a hotel of transient and anonymous guests.<sup>11</sup>**

As individuals, we discover ourselves to be already in community, not least in our households of birth and upbringing. In a similar way, as students we join large and complex communities which already exist, with all their distinctive places, traditions and practices. These communities are varied, for example, online communities of distance learners, occasional communities of part-time students and traditional collegiate communities. As with all human experience we are often ambivalent about communities. We long for the security and confidence they provide, yet fear being trapped within their limitations and victimised by their pathologies.

Christians believe that all people are called into the embrace of a God of love, who is three persons in one being. God’s divine life overflows in his love for us, creating and restoring relationships. The Christian gospel speaks of a new community, the ‘body of Christ’.<sup>12</sup> This is portrayed as a community of mutual interdependence where all are distinctively gifted and all need each other. This community has a shared point of reference and a common purpose, namely God. All flourishing communities have a similar form. Yet they are not simply spontaneous: we have to develop them and shape them.

### **What light does community shed on higher education?**

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Community requires us deliberately to foster relationships between people.<sup>13</sup> This is not as comfortable as it sounds. Most obviously, it means identifying and highlighting what we have in common. This can range from the emblematic, such as the colours of a shirt or scarf, to a whole intellectual or political ethos. But whatever the common ground is, it will be a mark of differentiation from those who are not part

of the community in question. Communities can be welcoming or hostile, but they cannot be completely open. Institutions of higher education should be attentive both to the importance and dangers of collective identity.

Communities take seriously the fact that we are embodied beings. This underlies the traditional provision of food and accommodation in a way which is integrated with study. Embodied beings are only capable of close relationships with a limited number of people. Because the quality of a community will depend on the frequency, length and nature of the interactions which take place within it, there are natural limits to the size and stability of real communities. Higher education institutions should take seriously our natural limits as persons called for a particular time to a particular place. This has wide-ranging implications for administrative organisation, and physical and virtual infrastructure. Units and programmes of study and research, and expectations of staff and students should all contribute towards sustaining community. Continuity of relationship is key to trust and openness and is particularly important for students seeking reassurance and security. The personal confidence this engenders is a precondition for intellectual challenge and robust debate.

The strongest relationships are constituted by multiple strands of identity and interest. Students and staff who meet socially as well as in the seminar room can experience a stronger bond. Students who share extra-curricular as well as curricular interests will form more permanent and secure friendships. Developing such strong, multi-faceted relationships is demanding, since it takes time and requires people to cross all sorts of boundaries. The





personal vulnerability this requires is the basis for demonstrating trustworthiness to each other.<sup>14</sup> This is important because building mutual trust is essential for community. One implication is that higher education institutions should consider the adverse relational consequences of hiving off social and pastoral roles to specialist staff in the name of academic efficiency.

Relationships flourish when there is parity of esteem. One of the hallmarks of good academic

community is that it manages to combine the inevitable (because real) differences in scholarly standing over the course of a lifetime with a sense that each is engaged in essentially the same endeavour and has something valuable to contribute. Higher education should be a place in which parity of esteem is expressed, for example, in decision-taking processes and remuneration policies.

## 4. Virtue

**Higher education is – as education – a place for the intentional transformation of persons. It is concerned not so much with skills and values as with what has traditionally been called ‘virtue’.<sup>15</sup>**

From antiquity, virtue has been associated with excellence. For example, someone can acquire technical expertise as they practise a skill or trade and so become an excellent practitioner in their field. Or, to provide a different example, another person might acquire the ability to think with exceptional precision and so become an excellent philosopher.<sup>16</sup> Excellence takes many forms. For example, an excellent laboratory technician will use scientific instruments with precision, an excellent accountant will have an eye for mathematical detail, and an excellent linguist will be sensitive to nuance. The Christian idea of a calling, or personal vocation, expresses the worth of each person’s distinctive abilities.

These examples only highlight one dimension of excellence. The virtuous laboratory technician is not only precise, but also has a welcoming disposition that encourages students; the virtuous accountant not only sees the mathematical detail, but can patiently explain those accounts to the budget-holder; the virtuous linguist is not only sensitive to nuance, but also honest and possesses the courage required to challenge others’ findings and interpretations. Honesty, patience, friendliness and courage are aspects of interpersonal relations, so virtue encompasses the intellectual, technical and moral.

It is important to notice that there are many forms of excellence in the moral realm. Virtue is not a simple matter of either hitting the target or erring.<sup>17</sup> When Jesus commands his disciples to love God and each other he gives a very general command that can be fulfilled in a multitude of ways.<sup>18</sup> Although the virtuous person is disposed towards making excellent choices, there are many potential and equally virtuous alternatives: there is a welcome heterogeneity

to virtue (and, conversely, although less appealingly, to the pursuit of vice).<sup>19</sup>

### **What light does virtue shed on higher education?**

Becoming virtuous involves a process of careful perception. One needs to understand the world as it really is in order to respond appropriately. Such a process is not necessarily straightforward, which is why virtue takes time to attain. All academic disciplines train their students in ways of being more attentive to the world. In this respect, academic disciplines are ‘moral economies’, communities of training in virtuous perception. Thus, theologian Mike Higton emphasises ‘openness to judgment’ as central to the life of the mind.<sup>20</sup> By this he means both the willingness to judge and the willingness to be judged. In teaching, learning and research, therefore, institutions of higher education should emphasise and develop the virtues that characterise good scholarship and not simply train future workers in the skills and values required for success in a ‘flexible economy’.

Another contemporary application concerns academic freedom. In a context which cares for the whole person, which treats scholarship as a vocation and the university as an exercise in collective virtue, academic freedom ceases to be a threat. Such freedom is not freedom from accountability to others. Rather, it is the freedom to be a unique exemplar of a life spent in pursuit of what is true, just and useful. Academic freedom is what enables scholars to make a distinctive contribution to collective wisdom.<sup>21</sup> Universities should uphold their historic commitment to academic freedom in this sense.



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## 5. The common good

Discussion of higher education policy is often cast in terms of identifying a ‘public good’ to counterbalance the merely ‘private good’ of personal enhancement. Both terms are problematic. To think of a university as only providing private goods which belong to one person ignores the social benefits of a thriving higher education sector. But higher education is not simply a state-provided public good like street lighting, from which persons cannot be excluded. The concept of the common good is more helpful. As Rowan Williams remarks, ‘[t]he most important bit of “impact” any university course can have is to help people become intelligent citizens’.<sup>22</sup> The nurturing of intelligent citizens is neither a purely private good, nor simply a public one.



