

## 3rd International Conference



# Christian Philosophy facing Naturalism

September 24–25, 2024 (Tuesday–Wednesday)

Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow, Poland

The dispute between naturalism and anti-naturalism has been underway almost since the very beginnings of philosophy. Christian thinkers, by proclaiming that God as Creator transcends the reality He has created, and that human beings as persons transcend the material world, have entered this dispute on the anti-naturalist side. The contemporary dominance in culture of the naturalistic paradigm requires Christian philosophy to reflect on naturalism in the broadest sense (in its various forms), together with its conditions and consequences, and to rethink its relationship to this philosophical tradition. Naturalism rejects the possibility of something existing, being known, or being explained that is separate from the material reality given in empirical cognition. Along with this, it denies human beings transcendence with respect to the natural or social world. In its contemporary iteration, this tradition appeals to the solutions and methods of domain-specific forms of scientific inquiry, relying on them for its own authority.

For Christian philosophy, naturalism represents a powerful challenge. It is possible to see in it a threat to Christian philosophy, but it is also possible to discern in it an opportunity for a more critical evaluation of Christian philosophy's previous solutions, and an opportunity to develop new ones. There is a need for a better understanding of naturalism itself, as well as of what the various domain-specific sciences (including the natural and social sciences, as well as the humanities and, currently, neuroscientific research in particular) have to say about the world and about human beings. Systematic and historico-philosophical questions equally still call for debate—in relation to the centuries-old dispute between naturalism and anti-naturalism, as well as the changing place of Christian thought within it. In our own time, one can witness diverse attempts by Christian thinkers both to critically discuss naturalistic positions and to implement naturalistic approaches or solutions within Christian thought itself. Certainly, the latter cannot ignore the fact that naturalism allows philosophy to maintain cognitive contact with domain specific forms of scientific inquiry.

## Proposals

We invite proposals that address the problems of **Christian Philosophy and Naturalism**. We are particularly interested in the following topics and questions, but any research on the conference theme is welcome.

### Main problems and questions worth considering

- Naturalism plus Christianity: an apparent contradiction or a real one?
- Should Christian philosophy focus on offering a critique of naturalism or on achieving its assimilation, and ought it to confine itself to the diagnosis of problems?
- Is ontological naturalism a necessary precondition for doing philosophy? Is it possible to retain methodological naturalism and reject ontological naturalism?
- Naturalistic ontology versus theism: how should we deal with the question of so-called “ontological emergentism” and the issue of bottom-up/top-down causation, especially in the context of God’s acting in the natural world?
- Is it possible (and, if so, to what extent) to develop theistic naturalism within different types of discourse, ranging from natural theology, through anthropology, to ethics?
- Can a naturalistic worldview be considered non-deficient or does it, from the viewpoint of philosophical grounding, call for supplementation—as proposed, for example, in the modern version of the teleological argument relating to the fine-tuning of the world, and Alvin Plantinga’s argument?
- Can Christian anthropology somehow assimilate the findings of natural science and the theses of naturalism? What are the limits to the naturalisation of Christian anthropology?
- Is a naturalistic explanation of the mind adequate, or must we invoke a traditional conception of the soul? Should Christian anthropology seek to integrate (to some extent) the findings of the cognitive sciences, along with contemporary notions from the philosophy of mind, thereby reformulating the concept of the soul? What implications does this have for the Christian worldview (especially the doctrine granting humans a special ontic status amongst living creatures) and, above all, for the Christian conception of salvation? Is a coherent integration of contemporary thinking about the mind with Christianity possible?

**Proposal Submission:** Please submit a 500-word abstract of your paper (in PDF format) by March 31, 2024 using the following link: <https://forms.office.com/e/Zp3UTXUzka>

**Language:** we accept proposals **in English exclusively**.

We will be delighted to meet all participants in person here in Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow. However, the organizers plan to conduct this conference in hybrid mode, combining both online and onsite elements. This model will allow all interested persons to participate, while also offering those wishing to actually come to Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow the possibility of doing so.

### Keynote speakers

We are pleased to inform that the following individuals have agreed to give a lecture or participate in a panel discussion during the conference:

Andrew Pinsent – Oxford University, UK

Paul K. Moser – Loyola University Chicago, USA

Wodzisław Duch – Nicolaus Copernicus University, Poland

John Hittinger – University of St. Thomas, USA

Jacek Wojtyśiak – Catholic University of Lublin, Poland

Peter van Inwagen – University of Notre Dame, USA

### Fees

The conference is co-financed by the Polish Ministry of Education and Science under project No. KONF/SN/0010/2023/012 in the "Excellent Science II" programme

The conference is open to the public (also via social media). Speakers will be charged with the costs of conference (materials, dinner, coffee breaks etc.)—the exact fee is below. One may decrease the fee by a prompt **submission** (till December 31, 2023) to the conference (so called, Early Bird registration).

#### Regular participants

60/80/100 EUR (Early Birds/PhD Students/Regular Participants)

#### Online participants

30/40/50 EUR (Early Birds/PhD Students/Regular Participants)

### Publication

After the conference we plan to publish a special issue in a philosophical journal with the articles based on the conference speeches. The speakers are encouraged to

prepare a paper (up to 10,000 words) and submit it by December 31, 2024. Each article goes through the process of double-blind peer review. *Forum Philosophicum*, international journal for philosophy (SCOPUS), has already agreed to publish a special issue in 2024 including the materials from the conference, though we are also open to the collaboration with other journals.

## Deadlines

- Submission of Proposals (Early Birds): December 31, 2023
  - Submission of Proposals: March 31, 2024
  - Notification of Acceptance: April 30, 2024
- Registration Deadline and Payment: June 30, 2024
  - Conference Dates: September 24–25, 2024
- Paper Submission Deadline: December 31, 2024

You may also see the video materials from our 2020 conference *Christian Philosophy: Its Past, Present, and Future*:

[https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2RdbxAZiEAmJWEvkKKt60Kj\\_ET8sE03s&si=9TMghvVd41ZxmFn5](https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2RdbxAZiEAmJWEvkKKt60Kj_ET8sE03s&si=9TMghvVd41ZxmFn5)

and from our 2022 conference *Christian Philosophy and its Challenges*:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2RdbxAZiEAn5Dj9XIZBE7LYYGiVqmL96>

More information can be found on our website: [www.christianphilosophy.ignatianum.edu.pl](http://www.christianphilosophy.ignatianum.edu.pl)

If you have questions, please contact the Conference Secretary at [ChristianPhilosophy2024@ignatianum.edu.pl](mailto:ChristianPhilosophy2024@ignatianum.edu.pl)