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Cover image: *Early orthodox Christian fresco in the cave church at Cappadocia, Central Anatolia, Turkey.* © Vadim Petrakov/ Shutterstock.com

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY BOARD CHAIR

## GRAHAM WARD

**I step down at the end of an extraordinary year that no one foresaw as we partied with the new cohort of graduate students back in Michaelmas.** I write this on Monday of ninth week of Trinity Term, having already had a morning meeting online and preparing for an Open Day this afternoon with those students from across the globe who have accepted a graduate place to study at Oxford in the autumn, also online. If we have grown more accustomed to these virtual sessions, then we have also grown more aware of how much good pedagogical practice gains from being face to face—embodied minds responding to other embodied minds in an iterative process in which ideas generate other ideas.

There comes a point when last year is almost a blur because of the events that overtook its course. So much energy went in to ensuring that teaching continued throughout Trinity (even if this was remotely) and summer examinations went ahead so students would pass with a degree reflecting their efforts and abilities. A whole year's work seemed to be compressed into a few months. This cannot go without comment. Several staff involved in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and all those appointed to Examination Boards, had no Easter vacation this year. Research was on hold while everyone worked and worked over a number of very intense weeks on what were 'frontline' issues for the Faculty and the University. In Britain, throughout the difficult months of the lockdown, each Thursday evening at 8pm people were encouraged to come to their doorsteps and balconies and clap for those frontline health and care workers coping with astonishing amounts of stress. On several occasions, I too would clap, and clap also for those academic and administrative staff working to ensure that our students were being taught, that they would be examined as justly and as accurately as possible under the circumstances, and that even prospective students knew as much as we did about how

things might look going forward into a new academic year. To my mind, this work was heroic and can only issue from a deep sense of vocation and commitment to the profession.

Nevertheless, there were some milestone achievements in the Faculty over the 2019-20 year. Most spectacularly, the A. G. Leventis Foundation agreed to endow the Associate Professor in Eastern Christianity that we share with the Faculty of History, currently occupied by Professor

Phil Booth. They are donating £1,765,000 to the post, leveraging £882,500 funding from the university Endowment Challenge Fund, so creating a total endowment of £2,647,500. While the Faculty's Development Officer, Harriet Bayley, is off to a new job at University College, she spearheaded our alumni campaign last year that raised funds we used to finance an online, graduate-led journal publishing peer-reviewed articles from the graduates here; many of whom are already having work accepted in internationally A-rated publications. Hatty is also finalising the endowment of a doctorate to advance women in theology. There were further large grants awarded to the Faculty: nearly \$3 million from the John Templeton Foundation for a 5-year project starting 1 November 2019 to extend the Ian Ramsey Centre's work on science and

religion in Central and Eastern Europe; and a £1.95 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation for the Oxford Character Project, housed in the Theology Faculty in conjunction with the Said Business School, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Engineering and Oxford Internet Institute. This will run for three years from September 2020. There were also academic accolades: Professor Mark Chapman awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Bonn; a documentary film, *Complete Surrender*, produced by Dr Louise Nelstrop (Lecturer in Theology, St Benet's Hall) won best documentary at the Love Story Film Festival in London; and Professor John Barton, now emeritus, was shortlisted for this year's Wolfson History Prize for *A History of the Bible*.

*So much energy went in to ensuring that teaching continued throughout Trinity (even if this was remotely) and summer examinations went ahead so students would pass with a degree reflecting their efforts and abilities.*

The year 2019-20 also saw new members appointed to the Faculty: Mark Wynn as the Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of Religion; Kirsten Macfarlane as the Associate Professor of Early Modern Christianities; David Downs as the Clarendon-Laing Associate Professor of New Testament Studies; and Laura Quick as the Associate Professor of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament.

Last year, then, was a time of exciting change and considerable reward for the vast amount of scholarly work that goes on in the Faculty, but COVID-19 casts something of a long shadow. And,

although his Chair was in the Faculty of Oriental Studies, we lost to its ravages Professor Stefano Zacchetti who taught Buddhist Studies.

As I said, this is my final year as Faculty Board Chair and, facing into the summer vacation, there are considerable challenges ahead with planning for teaching and examinations in the new academic year. But Professor Bill Wood takes to the tiller, so I am in no doubt that whatever lies ahead will be skilfully navigated. I have no doubt either that with the staff we have in place whatever successes are possible in the year 2020-21 there will be further achievements. ■



*Philosophy and Theology Faculties Library reading room. © Simon Bentley*

# TRANSCENDENCE ON OUR MINDS



**Ruth Gornandt**, *Marie Curie Fellow*

**My research attempts to link insights from the Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR) with traditional topics from theology and philosophy.** The Cognitive Science of Religion emerged as an interdisciplinary field of study about thirty years ago. Scholars from various disciplines started employing methods and insights from cognitive science as tools to understand religion. Why is there religion everywhere on earth? And why do we find recurring elements and structures instead of an infinite variety across the religions? Since then, CSR has collected evidence and developed sound theories which indicate that religion is deeply related to human cognition. Is this research relevant to theology and, if so, in what way?

The first generation of CSR scholars took a sharply atheist stance. ‘Religion Explained’ was the provocative book title of an otherwise

succinct introduction to the field by anthropologist Pascal Boyer. The enthusiasm was that the application of cognitive methods could explain religion via exclusively natural causes. And this seemed to justify the assumption that no God exists at all. Of course, this ‘debunking of theism’ evoked some criticism, not only from theologians and philosophers of religion, but also from scholars of CSR itself. Some pointed to methodological and epistemological flaws; others stressed the limits of a reductionist approach.

However, those discussions, important as they were, seem to be battles of the past. Today, we see evidence of a more balanced approach. As one researcher put it recently, the reductionist approach means that ‘CSR scholars do not attempt to explain



*The Monastery of Tatev (9th century) in Southern Armenia, home of Gregory of Tatev (1346–1409). © Alexey Mashtakov/Shutterstock*

religion in its entirety' (Claire White).

So, the task today is no longer to question CSR's methodological transgressions. Rather, theology has to focus on its legitimate results and ask what significance they may have for theological understanding.

Since CSR investigates particular aspects of reality it seems appropriate to connect it not with theism as a whole but with particular theological topics. Theological claims about reality are often subjective, sometimes even biased by the theological aim, and not developed on the basis of a controllable collection and reflection of evidence. This is where CSR comes into play. CSR studies phenomena which are also part of theological reasoning. How do people conceive of supernatural beings and what do they believe, independently of religious teaching, about the transcendent? How natural is religion? What does being human mean and is religious belief essential for it? CSR can contribute an objectified perception of a particular part of reality the validity of which can be discussed.

But also, in this function, CSR is far from being the new handmaiden of theology. Its insights differ significantly from established positions in theology. In my view, there are two main areas that need clarification. First, the question of how humans perceive and conceive of the transcendent and second, the importance of transcendence for being human.

Transcendence is fundamental to theology. It is the basis of religious belief and hence also the criterion in CSR for something to be called 'religious'—although designated by the term 'supernatural'. Many scholars of CSR adapt a working definition of religion that involves supernatural agents which are beyond everyday perception of reality, beyond nature and beyond the grasp of scientific observation. However, rather than being a limiting concept, the supernatural is in fact described by CSR in positive terms—as represented in human cognition. What are the imagined traits of supernatural agents and which elements of cognition are involved in their representation?

Hence, significant for theology is not only the fact that CSR advocates the cognitive naturalness of the belief in supernatural agents but also that it compiles long lists of their natural attributes which often deviate considerably from official teachings of the religions. How do we deal with this in theology? What may be the relation between this 'natural' knowledge of supernatural agents and the knowledge



of the transcendent God provided by revelation? To answer these questions, my research focuses on the traditional topic of natural knowledge of God, as well as on mystical theology. Both can help to find the correct relation between scientific reasoning and the limits of this reasoning, which are necessarily reached when thinking about something that transcends everything. I also investigate theologians from Orthodox Christianity, and especially Armenian theology. The latter seems particularly apt because it integrates a sharply rational inquiry and a deeply mystical spirituality.

The second area in which I see a relevant challenge is theological anthropology. According to most CSR scholars, religion is not essential for being human. It may well be connected to cognitive abilities

unique to humans. But it is often regarded an accidental by-product of abilities which are actually aimed at other needs: dealing with other people and their hidden intentions, survival in a threatening environment and so on. Thus, religion is not seen as providing any adaptive value which increases individual or inclusive fitness. Some scholars stress that religion does provide a certain adaptive advantage on the group level: by fostering

altruism, moral behaviour, cooperation and group cohesion. But, strictly speaking, it is not religion itself that grants these advantages. Religion here is rather an amplifier of a natural morality which seems to arise independently from supernatural agency, and this is what actually increases evolutionary success. Religion may be useful, but it does not appear essential for being human.

In both cases, CSR's perspective on being human evokes a crucial question: is religion the result of particular cognitive abilities of human nature, or is human nature, as theologians and many philosophers claim, the result of a relation to something transcendent? Can we describe human nature without transcendence, or is transcendence a prerequisite for the evolutionary origin and individual development of human exteriority, consciousness, subjectivity and identity? Alongside philosophical reflections on self-transcendence it is particularly the doctrine of *imago Dei* which may offer answers.

Can we respond to the challenges CSR's insights pose to theology? Furthermore, can we develop new perspectives by engaging critically with CSR and perhaps readdress open questions to CSR—all from the perspective of a long-standing tradition of reflecting on being

*Transcendence is  
fundamental to theology.  
It is the basis of religious  
belief...*

human under the horizon of an all transcending infinity? My research attempts to do this.

I am now almost at the end of my first year as a Marie Curie fellow at the Faculty of Theology and Religion. The application process is rather complex, especially since I was fully engaged in professional and family life at the time. But I received fantastic support from the Humanities Division's research facilitator for theology, Thea Vidnes, who tirelessly provided feedback and invaluable information, and from my mentor Professor Graham Ward. I applied for a Horizon 2020 European Fellowship in the Career Restart panel. Having put my academic activity on hold for family reasons, I then worked as a teacher. So, the Career Restart panel offered a great opportunity to resume my academic activity.

Discussions with students during my time as a teacher forced me to reduce complex problems to their basics, which helped me see the essential questions and their potential answers more clearly. Those experiences continue to inform my current research and I am grateful for this. At school, the issue of science and religion is a pressing subject. Many students are not able to take religious faith seriously. Against the backdrop of a quasi-infinite trust in science, they regard religion as an outdated explanation of the world from prescientific, uneducated times—nice stories without any sensible value. And with that, they mirror our Western societies, in which an allegedly enlightened secularism has replaced religious belief. I hope my academic activity in the years to come will contribute to a deeper understanding of what religion actually is through the dialogue with science. ■



🔍 *Can we locate religious belief in the mind? The Cognitive Science of Religion attempts to show how faith is related to specific processes in human cognition.* © John Hain/Creative Commons

🔍 *Religion as part of human life may date back as far as 100,000 years ago—but is it the result or the prerequisite of the evolution of human nature?* © Kevin Lavorgna/Shutterstock

🔍 *The starry heavens above us: transcending the natural environment is one of the fundamental traits of being human.* © Nick Chung/Creative Commons



# Heidegger and his Jewish reception

**Daniel M. Herskowitz**, *Junior Research Fellow, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies*



**As the second year of my three-year research fellowship at Wolfson College is coming to a close, I have been asked to write a few words about my research and share some reflections on the life of a post-doc at Oxford.** The invitation came at a good time. I just received the proofs for my forthcoming book *Heidegger and his Jewish Reception* from the editor at Cambridge University Press and I am happy for the excuse to postpone the proof reading for a little while to discuss the book itself.

In this book, which is based on the doctoral dissertation I wrote here at the Faculty of Theology and Religion in Oxford, under the supervision of Graham Ward, I look at Jewish theological engagements with the thought of the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. The topic of Heidegger, the Jews, and Judaism is a thorny and hardly pleasant one. As is relatively well known, in 1933, only a few years after publishing his magnum opus *Being and Time*, Heidegger joined the National Socialist party. We now know that he held and even expressed anti-Jewish views for quite some time, but after Hitler's rise to power Heidegger openly supported the Party and harnessed his philosophy to its shameful, racist ideology. His disillusionment with Nazism was relatively quick, but even after the Second World War he refused to apologise or express remorse publicly for his political and philosophical support of Nazism, despite some passionate requests from his former students to do so. These sorry facts, together with his mistreatment of his (formerly Jewish) mentor, the great phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, generated a dubious personal and philosophical reputation that was well-deserved. Indeed, Karl Popper spoke for many when he said: "I appeal to the philosophers of all countries to unite and never again mention Heidegger or talk to another philosopher who defends Heidegger. This man was a devil."

Alongside these direful credentials, however, it is also true that the majority of Heidegger's closest students were Jewish. Among them we can list Emmanuel Levinas, Leo Strauss, Herbert Marcuse, Hannah Arendt, and Hans Jonas, to name only a few whose

intellectual vocations were jumpstarted in Heidegger's classroom and who later became respected thinkers in their own right. Often, their original thought-programmes developed out of Heidegger's philosophy and in constant dialogue with it.