For centuries, the common good has been viewed as central to Christian thinking.<sup>23</sup> It has found renewed currency in our day, often employed in political debate as an exhortation to look beyond individual advantage to the good of others. Yet the common good is more than a banner to encourage social solidarity. It has deep philosophical and religious roots which give it three distinct senses. First, the common good is an *aim*, the good common to a community, whether that be a nation state, sports club or university. Second, the common good is a *practice*, that is, collective

activity for a common purpose. Third, the common good refers to the *conditions* necessary for everyone to fulfil their individual objectives, for example, a society that values free speech is one favourable to intellectual enquiry. This rich and multifaceted conception of the common good clearly shows that it is not a utopian ideal to be imposed by one group on another.<sup>24</sup>

### What light does the common good shed on higher education?

The common good illuminates the aims of higher education. We are citizens of a society with many competing visions of human flourishing. Higher education creates and disseminates knowledge to inform these visions. It also constitutes a forum for debate about what is good and true about each one. So higher education institutions should present and test diverse points of view in a way that is both an example of how to engage in civilised argument and as a means of improving the quality of the debates that shape our society.

The work of higher education institutions takes place as the aims of individuals within them are aligned. This is the result of careful negotiation between researchers, teachers, librarians, accountants and so on. In this process, higher education institutions should ensure that decisions are taken with reference to the common good of both institution and wider society, and not only to the interests of the most powerful.



The common good also illuminates the practices of higher education. Prominent among the intellectual practices orientated towards wisdom is the art of listening to others' views and perspectives. Universities and colleges provide common ground to hear and test competing claims in the pursuit of truth, not only in the lecture theatre and seminar room, but also in bars and other social spaces. Higher education institutions should provide opportunities to practise engaged and respectful dialogue with others, both within academic disciplines themselves and more widely.

The sector is itself a common practice which sustains and supports its various elements, whether they collaborate or compete with each other. Universities, colleges and the institutions of civil society should celebrate the distinct features of the British higher education system, including its attempts to secure equity of access, its concern for individual students, and its high academic standards.

The common good illuminates the conditions required for higher education. Perhaps the most important condition for the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom is the ability to assess competing claims. This requires free speech, which must be more than allowing everyone to say what they want, however objectionable. The imperative for higher education institutions is to protect a free speech which encourages civilised communication and debate, and hence engagement in the pursuit of a higher (common) good.<sup>25</sup>

The conditions for intellectual discovery include a community of scholars, each with their own perspectives, the result not only of their intellectual journeys but of their social and cultural background. Diversity within higher education is especially important in plural societies with many different visions of the good life. Institutions of higher education should aim to nurture dialogue between members of their communities in order to offer the hope that it will be possible to live together in other contexts as well. In this sense, and to return to Rowan Williams' observation, they should be schools for citizenship.

## 6. Understanding religion and belief

The processes of globalisation mean that population migration and modern communications technology have made us much more aware of those who inhabit religious and philosophical worldviews very different from our own. The increased need to share a common social and political space generates difficult challenges across the whole world. At the same time, it sometimes seems as if, within the United Kingdom, the public understanding of religion is losing ground. Even a basic knowledge of Christianity on the part of most well-educated people can no longer be assumed, let alone any understanding of those other religions whose presence in the British Isles is more recent.<sup>26</sup> This is no mere intellectual loss. As world events since the turn of the millennium have painfully reminded us, religions can be powerful forces for good and ill. The successful negotiation of religious difference is vital for the common good.

‘Religion and belief literacy’ is the name given to the wisdom needed to negotiate our growing awareness of ideological and philosophical difference with sensitivity and fairness. Institutions of higher education have a central contribution to make in developing these virtues. The inclusion of the word ‘belief’ is an important reminder that we should not exclude non-theistic philosophies and worldviews. Religions are not simply objects to be studied from some supposedly neutral critical distance. On the contrary, even our ‘scientific’ engagement with the world is itself embedded in philosophical and religious assumptions which are not universally shared, even while they claim universal validity. At the deepest level, therefore, religion and belief literacy requires the ability to move competently between our own most cherished ways of seeing and acting in the world, and the recognition that truth does not seem like that to everyone. It requires a certain sort of virtue.

As well as emphasising the cultural embeddedness of all religions and beliefs, and the tension between the fact of deep diversity and the need each of us has to believe in and base our lives on *something*, religion and belief literacy is conscious of the depth of the diversity between and within religions. Even the category of ‘religion’ can be unhelpfully distorting if it forces a particular emphasis on doctrinal belief or ritual practice as opposed to identity, community and

heritage. There is a complexity and variability in the relationship between the elements which constitute ‘being religious’ or, for that matter, ‘being non-religious’. These elements are not static: they have histories of evolution and change as well as aspects of long continuity. Nor do they preclude mutual appreciation and ‘borrowing’ as different religions and beliefs come into contact with each other.<sup>27</sup> The wisdom that comes from such deep knowledge of one’s own beliefs and those of others is a precious resource in a diverse and conflicted world. In such a context, Christians hope to go beyond mutual understanding to reconciliation and richer forms of community, ideas which are themselves informed by religion and belief.<sup>28</sup>





In addition to forming the subject-matter of distinct programmes and organisational units,<sup>29</sup> religions and beliefs can be studied through a wide range of disciplinary perspectives including theological, historical, literary, social, political and legal perspectives. Institutions of higher education can contribute to the public understanding of religions and beliefs by working within these multiple perspectives to improve our grasp of the diverse phenomena involved and to bring those findings to bear on public debate. Higher education institutions should make religion and belief literacy mainstream by ensuring that, where possible, research and teaching in all relevant disciplinary areas include scholars, educators and communicators working in these fields.

Beyond 'religion and belief' as core business of the university, higher education institutions should

themselves aspire to be religiously literate, modelling good practice in student and staff relations.<sup>30</sup> The internationalisation of many sectors within higher education, along with what ought to be an instinctive response to human diversity of curiosity, sensitivity and open enquiry, makes universities and colleges a particularly important location for leadership by example.<sup>31</sup>

Perhaps the biggest challenge of all will be for higher education institutions to become more self-aware of their own faith-inflected histories (in both the religious and secular sense) and those of the bodies of scholarship they exist to preserve, transmit and develop. The aim of such self-awareness is not to exclude such dimensions in the pursuit of an unachievable neutrality, but to lead us to a deeper, and perhaps altered, appreciation of our own intellectual foundations.<sup>32</sup>





## 7. Faith seeking understanding

**‘Understanding Religion and Belief’ encourages sustained reflection on religions and beliefs in a way which expresses a movement from the ‘outside’ to the ‘inside’. It asserts the importance of understanding the perspectives of all religions and beliefs. As Christians, we inhabit one of those distinctive perspectives. By ‘faith seeking understanding’ we mean the process in which we understand the world from a Christian perspective.<sup>33</sup> So the Church of England’s engagement with higher education includes the offering of theological wisdom on the *content* of research and education.**

At the centre of this process lies Christian theology itself, a rich intellectual tradition of reflection on the complex interactions of revelation, reason, experience and tradition in our thinking about God and the world. It retains a rightful place alongside religious studies and the theologies of other faiths.

