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A MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY BOARD CHAIR

WILLIAM WOOD

As the 2022–23 academic year draws to a close, I am struck by how normal it seemed. Instead of giant, world-historical problems like, say, avoiding the plague, the problems we as a Faculty faced were comparatively mundane, as we fully returned to the much more comfortable and familiar day-to-day work of teaching, learning, and researching in ordinary conditions. Which is not to say that there were no challenges. Partly as a result of the aforementioned plague, many of our colleagues reasonably chose to delay their accrued sabbatical leave until this year. Indeed, for much of the year, it seemed as though nearly everyone was gone. Suffice it to say that those of us who remained really noticed the difference.

In what has become an annual event, I am very happy to report that another Faculty member has been made a Fellow of the British Academy. Congratulations to Mark Edwards, Professor of Early Christian Studies, for this long overdue honour. Among current Faculty postholders, Professor Edwards joins Professors Mark Wynn and Carol Harrison as fellow Fellows, alongside at least nine active emeritus Faculty members. Professor Edwards commented ‘I am honoured and flattered by this award, and grateful above all that the British Academy continues to support the smaller subjects in the Humanities, without which there could be no serious research in the major disciplines, and consequently no advance in public thinking in the sciences, politics or medicine either.’ Exactly so.

In any academic year, we typically say goodbye to beloved colleagues and welcome new colleagues into our Faculty. This year, I would like to single out one new arrival, and one departure. I am absolutely thrilled to report that Professor Mark Harris has accepted the Idreos Chair in Science and Religion. Professor Harris will start right away, in October 2023, which is also great news. He describes himself as ‘a physicist who works with theologians’, a statement that—like Professor Harris himself—is both accurate and far too modest. He comes to us immediately from the University of Edinburgh, but this is his second stint in Oxford, having first arrived some years ago as a postdoctoral researcher in the Oxford Department of Physics. He then trained as a priest at Cuddesdon, and served for six years as the Oriol College Chaplain and Lecturer in New Testament—clearly a man

of many talents. We in the Faculty are very excited that he will take up the Idreos Chair, which is the world’s foremost academic post in Science and Religion.

On the other hand, I am not at all excited about, but at best resigned to, the retirement of Fran Roach, the Faculty’s longtime office manager and personal assistant to several grateful Faculty Board Chairs (including me). Those of you who live and work in Oxford will know Fran well. To far off friends and colleagues who have not met Fran: trust me, that is your loss. In a Faculty that is not known for its cohesiveness, Fran has long been a point of unity and institutional memory, and she will be sorely missed by us all.

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“Those of you who live and work in Oxford will know Fran well. To far off friends and colleagues who have not met Fran: trust me, that is your loss.”

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The normal term of office for a Faculty Board Chair is three years, so my regular term of office should be coming to an end now. In fact, however, I have agreed to serve for one more year. I’d like to say that – dazzled by my achievements as Chair – the Faculty Board rose up in unison and begged me to stay on. But in full disclosure, it was my own idea and I had to persuade the Board to agree. (Why did I want to stay on? At this point, mere weeks away from what would have been the start of a glorious sabbatical year, all I can say is: it seemed like a good idea at the time...) All kidding aside, I am honoured to serve as the Chair of Oxford’s Faculty of Theology and Religion, one of the world’s oldest academic faculties, and thanks to the Board’s agreement, I will now serve as Chair for a fourth year. I am very grateful for their confidence.

I’m sure you will enjoy this year’s issue of *The Oxford Theologian*. We have a great lineup of features, including Professor Jennifer Strawbridge discussing a very popular new paper called ‘How women, black lives, and the environment matter to the interpretation of the New Testament’, and an exciting list of new books written by our Faculty members. ■

Ugo Zillioli

Tracing Buddhist Philosophy through Ancient Greek Theology

Interview by **Claire MacLeod**, *Managing Editor*



Claire: What brought you to Oxford?