Indeed, it is truly a striking irony in intellectual history that, notwithstanding the notoriety of his biography and his thought's possible connections with murderous and antisemitic fascism, the mark of Heidegger's philosophy is widely and deeply felt in twentieth century Jewish thought. So much so that one is hard pressed to find a more impactful thinker on twentieth century Jewish philosophy

*The mark of Heidegger's philosophy is widely and deeply felt in twentieth century Jewish thought.*

than Martin Heidegger. If much of medieval Jewish philosophy is rightfully perceived as operating under Aristotle's domineering shadow, determined by its concepts, possibilities, and boundaries, and the same is true with respect to nineteenth century Jewish thought and Kant, then the previous century might be termed the 'Heidegger century' in Jewish European thought.

Thus, in my forthcoming book I critically examine the rich, persistent, and charged Jewish wrestling with Heidegger's thought and try to delineate the dialectic of attraction and repulsion that marks this intellectual encounter. What I am most interested in are Jewish readings of Heidegger that understand his philosophy to be religiously charged, that is, as either emerging from, reflecting, or promoting a certain 'religious' tradition or stance. The presence of secularised Christian categories, the absence of reference to God in his ontological portrayal of human existence, and his obscure references to the 'gods' and the 'holy,' among other things, led many Jewish thinkers, in a manner not unlike their Christian counterparts, to associate his thought with various religious positions they renounced, and to rebuke it accordingly. Unlike their Christian peers, of course, this crucial engagement with Heidegger often served as a foundation for offering a philosophical or theological reconstruction of Judaism or Jewishness that was then presented as an alternative to Heidegger's philosophy, to the 'religious' traditions that are said to be reflected in it, and to the various moral and political ills to which his thought has been linked.

It would, however, be a mistake to judge the Jewish engagement with Heidegger as unproblematically antagonistic. While the mainstream Jewish attitude is marked by a clear and fierce opposition, there is at the same time a persistent fascination with Heidegger's thinking; indeed, even an odd attraction. This is not only because his rejection of metaphysics and penetrating analysis of existence, authenticity and death excited and provoked an entire generation of thinkers, but because often what they constructed as 'Jewish' was also found, quite disturbingly, in his philosophy. For example, in a sermon from 1935, the prominent German rabbi, Leo Baeck remarked about Heidegger's account of human existence: "The philosopher Heidegger has—intentionally or unintentionally—expressed a biblical thought [...] This is Jewish thinking." After a long conversation with Martin Buber, Werner Kraft, a German-Jewish scholar and friend of Buber's, reported that "I have the impression that he [...] cannot free himself from Heidegger." Likewise, Levinas, the great French-Jewish thinker, wrote of Heidegger's reflections on the silence of language that "in this way, without realizing it,

Heidegger would have Judaized the Greeks." In an interview late in his life, Levinas was asked whether it is correct to say that he "went through Heidegger, beyond Heidegger, by means of Heidegger." His reply conveys the complicated personal and intellectual relationship he had with Heidegger: "always with pain and suffering," he admitted. "But I cannot deny it. Mont Blanc is Mont Blanc."

More examples, of course, can be given. What is clear, however, is that for a remarkable cohort of Jewish thinkers, it is Heidegger who is the philosopher they are at once drawing on and arguing against. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Heidegger occupied a commanding presence—as a constructive resource and as an adversary—in a central strand of twentieth century Jewish thought. Thus, in another moment of irony, it can be said that not only was Heidegger a key reference point in the various attempts to negotiate the boundaries between Judaism, Christianity and secularism in twentieth century Jewish thought, his thought also proved itself to be fertile ground for reconceptualising what it means to be Jewish. ■



*Martin Heidegger at his desk in Freiburg in September 1959.*



# Religion and the Frontier Challenges

## A new postdoctoral fellowship programme at Pembroke College

**Justin Jones**, *Project Coordinator, Religion and the Frontier Challenges*

**Barnabas Aspray**, *Junior Research Fellow, Religion and the Frontier Challenges*

**Imen Neffati**, *Junior Research Fellow, Religion and the Frontier Challenges*



### **JUSTIN JONES**

During this 2019-20 academic year, Pembroke College has begun an exciting and ambitious academic early career fellowship programme. Entitled 'Religion and the Frontier Challenges', the programme is hosted at Pembroke, but is also affiliated with the Faculty of Theology and Religion, and is building up links with other faculties and centres around the university.

This research programme seeks to enrich discussion of how contemporary religious traditions and ideas might provide (or how they are providing) knowledge and leadership in facing the major challenges currently confronting humanity. Its title is loosely inspired by a conference of Catholic theologians held in Mexico City in 2010, which evoked the idea of the "frontier challenges" facing contemporary humanity: challenges that are "supra-national or supra-continental" in character. These may be challenges of knowledge, of the "isms": aggressive atheism or secularism, for instance, or fundamentalism. They may be the great challenges of poverty, inequality, discrimination and the many fights for social

justice. Or they may be the challenges created by modern advances of technology, science or medicine, or the unprecedented threat of the climate crisis. But in all these cases, the suggestion was that religion had to be proactive in seeking out solutions, thinking creatively and tracing pathways forward.

This growing fellowships programme is open to specialists in contemporary religion who may work from any disciplinary perspective, and on any religion. Our fellows develop their own projects that focus, in one way or another, on the search for constructive engagements between religion and some of these “frontier challenges” encountered in a fast-changing world. Our first two fellows joined this academic year, and they introduce their research below.

Our hope is that, over the next few years, we will appoint new fellows every year, and build a growing cluster of young scholars, able to devote time and resources to their own research projects, and to build collective events and collaborations. We are excited about these opportunities, and look forward greatly to working with our partners in the Faculty of Theology and Religion. ■



**DR BARNABAS ASPRAY:**

“I am a philosophical theologian by training, having written my PhD (Cantab) on Paul Ricœur’s conception of human finitude, evil, and transcendence. Philosophical theology concerns itself with fundamental questions of metaphysics, onto-theology, religious language, the possibility of speaking of God, and so on. While these questions are crucially important, I believe that

philosophical theology also has a lot to offer to concrete practical issues, bringing a much-needed perspective to bear on global challenges that concern everyone.

My project begins a dialogue between philosophical theology and forced migration studies. This means both offering philosophical-theological insights to the contested field of refugee ethics, and showing what a ‘refugee hermeneutic’ can teach theology in return. Refugees are everywhere in the Bible and the Christian tradition, a rich resource to inform understanding and guide action. I will add to this the insights available from the large body of reflections on ‘the Other’ available in the thought of twentieth-century French figures like Lévinas, Foucault, Lacan, and Ricœur.

But this is not simply an abstract project. I have partnered with Refugee Support Network, a UK charity which helps refugee and asylum-seeking children and young people to build more hopeful futures through education. In this context, I have been engaged in ethnographic fieldwork, interacting with refugees and those who

work with them, to learn first-hand the challenges and opportunities of the present situation. My goal is to survey and evaluate what Christians have done, and are doing, in response to refugees. All kinds of responses are taken into account—positive/negative, open/closed, opposed/welcoming—provided they have a Christian basis. This also means listening to refugees themselves, letting possible preconceptions be transformed by dialogue and accompaniment.

The goal of my work is not only to make an academic contribution, but to raise awareness and effect change in the wider society. Although refugees and immigration are a constant topic in the news, and although Christians around the UK have responded admirably to the growing need, there has been almost no material introducing a Christian perspective on refugees for a popular audience. My plan is to launch a podcast focused on Christian responses to refugees, interspersing my own reflections with interviews from experts in the field. Then, I will gather these materials into a short popular handbook that gives an accurate overview of the current situation and provides a Christian lens through which to look at it.” ■

➔ *Hussein, a UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child) arrived in London without his family towards the start of the Syrian conflict and was recognised as a refugee by the UK government.* © Refugee Support Network; used with permission.

➔ *Peshtaz and Ashraf, two Afghan UASCs with their UK foster family, the Towlers who live in the Midlands.* © Refugee Support Network; used with permission.





**DR IMEN NEFFATI**

“I am a historian of modern France and the ‘Francophone world’, with a broader interest in religion, secularism and modernity. My PhD (University of Sheffield) explored the history of the French satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and studied its anticlerical style and its rhetoric about Islam and Muslims, and built upon my interests in the perceived dichotomy between Islam and

secularism, particularly regarding gender equality. At Pembroke, I am currently building up a project that examines inheritance law and debates over its reform in Tunisia. This will shed light on the evolution of Muslim identity in Tunisia under both the authoritarian post-independence secular regimes and the post-Arab Spring democracy. It explores the impasse regarding socio-political reforms that are perceived as contradictory to Islamic teachings and thinks about the composition of the secular Muslim identity.

This project investigates the resistance amongst a large section of Tunisian society to the reform of inheritance law, exploring the arguments made in favour of reforming the inheritance law to make it more gender-equal, and those against it. Those against

the reform argue that Islamic laws should be immune to forms of personal reasoning (known as *ijtihad*), placing Islamic laws outside of government interference. This leads to the question of legitimacy: who has the right to change issues related to Islamic practice, and who should have access to *ijtihad*?

In my project, I explore how, since the country’s independence in 1956, a previously centralised religious power, clustered around Tunisia’s official Muslim representative the Zitouna Mosque, has been broken up. With the role of the religious elite having diminished, and the emergence of new religious actors including political parties and social groups, my project surveys the place of the Muslim scholar in modern society, and the tools available to him/her to play an active role in social and political change.

Arguments in favour of the reform of inheritance laws have been led by the Individual Freedoms and Equality Committee (COLIBE), which operates on the basis of the secular Tunisian Constitution and international law, and argues that Islam over the *longue durée* has always moved in the direction of progress. My aim is to think about how organisations like COLIBE and other women’s and minority rights NGOS navigate their Muslimness and negotiate citizenship amidst tensions created by debates around reinterpreting or challenging the religious text.” ■



📍 *Tunis, 13 August 1956, President Habib Bourguiba and Minister of Justice Ahmed Mestiri sign the Code of Personal Status, a series of progressive family laws that guarantee equality between men and women. Next to Bourguiba (on his left) is Zaytouna scholar Mohamed Tahar Ben Achour (author of *Maqasid al-Shari’ah al-Islamiyyah*, 1946). Behind Bourguiba is sheikh Mohamed Abdelaziz Jait, Mufti of Tunisia and one of the authors of the Code.*

# Theology, Technology, and Human Flourishing

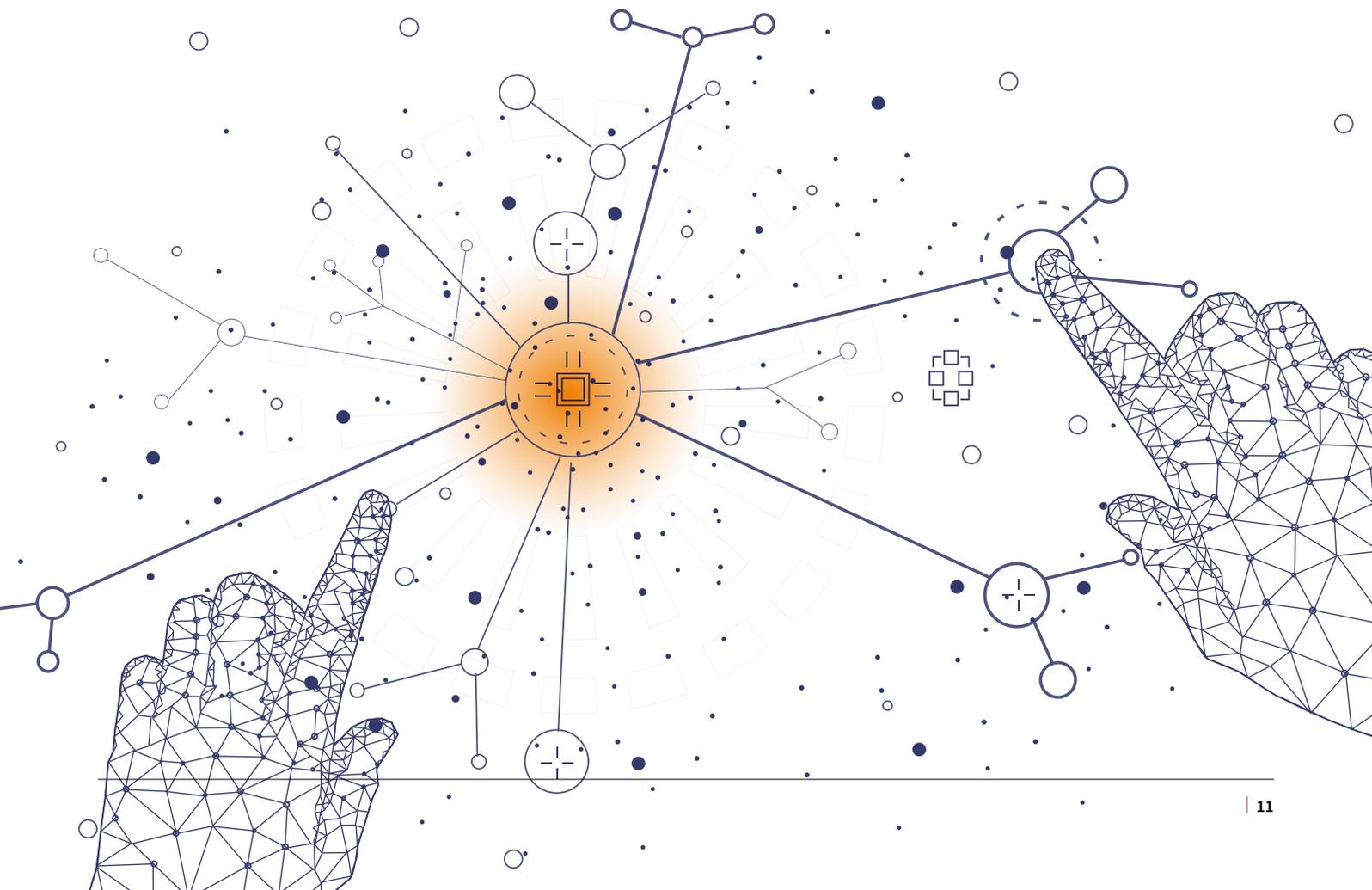


**Ashley Moyse**, *McDonald Postdoctoral Fellow in Christian Ethics and Public Life*

**When interviewed for my current position, I was asked to respond to the question: ‘How might I develop the mission of the McDonald Centre to engage with public life?’** To clarify, the mission of the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics, and Public Life is to bring a Christian intelligence to bear on ethical issues of public concern with a view toward the following aims: to develop Christian ethics’ grasp of contemporary issues; to commend a Christian vision of moral life in society at large; to raise the quality of public deliberation about ethical issues; and to encourage Christian ethicists in the art of honest engagement with fellow members of a ‘secular’ (i.e., plural) public. Yet responding to such a question during

an interview is a speculative exercise that risks both naïve optimism and ill-informed ignorance. Happily, I avoided both hazards.