But theologically-informed scholarship cannot be limited to the formal study of theology. The document already noted, the *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good* (2016) affirms that, in church schools, ‘the deeply Christian foundation for [the Church of England’s vision for education] will be seen explicitly in teaching and learning both in RE and across the curriculum’. Anglicans in higher education will want to explore more intentionally what this kind of vision might mean for the substance of higher education as a whole.<sup>34</sup>

We would not assume, for example, that subjects as diverse as law, business, nursing and media studies would remain uninfluenced by being located within an explicitly Christian narrative.

We recognise that some people will resist the idea that there could be a ‘Christian’ or ‘theological’ perspective on ‘secular’ subjects, on the grounds that the autonomy of such subjects would be compromised or that there simply is no relevant theological wisdom on them. Others, however, hold that ‘secular’ disciplines inevitably reveal the influence of underlying ‘faith-like’ commitments that need to be identified and engaged with critically, and that new orientations then need to be developed on the subject in view. However, one understands this complex issue – and the answers



undoubtedly differ from discipline to discipline – it is at least important that the question be asked.

Thus, sustained theological attention is needed on the distinct questions of the content of any particular discipline or field, the methodologies with which these are examined and interpreted, and the curriculum through which it is taught. Exploring such issues critically through the lens of Christian faith would ensure a rigorous and relevant engagement with the primary professional and intellectual concerns of scholars and institutions in the university sector.<sup>35</sup> This presents a demanding but exciting challenge: to explore how wisdom, community, virtue and the common good might shape the design of individual university courses.<sup>36</sup>

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## 8. Spirituality for everyone

**For the Christian, the pursuit of wisdom in community, growth in virtue and service for the common good are not separated off from a life of devotion to God. Rather, scholarship is a fully integrated part of a journey in fulfilment of a fundamentally spiritual calling.**

Higher education institutions should take seriously the fact that we are all spiritual beings, made with a longing for the divine.<sup>37</sup> This dimension of human existence and aspiration will therefore not be arbitrarily excluded from the study of subjects and community life but will always be a welcome presence, however tentative and exploratory. Subjects which make this connection will find their place in the curriculum, just as opportunities and spaces for reflection and worship have their place on campus.

One of the main expressions of a commitment to spirituality for everyone is the presence of chaplaincy on campus. Chaplaincy constitutes a significant gift to higher education. There are over 1,000 chaplains and faith advisors working in British universities, of whom only 1 in 5 is funded by the institution for which they work.<sup>38</sup> Religious bodies provide the greatest proportion of funding, although at least 60% are volunteers. Chaplains thus represent a significant resource for universities and colleges.<sup>39</sup> The substantial contribution of chaplains to their institution is often overlooked and, we suspect, undervalued.<sup>40</sup>

Although the nature of chaplaincy varies across the sector, it typically has two main emphases: to serve the community of staff and students, and to be a place for encounter. Service to higher education communities includes care for those who are struggling through isolation, stress or bereavement. Providing a place for encounter encompasses creative exploration of life's 'ultimate questions', championing a holistic understanding of education, and helping people learn to live with difference.

These activities have a positive impact upon the life of higher education institutions.<sup>41</sup> So, for example, chaplaincy can contribute to an

improvement in organisational practice by guiding the implementation of *Prevent* policies in culturally sensitive and intelligent ways, it can enhance community cohesion through communal events like the university carol service and, perhaps most obviously, it assists individuals in need.

Chaplaincy has an important role in the pursuit of wisdom in community, growth in virtue and service for the common good.<sup>42</sup> Chaplaincy points to the priority of wisdom for life over a narrow focus upon subject knowledge, indicating that life is not merely physical, but includes an embodied spiritual dimension rooted in God. As chaplaincies help others engage with issues like the ecological crisis, they also point toward the wisdom required to prepare for a sustainable future for us all. And the wise contributions of individual chaplains can inform the decisions of leaders in higher education as they fulfil potentially conflicting responsibilities for institutions as businesses and learning communities.

Chaplaincies can be schools for virtue. As they affirm that personal dignity is not reducible to performance or financial worth, they witness to an alternative logic in which people are intrinsically valuable because they are made in God's image. The opportunity to participate in worship and liturgy enables the exploration of faith 'from the inside' as students and staff try on and test their chosen faith tradition. And as places for encounter and discussion, chaplaincies encourage debate and understanding, with all the civic benefits we have outlined above.

Chaplains are frequently among the few 'experts' in religion on campus. Against a backdrop of limited religion and belief literacy they can make a vital contribution to equality and diversity by

helping to ensure universities and colleges are attentive to the religious needs of students and staff. These needs are not a spiritual add-on but part of 'life in all its fullness'.<sup>43</sup> Chaplaincy, therefore, seeks to partner and complement other facets of higher education institutions, contributing to their common good. They often do this from a unique place within the professional structures of universities and colleges where they are related to but not subservient to hierarchical line management structures.<sup>44</sup>

Higher education institutions should not allow historic or institutional commitments to 'secularity' to prevent them from drawing on the resources of chaplaincy, or from being willing collaborators in making those resources available to everyone.

## 9. Sharing the vision

*Faith in Higher Education* is not the first time the Church of England has reflected on the nature and value of higher education.<sup>45</sup> This vision is a fresh articulation of God's calling to life in higher education, a calling which is expressed in wisdom, community, virtue and the common good. Each one sheds a distinctive light on our practices. Together they illuminate what it means for higher education to be fully humane. Humanising education involves attending to ethics, spirituality and relationships as well as the life of the mind.

We share this vision with a wider readership and commend its use in at least five different ways:

- to **stimulate** leaders in higher education as they develop their own visions
- to **enrich** understanding with a Christian perspective on higher education
- to **illuminate** the values implicit in different higher education contexts
- to **encourage** creative proposals for positive change
- above all, to **challenge** all involved in higher education to transformative action

Our Christian faith has led us to a revived vision of why higher education matters for everyone. We hope that readers will share and debate the vision presented here and so find practical ways of shaping their own involvement for the good of all.

# Annexe A: Higher Education Today

Universities have changed immeasurably since John Henry Newman wrote his seminal work, *The Idea of a University*.<sup>46</sup> From being the preserve of a relatively small elite male section of society, in many cases preparing for ordination into the Church, gaining a degree has now become a normal stage in the development of almost half our young people.<sup>47</sup> Women are now in a majority.<sup>48</sup> While there are clear continuities, the subjects studied, the way they are taught, and those who teach them are all very different.

