

## **CFP: Intellectual Authority and Its Changing Infrastructures in North American and Australian Christianity, 1960s-2010s**

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### **Intellectual Authority and Its Changing Infrastructures in North American and Australian Christianity, 1960s-2010s**

Scholars working in religious history, intellectual history, history of media, and religion and theology may be interested in this 2-day symposium being held both **online** and in-person at ACU Brisbane CBD campus on **28-29 July Australian Eastern time (evenings of 27-28 July in US timezones)**. The call for papers is open until 30 May, but online attendance will remain free and open to all who register in advance at <https://intellectual-authority.eventbrite.com.au>

Keynote speakers include:

- **Willie James Jennings**, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Africana Studies at Yale Divinity School, and author of *After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging* (2020).
- **Professor Kristin Kobes du Mez** of Calvin University, historian, and author of *Jesus and John Wayne: How White Evangelicals Corrupted a Faith and Fractured a Nation* (2020).
- **Dr Garry Deverell**, inaugural Vice-Chancellor's Fellow in Indigenous Theologies at the University of Divinity in Melbourne, and the author of *Gondwana theology: A Trawlolway man reflects on Christian faith* (2018).
- **Dr Tom Aechtner**, author of *Media and Science-Religion Conflict: Mass Persuasion in the Evolution Wars* (2020) and Senior Lecturer in Religion, University of Queensland.

By “infrastructures” of intellectual authority, the symposium aims to put into historical perspective the way Christians in Australia and North America have licensed and credentialed ideas and their purveyors as authoritative or not. This includes churches and their professions of adherence to the authority of scripture and ecclesial authority but goes beyond these dimensions to explore actually practiced historical mediations of intellectual authority over the previous 50 years at the interfaces of universities, Bible colleges, publishing and marketing houses, media ecologies and parachurch ministries and more. It also includes factors shaping orientations of trust or suspicion toward mainstream expertise and

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theological relations with secular disciplinary knowledge.

The symposium also considers these infrastructures in the light of the ongoing imperative to decolonize knowledge production. We ask about the way that such infrastructures of intellectual authority in Christianity have been racialized, taking whiteness, in Willie James Jennings' terms, to be their "convening power," and the ways that Indigenous theologians, Black theologians and others have viewed the task of theological formation in recent decades.

We seek further individual papers on questions such as:

- How have Christian churches, groups and individuals in Australia, the US, and Canada changed over time in the way they exercise, license, distinguish and generate intellectual authority?
- How have churches and theological colleges in both Australia, the US and Canada responded, or not, to the call to 'decolonise' ways of knowing?
- How have US and Australian churches positioned themselves in relation to the Global South as they credential intellectual authority via the infrastructures of the Global North?
- Are there distinctively US modes of generating intellectual authority, leadership and credibility, and have these taken root or been adapted in Australian culture?
- What are the implications for Christian responses to and acceptance of expert knowledge regarding science, health, the environment, and sexuality?

The full Call for Papers is available at the event website:  
<https://intellectual-authority.eventbrite.com.au>

The symposium is hosted by ACU, Deakin University with the support of the Religious History Association of Australia.

**To express interest in presenting, please submit a 200- word abstract and title,  
together with a brief biography  
by 30 May 2021 to Dr Michael Thompson at [Michael.thompson@acu.edu.au](mailto:Michael.thompson@acu.edu.au)**

Contact Info:

**Dr Michael Thompson**

Lecturer in History, National School of Arts  
Australian Catholic University

1100 Nudgee Road, Banyo, QLD 4014 |  
Postal Address: PO Box 456, Virginia, QLD, 4014  
T: +617 3623 7191  
E: [michael.thompson@acu.edu.au](mailto:michael.thompson@acu.edu.au)

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W: [www.acu.edu.au](http://www.acu.edu.au) | <https://acu-au.academia.edu/MichaelThompson>

Contact Email:

[michael.thompson@acu.edu.au](mailto:michael.thompson@acu.edu.au)

URL:

<https://intellectual-authority.eventbrite.com.au>