Yet that question has nurtured the ways I’ve engaged my role as the McDonald Postdoctoral Fellow in Christian Ethics and Public Life. In the first instance, I have allowed the question to discipline my attention to and support for established and planned programmes within the McDonald Centre, as well as those persons at their fulcrum. Second, I have been able to give support for and to develop the mission of the centre through my own work, which I will highlight below.





*‘The Art of Living for the Technological Age’ sketches a crisis whereby persons are enamored by the promises of progress and disciplined to form by the power of technology – the ontology of our age.*

For several years, I have been involved with projects relating to my thinking about philosophy of technology. My work in this area began while in a previous postdoctoral position at Regent College and my continuing research association with Vancouver School of Theology, both at the University of British Columbia, Canada. It was there that I began my involvement with a cohort of scholars led by Jens Zimmermann (JI Packer Chair of Theology, Regent College) and Michael Burdett (Assistant Professor of Theology, Nottingham). Their three year project ‘Human Flourishing in a Technological World: A Christian Vision’ (<https://www.christianflourishing.com/>) has served to gather an interdisciplinary network of scholars to think through a Christian vision of human flourishing. A compendium volume, *Human Flourishing in a Technological World: A Theological Vision* (to be published with Oxford University Press in 2021) will include my essay titled “Dissenting discontent: a theological interrogation of transhumanist anthropology”, and will, in part, draw upon the Russian philosopher Nicholas Berdyaev whose writings in the 1920s and 1930s interrogated anti-humanism as a motive force behind the modern project, which has sought mastery over all, including human being.

Interest in philosophy of technology has also focused attention toward my second monograph, *The Art of Living for the Technological*

*Age* (Fortress, February 2021). This book sketches a crisis whereby persons are enamored by the promises of progress and disciplined to form by the power of technology—the ontology of our age. Yet it also offers a response, attending to those performative activities, educative and transformative social practices, that might allow us to live humanly and bear witness to human being (becoming) for a technological age. The book is included in the ‘Dispatches’ book series of moral and political theology, which I advise and co-edit with Scott Kirkland (John and Jeane Stockdale Lecturer in Practical Theology and Ethics, Trinity College Theological School at the University of Divinity, Australia). The series has published four volumes to date, including *The End is Not Yet* (John de Gruchy, 2017), *Political Orthodoxies* (Cyril Hovorun, 2018), *Theology and the Globalized Present* (John McDowell, 2019) and *Theology, Comedy, Politics* (Marcus Pound, 2019).

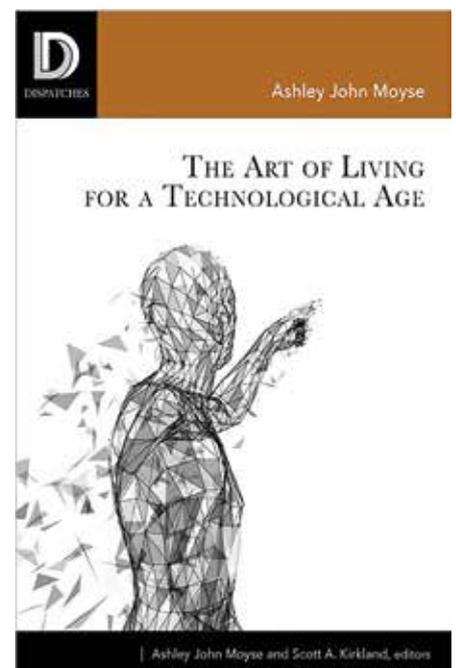
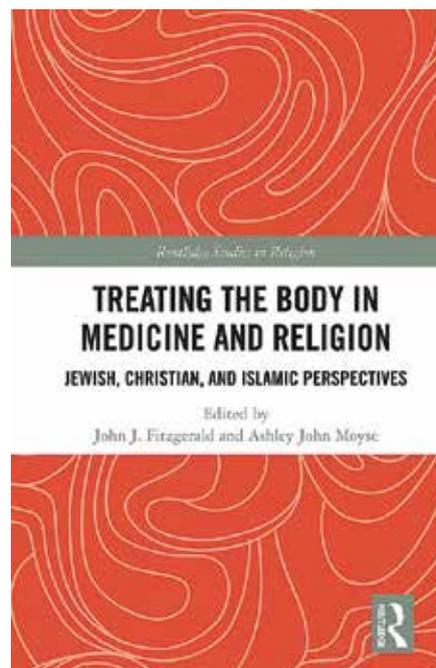
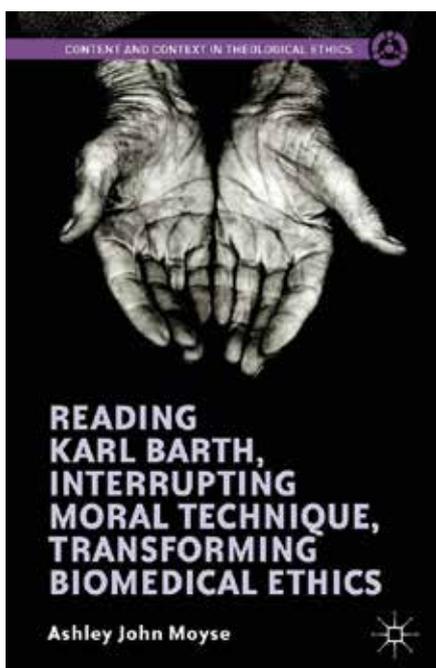
Although occupied by these projects, research and writing in bioethics and medical humanities has been a central focus since my arrival. Such work is a continuation of research inaugurated during my postgraduate studies in theology, and my first monograph *Reading Karl Barth, Interrupting Moral Technique, Transforming Biomedical Ethics* (Palgrave, 2015). For example, last year I finalised a collaborative project with John Fitzgerald (Associate Professor

of Theology and Religious Studies, St John's University, New York), which sought to collate and publish essays from a cadre of leading and emerging scholars, trained in medicine, theology, and/or religious studies, and which examined the nature of the body in medicine and religion. The project *Treating the Body in Medicine and Religion: Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives* (Routledge, 2019) includes a prologue by the late physician and philosopher H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr, to whom the collection of essays is dedicated. My essay, "Responsibility for the broken body," was stimulated by the writing of the late American surgeon and writer Richard Selzer; specifically his "The Surgeon as Priest", which explores the theme of surgery as sacrilege and in need of redemption by love. The argument draws upon Karl Barth's relational anthropology while examining the claim upon physicians who might learn to encounter the broken bodies of patients in the fullness of their being and by a posture of responsibility grounded by love.

Continuing with such work, I have become increasingly attentive to the themes of despair and hope in aging populations, with particular interest in the depredations of aging among frail elderly persons and the desire for control over dying by some otherwise healthy elderly persons who believe they have reached the end of their life course. Interests here have afforded opportunity to collaborate with scholars involved in the Oxford Institute of Population Ageing and the Healthcare Values Partnership. Professors Sarah Harper and Joshua Hordern have been principal partners in these collaborations, which include convening a successful eight-part seminar series during Hilary Term 2020. 'The construction of ageing' series invited scholars in the humanities and social sciences to examine assumptions that surround the various ways

that ageing and ageing persons are and have been conceptualised and discussed (<https://www.ageing.ox.ac.uk/events/view/415>). Furthermore, the planned 2020 McDonald Centre conference built upon these partnerships to draw in an international cast of scholars, including theologians, philosophers, gerontologists, and medical/nursing professionals to present on the existential gravity of ageing, exploring not only ageing, suffering and despair but also the ways in which patience and hope might be nurtured for the benefit of health and care. Unfortunately, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and related travel and institutional restrictions, the conference event was cancelled. Yet a reimagined and asynchronous virtual 'conference' is in development (<https://www.mcdonaldcentreconference.info/>). Invited scholars (from Australia, Canada, Ireland, The Netherlands, South Africa, United Kingdom and the United States) have been asked to record presentations on the principal theme, ageing and despair, with three scholars presenting on the *Ars moriendi* (art of dying).

Finally, I am currently writing my third monograph, *Resourcing Hope for Ageing and Dying in the Late Modern World: Wayfaring through Despair*, which will be published by Anthem Press. Responding to both the risks and threats of despair experienced by persons whether aging or dying, I will illuminate the habits of character formation and communal life that might enable a strength or resilience to endure such despair while learning to become *homo viator* or the 'human wayfarer' for journeys of perseverance. It is a project strongly indebted to the writings of Gabriel Marcel and builds upon my essay "Fodder for despair, masquerading as hope: diagnosing the postures of hope(lessness) at the end of life", which was published in the journal *Religions* in (2019). ■





# New Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture

## An Interview with Anthony Reddie

**Tim Middleton**, *DPhil Student in Modern Theology*

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**Anthony Reddie**, Extraordinary Professor of Theological Ethics at the University of South Africa, is the new Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture at Regent's Park College, and recently received The Lanfranc Award for Education and Scholarship from the Archbishop of Canterbury for his work on Black Theology in Britain and beyond.

**Congratulations on your appointment as the new Director for the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture. Would you like to say a bit about your vision for the centre?**

I think it's important to say that there has been a change in nomenclature: previously it was the Oxford Centre for Christianity and Culture. The name change preceded my appointment, but it certainly encouraged me to apply. Looking at the history of the centre, it tended to perceive culture in terms of aesthetics and cultural performance—things like Christianity and music, Christianity and art, Christianity and literature, or Christianity and sport. I see my role as one of evolution, not revolution, so we will still pursue work in these areas. But I also want to push the centre in a slightly more anthropological and sociological direction in terms of how we see culture—including postcolonial analysis, an appreciation of power relationships and an understanding of culture as a matrix that holds people's identities.

I also really want to develop the centre around an ethics of equality, diversity and inclusion. One of the questions that I put to my colleagues is: who are the voices that we are not hearing? Who is not currently around the table? What are the implications of that, and how then do we change it? So, I'm very much interested in trying to develop a more diverse cohort of scholars whilst building on the work that has already been done.

**How do you see your vision for the centre relating to the recent events happening globally, like the Black Lives Matter protests?**

I was interviewed for the post back in August 2019, well before the current events began. My pitch at the time, as a committed black liberation theologian, was to reimagine how the centre thought about religion and culture in terms of identities and worldviews. So, in many respects, what is happening now is a kind of vindication of my original pitch. I couldn't have predicted the very visceral way in

which things have unfolded around George Floyd's death, but there has always been a contestation about what it means to be human and who's voice matters. I hope the centre will be a space where conversations about differing worldviews, values and perspectives can be held. For me, the pulling down of Edward Colston's statue in Bristol was a classic microcosm of these larger areas of contestation that I think the centre should be speaking to.

A lot of what I had planned for Trinity term 2020 was put on hold because of the pandemic. But that series was looking at issues of inclusion and exclusion in terms of religion and culture—with speakers such as Professor Mona Siddiqui, Dr Brian Klug and Professor Rachel Muers talking about issues of identity in relation to Islam, Judaism, feminism and Quakerism. We're going to try again in 2021, but these are the sorts of topics that I hope the centre will address in the future.

**Let's talk a bit about your latest book, *Theologising Brexit: A Liberationist and Postcolonial Critique*. What are the issues you're seeking to tackle there?**

The big disclaimer is that the book is not about the European Union. What I'm looking at are the subterranean issues beneath this focus on the EU. Essentially, in the UK, we've never come to terms with post-war migration and the fact that we've become a very plural nation with people from all over the world. The UK is no longer a *de facto* White nation.