The changes to higher education are the consequence of many complex and interacting causes. The most obvious effects can be summed up in four familiar trends in modern higher education: growth, globalisation, specialisation and marketisation. We sketch these four trends before reflecting on the range of ways in which they can be perceived. *Faith in Higher Education* is offered as a response to these trends and perceptions.

## Growth

Overall participation in higher education rose only slightly in the first half of the 20th century to reach 3.4% of the population in 1950. It then increased significantly, such that the initial participation rate by young British people is now 49.8%.<sup>49</sup> There are currently about 2.34 million students in the UK, about 1.77 million of whom are undergraduates.<sup>50</sup>

The number of institutions has also grown. Broadly speaking, the ‘redbrick’ civic universities created in the first half of the 20th century added about a dozen institutions; the 1960s ‘plate-glass’ universities added two dozen, and the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 another fifty. There are now 352 higher education providers employing 429,000 people and supporting more than twice that number of jobs again.<sup>51</sup> Of these 352 higher education providers, 204 are further education institutions providing higher education and 99 are considered Alternative Providers with a total of 71,000 students.<sup>52</sup> As a whole, the sector is now said to represent around £21.5 billion (1.2%) of the UK’s GDP and generates £95 billion for the economy.<sup>53</sup>

## Globalisation

In 1994-1995, a little over 10% of student enrolments were international. That proportion has risen to 14% and 6% internationally and EU domiciled respectively. This masks considerable variation according to degree level. Around 43% of full-time postgraduates and 10% of full-time undergraduates are from international domiciles.<sup>54</sup> A similar pattern of growth can be seen among academic staff with 30% from outside the UK.<sup>55</sup> Just under two-thirds of the growth in academic staff numbers since 2006-2007 has been those defined as non-British. There is no certainty of the impact of Brexit on these trends, although some proposed measures (such as a skills cap with a salary threshold of £30,000 in a recent Immigration White Paper) have led to significant anxieties about its adverse effect (if implemented) on the recruitment of overseas staff.

Globalisation is not simply a function of staff and student mobility. The dominance of English as a world academic language supported by modern communications technology means that many disciplines, especially the sciences, are based upon global communities of scholarship. Although only 4% of the world’s researchers are located in the United Kingdom, they generate around 16% of the most-cited research – second only to the USA.<sup>56</sup>

## Specialisation

From Alexander von Humboldt’s reforms to the University of Berlin in the early 19th century onwards, the ‘modern’ university has been characterised by increasing specialisation



as disciplines have grown and sub-divided, and expertise has become ever more focused. The Higher Education Statistics Agency now uses around 1,200 subject codes, grouped into 167 principal areas.<sup>57</sup>

Slightly more students study non-science subjects than science subjects. The largest groupings in the former are, in rank order, business and administrative studies, social studies, creative arts and design, and education. Within science the largest groupings are subjects allied to medicine (principally nursing), biological sciences, engineering and technology, computer science and physical sciences. Viewed from the opposite end of the spectrum, there are just over 7,500 students of theology and religious studies at all levels. Although joint degrees are still widespread, very few follow a programme in general liberal arts or combined studies. Universities in the Cathedrals Group (see Annex B) host a little under 3,000 theology and religious studies students with the large majority at undergraduate level.<sup>58</sup>

Specialisation brings depth of knowledge, and also presents practical problems for academics seeking to synthesise vast bodies of knowledge. It also raises the intellectual obstacles for students attempting to understand whole traditions of enquiry.

## Marketisation

Marketisation is a term widely used by both proponents and critics of the phenomenon to indicate several related features of modern higher education. These include (partial) funding by students, construed as consumers exercising choice between competing institutions and programmes, regulated public data to facilitate that choice, and competition between researchers for research income. The attention now commonly paid by universities to 'the student experience' suggests, in part, the influence of a model of the student as consumer.<sup>59</sup> Marketisation also indicates an 'economisation' of education in which its value is understood principally in terms of its contribution to individual earning power or collective national prosperity. The emphasis on 'skills' can reflect an overriding concern for employability and the economic benefits of higher education.

State grants to universities were substantial even before the founding of the University Grants Committee in 1919. On the outbreak of the Second World War, a little over a third of income was derived from state grants; a little under a third from fee income, and the rest from local grants, endowments and other sources.<sup>60</sup> Between 1962 and 1998, the state took over the payment of tuition fees, also providing maintenance grants. Fees supported by public loans were reintroduced at £1,000, raised to £3,000 in 2004, £9,000 from 2010 and are currently £9,250. This large increase in fees and changes in the student loan regime have both been regarded as key factors in the significant decline in the number of part-time and mature students in the last decade. The number of part time undergraduates has fallen by 37% since 2010 and mature students over the age of 26 by 49% since the 2006-2007 cycle.<sup>61</sup>

There have also been attempts to introduce a measure of competition into research funding using the Research Assessment Exercise/Research Excellence Framework from 1986 onwards, and the balance has also shifted from the Quality-Related block grant based on periodic assessment to competitive individual project funding by the UK Research Councils.<sup>62</sup> In these processes of assessment, the need for research and scholarship to demonstrate a positive socio-economic impact is increasingly prominent.

## Experiencing higher education

The four trends identified above – growth, globalisation, specialisation and marketisation – can be experienced in a wide range of ways, both positive and negative.

For many students, university is exhilarating as they lay strong intellectual and relational foundations which last a lifetime; new skills are learnt, careers are built, and social networks established. Pathways to higher education have diversified to embrace new entry-points, for example, via apprenticeships, as well as new contexts for study in further education colleges. The widening participation agenda has benefited many who in previous generations would not have accessed higher education. Yet as the sector has expanded, so assumptions of automatic employment have receded. Students take out

a student loan, which is effectively regarded as substantial long-term debt, even though a growing proportion will not in fact repay the value of their loan before it is written off. They are also conscious of the risk that they may not get a 'good' degree and a sufficiently well-paid job as a return on their investment. Indeed, it has been suggested that 31% of graduates in 2017 had more education than was specifically required for the job they were doing.<sup>63</sup> The need to undertake paid work alongside full-time study squeezes time for rest and recreation. For all its merits, social media can also create pressures to perform which force a wedge between image and reality. As university communities have grown, more and more students are experiencing alienation and loneliness. Rates of mental ill-health among students have increased dramatically in recent years, exacting an enormous, sometimes tragically fatal, cost on those concerned, their families and friends.<sup>64</sup>

In terms of generating new knowledge and insight, the size and technological power of modern higher education makes scholarship more productive than ever before. Academics are conscious that they are contributing to accelerating and exciting advances in human knowledge. Yet far from feeling liberated, many academic staff experience their work as controlled by an ever-tighter regulatory straitjacket. Student satisfaction surveys, teaching

quality assessments, research evaluation and grant income targets all seek to ensure high levels of academic productivity and value for money, but redirect academics' energies towards bureaucratic processes. Long hours, job insecurity for many staff on short-term contracts and the erosion of pensions make a university career less attractive for new generations of graduates.

