



Postgraduate Studies Seminar

27.8.2021

Rev Dr Bruce Pass, Brisbane School of Theology

‘The Marie Antoinette of the Sciences? Theology in the University’

The contemporary debate over the place of theology in the university reflects a broad spectrum of opinion. While some seek to revive the claim that theology is the queen of the sciences, others query its inclusion in a modern research university. This paper draws on Herman Bavinck’s extensive contribution to this discussion, juxtaposing his portrayal of theology as the servant-queen of the sciences with the recent work of Linn Tonstad, who opposes any revival of theology’s ancient moniker. While it will be argued that Bavinck’s model resists the objections Tonstad raises, attention is drawn to a notable lacuna in his presentation. This conceptual gap, however, can readily be filled by John Webster’s *The Culture of Theology*.

Dr Alex Chow, University of Edinburgh

‘Global Mission, Public Faith, and China’s Social Credit System’

In September 2018, Beijing Zion Church, was shut down by local government officials after refusing to install CCTV on their premises. Zion’s senior pastor Ezra Jin has previously been a major advocate for the Chinese contribution to Christian mission and, with others, has argued for unregistered churches to actively engage in the Chinese civil society. Whilst religious control has been tightening in China since 2014, the recent events must also be connected to the first phase of China’s Social Credit System—a means of assessing the trustworthiness of a person based on various criteria, ranging from financial credibility to behaviour on social media and the broader society. This paper will argue that the rise of digital technologies like social media and CCTV complicate questions of religion and the public-private divide, both in Chinese and Western societies, and further suggests that these technological changes raise new questions to understandings of Christian mission in the digital age.