My most famous tweet is, I suppose, a summation of the book, namely that: Brexit is the shingles to the chicken pox of empire. Essentially, Brexit is a symptom of postcolonial melancholy—which is a phrase I borrow from the British sociologist and historian Paul Gilroy. Using Gilroy's trope, I say that Britain's identity is built upon a form of exceptionalism. At the height of the British Empire, a quarter of the world was pink on those old globes, and from that we get a huge sense of hubris. Empire dwindles and goes, but the sense of exceptionalism doesn't go. Therefore, part of the push for Brexit is a nostalgia where we can reclaim our past glories.

But I'm arguing that our plural identity is not a problem. Some of the later chapters are about affirming the impact of migration on Britain, and the three institutions that have benefited from migration are the health service, London transport and the church. Every

major denomination would be in a worse position if it were not for immigration.

**Why do you think the study of theology is important for many of these issues, especially at this time of heightened awareness of race and racism?**

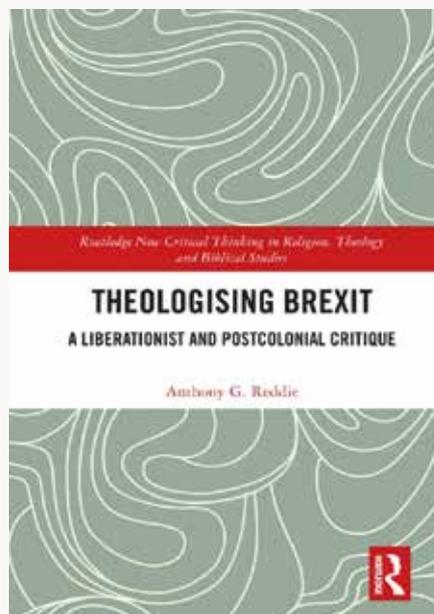
Many historians of religion, particularly Christian theologians working in patristics, would say that what we now understand as the construct of race comes out of a theological worldview. Kelly Brown Douglas, in her book *What's faith got to do with it?*, looks at the development of what she calls 'closed monotheism': Christianity not only believes in one God, but also holds that the one God revealed

through Jesus Christ is the only means of salvation. In and of itself, this doesn't give rise to racism, but it does legitimise a framing of Christian empire under the aegis of a missionary impulse to propagate the faith. These ideas then evolve into constructs of race and racism. So, Christian theology is important because we helped to create this mess in the first place. At the very least we, as theologians, must be aware of our own complicity.

Yet, as a committed liberation theologian, I believe that theology can also be part of the solution. Within the Christian project are alternative seeds that could have given rise to an entirely different set of foliage. What the liberation project tries to do is to go back and reclaim the radicalism and inclusivity of the early Jesus movement that predates empire—a movement that offers forms of resistance that are based upon an ethic of love, solidarity and commitment to one another.

**Lastly, what has been your experience of Oxford so far?**

I guess I arrived with all the preconceptions that one might have about a place like Oxford. Some of it has been realised, but for the most part I have been very surprised at how diverse Oxford is, especially at postgraduate level. Even within the Senior Common Room at Regent's Park College, I have noticed people with all kinds of different trajectories, and some of the stereotypes about people's backgrounds have not actually been true at all. What has also stunned me is just how big the place is; you realise that at any given time there are just so many different things taking place that you can't go to all of them. It's a huge world of opportunity and there are so many interesting people around. So, thus far, I've really enjoyed it. I see it as a great adventure. ■



*My most famous tweet is, I suppose, a summation of the book, namely that: Brexit is the shingles to the chicken pox of empire.*

# MEET OUR UNDERGRADUATE FINALISTS, 2020

## AMELIA HOLT

St John's College

I applied to Oxford from a state school that very rarely sent students to Oxford or Cambridge, meaning that I did not know anyone who had been to the university, let alone for my course of study. I began my degree studying for the BA in Philosophy and Theology since Oxford does not offer a single-honours philosophy course, but, as my first year progressed, I enjoyed the theology papers so much that I switched onto the BA in Theology and Religion for my second year.



Theology is perhaps one of the broadest courses of study available at Oxford. You are allowed complete freedom to choose your papers of study after the first year, so you can study the things that you are truly interested in. A highlight of my degree was studying for the paper *Liberation Theology and its Legacy* with Dr Michael Oliver; learning about social and economic justice, and how religion has been used to advocate for such justice, was eye-opening for me. Another highlight was the paper *Christian Moral Reasoning* with Dr Dafydd Daniel, in which we discussed numerous ethical theories and practical ethical dilemmas, giving me a greater awareness of the nuances of some of the most pressing ethical issues of our day. I particularly enjoyed these papers because they were geared towards practical application, showing the relevance of theology in every sphere of life.

I have taken this passion for social justice into my job working as the Vice President for Welfare and Equal Opportunities at the Oxford SU. One of my primary roles in this position is working with, and campaigning for, marginalised groups; the papers I studied during my degree have helped me to develop the skills I need to do this work effectively.

Studying theology at Oxford has taught me about so much more than just religion. It has taught me about culture, art and history. I have been shown how to think critically about abstract concepts and values. But most importantly, I have been encouraged to see the world through more open eyes, allowing me to develop valuable skills that I hope to take forward and use to improve the lives of others.

## SKYE HUMBERT

Regent's Park College

I grew up in Cambridge so the opportunity to go to Oxford University meant I could continue to live in a city just as beautiful. I also got accepted into a college with a large number of students taking a similar subject to me, so I was able to make plenty of friends with a similar mindset.



Having never studied theology before coming to Oxford, I worried I would be out of my depth, but the support from the faculty and college made studying Theology and Religion a truly enjoyable process. In the first year, the course covered a wide range of topics, religions and practices. Yet, what really stuck out to me was the huge variety of modules you could choose in your second and third year, for which I chose extremely unusual topics compared to what I expected when first making my application. Theology and Religion has been taught to me in so many ways: through exegesis, language-learning, early church texts and modern commentaries. Although a smaller department than some, the Theology Faculty have shown a real commitment to maintaining diverse and engaging ways of studying.

*...what really stuck out to me was the huge variety of modules you could choose in your second and third year.*

Most of all, I feel like studying Theology and Religion has contributed to a personal journey, encouraging thoughtfulness, scepticism, critical questioning and understanding. The ability to approach a modern or historical text and begin to unpack its contextual and theological elements is a valuable and transferable skill. And so, I feel confident leaving Oxford University that I have acquired a unique set of skills and an understanding of the world which will be invaluable as I begin my career. I leave Oxford more confident about my abilities, and with plenty of new interests and connections that will help me with the next steps.

**ISSY PAUL****Worcester College**

I've just finished studying for the BA in Theology and Religion at Worcester. I'm from Launceston, Cornwall, and I'm one of only a few students from my state school to go to Oxbridge. I was lucky enough to participate in the UNIQ summer school a few years ago; despite English being my first choice, I was offered a place for my 'backup' subject: Theology. Although I barely knew what Theology was, a week in the Gibson Building was enough to convince me that Theology was the perfect mix of everything I loved studying in my English, History and Philosophy A Levels. I particularly remember writing an essay on the Epic of Gilgamesh, which funnily enough I chose to write on again in my finals.



*Most people who knew me were quite sceptical about my decision to study theology...*

Most people who knew me were quite sceptical about my decision to study theology, given that I've always been a staunch atheist. I'll admit that I was probably quite sceptical too, but three years later and I'll sell Theology to anyone. The breadth of the course is amazing; as well as having the opportunity to study the Gospels and the Hebrew Bible, I've particularly enjoyed the newer papers *Feminist Approaches to Theology and Religion* and *Liberation Theology and Its Legacy*. These papers make you feel like what you're studying isn't so far removed from real life, and, for the first time, I could see how much theology mattered outside of the academic and religious world. For instance, sitting my finals and writing essays on James Cone and Black Theology in the wake of the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement made my degree feel more relevant than ever.

Alongside studying theology, I've spent the majority of my time doing drama; I went from acting in OUDS coppers to directing both *Spring Awakening* at the Oxford Playhouse and *The Tempest* for the Worcester Buskins garden play. Though it seems like a terrible time given the uncertain future of theatre, I'm hoping to pursue a career in directing. I've got a place on the MA in theatre directing at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. Though this may not seem directly related to my degree, my love of directing and my desire to tell women's stories was definitely shaped by my studying gender and power dynamics, looking specifically at biblical women. The unquestionable impact of the Bible and its portrayal of women on western literature has made me very aware of the lack of parts for women, particularly in classical theatre. It is not the case that all great stories are about men, as feminist study of the Bible demonstrates!

**NIAMH FITZGERALD****Lady Margaret Hall**

I originally planned to apply to universities for something to do with philosophy and history – so it was by fate or luck or whatever you want to call it that I ended up applying for a BA in Philosophy and Theology at Lady Margaret Hall. Since school I was enthusiastic about philosophical problems. I loved studying Religious, Moral, and Philosophical Studies at school and loved pestering my Mum with endless chat on matters philosophical. I was certain that I wanted to study philosophy at university, but I was somewhat more apprehensive about theology. I'd never studied theology at school and I was working under the misconception that I'd have to be religious to enjoy it. As a self-identified 'à la carte' Catholic, I appreciated the teachings I was brought up with but struggled to mesh these with other views I held about the world. However, studying theology has been the most enriching experience I could have hoped for. I have been able to engage with writers who ask the same questions that I asked, write essays on topics that have real life application and enjoy being taught by some of the best teachers academia has to offer.



Now that I have finished my undergraduate degree, I have an exciting – if not a bit frightening – chance to mould my own career path. I currently have a master's offer from Keble College for a postgraduate degree in Philosophical Theology. This course sounds like the most interesting and thought-provoking study I could engage with yet. However, due to the current financial situation and COVID-19 fallout I will be trying to defer my offer until next year. In the meantime, I am crossing my fingers that a degree in Philosophy and Theology has prepared me for the baptism of fire into the world of work. However, I am also looking into a career in education of some sort and I am in the process of lining up teaching assistant work to give me some experience in the field. I'm torn between possible careers in academia or education, and I hope that I can do a bit of both. I want to pursue further studies in philosophical theology, but I also want to help other students understand that a degree in Philosophy and Theology isn't just an ivory tower pastime but is relevant and applicable. My undergraduate thesis—on Coptic Apocrypha and Postmodernism—may seem like the epitome of niche academic work, it shows that the study of theological works does have real benefits for understanding postmodern movements such as deconstruction and feminism.

I am extremely grateful that I had the opportunity to study Philosophy and Theology at Oxford. Despite a few too many Red-Bull-fuelled all-nighters to meet essay deadlines, my undergraduate degree was a unique opportunity to work alongside world experts, make life-long friends and read spirited discussions—all within the beautiful libraries and surroundings of the city of dreaming spires.

## RACHEL MURPHY

### Wycliffe Hall

Stepping into the lecture hall for my induction into undergraduate studies at Oxford was a surreal experience. Sitting in the room that day and looking around, it struck me that my new peers were probably in nappies when I was beginning my first undergraduate degree in 2000. Back then, and until very recently, it would never have occurred to me that one day I would be studying theology at Oxford, whilst training to be a priest in the Church of England. As I come from a working-class town in Indiana, with a family background that is not especially religious, academic, or worldly, I often marvel at the shape my life has taken.



After becoming a Christian as a teenager and completing a BA at Purdue University, I moved to Chicago and began a career in sales and marketing. I had felt called to Christian ministry but, coming from a conservative evangelical tradition in the US, options for women were limited. That desire was all but forgotten as I continued in my sales career. In 2013, I was transferred to London by my employer. I also began to worship in a Church of England parish and learned that here women were permitted (and encouraged!) to lead. As I discussed the possibility with my vicar and weighed the costs of leaving my career, I felt confident I should pursue ordination. Finding out I could train at Oxford reaffirmed my decision (and alleviated some of my parents' dismay about my leaving such a cushy job).

Even though it meant moving from my London flat to a dorm room with a single bed and eating meals in halls, studying theology and religion here has been one of the highlights of my life and ordination training. When I began, I had a dictionary tab open at all times on my computer; words like 'anachronism' and 'soteriology' had not come up in my previous business meetings! These years have been challenging, yet exciting and inspirational. In the midst of the essay-writing, it has been easy to keep sight of how privileged I am whilst attending Sue Gillingham's lectures on the poetry of the Hebrew Bible or listening to Nigel Biggar teach on ethics.

I have come to recognise how important it is to question the history and thought which has shaped my current understanding of theology and religion. I am grateful for the time learning from Augustine, and connecting to his experience centuries later, and for days reflecting on how the Psalter was edited, as well as its effect on so many lives throughout the ages. My time here has opened my eyes to the vast depths of theology and religion, and has provided tools which help me to continue exploring. The desire to remain curious has been a true gift, one which was encouraged and cultivated in me here, and which I hope to pass on to parishioners for years to come.

## RAJIV SIDHU

### Ripon College Cuddesdon

Significant and substantial theological understanding for our time; this is the gift of Theology at Oxford. I'm an ordinand in the Church of England and I left a very different life on the Isle of Wight as an Assistant School Principal, to read Theology at Oxford. Finals marked the end of a fascinating and intense two years as a mature student. The passion of Theology at Oxford will stay with me forever, and I will be pursuing postgraduate study at Ripon College Cuddesdon, before ordination in 2021.