Vice-Chancellors and other senior managers have overseen a growing and vibrant sector. But the combined effect of the trends in higher education mean that non-academic staff feel the pressures of trying to administer organisations which too often stubbornly refuse to behave according to the simpler precepts of commerce. Often facing even more stringent financial pressures than academic departments, they have to deliver outcomes for external stakeholders and students who seem insatiably demanding, working with staff who often seem recalcitrantly autonomous.

From the perspective of politicians and civil servants, the higher education sector now represents an important part of the country's current and future economic and cultural prosperity. It is also an expensive and risky investment since universities and colleges are no longer a small and tolerable luxury. As places in which large numbers of young people congregate, there are fears about the potential for radicalisation and terrorist networking. This raises political conundrums around the relationship between historic self-government and state regulation.

### Engaging the future of higher education

How we experience higher education inevitably affects our view of its nature, value and future prospects. Some are able to embrace the benefits of the current situation; others lament the passing of a fondly-remembered past. Both attitudes have their dangers: an uncritical celebration of contemporary conditions, or an unrealistic critique of deep-rooted social and intellectual trends. This vision aspires to avoid both of these pitfalls. Instead, taking the critiques seriously, we nonetheless seek to offer a constructive vision of what higher education can be.<sup>65</sup> We ground this vision in our understanding of the Christian gospel and its implications for the whole of life.



# Annexe B: Anglican Universities

**Until the 19th century, all British universities were religious foundations. Some of that history is still evident, although many people are surprised that Christian faith has so powerfully shaped our institutions of higher education.**

Fifteen British universities, 11 of them Anglican, retain an explicit Christian ethos. All developed from the teacher training colleges established from the 1830s to provide staff for the churches' schools for the poor. Known collectively as the Cathedrals Group, these institutions educate over 100,000 students a year.<sup>66</sup> While they share a both a common faith heritage and a commitment to social justice, each institution embodies these differently according to its history, the communities it serves and its place in the higher education system.

The presence of universities with a religious foundation within English higher education raises issues of diversity of provision within the overall system, as well as institutional distinctiveness. Marketisation and growth might have been expected to increase diversity in the sector. While government policy has encouraged innovation, the net impact has been relatively slight. There are around 115 'Alternative Providers' teaching almost 73,000 students; most of these are small institutions: only 11 have more than 1,000 students; 33 have fewer than 100.<sup>67</sup> Yet the benefits of diversity have been outlined in a GuildHE report, *Excellence in Diversity: A report celebrating the diversity of UK Higher Education*.<sup>68</sup> Anglican universities have an opportunity to build upon their heritage and current specialisms to distinguish themselves in areas such as social inclusion, concern for the education of the whole-person<sup>69</sup> and, as we have discussed above, curriculum.<sup>70</sup>

The report *Distinctiveness and Identity in a Challenging Environment: A Unique Opportunity for Cathedrals Group Institutions* explores how their religious foundations are made manifest in the institutions' activities.<sup>71</sup> A key theme is these universities' commitment to the quality of the

student experience, especially as it relates to both the student and wider community, for example, with respect to volunteering and social engagement. As we have noted above, the embodied nature of human existence means that these emphases are not incidental to the experience of higher education.

The Church of England has reflected on the distinctiveness of Anglican education for many years. One attempt to articulate the characteristics of an Anglican university was produced in 2013.<sup>72</sup> It commends the following features, worth reproducing in full:

- 1) The instinct to include:** Extending the opportunities afforded by higher education (in formal terms, such as funding, referred to as Widening Participation ) is an instinct arising from the Anglican desire to serve and include. Though never perfectly executed, this instinct is perhaps most clearly seen in the parish system in England in which every member of the population, regardless of faith, has a claim upon their local church. As Archbishop William Temple had it, the Anglican Church is a society that exists primarily for the sake of its non-members.
- 2) The priority of conversation:** Anglicans will recognise that teaching, learning, research and good leadership all involve conversation. They do so not only in the light of good practice, but also drawing on Christian faith, rooted in a God who is Trinity, whose Persons exist in ongoing dynamic conversation. Such a God engages the world in conversation through incarnation and the work of the Spirit.
- 3) Openness to critical self-examination:** The Anglican University will wish to organise

its life in such a way that it remains open to the critique of the Gospel of Jesus. Via governance and management arrangements, and by giving permission for the chaplaincy team (amongst others) to speak truth as it understands it, an Anglican university will subject itself to critical self-examination, seeking to ensure that every aspect of its operation – from the manner in which it treats its staff and students, to its estates, catering and procurement policies – is informed by its Anglican character and identity.

**4) Respect for the inherent dignity of the whole person:**

A fundamental Christian insight, upheld by the Anglican tradition, is that all human beings are made in the image of God. Therefore, students and staff will be treated as whole persons and with dignity. The university will do its best for all its members, because, being made in God's image, they are of inestimable value.

**5) Personal character and public citizenship:**

Anglicanism is concerned with the common good and the contribution of the individual to that. An Anglican university will be obliged to envisage and contribute to the common good, in dialogue with Christian convictions about vocation, service and love of neighbour, and encourage its students to engage in such work. Public theology will inform its grappling with these issues.

**6) Education for life:** Anglicanism, with its stress on the incarnation of God in Jesus, is a world-affirming faith. That includes the world of work, for which universities will seek to prepare people. It also includes an engagement with culture, spirituality, sport, exploring the mystery of creation, including issues of sustainability, and developing wisdom for living in a complex world.

**7) Shaping society:** Jesus proclaimed and enacted a new order called the Kingdom of God, a world of justice, peace and healing. An Anglican university will be concerned with the way the world is, with envisaging how it might be, with working for a better world and with preparing people to work for such a world.

**8) Respect for faith and reason in the search for truth:**

Anglicanism is concerned with truth. It takes religion and its insights into reality seriously; so will an Anglican university. Following Richard Hooker, it also affirms the importance of reason. An Anglican university will do likewise. Indeed, in an Anglican university, reason, science, philosophy and theology will flourish alongside each other for the better exploration of truth. Academic freedom is part of that search, and part of humankind's liberty to explore the world God has made.

**9) Theology:** Taking faith seriously includes engagement with theology and religious studies as disciplines which deal with the broadest conception of reality. As such they make creative conversation partners with any academic discipline.

**10) Opportunities for worship and celebration:**

The Anglican tradition has been deeply shaped by regular daily, public prayer and the celebration of the festivals, marking out the Christian (and academic) year. Creating opportunities for prayer, celebration, and individual and communal exploration of faith and spirituality, will be part of an Anglican university.

