

The Borders of Borders:

Christianity and the Rethinking of Public Space

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This article examines the significance of public space for the European project and reflects on the contribution of Christianity to the shaping of today's public space. It is characterized by a common and shared symbolic, social, cultural, economic, political and geographical sphere that is potentially accessible and open to all people and welcomes creative participation. Today the specific task of Christianity consists not least in the concretization of the idea of universal friendship in view of an ethos of empathy and inclusion which is perceptive of migrants and their stories (also their stories of suffering). The development of a friendly and non-hegemonic coexistence of Christianity, Islam and the secular world in Europe poses a particular challenge. In addition, it is necessary to make one's own traditions and potentials fruitful in such a way that also the dead, who in the secular world are largely excluded, obtain a corresponding presence in the world of the living beyond nihilistic resignation. In this context it becomes apparent that the vocation of Christianity consists in providing an exit strategy to closed social and symbolic worlds. This exit means not least the subversion of boundaries (also those between the living and the dead). It does not create an abstract boundlessness, but sets in motion a continuous process of creative openings and shifts in which public space becomes concrete as a place of ever new approaches, exits and inclusions.

Keywords

public space – exit strategy – Christianity – Islam – boundaries – subversion of boundaries – postnihilistic narratives – Europe