'You have to be deeply rooted in tradition in order to innovate with integrity,' says Nadia Bolz-Weber, and my experience of Oxford theology has been of both 'tradition' and 'innovation'. The Church of England has influence within the Global Anglican Communion. The name 'Anglican' stems from 'The English Church', and the Archbishop of Canterbury has a key role over the whole 'Anglican Communion' in a convergence between local and global culture. My thesis researched the evangelical Henry Martyn, and his contribution to missions in India. I applied a postcolonial lens to his legacy, revealing his contribution in a new light. Whilst this did not 'topple his statue', it did refine what his legacy and contributions are, and the importance of navigating culture and identity within the global Anglican Church. I look forward to continuing in this way — toppling that which should be toppled; celebrating what should be celebrated in my future research.

For me, Liberation Theology and sociological approaches to the Bible are really at the cutting edge of theology. In this time, where 'Black Lives Matter' has shone a light on systemic injustices in the world (and within the Church of England), and in the wake of #MeToo, the need for theologians armed with this theological understanding has never been greater. We need theologians who are deeply rooted in biblical understanding, who can relate anthropological methods to Biblical Studies, and who have a penetrating insight into Liberation Theology.

My study of Theology at Oxford has equipped me with the tools to deconstruct these issues. This has had a very real and practical impact on my work as a priest in training. Race is a sociological concept; and sociological approaches to the Bible reveal a deeper understanding of the human condition within the Judeo-Christian tradition. For example, I recently preached at an LGBTQ inclusive service at Christ Church Cathedral, building upon Delores Williams' work on Hagar. My studies are the foundation from which I write and speak, in solidarity against all forms of oppression, rooted in the passion gained in Oxford Theology.

During this time of isolation in COVID-19, I have been struck by the solidarity between students. The sharing and caring that has been

so important. This is the human side of Oxford. Oxford Theology makes you a better and more effective theologian; which makes you a better and more compassionate person. The pursuit of Theology is noble indeed. I can't think of a better grounding for a trainee priest.

## ZACHERY MOFFATT

St Peter's College

I was somewhat nervous about beginning my degree in Philosophy and Theology, having never previously studied theology, and only having read a few introductory texts. While it was a steep learning curve—coming to terms with how one writes a theological essay and the constancy of Oxford's deadlines—I have thoroughly enjoyed studying theology during my three years. From an outsider's perspective, theology may seem like a rather static discipline, where one examines millennia-old texts and events within various religions that have no bearing upon modern life. However, I soon learned that this was far from the case. Theology is a discipline that always has an eye upon 'the now' and how a theological perspective can inform modern debates relating to subjects such as ethics, politics, and science, as well as timeless questions regarding the nature of the universe and humans' place within it.



My favourite aspect of studying theology has been coming to appreciate the extent to which past theological debates relate to modern worldviews, regardless of whether these worldviews are religious or secular. In particular, my primary focus has been examining the relationship between science and religion. It is commonly held that science and religion are in perpetual conflict, with science being concerned with truth and reason, whilst religion is concerned with faith and dogma. However, I have come to realise the complexity surrounding these two disciplines and the role that religion has played in the development of modern science.

One of the greatest benefits of my degree was having the opportunity to write a dissertation in science and religion. The academic freedom afforded by my dissertation allowed me to, along with the help of my supervisor, conduct my own research and develop my own arguments. Not only did this improve my research skills and critical thinking, it further strengthened my interest in science and religion, and consequently, helped me decide that after my undergraduate degree, I would like to undertake a Masters degree in Science and Religion.

Theology is an interdisciplinary subject that incorporates historical, hermeneutical and philosophical research methods. The interdisciplinary nature of theology has allowed me to appreciate the many different lenses one can use when tackling a specific problem and the importance of examining a problem through these different

lenses. Studying theology has strengthened my understanding of the complex relationships between theology and other academic disciplines, and how a theological understanding can help inform debates which, *prima facie*, seem unrelated to theology.

## HENRY MARTIN

St Benet's Hall

Pursuing theology at Oxford has been an incredibly rewarding experience and I have learnt an enormous amount about myself and the depth of my chosen discipline during my time here. My definition of what theology as a subject encompassed was embarrassingly narrow before starting at Oxford, but it has now broadened in a multiplicity of directions.



During my first year of the Final Honour School (FHS) I chose subjects which reflected a more traditional academic trajectory for pursuing theological enquiry, making the decision to study: *The Gospels*, *The Narrative World of the Hebrew Bible* and the *History and Theology of the Early Christian Church*. This proved useful as it provided me with a strong scriptural and historical foundation for further study. For my second year of FHS I took a rather different academic route, choosing to study: *Liberation Theology and Its Legacy*, *Sociology of Religion* and the *Nature of Religion*. These approaches allowed me to look at several more recent methods of theological enquiry. I particularly enjoyed the liberation theology paper because, as with several of my other chosen papers, there were a number of useful, transferrable skills that I acquired which are directly relevant to jobs that I may take up after I have graduated. For instance, being able to read a thirty page article and synthesise that information into a page or two of notes is a skill that I have developed again and again during my time at Oxford. The reading lists that the faculty provides are also incredibly broad in terms of difficulty; this allows students like myself to dip my toes into a topic or subject on a more basic level, but also to explore some more complex texts that will challenge my depth and understanding of the topic as well.

One of my favourite parts of the course was writing my thesis. I chose to write on James Cone, a popular black theologian who attempted to grapple with the entanglement of racism and white supremacy in North America. My supervisor was very helpful and directed me in several useful directions while still giving me the freedom to produce a piece of work that truly was my own. The challenge of writing this thesis has developed both my academic curiosity and my intellectual interest in an area of theology which I think is of great importance. I hope to use the skills I have developed from my time at Oxford studying theology to pursue a potential career in law. ■

# COMINGS AND GOINGS

We warmly welcome and bid a fond farewell to the faculty's valued members

## COMINGS

### BRENDAN HARRIS

I joined the Faculty of Theology and Religion in October 2019 as Departmental Lecturer in Patristics and I am pleased to be



staying on in the new role of Departmental Lecturer in Philosophical Theology. In my new role I will also be returning to my *alma mater*, Oriel College, as Tutor in Theology. I previously read Philosophy and Theology as an undergraduate at Oriel (2010-2013). I have a great affection for the college and its traditions, so this very much feels like a homecoming for me. Between leaving Oxford at the end of my undergraduate degree and returning as a lecturer I completed a Masters in Christian Theology at Durham University (2013-2014) and travelled stateside to complete my PhD in Historical Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia (2014-2019).

My research is focused on patristic theology and philosophy, with a secondary interest in the relationship between patristic thought and contemporary theology (in particular the relationship between patristics and analytic theology). I am broadly interested in the topics of soteriology, Christology and Trinitarian theology. I am currently completing work on my first monograph, *The Doctrine of Theosis in the thought of Gregory of Nazianzus*. While the fourth-century Cappadocian bishop is perhaps best known for his contributions to Trinitarian theology and Christology (as Bishop of Constantinople

Gregory chaired the first sessions of the Council of Constantinople in 381, before writing the definitive anti-Apollinarian treatise in the first of his *Christological Epistles*), my monograph deals with Gregory's equally significant contributions to soteriology by analysing his claim that the goal of salvation is 'deification' or 'becoming divine'. In addition to this, I am currently working on a translation of Gregory's previously untranslated poems on the moral life, and I have also published articles on other patristic figures such as Ambrose of Milan and Irenaeus of Lyons.

*I am broadly interested in the topics of soteriology, Christology and Trinitarian theology.*

I have greatly enjoyed my time at Oxford this past year and I am very excited to continue teaching here over the next few years. The biggest highlight by far has been working with my wonderful colleagues on the faculty and with our amazing students. I remain convinced that Oxford is the best place in the world to study theology and I am delighted, therefore, to continue working with this fantastic community in the years to come.

### MARK WYNN

Many years ago, I completed my BA in Philosophy and Theology and my DPhil at the University of Oxford. My DPhil was supervised in turn by Brian Davies and then



Richard Swinburne, who was at the time the Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion. I am excited to be returning to the place where I spent my formative years, from my late teens to my mid-twenties – and both excited and somewhat daunted to be stepping into the role of my DPhil supervisor.

Following the work of my supervisors, my DPhil and first book were concerned with various questions in natural theology, and I retain an interest in those matters. The track of my research thereafter is evident from the titles of my later books: *Emotional Experience and Religious Understanding: Integrating Perception, Conception and Feeling* (2005), *Faith and Place: An Essay in Embodied Religious Epistemology* (2009), *Renewing the Senses: A Study of the Philosophy and Theology of the Spiritual Life* (2013), and most recently *Spiritual Traditions and the Virtues: Living Between Heaven and Earth* (2020). I had no clearly defined research programme that led me to write works on these various themes but, looking back, it seems clear that I have been focally concerned with the relationship between religious belief and the bodily character of human life.

*It seems clear that I have been focally concerned with the relationship between religious belief and the bodily character of human life.*

Partly, my interest has been in the possibility of developing an expanded religious epistemology – one that gives due recognition to, for example, the cognitive

significance of the emotions, and the kind of understanding that is rooted in the place-sensitive responsiveness of the body. And partly, I have been concerned to think about religious commitment as a practical project, which is ordered to various goods that can be realised in our everyday dealings with other human beings and the material world. Two of my key interlocutors have been William James – I admire his sensitivity to the practical and experiential character of religious belief – and Thomas Aquinas, whose clarity and religious and spiritual seriousness represent, I think, an enduring model for theological enquiry.

Over the years, I have worked at, among other places, the Australian Catholic University, the University of Glasgow, the University of Exeter, and most recently the University of Leeds, where I was Professor of Philosophy and Religion until June 2020. My approach to philosophical theology has been stamped by the friendships I formed in each of those places – and indeed my understanding of a body of ideas has very often been enabled through relationship to someone who is committed to those ideas, and can rehearse them in conversation. So, one further reason why I am excited about returning to Oxford is the knowledge that here I will find an unusually wide range of conversation partners. And once again, in this new role, I expect my research interests to evolve in step with my encounters with ideas embodied in persons. I am eager to meet colleagues and students – past and present – and to learn!

#### **CIAN POWER**

I am very pleased to begin as Ancient Hebrew Instructor at the Faculty in September 2020. This new role will involve teaching ancient (Biblical and Classical) Hebrew language and literature to



undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Faculty at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.

*Over the last year, it has been highly rewarding to see some fantastic students develop as Hebraists and to learn important lessons with them about remote learning ....*

I joined the Faculty in 2019, taking over from Dr Alinda Damsma as the Instructor in Biblical Hebrew—a role shared with the Faculty of Oriental Studies. Before this I worked independently as an academic translator and editor, having finished a postdoc at the Faculty of Theology at Uppsala University in Sweden in 2018. I received my PhD in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament from Harvard University's Department of Near Eastern Civilizations in 2015. Previously I read Philosophy and Theology (BA) and Jewish Studies (MSt) at Oxford.

I am excited to be able to dedicate all of my efforts to students in Theology and Religion this coming year. Over the last year, it has been highly rewarding to see some fantastic students develop as Hebraists and to learn important lessons with them about remote learning after the abrupt switch. I have enjoyed the support of wonderful colleagues—Fran Roach, Louise Taylor, Dr Mary Marshall, and Dr Hilla Wait to name just a few—and I look forward to working closely with Dr Cressida Ryan to make a success of language instruction at the Faculty during the challenging year ahead. I am also glad to be able to contribute to the thriving and growing subject area of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, coordinated by Professor Hindy Najman.

Alongside this role, I plan to continue my own research into the worldviews of the

authors and editors of the Hebrew Bible. My first monograph, *Attitudes towards Linguistic Diversity in the Hebrew Bible*, is forthcoming in Mohr Siebeck's FAT 2 series. A work I translated from Swedish, *Jesus the Apocalyptic Prophet* by Cecilia Wassén and Tobias Hägerland, will also shortly be published by Bloomsbury. ■

## GOINGS

#### **ALEX HENLEY**

I am leaving the Faculty of Theology and Religion after four years as a Departmental Lecturer in Islam (2016-2018) and Marie Curie Research Fellow (2018-2020). I will be taking up a position at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, heading up their Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies.



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During my time here, my research explored the transformative role of new official religious institutions in redefining the place of Islam in Middle Eastern states such as Jordan. In 2019 I launched an interdisciplinary research network on *Categories of Religion and the Secular in Islam* ([crsi.theology.ox.ac.uk](http://crsi.theology.ox.ac.uk)), and in 2020 I organised a popular series of visiting speakers discussing cutting-edge research in *Critical and Decolonial Approaches to 'Religion'*.

In future, I can be reached at [ahenley@iis.ac.uk](mailto:ahenley@iis.ac.uk). ■

# STUDENT PRIZES

Prizes awarded annually in the Faculty of Theology and Religion

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**Aamir Kaderbhai**  
(Mansfield College)

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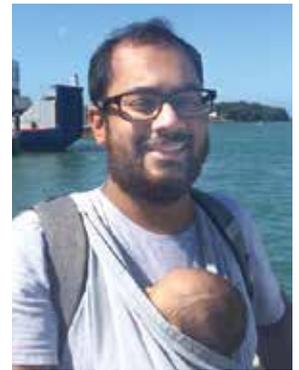
**GIBBS PRIZE:** Best overall performance in the Final Honour School of Theology and Religion.