**11) A living connection to the (local, national and international) Anglican Church:** Anglican identity will be nurtured and encouraged via a network of reciprocal relationships with the local dioceses, the national church (particularly the Education Office) and the world-wide Anglican communion. The university will also act as an intellectual resource and critical reflector for the Church. Networks such as the Cathedrals Group and the Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion will also facilitate such exchanges. Chaplaincy can play a vital bridging role between the institution and the wider church.

In addition to the Cathedrals Group, the Church of England has an institutional connection with some 140 Anglican higher education institutions overseas through the Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion (CUAC).<sup>73</sup> This network offers its members an opportunity to be explicit



about their theological foundations and a chance intentionally to model a Christian vision of higher education.<sup>74</sup> The Church of England also enjoys communion with Christian churches throughout the world. We are regularly reminded of the great challenges we face together. It is part of the calling of higher education to serve the global common good, including by addressing issues which face people outside the West. Such global challenges include population growth, migration, poverty, inequality, climate change and technological advances. All these, and many more, require the sustained engagement of the best minds to find ways to enhance human wellbeing and our planet.

Yet although higher education prepares people to be global citizens, higher education institutions should not promote some disembodied grand cosmopolitanism. Each individual student or scholar will have a limited disciplinary expertise, and will live and work in a particular part of the world. The aim of Anglican universities, which are connected to others by both the accidents of history and present choice, must be to shape people who are wisely outward-looking, and can thus see how they can use their specific interests and location to play a valuable part in our collective endeavours to address the challenges of our times.<sup>75</sup>



# Endnotes

**\*This vision document has been prepared by the Church of England Further Education & Higher Education Development Group, chaired by Bishop Tim Dakin. We thank the following for helping shape this Vision, including members of the Development Group: Mrs Tracey Allen, Dr Jonathan Chaplin, Mrs Siriol Davies, Ms Natalie Davison-Terranova, Revd Prebendary Cate Edmonds, Revd Nigel Genders, Mr Derek Holbird, Revd Dr Jeremy Law, Revd John Lenton, Revd Garry Neave, Revd Canon Professor Peter Neil, Canon Richard Noake, Mrs Marion Plant, Revd Dr Jonathan Rowe, Professor Julian Rivers, Revd Canon Rowan Williams, Ms Sophie Woollen; and those who generously gave their time to comment on its shape and content, particularly Professor Kristin Aune, Professor David Ford, Professor Gavin D’Costa, Professor Mathew Guest, Professor Mike Highton and Revd Dr James Walters. Our thanks are also due to those who provided administrative support to our work, notably Mrs Julia Eden.**

- 1 Wisdom, community, virtue and the common good can all be found in the ‘genetic code’ of the university. For example, Walter Rüegg identifies seven formative academic values of the medieval university drawn from Christianity: (1) Belief in a rationally accessible world order created by God; (2) understanding of human beings as imperfect, leading to values such as modesty and self-criticism; (3) respect for the individual as ‘a reflection of the macrocosm’ leading to academic freedom; (4) absoluteness of the imperative of truth; (5) recognition of knowledge as a public good; (6) reformation, i.e. the continual renewal of previously established knowledge; (7) the equality and solidarity of all scholars. See Walter Rüegg, ‘Themes’ in Hilde de Ridder-Symoens (ed.), *Universities in the Middle Ages* A History of the University in Europe Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
- 2 On this point, see Alasdair Macintyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Inquiry* (London: Duckworth, 1990).
- 3 Luke 2:52; Proverbs 17:3.
- 4 See Oliver O’Donovan, *Self, World, and Time* Ethics as Theology Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013).
- 5 The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good* (Autumn, 2016), p.8. Cf Proverbs 4:7.
- 6 Rather than being deduced from some higher principle, such wisdom is a distillation of experience, often into a pithy proverb. This process means that people from different cultures can have quite similar insights. Note, for example, the similarities between Proverbs 22:22–23:11 and the Wisdom of Amenemopet (Egyptian, c.1200 BC). Compare, specifically, ‘Make no friends with those given to anger, and do not associate with hotheads’ (Proverbs 22:24) and ‘Do not befriend the heated man, nor approach him for conversation’ (Amenemopet 11:13-14). There are other types of wisdom in the Bible, including philosophical enquiry (Ecclesiastes), theodicy (Job) and poetry (Song of Songs, some Psalms).
- 7 Proverbs 8. The literature surrounding the identity and significance of ‘lady wisdom’ in Proverbs 8 is substantial. In addition to the commentaries see, inter alia, Claudia V. Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* Bible and Literature Series 11 (Decatur GA: Almond Press, 1985); Bernard Lang, *Wisdom and the Book of Proverbs: An Israelite Goddess Redefined* (New York: Pilgrim, 1986). Interpretative questions have a long pedigree: Johann Cook suggests the translators of the Septuagint wished to clarify the relationship between God and Wisdom, and to assert that God was the sole creator; see *The Septuagint of Proverbs: Jewish And/Or Hellenistic Proverbs? Concerning the Hellenistic Colouring of LXX Proverbs* VTSup. p.69 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 223. For a recent study of the relevance of Wisdom for ethics see Anne Stewart, *Poetic Ethics in Proverbs: Wisdom Literature and the Shaping of the Moral Self* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015).
- 8 I Kings 4:33.
- 9 Stanley Fish notes that ‘the maintenance of the categories of the academic and of academic freedom requires the assumption of an account of knowledge that some academic disciplines have declared out of date.’ Stanley Fish, *Versions of Academic Freedom: From Professionalism to Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 55.