Ugo: I arrived at Oxford in September 2022. My primary background is in philosophy. About 20 years ago, I completed my doctorate in ancient philosophy at Durham in the north of England. After that, I held various research and teaching positions in different European countries, including Trinity College in Dublin and institutions in Pisa and Parma, Italy. In 2015, I returned to Durham, supported by significant European funding. Subsequently, I collaborated with Jan Westerhoff on a research project that we are currently working on, which is generously funded by the Leverhulme Trust. My academic journey has been complemented by several important publications, mainly in the realm of ancient philosophy. I have authored two books and contributed to two collections. Additionally, there is an upcoming book set to release next year stemming from our current project.

While I have always enjoyed relocating for my research, it has not always been easy for my family. However, the project I am presently engaged in, in collaboration with Jan Westerhoff, is truly special and rewarding.

Claire: What brought you to the field of theology?

Ugo: My journey began with a focus on ancient philosophy. In this domain, there is not a clear distinction between philosophical and

theological thought. In the ancient world, which is my primary research area, philosophy and theology often blended seamlessly.

My interest in theology intensified around 2017 when I ventured into Buddhist philosophy. I had organised a conference in Durham on Atomism and invited a speaker to discuss Atomism's role in Buddhist philosophy. This experience piqued my curiosity, leading me to delve deeper into various subjects within Buddhist philosophy. I became particularly captivated by the work of Jan Westerhoff. Inspired by new ideas and insights, I approached him to explore a possible collaboration, which he was keen on.

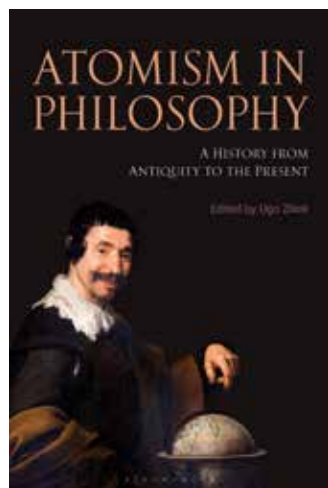
Our joint endeavour is housed within the theology faculty, given its focus on Buddhist philosophy. The project, titled "Material Objects in Ancient Philosophy: Greek and Buddhist," received generous funding. This collaboration is a significant reason I'm in this field today, and I genuinely cherish the opportunity to work in such a vibrant academic environment.

Claire: What was so interesting about Atomism?

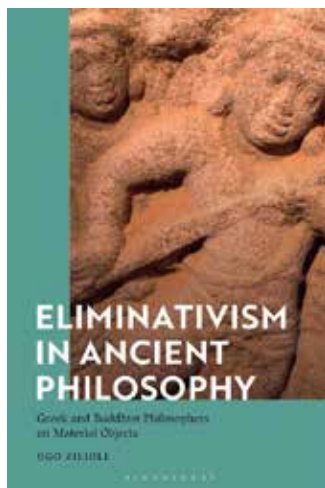
Ugo: My journey into Atomism began when I was curating a collection, aiming to unravel the intricacies of ancient thought. This effort resulted in a comprehensive collection of nearly 600 pages, which I edited. What is fascinating about Atomism is that its interpretation varies across different philosophical traditions. For instance, its representation in ancient Greek philosophy differs from its role in Buddhist philosophy. However, they also share many similarities. This duality of difference and analogy made Atomism an ideal topic to explore in diverse philosophical traditions, which is why I was drawn to it.

Claire: What intrigued you about studying Eastern religions, especially Buddhism? Why Buddhism over other faiths?

Ugo: Buddhism represents an incredibly sophisticated philosophical tradition. While much has been explored, there is still a depth to this tradition that Western thinkers are striving to understand. The intricate debates encompass a wide range of topics, from Atomism to material things, and one particularly intriguing aspect is Buddhist perspectives on personhood –



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📍 Nagarjuna flourished around the second century CE, and was an Indian Buddhist philosopher who articulated the doctrine of emptiness (*shunyata*).



📍 Gorgias, 483–375 BC, was an ancient Greek sophist, pre-Socratic philosopher, and rhetorician who was a native of Leontinoi in Sicily. Along with Protagoras, he formed the first generation of Sophists.

the criteria defining an individual's identity over time. This level of sophistication in Buddhist debates stands out. For instance, while Greek philosophy has its merits, it does not delve as deeply into personal identity as Buddhism does. Notably, the late Oxford philosopher, Parfit, acknowledged drawing significant insights from Buddhist discussions. My primary attraction to Buddhist philosophy lies in its in-depth exploration of topics, especially the emphasis on personal identity, which they place at the heart of philosophical thought.