**Niv Lobo**  
(Wycliffe Hall)

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**CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA PRIZE:** Best performance in the Honour School of Theology and Religion by a member of the Anglican Theological Colleges who intends to be ordained in the Church of England.



**Kevin Cho**  
(Mansfield College)

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**GIBBS ESSAY PRIZE:** Outstanding thesis submitted for the Final Honour School of Theology and Religion.



**Niv Lobo**  
(Wycliffe Hall)

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**DENYER AND JOHNSON PRIZE:** Candidate whose performance in the Final Honour School of Theology and Religion is judged to be the best and of sufficient merit.



**Caitriona Dowden**  
(Regents Park College)

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**GIBBS PRIZE:** Best performance in theology in the Final Honour School of Philosophy and Theology.



**Annie Calderbank**  
(Oriental College)

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**HALL-HOUGHTON SEPTUAGINT PRIZE:** Outstanding performance in relation to the Septuagint version in its twofold aspect, vis-à-vis the Hebrew Bible and/or the Greek New Testament, as demonstrated in a paper on the Septuagint or in submitted work drawing extensively on evidence from the Septuagint.



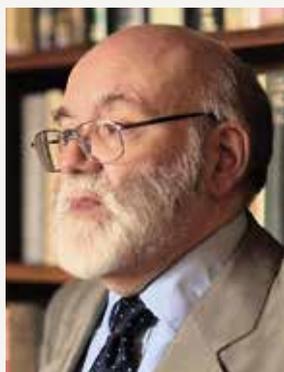
**Zachery Moffatt**  
(St Peter's College)

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**GIBBS PRIZE:** Best performance in philosophy in the Final Honour School of Philosophy and Theology.



# FACULTY NEWS



## JOHN BARTON

Professor John Barton's book *A History of the Bible: The Book and its Faiths* (Allen Lane, 2019) has been awarded the Duff Cooper Prize for nonfiction for 2019. The prize (sponsored by Pol Roger) is awarded annually to a work of history, biography, or poetry, in English or French, and consists of a cheque for £5000 and a magnum of champagne. John's book was also shortlisted for the 2020 Wolfson History Prize.



## DAFYDD DANIEL

Dr Dafydd Mills Daniel was appointed an Ashmolean Public Engagement Research Associate, on the Ashmolean Museum and Mellon Foundation project, *Talking Emotions*, 2019/20. In July 2020, his article on the Scottish Enlightenment was published by the *Journal of Religion*, and his appearance on BBC Radio 3 to commemorate the tricentenary of 18th century nature-writer and 'parson-naturalist', Gilbert White (*Free*

*Thinking - Nature Writing*), was selected as 'Choice' in the *Radio Times*. In November 2019, he appeared on BBC Radio 3's *Landmark: George Eliot's Mill on the Floss*. In summer 2020, this programme was included as the 'bonus programme' with the digital release of Radio 4's new adaptation of *The Mill on the Floss*. At the same time, Dafydd's appearance on *The Story of God with Morgan Freeman* (Series 3, Episode 4: 'Deadly Sins') was released on *Netflix*.



## DANIEL DE HAAN

Dr Daniel De Haan will be, till August 2021, the principal investigator on the project *Conceptual Clarity Concerning Human Nature*, a grant funded by the Templeton World Charity Foundation. This project will bring together a range of experts on normative, ontological, evolutionary biological, brain and psychological, and social, cultural, and religious conceptions of human nature, to develop an extensive interdisciplinary questionnaire which addresses the wide field of Big Questions concerning human nature. The project will establish a small cohort of scholars who together will identify the major conceptions of human nature and develop a website-based interdisciplinary questionnaire which will help researchers position their interdisciplinary research proposals with respect to this suite of conceptions of human nature.



## SIMON GAINÉ

Simon Francis Gaine OP, who has been a member of the Faculty since 2003, is leaving for Rome. Dr Gaine studied theology as an undergraduate and postgraduate at Oxford, before joining the Dominican Order in 1995. From 2012 to 2019 he was the Regent of Blackfriars, the University's Dominican Permanent Private Hall. His teaching for the Faculty over many years included the special theologian class on St Thomas Aquinas. From September he will be based at the Pontifical University of St Thomas, the Dominican University in Rome, where he will be the first Pinckaers Professor of Theological Anthropology and Ethics.



## SUSAN GILLINGHAM

This last year has been 'a history of cancelled conferences' for Professor Gillingham. Three were cancelled because of an inability to travel far before surgery for a new knee; one, in Jerusalem, was an interfaith approach to

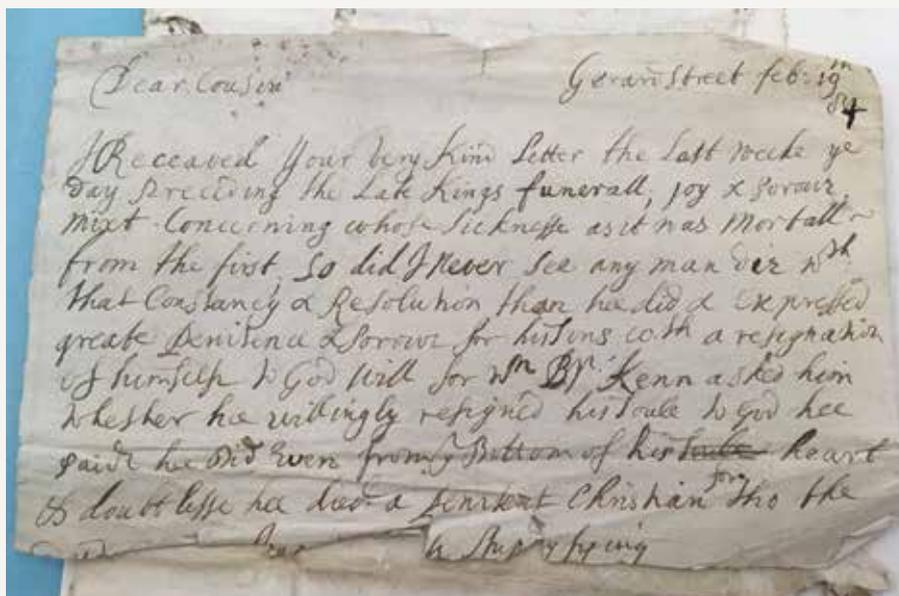
the Psalter, another was at SBL in San Diego, where she was due to compare Calvin's and Luther's approaches to the Psalms, and the third was in Rome, on literary studies of the Psalms in memory of Erich Zenger. Then came a series of cancellations because of COVID-19. One was in Germany, one in New York, two in the UK. So far, Professor Gillingham has therefore written four papers in publications from conferences she never attended: a surreal experience. In March she managed to speak in Rome about reception history as an academic discipline: this was to 250 Jesuits, mainly priests, convening at the 'Biblicum' (Pontifical Bible Institute). She returned to Oxford just as everything was shutting down, on the same day she heard that her second volume of *Psalms through the Centuries* was now out in paperback (at a more acceptable cost of some £32 for its 400 pages). And, of course, the surgery for that new knee has been cancelled again.



**DIARMAID MACCULLOCH**

In October 2019, Professor MacCulloch delivered the John Albert Hall Lectures at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. The lectures were entitled: 'Christianity and Islam' and 'Christianity Past, Present and Future: The Big Picture'. He also partook in several other events for the Anglican Dioceses of British Columbia and Winnipeg.

In January 2020, Professor MacCulloch was Mary Robertson Fellow, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, where he explored the Huntington Library's rich Tudor England manuscript collections. Whilst there, he discovered a hitherto unknown, though brief,



Samuel P. Huntington Library - call number HA Misc. Box 1(35)

eyewitness account of the deathbed of King Charles II (see image: Samuel P. Huntington Library, HA Misc. Box 1(35)).

The paperback for *Thomas Cromwell: A Life* has been published by Penguin, and Professor MacCulloch also has two chapters—'The Great Transition: 1530-1600' and 'Conclusion'—in David Cannadine's new book *Westminster Abbey: A Church in History*, published by Yale University Press.



**ELEANOR MCLAUGHLIN**

Dr McLaughlin has been part of the international research group 'Human Flourishing in a Technological World: A Christian Vision' (<https://www.christianflourishing.com/>) since its inception in 2017. This interdisciplinary group aims to provide a comprehensive theological assessment of recent technologies' impact on human nature and human life.

Her contribution to the project is an enquiry into the role of technology for human flourishing of people with disabilities. The group has just released a series of public engagement videos on YouTube in which they talk about their various parts of the project. (e.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IM-Wa8nC50M>). Their multi-author volume is due to be published with Oxford University Press in 2021, with the provisional title *Human Flourishing in a Technological World: A Theological Vision*.



**RAMESH PATTNI**

Dr Ramesh Pattni of the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies was awarded an OBE by Her Majesty the Queen in the 2020 New Year honours list for services to interfaith relations and the Hindu community in the UK. Dr Pattni, a graduate of the Faculty of Theology and Religion, is an academic Hindu theologian and psychologist and has

been a practitioner of Vedanta for over two decades. Having dedicated much of his personal time and effort to interfaith relations in the UK, Dr Pattni has served as Trustee of the Interfaith Network UK, founder and Co-Chair of the Hindu Christian Forum and Chair of the Interfaith Committee of the Hindu Forum Britain (HFB) for which he now serves as Vice President. He has been an advisor on many Government consultations and has strived to improve links between the UK government and the British Hindu community. As a psychologist, he also serves as a volunteer counsellor at a charity (DAWN) dealing with mental health issues especially affecting women and couples.



### TOBIAS TANTON

Dr Tobias Tanton, Lecturer in Theology at Ripon College Cuddesdon and Associate Member of the Faculty of Theology and

Religion, has been awarded a Fellowship in Science-Engaged Theology as part of a project on *New Visions in Theological Anthropology*. The project is designed to get theologians thinking carefully about theological anthropology on those questions that involve evolutionary biology, developmental psychology and cognitive science. His research for this project will examine how the psychology of prejudice, including mechanisms that influence attitudes towards in-group and out-groups, might inform contemporary ecclesiology. More information on the project can be found at: <http://set.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk/about/>



### JENNIFER STRAWBRIDGE

In January 2020, Professor Jenn Strawbridge was installed as the first Canon Theologian for the Diocese of Blackburn. Within this role, Jenn assists the Diocesan Bishop and Cathedral Chapter in their theological reflections, studies, and teaching. Following the installation, she gave an inaugural lecture for the Diocese — “‘Sight to the Inly Blind’: Encountering Blindness in Hymns and Scripture’ — drawing from her wider research on sightlessness in the New Testament. Her installation was covered by two Lancashire newspapers and BBC Lancashire. Jenn also continues to serve as a Wiccarnical Prebend (Honorary Theological Canon) for the Diocese of Chichester.

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*Jennifer Strawbridge with the Rt Rev Julian Henderson, Bishop of Blackburn.* © Clive Lawrence for Blackburn Diocese



# WORKSHOPS & PROJECTS

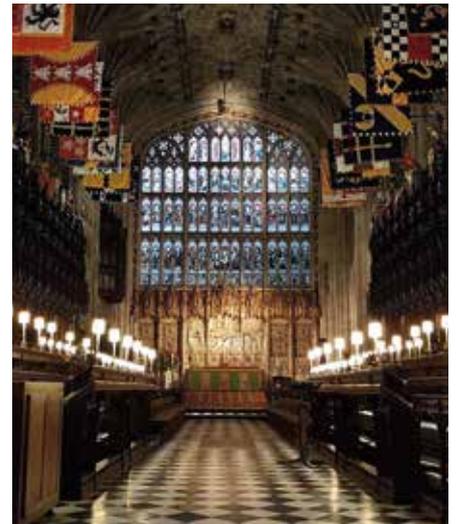
## CASTLE, CHAPEL, COLLEGE

### HYWEL CLIFFORD

Dr Hywel Clifford, Lecturer in Old Testament at Ripon College Cuddesdon, coordinated a week-long Clergy Consultation at St George's College (Windsor Castle) which took place just before the 2019/2020 academic year began. Entitled 'The Old Testament in the Church and Beyond', Dr Clifford and two other Oxford colleagues, Dr Deborah Rooke (Regent's Park College) and Dr John Screnock (Oriental Institute), took twenty-five conference delegates with at least five years of recent experience in ordained ministry on an engaging journey through the canonical sections of the Old Testament.

Covering enriching and challenging topics by means of lectures, group discussion, and textual study, the delegates were invited to consider afresh major biblical themes in context and their relevance today. This all took place in Vicars' Hall, a beautiful setting conducive to learning. Each day was framed by worship nearby in St George's Chapel—a 'royal peculiar', that is, a parish or church under the direct jurisdiction of the monarch—and time was also spent together over food and in lively conversation throughout the day. The week began with recognition of the enduring role the Old Testament has in Christianity (acknowledging, of course, that its texts are known as the Tanakh in Judaism, or often the Hebrew Bible in universities). The week ended with reflection on how to take the insights and inspirations gained during the Consultation back into church and society.

