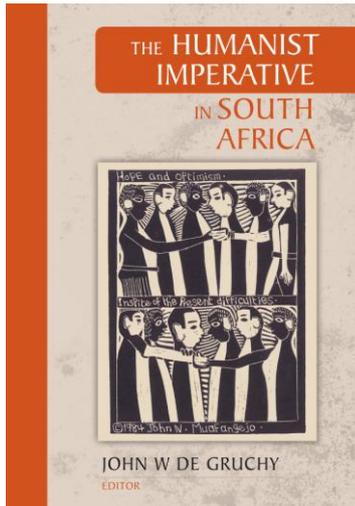


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PRESS RELEASE

10 August 2011



## BOOK LAUNCH

### **THE HUMANIST IMPERATIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA** John W de Gruchy (editor)

*The Humanist Imperative in South Africa* is the product of a research project of the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) and also the first publication in the new STIAS series of publications. Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu will be the keynote speaker at the launch function on Thursday, 11 August 2011, at the Wallenberg Research Centre in Stellenbosch.

According to STIAS Director Professor Hendrik Geyer, *“the STIAS series of publications is aimed at a broad public which will naturally vary with specific research themes. Straddling the academic world and the public forum of an engaging public is a challenge that STIAS accepts; we trust that each STIAS publication will reflect the ‘creative space for the mind’ in which it is rooted, stimulate public interest and debate, and contribute to informed decision making at various levels of our society.”*

The book comprises twenty-six multi-disciplinary essays and reflections originally presented at two symposia of the New Humanism Project held at STIAS in June 2009 and February 2010. The twenty-eight contributing authors are leading academics and public figures, and include John de Gruchy (Editor), Denise Ackermann, Laurie Ackermann, Neville Alexander, Russel Botman, Mary Burton, Paul Cilliers, Drucilla Cornell, André du Toit, George Ellis, Bobby Godsell, Hendrik Geyer, Jan-Hendrik Hofmeyr, Wolfgang Huber, Hans Huyssen, Antjie Krog, Bernard Lategan, Stephen Martin, Achille Mbembe, Thaddeus Metz, Ebrahim Moosa, Njabulo Ndebele, Kenneth Panfillio, Deborah Posel, Mark Solms, William Schweiker and Peter Willis.

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The essays focus on the humanisms that have shaped our society and its constitution, what it means to be human beings together in South Africa, and issues of economic and social justice, human dignity and rights. Developing mutual respect, listening critically and constructively to each other, and promoting a wider conversation are of vital importance. Fostering programmes that enable all people to attain their full potential is identified as an urgent priority.

*“Social and natural scientists together with jurists and theologians engage in a genuine interdisciplinary exercise in how humanism ‘affects daily life within our present-day context’ ... The relevance and importance of the topic is beyond question. Even computer designers are now confronted with ethical issues, as skills that were once exclusively human are simulated by machines.”*

– Heribert Adam, Emeritus Professor of Sociology, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, and STIAS Fellow

*“It is remarkable that such a variety of academics – from postmodern poetry and philosophy to hard nosed brain science and complexity theory – have been willing to spend time and energy to wrestle with each other in the pursuit of a common way forward for humanity in the South African context. The volume contains a bewildering variety of perspectives that mesh with each other to form an impressionistic mosaic rather than a systematic treatment. The intention is clearly to gather different approaches, widen horizons and open up a debate. This objective has certainly been met.”*

– Emeritus Professor Klaus Nürnberger, Fellow and Senior Research Associate,  
University of KwaZulu-Natal.

*The Humanist Imperative in South Africa* is published by SUN MeDIA Stellenbosch under the SUN PRESS imprint.

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