- 10 See one philosophical outworking of this idea commended by scholars such as Andrew Wright, *Christianity and Critical Realism* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015). Wright frames his account in terms of epistemic relativism, ontological realism and judgemental rationality.
- 11 Jonathan Sacks makes this point about the liberal state more generally in *The Home We Build Together: Recreating Society* (London: Continuum, 2007).
- 12 I Corinthians 12.
- 13 For a brief introduction to some of the key ideas see the Relationships Foundation's booklet *Why Relationships? Introducing relational thinking*. Available at: [http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/why\\_relationships.pdf](http://www.relationshipsfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/why_relationships.pdf) (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 14 Onora O'Neill, *A Question of Trust: The BBC Reith Lectures 2002* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002).
- 15 Note that these practices, even in a university context, are not solely 'academic', see James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom (Cultural Liturgies): Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009).
- 16 See, especially, the thought of the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC), noting that what he termed 'practical wisdom', in contradistinction to *technē*, 'scientific wisdom', is an *intellectual* virtue requiring the time to think about the world that was only possible for wealthy, leisured men such as himself. That this has remained true until relatively recently draws attention to important concerns around gender and power in higher education.
- 17 Aristotle states that, 'there are many ways of missing to be in error... But there is only one way to be correct. That is why error is easy and correctness is difficult' (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1106b30-32). But there are many ways of responding well to the innumerable goods and evils with which we are confronted each day.
- 18 Matthew 22:37-39. See Augustine's assertion that, 'It is a brief but true definition of virtue to say it is the order of love' (*City of God* 15.22). While hitting or missing the bullseye can be likened to standing on the pinnacle of a cartoon mountain, Jesus' view might be compared to the flat expanse of the Table Mountain. There are, of course, some things that fall outside what it means to love God, but this does not stop 'loving' being something open and creative.
- 19 See Robert Merrihew Adams, *A Theory of Virtue: Excellence in Being for the Good* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 11.
- 20 Mike Higton, *A Theology of Higher Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), ch.6.
- 21 This view of academic freedom can be contrasted with that of, e.g., Stanley Fish, who sees it as a mere means for the pursuit of truth narrowly conceived. Stanley Fish, *Versions of Academic Freedom: From Professionalism to Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2014). For a recent defence from a Christian perspective, which focuses on the institutional preconditions of academic freedom, see Tom Simpson, 'Academic Freedom' *Cambridge Papers* 27.2 (June 2018).
- 22 Rowan Williams, *Making Things Happen*, the University of Wales Corporate Strategy, p. 3. Available at: [https://www.southwales.ac.uk/documents/2/USW\\_Corp\\_Strategy\\_English.pdf](https://www.southwales.ac.uk/documents/2/USW_Corp_Strategy_English.pdf) (accessed 6 July 2018).
- 23 In the 4th century, John Chrysostom preached, 'This is the rule of most perfect Christianity, its most exact definition, its highest point, namely, the seeking of the common good... for nothing can so make a person an imitator of Christ as caring for his neighbours' *Homily 25 on 1 Corinthians*.
- 24 The modern appropriation of 'the common good' in religious and political discourse owes much to Roman Catholic Social Teaching. For a highly regarded statement by the Catholic Bishops Conference in England and Wales see *The Common Good and the Catholic Church's Social Teaching*. Available at: [http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/content/download/22715/145166/file/THE%20COMMON%20GOOD%20AND%20THE%20CATHOLIC%20CHURCH\\_1996.pdf](http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/content/download/22715/145166/file/THE%20COMMON%20GOOD%20AND%20THE%20CATHOLIC%20CHURCH_1996.pdf) (accessed 29 May 2019). The Anglican Bishops' 'Letter from the House of Bishops to the People and Parishes of the Church of England for the General Election 2015', Who is My Neighbour?, was infused with thinking about the common good. Available at: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Who%20is%20my%20neighbour.pdf> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 25 What political theorist Susan Mendus said in the aftermath of the Rushdie affair also speaks to the university setting: 'The justification of free speech [is that] it enhances rather than thwarts the possibilities of communication between different people... When free speech is employed in such a way as to destroy the possibility of communication, and of mutual understanding, then its *raison d'être* is destroyed' ('The Tigers of Wrath and the Horses of Instruction',



- in Commission for Racial Equality, *Free Speech: report of a seminar* (London: Commission for Racial Equality, 1989), 3-17 at 16). In a similar vein, Anshuman Mondal argues that the very purpose of freedom of speech is not first of all to protect the bare agency of a speaker, exercised in abstraction from all social relations, but rather to facilitate communication – ‘to develop mutual understanding and through that to create, nurture, sustain and, when necessary, recast and revise the irrevocable ties that bind us all to each other’ (*Islam and Controversy: The Politics of Free Speech After Rushdie* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 150-1.
- 26 See Commission on Religion and Belief in British Public Life, *Living with Difference: community, diversity and the common good* (Cambridge: The Woolf Institute, 2015), paras. 3.16 to 3.23, with a particular focus on media representations, paras. 5.14 and 5.27.
- 27 Gavin D’Costa points out that the category of ‘religion’ itself has a history rooted in the Western Enlightenment and the secularisation of Christian belief and practice. Gavin D’Costa, *Christianity and World Religions: Disputed Questions in the Theology of Religions* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 58-102.
- 28 As one example among many, see Archbishop Justin Welby’s opening speech on the motion, ‘*That this House has taken notice of the role of reconciliation in British foreign, defence and international development policy*’. Hansard: House of Lords Vol. 794 14 December 2018.
- 29 See, for example, the Religious Literacy Project at Harvard Divinity School, <https://rlp.hds.harvard.edu/> (accessed 29 May 2019), and the Religious Literacy Programme at the Faiths and Civil Society Unit, Goldsmiths, University of London, <https://www.gold.ac.uk/faithsunit/current-projects/literacy/> (accessed 29 May 2019). Note also the Cambridge Interfaith Programme, <https://www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/> (accessed 9 July 2019).
- 30 This is a particular focus of the Goldsmiths programme.
- 31 Jacqueline Stevenson and Kristin Aune have recently made 12 helpful recommendations for universities in this respect. See Jacqueline Stevenson and Kristin Aune, ‘Introduction: religion and higher education in Europe and North America: historical and contemporary contexts’ in Aune & Stevenson (eds) *Religion and Higher Education in Europe and North America* (London: Routledge, 2017), 17.
- 32 See, further, Stephen H. Jones, ‘Religious literacy in higher education’, in Adam Dinham and Matthew Francis (eds.), *Religious literacy in policy and practice* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2015).
- 33 The dictum is Anselm of Canterbury’s, ‘fides quaerens intellectum’ being the original title of his work *Proslogion*. It is also reflected in the well-known quotation from C.S. Lewis: ‘I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it, I see everything else’ (in ‘Is theology poetry?’).
- 34 Few, if any, Anglican statements have so far explored what this might mean, beyond the disciplines of theology and religious studies.
- 35 In *Tracing the Lines: Spiritual Exercise and the Gesture of Christian Scholarship* (Wipf & Stock, 2016), Robert Sweetman distinguishes ‘complementarist’, ‘integrationist’ and ‘holist’ standpoints.
- 36 Consider the MA in Bioethics and Medical Law at St. Mary’s University, Twickenham. Its stated aims include: ‘To promote respect for human dignity and respect for the life of human beings, as understood in the Hippocratic/Judeo-Christian tradition, through the provision of a thorough academic understanding of the major issues and competing schools of contemporary bioethics;... to promote academic enquiry into Bioethics within a Hippocratic/Judeo-Christian context with awareness of the ecumenical and inter-faith significance of cooperation in matters of justice;... to develop as a centre for dialogue and reflection for those within the Catholic Church, those of other Christian traditions and of other faiths or none, in order to explore our common humanity, and hence to promote the culture of life’. See <https://www.stmarys.ac.uk/postgraduate-courses-london/bioethics-and-medical-law> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 37 Augustine, Confessions, book 1 chapter 1; see Kristin Aune and Jacqueline Stevenson (eds), *Religion and Higher Education in Europe and North America* (London: Routledge, 2017).
- 38 Kristin Aune, Mathew Guest and Jeremy Law, *Chaplain on Campus: Understanding Chaplaincy in UK Universities* (2019), [https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/Chaplain%20on%20Campus%20Full%20Report\\_0.pdf](https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-05/Chaplain%20on%20Campus%20Full%20Report_0.pdf)
- 39 Some 59% of chaplains are Christian, with Anglican chaplains, who alongside Methodist and Roman Catholic colleagues have a long history of involvement in universities, forming the majority of Lead Chaplains. Muslim and Jewish chaplains comprise the next largest groups at 9.5% and 7.9%, respectively.
- 40 See Miranda Threlfall-Holmes and Mark Newitt, *Being a Chaplain* (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 2011).