It was a real treat to be in Windsor Castle, a royal residence of evocative grandeur and centuries-long memory (the Queen returned from Buckingham Palace during the week); and to enjoy the special privilege of learning together inside its iconic walls. St George's House, where the delegates stayed in residence in the castle grounds, was founded in 1966 to be a place for those of influence and responsibility—clergy among them—to explore contemporary issues in society; this is portrayed in episode seven of the third series of Netflix's drama *The Crown*. Indeed, the wider world was never far away during the week: Eton College Chapel and the busy M4 motorway are both visible in the distance, as is the market town of Windsor just below.



RIGHT: *St George's Chapel*  
BELOW: *Vicars' Hall*  
BELOW RIGHT: *Windsor Castle grounds.*



## \$3M GRANT FOR PROJECTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

### ANDREW PINSENT

The Ian Ramsey Centre is pleased to announce a new \$3 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation for a five-year project running until 2024 to stimulate research and outreach in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The project will focus on a suite of questions within the broad themes of (a) Science and Religion in the CEE Context; (b) Reason and Faith; and (c) Persons, Mind, and Cosmos.

Over two hundred diverse subgrants and major activities of the project, covering the twenty-four countries of CEE, will include three study weeks, a congress and a conference, an exchange program for Masters students, three essay competitions, fifteen visiting fellowships, thirty-five project subgrants, ten translations of key works into leading regional languages and forty project videos. The project is also expected to stimulate the preparation of over ninety-five academic publications. These activities will help to foster a new generation of scholars and cooperative networks to transform future research in the region and enhance international cooperation.

The principal investigator at Oxford is Andrew Pinsent and the project is employing an additional postdoctoral researcher, Samuel Hughes, with assistance from Marija Selak Raspudić (University of Zagreb), Mikołaj Sławkowski-Rode (University of Warsaw), and Ralph Weir (University of Lincoln).

## IAN RAMSEY CENTRE: ACCELERATING INSIGHT IN SCHOOLS

### ANDREW PINSENT

Despite the challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ian Ramsey Centre completed all of its planned events for schools in 2019-2020 with a final event for over 500 gifted and talented students at Oxford Town Hall on 6 March. This event brought to completion a three-year project, "Accelerating Insight," run in collaboration with



*Prof. Tom Greggs, Marischal Chair of Divinity at Aberdeen, speaking with A-Level students in Oxford.*



*St Olaf Baptist Church and the Medieval Old Town, Tallinn, Estonia. © Igor Dymov, Bigstock*

Julie Arliss of Academy Conferences, and made possible thanks to a grant of £300,000 from the Templeton World Charity Foundation.

Since 2017, members of the project team have hosted or participated in 96 events for students, 12 events for teachers, and 4 for headteachers, involving 18,806 students, 2,603 teachers, and 173 headteachers in the UK, Argentina, Australia and New Zealand. A priority of the project has been to introduce students and teachers to inspiring speakers who can stimulate engagement with Big Ideas in science, philosophy and theology. Presenters in 2020 included the newly appointed University Lecturer in Philosophy of Religion at Cambridge, Dr James Orr, an alumnus of the Oxford Faculty of Theology and Religion. Another excellent speaker has been Charles Foster, a barrister and polymath from Green Templeton College who was joint winner of the 2016 IgNobel Prize for Biology for living in the wild as, at different times, a badger, an otter, a deer, a fox, and a bird.



*The Principal Investigator, Andrew Pinsent, speaking with teachers at an event in Argentina.*

## INSPIRING SERVICE

### ANDREW TEAL

At Christmas 2018, Pembroke College hosted a panel of Lord David Alton, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, the Most Revd and Rt Hon Lord Rowan Williams and the Revd Professor Frances Young. From their respective faith traditions (Catholic, Mormon, Anglican and Methodist), all spoke to encourage students to commit to following their motivation to public service, the academy, law, politics and the churches. The event was supplemented by some initial theological encounter and dialogue in the University Church with the support of the Faculty of Theology and Religion, joint worship, and a banquet where archbishops of Orthodox, Anglican and Catholic traditions were represented, as well as church leaders of reformed and restored traditions. Academics and civic representatives as well as students, staff and people from Oxford's homeless community were also welcomed.

All of this is now published in the first of several planned volumes of this kind. *Inspiring Service: Interfaith Remarks with Elder Jeffrey R. Holland at Oxford*, edited by Andrew Teal, was published by Brigham Young University Press / Deseret Press, Utah in 2019. It will be published with a slightly different title in the UK by Sacristy Press, Durham in 2020.

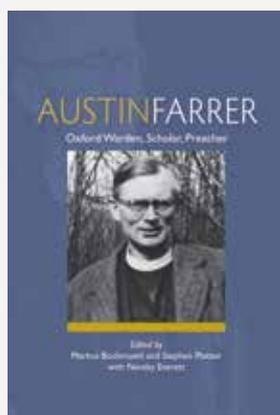
It became clear that the path of dialogue was an important one to commit to pursuing. Invitations to speak in panels in the US (Salt Lake City, Washington and New York) were taken up exploring models of ministry and chaplaincy, looking at theological and ecclesiological differences, exploring the nature and canon of Scripture, the place of tradition and experience, authority, baptism, eucharist and ministry, interfaith and ecumenical possibilities, law, society and religion, and joint humanitarian ventures. Andrew Teal will be spending four months at the Neal A. Maxwell Institute in Provo, Utah, where—in addition to preparing volumes of outsider readings of Joseph Smith Jr. and early Mormon communities—he hopes to set up a series of international scholarly projects. He convened a panel from the UK, inviting (among others) the Archbishop of York, Geoff O'Donoghue (International Director of CAFOD) and Law and Human Rights Muslim scholar Farrah Raza to participate. The virus has meant that this will be virtual in 2020, but, hopefully, will be reconvened in Provo and Washington in 2021.

Invitations to ecumenical and inter-faith collaboration has historically rarely included the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and attitudes to theological dialogue and common humanitarian work, though undertaken, are rarely celebrated. This collaboration commenced at the University of Oxford marks a new movement and is committed to walking a different, public path of celebration and trust, pioneering not only shared scholarship, understanding and mutual advocacy, but friendship and service together.



*Lord David Alton, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, the Most Revd and Rt Hon Lord Rowan Williams and the Revd Professor Frances Young, Pembroke College, 2018.*

# FACULTY BOOKS

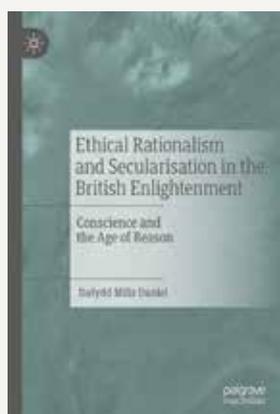


**Markus Bockmuehl,  
Stephen Platten (eds.)**

*Austin Farrer: Oxford  
Warden, Scholar, Preacher*

SCM Press, 2020

This volume is the result of an international conference held at Keble College in January 2019 to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Austin Farrer (1904-1968), frequently described as the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most creative Anglican theologian. It considers the impact of his work as a New Testament scholar, a philosophical theologian, an Oxford literary figure and friend of C. S. Lewis, and as a preacher. The book also contains four of Farrer's previously unpublished lectures delivered in the United States. Contributors include John Barton, Mark Goodacre, Michael Lloyd and Judith Wolfe.

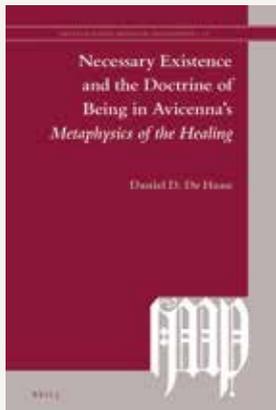


**Dafydd Mills Daniel**

*Ethical Rationalism and  
Secularisation in the  
British Enlightenment:  
Conscience and the Age of  
Reason*

Palgrave Macmillan, 2020

This book reassesses the ethics of reason in the Age of Reason. An interdisciplinary work in ethical theory and intellectual history endorsed by historians (William Bulman, Peter Harrison), philosophers (Stephen Darwall, Fiona Ellis), and theologians (Jennifer Herdt, Robin Lovin), it challenges the current understanding of both rationalism in ethics and the Enlightenment's secular legacy by re-examining the meaning of 'conscience'. Dafydd Mills Daniel defends British Enlightenment ethical rationalism from ongoing criticisms, not least those derived from David Hume and Immanuel Kant, by using 'conscience' to demonstrate that it (along with such figures as Joseph Butler and Adam Smith) must be interpreted in the context of an early modern Anglican tradition of Ciceronian right reason and Thomistic natural law. Incorporating Richard Hooker, Cambridge Platonists, latitudinarians, and Anglican casuists into a discussion of Enlightenment rationalism in Britain, enables Daniel to trace the secularisation of reason and conscience through key figures and debates in early modern and modern philosophy, theology, science, literature, and politics. In doing so, he recontextualises controversies over theatre-plays and church patronage in the Scottish Enlightenment; reflects on conscience's role in contemporary ethical realism; and uncovers the shared Christian metaphysics of Samuel Clarke ('Isaac Newton's bulldog'), Richard Price (Edmund Burke's opponent over the French Revolution), and John Witherspoon (the only clergyman to sign the US Declaration of Independence).

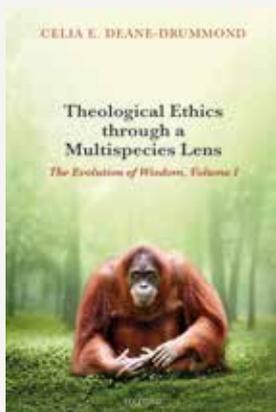


**Daniel D. De Haan**

*Necessary Existence and the Doctrine of Being in Avicenna's Metaphysics of the Healing*

Brill, 2020

*Necessary Existence and the Doctrine of Being in Avicenna's Metaphysics of the Healing* explicates the central argument of Avicenna's metaphysical masterpiece. The book argues that the most fundamental primary notion in Avicenna's metaphysics is neither being nor thing but is the necessary (*wājib*), which Avicenna employs to demonstrate the existence and true-nature of the divine necessary existence in itself. This conclusion is established through a systematic investigation of how Avicenna's theory of a demonstrative science is employed in the organisation of his metaphysical science into its subject, first principles, and objects of enquiry. The book examines the essential role the first principles as primary notions and primary hypotheses play in the central argument of Avicenna's metaphysics.



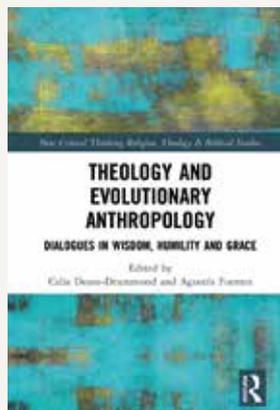
**Celia Deane-Drummond**

*Theological Ethics Through a Multispecies Lens: The Evolution of Wisdom, Volume I*

Oxford University Press, 2019

There are two driving questions informing this book. The first is: where does our moral life come from? It presupposes that considering morality broadly is inadequate. Instead, different aspects need to be teased apart. It is not sufficient to assume that different virtues are bolted onto a vicious animality, red in tooth and claw. Nature and culture have interlaced histories. By weaving in evolutionary theories and debates on the evolution of compassion, justice and wisdom, this book offers a richer account of who we are as moral agents. The second driving question concerns our relationships with animals. Deane-Drummond argues for a complex, community-based, multispecies approach. Hence, rather than extending rights, a more radical approach is a holistic multispecies framework for moral action. This need not weaken individual responsibility. The intention is not to develop a manual of practice, but rather to build towards an alternative, philosophically informed approach to theological ethics, including animal ethics.

The theological thread weaving through this account is wisdom. Wisdom has many different levels, and in the broadest sense is connected with the flow of life understood in its interconnectedness and sociality. It is profoundly theological and practical. In naming the project *The Evolution of Wisdom*, Deane-Drummond makes a statement about where wisdom may have come from and its future orientation. But justice, compassion and conscience are not far behind, especially in so far as they are relevant to both individual decision-making and institutions.

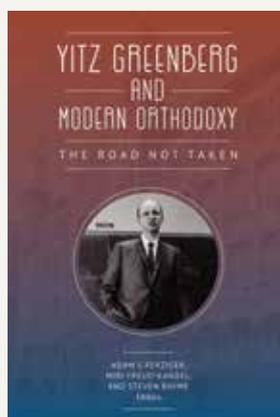


**Celia Deane-Drummond,  
Agustín Fuentes (eds.)**

*Theology and Evolutionary  
Anthropology: Dialogues  
in Wisdom, Humility, and  
Grace*

Routledge, 2020

This book sets out some of the latest scientific findings around the evolutionary development of religion and faith, and then explores their theological implications. This unique combination of perspectives raises fascinating questions about the characteristics that are considered integral for a flourishing social and religious life and allows us to start to ask where in the evolutionary record they first show up in a distinctly human manner. The book builds a case for connecting theology and evolutionary anthropology using both historical and contemporary sources of knowledge to try and understand the origins of wisdom, humility and grace in ‘deep time’. In the section on wisdom, the book examines the origins of complex decision-making in humans through the archaeological record, recent discoveries in evolutionary anthropology and the philosophical richness of semiotics. The book then moves to an exploration of the origin of characteristics integral to the social life of small-scale communities, which then points in an indirect way to the disposition of humility. Finally, it investigates the theological dimensions of grace and considers how artefacts left behind in the material record by our human ancestors, and the perspective they reflect, might inform contemporary concepts of grace. This is a cutting-edge volume that refuses to commit the errors of either too easy a synthesis or too facile a separation between science and religion. As such, it will be of interest to scholars of religious studies and theology – especially those who interact with scientific fields – as well as academics working in anthropology of religion.

