

## SEMINARIES LAUNCH PROJECTS EXPLORING SCIENCE AND MINISTRY

For 19.03.24



*A Cranmer Hall student taking part in a Science for Seminaries-funded study day on AI and Robotics*

Four theological colleges in the UK and Republic of Ireland have been awarded funding to develop teaching resources incorporating science, ethics, and theology.

The Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science (ECLAS) project, based at St John's College, Durham University, has awarded funding of up to £60,000 to each college, to support them to incorporate scientific topics into their core curriculum. ECLAS' Science for Seminaries programme works with seminaries to equip ministers with a grounding in science to preach persuasively, pastor responsively, and spread the gospel.

The four colleges taking part in the 2024-25 round of Science for Seminaries are Birmingham Christian College, Coleg y Bedyddwyr Caerdydd/Cardiff Baptist College, Regent's Park College, and Trinity College Dublin. This is the first time that Baptist colleges are taking part in the scheme.

Each college will adopt a different approach to engaging with science in their core theological studies. Regent's Park College will connect students with a heritage of science-engagement by key Baptist figures, leading classes and producing resources for a wider community. Birmingham Christian College will bring rigorous engagement with science and scientists into their module on Environmental Stewardship. Cardiff Baptist College will run activities including a campus-wide 'befriend a scientist' shadowing programme. Trinity College Dublin will bring working scientists into their discussion of hermeneutics and cosmology to examine scientific discovery and interpretation.

This is the third round of Science for Seminaries funding distributed by ECLAS, and is supported by a generous grant from the John Templeton Foundation.

### **ECLAS Director and Durham University theologian Revd Prof David Wilkinson said:**

"The aim of Science for Seminaries is to embed science within the mainstream theological curriculum, rather than as an optional extra for those who are already passionate about it. We have supported this already in a large number of theological colleges and courses in the UK and Ireland, and this new cohort have exciting plans to extend this work even further."

**Rev. William Kugbeadjor, Principal of Birmingham Christian College, said:**

“Our project involves integrating rigorous ecological insights into the compulsory Environmental Stewardship module, empowering church leaders to provide a Christian response to environmental issues and take meaningful actions to address these issues within their congregations and communities.

“We believe that scientific engagement for seminarians not only results in a more holistic and enriched educational experience, but also equips them with the knowledge required to confidently lead and address scientific questions raised by their congregations and the wider community.”

**Rosa Hunt and Ed Kaneen, the co-principals at Coleg y Bedyddwyr Caerdydd /Cardiff Baptist College, said:**

“We both have backgrounds in science, and we are both so grateful for the perspective and richness that this background has brought to our faith. Understanding even a little about how science and scientists work has helped us bring an epistemological awareness and a lack of fear to the table when engaging with scientific matters as people of faith. We are so eager to see our students leave College with a similar confidence in and enthusiasm for science and what it can contribute – as well as a more grounded understanding of where its limits lie. We are delighted that we have received this grant, which will enable us to start doing this by running a core module in science and religion, and running campus-wide events.”

**The Principal of Regent’s Park College, Professor Sir Malcolm Evans, said:**

“I am absolutely delighted that Science for Seminaries will be supporting our project on ‘Science and Religion in the Baptist World’. Our ministerial students will benefit hugely from greater exposure to the wealth of local scientific expertise that is available here in Oxford, and we look forward to showcasing the scientific lives of some key Baptist figures via the resources of our Angus Library. Regent's Park College is excited to be one of the first Baptist colleges in the UK to receive funding from Science for Seminaries, and we look forward to contributing to wider Baptist engagement with scientific concerns.”

**The Head of the School of Religion, Theology and Peace Studies, Prof Gillian Wylie and the Director of the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, Dr Maurice Elliott, at the University of Dublin, Trinity College, said:**

“We are delighted to have been selected for this Science for Seminaries funding award. Our project, led by Prof Cathriona Russell, aims to enrich the current initiatives in teaching theology in an age of science through integrated teaching on novel, original and creative developments in the sciences in tandem with practicing empirical scientists, on our Masters Programs in ministry, and in theology and religion in the humanities.”

**ENDS**

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**ABOUT ECLAS**

Equipping Christian Leadership in an Age of Science (ECLAS) is a global research and engagement project which brings science and Christian faith into deeper conversation, through conferences for

senior church leaders, grant programmes for churches and theological colleges to engage with the work of scientists, and issues in public policy.

ECLAS is based in the UK at St John's College, Durham University in partnership with the University of York and the Church of England. Our international partners are St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya; Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland; Singapore Bible College, Singapore; United Theological College, Bengaluru, India.

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