- 41 See Ben Ryan, *A Very Modern Ministry: Chaplaincy in the UK* (London: Theos, 2015); Aune, Guest & Law, op cit.
- 42 For a recent articulation of how chaplains might understand their own identity and purpose see: Rowan C Williams, *A Theology for Chaplaincy* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2018).
- 43 John 10:10.
- 44 See especially, *Chaplains on Campus*, ch. 4. In addition, when they are qualified to do so, chaplains contribute to the academic life of the university through formal teaching and research, or by organising more informal courses that enrich or complement existing programmes.
- 45 For further instances of engagement and a brief history of Anglican universities, see Annexe B.
- 46 The component essays were written from 1852 onwards; 9th edition 1889.
- 47 The Higher Education Initial Participation Rate by age 30 has risen from 42% in 2006/2007 to 49% in 2015/2016.
- 48 Women now represent 57% of university students, although this figure masks wide variation by subject-matter: nursing, veterinary science, education and languages are dominated by women; mathematical sciences, architecture, engineering and computer science by men.
- 49 Participation Rates in Higher Education: Academic Years 2006/2007 – 2016/2017 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/744087/Main\\_text\\_participation\\_rates\\_in\\_higher\\_education\\_2006\\_to\\_2017\\_.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/744087/Main_text_participation_rates_in_higher_education_2006_to_2017_.pdf) (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 50 HE Enrolments by level of study <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb252/figure-3> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 51 The OfS Register <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/the-register/the-ofs-register/> (accessed 29 May 2019). HE Staff by HE provider and activity standard occupational classification 2014/2015 to 2017/2018 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/staff/table-1> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 52 The Association of Colleges College Key Facts 2018/2019 <https://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/College%20Key%20Facts%202018-19.pdf> (accessed 29 May 2019) alternative provider student enrolments by alternative provider and domicile 2017/2018 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb254/figure-6> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 53 Times Higher Education “Universities generate £95 billion for UK economy” <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/universities-generate-ps95-billion-uk-economy> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 54 HE student enrolments by level of study, mode of study and domicile 2017/2018 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb252/figure-7> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 55 Universities UK Higher Education in facts and figures 2018 <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/data-and-analysis/Documents/higher-education-in-facts-and-figures-2018.pdf> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 56 Universities UK University research changes the world <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/facts-and-stats/impact-higher-education/Pages/university-research-changes-the-world.aspx> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 57 The Joint Academic Classification (JACS) system will be replaced from 2019 by HE Classification of Subjects (HECoS), which is less hierarchical. See <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/innovation/hecos> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 58 HE student enrolments by HE provider and subject of study 2014/2015 to 2017/2018 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/table-13> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 59 Kristin Aune helpfully reflects on the attenuated place of ‘faith’ in the discourse of ‘student experience’. See Kristin Aune, ‘Faith and the university experience in the UK’: <http://cuac.anglicancommunion.org/media/153639/Occ-Papers-on-Faith-in-HE-no-1.pdf> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 60 Robert Anderson, University fees in historical perspective: <http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/university-fees-in-historical-perspective> (accessed 29 May 2019).
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- 62 Data from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) established under the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 to oversee central government research funding, with the Research Councils funding specific

- programmes and proposals. Summary at <https://re.ukri.org/news-events-publications/publications/funding-for-higher-education-institutions-for-2018-19> (accessed 30 May 2019). The 'dual support' system for research funding is described in more detail at <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/the-ukri-balanced-funding-programme> (accessed 30 May 2019).
- 63 Office for National Statistics: *Overeducation and hourly wages in the UK labour market; 2006 to 2017* <https://www.ons.gov.uk/news/news/oneinthreegraduatesovereducatedfortheircurrentrole>: released 29 April 2019 (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 64 Universities UK, *Minding our future: starting a conversation about the support of student mental health* (11 May 2018). <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2018/minding-our-future-starting-conversation-student-mental-health.pdf> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 65 We thus seek to move beyond, e.g., Stefan Collini's otherwise insightful critiques of modern higher education, which are not accompanied by any clear alternative vision. See, for example, Stefan Collini, *What are Universities For?* (Penguin, 2012); id., *Speaking of Universities* (Verso, 2017).
- 66 This is about 5% of the UK total, 30% of all primary school teachers, 40% of Key Stage 2-3 staff, 16% of secondary teachers and 44% of those studying and researching Theology and Religious Studies <https://www.cathedralsgroup.ac.uk/AboutUs.aspx> (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 67 Data for 2017-2018 <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/news/14-02-2019/sb254-higher-education-student-statistics-APs/totality> (accessed 30 May 2019). In comparison, English Colleges of Further Education educate 151,000 higher education students; a number have been awarded Gold standard in the Teaching Excellence Framework.
- 68 See [www.guildhe.ac.uk/excellence-in-diversity/](http://www.guildhe.ac.uk/excellence-in-diversity/) (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 69 Note the aspirations of the Cathedral Group in this regard: [www.cathedralsgroup.ac.uk/OurValues.aspx](http://www.cathedralsgroup.ac.uk/OurValues.aspx) (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 70 See 'Faith Seeking Understanding', above.
- 71 See [www.cathedralsgroup.ac.uk/Uploads/DistinctivenessFullReport.pdf](http://www.cathedralsgroup.ac.uk/Uploads/DistinctivenessFullReport.pdf) (accessed 29 May 2019).
- 72 Stephen Heap and Jeremy Law, *The Identity and Character of Anglican Universities: A Contribution to the Discussion* (November 2013).
- 73 <http://cuac.anglicancommunion.org/> (accessed 29 May 2019). By contrast, the Roman Catholic Church is the largest non-governmental provider of higher education in the world. Some estimates of Roman Catholic HEIs across the world are as high as 1,860 (US Conference of Catholic Bishops) depending on the definition adopted.
- 74 <http://cuac.anglicancommunion.org/identity-and-character-declaration.aspx> (accessed 29 May 2019). The Colleges and Universities of the Anglican Communion (CUAC) Declaration of Ideals is substantially based upon the *Anglican Identity and Character* document noted above.
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