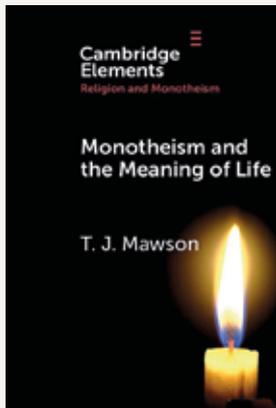


**Adam Ferziger,  
Miri Freud-Kandel,  
Steven Bayme (eds.)**

*Yitz Greenberg and Modern  
Orthodoxy: The Road Not  
Taken*

Academic Studies Press, 2019

Sixteen scholars from around the globe gathered at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies in June 2014 for the first (now annual) Oxford Summer Institute on Modern and Contemporary Judaism. This volume is the fruit of this encounter. The goal of the event was to facilitate in-depth engagement with the thought of Rabbi Dr Irving “Yitz” Greenberg, concentrating particularly on the historical ramifications of his theological and public stances. Consideration was given to his lifelong and complex encounter with the Modern Orthodox stream of American Judaism and the extent to which his teachings functioned as “the road not taken”. This auspicious gathering was certainly characterised by deep appreciation for Greenberg’s original outlook, which is predicated on his profound dedication to God, Torah, the Jewish people, and humanity. But this was by no means gratuitous homage or naïve esteem. On the contrary, those in attendance understood that the most genuine form of admiration for a thinker and leader of his stature—especially one who continues to produce path-breaking writings and speak out publicly—is to rigorously and critically examine his ideas and legacy. The creative process that was nurtured has resulted in a substantive contribution to research on the religious, historical, and social trajectories of contemporary Judaism, and will engender fresh thinking on crucial theological and ideological postures that will ultimately enrich Jewish life. This volume offers readers a critical engagement with the trenchant and candid efforts of one of the most thoughtful and earnest voices to emerge from within American Orthodoxy.

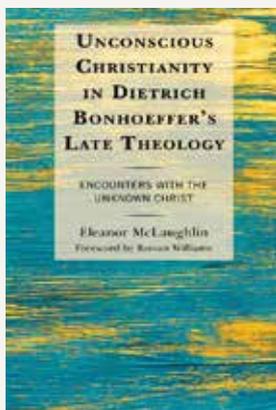


**Tim J. Mawson**

.....  
*Monotheism and the  
 Meaning of Life*  
 .....

Cambridge University Press, 2019

*Monotheism and the Meaning of Life* discusses the role that God might play in the answer to the question ‘What is the meaning of life?’ Exploring the various senses of ‘meaning’ and ‘life’, Mawson argues that there are various questions implicit in the notion of the meaning of life and that the God of the monotheistic religions is central to the correct answers to almost all of them.

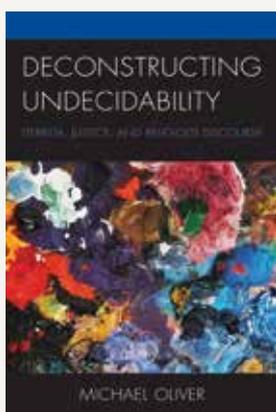


**Eleanor McLaughlin**

.....  
*Unconscious Christianity in  
 Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Late  
 Theology: Encounters with  
 the Unknown Christ*  
 .....

Fortress Academic, 2020

In the last years of his life, Dietrich Bonhoeffer began work on an idea that he called *unbewußtes Christentum* (unconscious Christianity). While Bonhoeffer’s other ideas from this period have been extensively studied and are important in the field of theology and beyond, this idea has been almost completely ignored. For the first time in Bonhoeffer scholarship, this book provides a definition of unconscious Christianity based on a close reading and analysis of the texts in which Bonhoeffer mentioned the term. Through a variety of surviving texts, from a scribbled marginal note in his *Ethics* manuscript to the fiction he wrote in prison, McLaughlin constructs a detailed definition of unconscious Christianity that sheds light not only on Bonhoeffer’s late work but also his theological development as a whole.

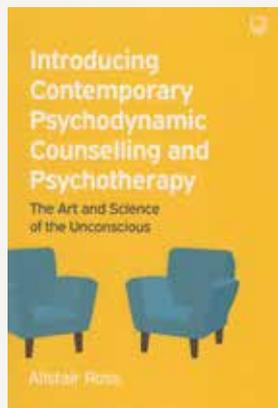


**Michael Oliver**

.....  
*Deconstructing  
 Undecidability: Derrida,  
 Justice, and Religious  
 Discourse*  
 .....

Fortress, 2020

Advancing current readings of the deconstructive work of Jacques Derrida, *Deconstructing Undecidability* critically explores the problematic nature of decision, including the inherent exclusivity that accompanies any decision. In discourses where a pursuit of justice or liberation from systemic oppression is a primary concern, Michael Oliver argues for an appreciation of the inescapability of making limited, difficult decisions for particular forms of justice. Oliver highlights a similarly precarious predicament in the context of philosophical and religious negotiations of divine decision, pointing to the impossibility of safely navigating this issue. While wholeheartedly affirming the problem of exclusivity that inevitably accompanies decision, this book offers a renewed sense of undecidability that highlights a mistaken, illusory position of indecision as a reflection of power and privilege. Ultimately, this book aims to gain a greater appreciation for the complexity of the problem of decision, in order to be more rigorous and transparent in our continued engagement with it.

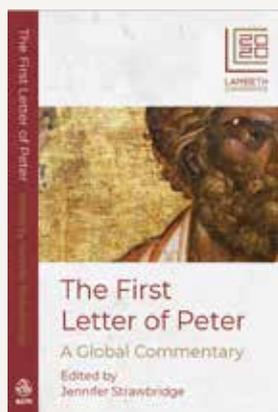


**Alistair Ross**

*Introducing Contemporary Psychodynamic Counselling and Psychotherapy: The Art and Science of the Unconscious*

Open University Press, 2019

In the history of ideas, when compared to theology or philosophy, counselling and psychotherapy are very new disciplines. Yet, in the last 30 years, important new theoretical ideas, skills and clinical practices have emerged. Key Freudian concepts like transference, counter-transference and the influence of the past on the present remain. However, these have been added to by research drawn from infant development, neuroscience, the role of the sacred and intersubjective approaches to relationships. These have changed the way therapists understand and work with their clients. Ross charts these developments, illustrated by chaos/complexity theory. He offers vignettes and personal insights from his professional practice, putting theory to work in real-life situations. The result is an accessible text for anyone wanting to enter this field, or therapists who want an overview of new thinking and practice. It offers invaluable insights into psychodynamic practice, applying Freud and later psychoanalytic theory and practice to improving the lives of real people today.



**Jennifer Strawbridge (ed.)**

*The First Letter of Peter: A Global Commentary*

SCM Press, 2020

*The First Letter of Peter: A Global Commentary* is written for a non-specialist audience and offers a distinctive perspective on an oft-neglected biblical book. Supported by a £100,000 research grant, Strawbridge convened two seminars with 34 scholars from 19 countries to research and discuss 1 Peter together—and from these seminars, this book was created. This academically rigorous commentary is original in the field for (a) its combined exegetical, pastoral and contextual approach to 1 Peter, (b) the number of voices contributing to the formation of the text, and (c) the single narrative of the commentary with no reference to individual authors within the body of the text. The book is already on its third printing since publication in February 2020 and has been translated into Spanish, Portuguese, French and Mandarin. It will form the foundation for teaching and study at the Lambeth Conference in 2022, when 1700 delegates from more than 170 countries will gather. It underpins a set of published studies on 1 Peter and nine teaching videos.



**Robert J. D. Wainwright**

*Early Reformation Covenant Theology: English Reception of Swiss Reformed Thought, 1520-1555*

P & R Publishing, 2020

*Early Reformation Covenant Theology* is both a forensic analysis of the doctrine of covenant in the early sixteenth century and a fresh approach to the nature of religious reform under King Henry VIII. It traces the early emergence of covenant theology in Switzerland when Huldrych Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger and John Calvin recast late medieval conceptions of the divine pact within radical new parameters of ‘grace alone’ and ‘Scripture alone’ and shows how quickly their ideas spread into English discourse. As Diarmaid MacCulloch writes in the Foreword, it demonstrates not merely “the strange death of Lutheran England, but [...] the positive English turn towards what in the course of the sixteenth century gained an identity as Reformed Protestantism.”

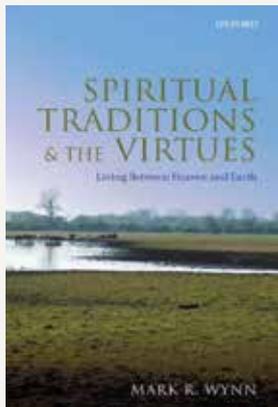


**Jan Westerhoff**

*The Non-Existence of the Real World*

Oxford University Press, 2020

Does the real world, defined as a world of objects that exist independent of human interests, concerns, and cognitive activities, really exist? Westerhoff argues that we have good reason to believe it does not. His discussion considers four main facets of the idea of the real world, ranging from the existence of a separate external and internal world (comprising various mental states congregated around a self), to the existence of an ontological foundation that grounds the existence of all the entities in the world, and the existence of an ultimately true theory that provides a final account of all there is. As Westerhoff discusses the reasons for rejecting the postulation of an external world behind our representations, he asserts that the internal world is not as epistemically transparent as is usually assumed, and that there are good reasons for adopting an anti-foundational account of ontological dependence. Drawing on conclusions from the ancient Indian philosophical system of Madhyamaka Buddhism, Westerhoff defends his stance in a purely Western philosophical framework, and affirms that ontology, and philosophy more generally, need not be conceived as providing an ultimately true theory of the world.

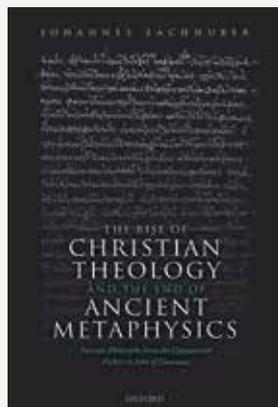


**Mark R. Wynn**

*Spiritual Traditions and the Virtues: Living Between Heaven and Earth*

Oxford University Press, 2020

This book offers a philosophical appreciation of the spiritual life. Among other matters, it considers: the distinctive character of the goods to which religious and spiritual traditions are directed; the structure of such traditions, including the connection between their practical and creedal commitments; the relationship between the various vocabularies that are used to describe, from the insider's perspective, progress in the spiritual life; the epistemic significance of tradition in religious contexts; and the relationship between the concept of God and accounts of spiritual well-being. In his discussion of the infused moral virtues, Thomas Aquinas suggests how it is possible for our relations to the everyday world to be folded into our relations to the divine or sacred reality otherwise understood. In this sense, he is offering a vision of how it is possible to live between heaven and earth. In this book, Wynn considers how that vision may be extended across the central domains of human thought and experience, and how it can deepen and diversify our understanding of what it is for a human life to be lived well.



**Johannes Zachhuber**

*The Rise of Christian  
Theology and the End  
of Ancient Metaphysics:  
Patristic Philosophy from  
the Cappadocian Fathers  
to John of Damascus*

Oxford University Press, 2020

It has rarely been recognised that the Christian writers of the first millennium pursued an ambitious and exciting philosophical project alongside their engagement in the doctrinal controversies of their age. This book offers, for the first time, a full analysis of this Patristic philosophy. It shows how it took its distinctive shape in the late fourth century and gives an account of its subsequent development until the time of John of Damascus.

The book falls into three main parts. The first starts with an analysis of the philosophical project underlying the teaching of the Cappadocian fathers, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus. This philosophy, arguably the first distinctively Christian theory of being, soon became near-universally shared in Eastern Christianity. Just a few decades after the Cappadocians, all sides in the early Christological controversy took its fundamental tenets for granted. Its application to the Christological problem thus appeared inevitable. Yet it created substantial conceptual problems.

Parts two and three describe in detail how these problems led to a series of increasingly radical modifications of the Cappadocian philosophy. In part two, Zachhuber explores the miaphysite opponents of the Council of Chalcedon, while in part three he discusses the defenders of the Council from the early sixth to the eighth century. Through this overview, the book reveals this period as one of remarkable philosophical creativity, fecundity, and innovation.

*The Three Holy Hierarchs: two of the Cappadocian fathers (left and right: Basil and Gregory Nazianzen) with John Chrysostom (centre).*



# OXFORD THEOLOGICAL MONOGRAPHS 2020-21

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**Holly Morse**

*Encountering Eve's Afterlives: A New Reception Critical Approach to Genesis 2-4*

**Vince R. Vitale**

*Non-Identity Theodicy: A Grace-Based Response to the Problem of Evil*

**Gopal K. Gupta**

*Māyā in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa: Human Suffering and Divine Play*





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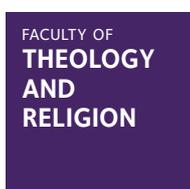
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**Thank you**





Early orthodox Christian fresco in the cave church at Cappadocia, Central Anatolia, Turkey  
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