Claire: *A lot of your work delves into the nature of metaphysics. How does this factor into the debate about the differences between Greek and Buddhist philosophies?*

Ugo: In my upcoming book set to be released in 2024, which is a primary result of my research, I explore both Greek philosophers and their counterparts in Buddhist philosophy. An intriguing comparison can be made between Gorgias, a Greek sophist, and Nagarjuna, a preeminent Buddhist philosopher. Gorgias postulated that nothing truly exists, and even if it does, it is unknowable and incommunicable. Nagarjuna, on the other hand, began with the idea of emptiness, suggesting everything lacks intrinsic nature. These radical positions, when compared both within and outside their traditions, help us make sense of their claims.

Solipsism is like nihilism, quite an implausible position because it means that I alone exists and there is nothing else. No other persons, no other bodies, no ideas, objects, nothing.

Claire: *Is it appropriate to discuss nihilism in this context?*

Ugo: Nihilism is becoming very popular at the moment. So, of course, Jan has written a lot of interesting books on Nihilism and Buddhist philosophy. Nihilism can be an implausible position because we know, of course, that there is something. But we want to understand why there were some philosophers who claim that there is nothing and is that claim so implausible? And this brings us to the next step of research that we would like to do. This Leverhulme project is actually on material objects which means the object of our life, as well as on persons. But we did not have time to concentrate on the ontological status of persons, because, as I said, the Buddhist developed a huge debate on personhood and selfhood. This current project is for three years, and it is not possible to do justice to personhood and, more in general, material objects at the same time. So, we concentrated on the

The experience of teaching children has been transformative for me. They require clarity and engagement; there's no room for vagueness. If they aren't captivated, they won't follow.

latter. And because we are working together very well, we would like to do something about solipsism. Solipsism is like nihilism, quite an implausible position because it means that I alone exist and there is nothing else. No other persons, no other bodies, no ideas, objects, nothing. And again, this is a radical position. There has been quite a lot of debate in Buddhist philosophy about it.

The philosopher Ratnakirti wrote about solipsism, and I think there is quite a lot to discover to be discovered in ancient Greek philosophy about solipsism. For instance, there is this Socratic and post Socratic school called the Cyrenaics, which can be taken as solipsistic. And so, what we are going to do, we are trying to build up a kind of groundwork on solipsism in ancient philosophy, Greek and Buddhist, and to see if we can go for a larger funding for a history of global solipsism. Which means we are going to try to pin up and down all solipsistic positions in the history of thought, both Greek, Buddhist, modern and contemporary, Eastern, and Western. So, this is the next step we would like to take after the current project.

Claire: I noticed in your profile that you've emphasized outreach in schools, discussing the utility and importance of philosophy. Could you elaborate on that? What have you accomplished in that regard, and what are your objectives?

Ugo: Certainly. This outreach is rooted in my background in ancient philosophy. For ancient Greek and Buddhist philosophers, philosophy was not merely an abstract concept. Instead, it was a way of life, actively influencing their daily actions and decisions. Being passionate about these subjects naturally led me to view philosophy as beneficial for everyone, not just scholars or enthusiasts. In recent years, I have pivoted towards this research direction.

While at Durham, I participated in the 'Philosophy for Children' initiative, which began about a decade ago in the United Kingdom. The essence of this project is to introduce philosophical questions to children in primary and secondary schools, making it relatable and showing them its relevance in their lives. Engaging with younger minds, helping them realize that philosophical thinking can enrich their understanding of life, has been incredibly fulfilling. I recall a session in a Durham primary school where we began discussing the concept of joy and eventually transitioned into the topic of death. It was enlightening to see these young minds approach such profound subjects so naturally.

Claire: How has this outreach, especially with younger children, influenced your academic work and your writing?

Ugo: Teaching at the university level often caters to a specific audience: mature students. However, when you introduce philosophy to younger minds, it necessitates a flexible and clear teaching approach. The experience of teaching children has been transformative for me. They require clarity and engagement; there is no room for vagueness. If they are not captivated, they will not follow. This challenge, to make philosophy both engaging and comprehensible, has enriched my teaching methodology and influenced my academic pursuits. I have learned as much from them as they have from me.

Claire: As we approach the conclusion of our discussion, can you shed some light on the objectives of the Intercessor Project? Also, considering the next steps in outreach, do you have any future projects or visions in mind?

Ugo: Certainly. For the Intercessor Project, our immediate goal is to secure internal funding, especially for the outreach component. Although we have not charted out the specifics, I see potential in engaging with schools. For instance, I am scheduled to give a talk at my son's school next academic year. Even though he does not study philosophy, they have a module on Buddhism. They are keen on having professionals, including parents, share their academic experiences. This presents a fantastic opportunity to disseminate our work beyond the university realm. The appetite for philosophical discussions has notably expanded beyond academic institutions. On a personal note, before joining Oxford, I was at Durham and took a hiatus from academia to teach Latin and Greek in secondary schools. Accepting the role at Oxford marked my full-fledged return to research. Even though I relinquished a permanent position elsewhere (much to my wife's chagrin), I must admit, I have never been happier. Oxford provides a stimulating environment, and I find myself immersed in research more than ever, especially as I approach the 21st year post-doctorate.

Claire: To wrap up, any advice for early-career academics or postdocs navigating the uncertainties of the academic sphere?

Ugo: Navigating the academic world is undoubtedly challenging, especially with the current bureaucratic intricacies. I secured my first major funding 15 years ago, and while there are more funding opportunities now, the system has become trickier. My primary advice would be to stay true to your convictions. Prioritize your unique ideas, even if they are unconventional. With dedication and effort, you will eventually find like-minded individuals and potential funding opportunities. It is vital to remain authentic and passionate. ■

Liberation Theology and its Legacy

Exploring the nature of theological enterprise

Anthony Reddie, *Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture*



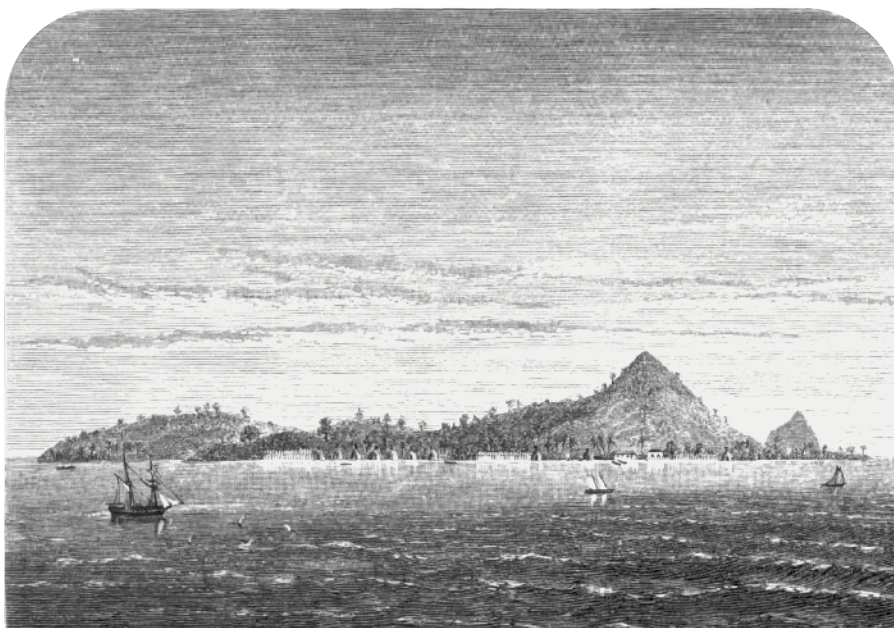
I inherited this course in the summer of 2020 following the departure of Dr Michael Oliver. Dr Oliver had taught the course for two years prior to my arrival in Oxford in January 2020. As a committed liberation theologian for over 20 years, I was delighted to take on this course. Dr Oliver was incredibly gracious in giving me a great deal of support and advice as he handed over the course into my safe keeping. The class assists students in understanding the relationship between social identities and the constructive task of talking about God and converting God-talk into activism for individual, collective and systemic transformation.

Definition and Intellectual Intent

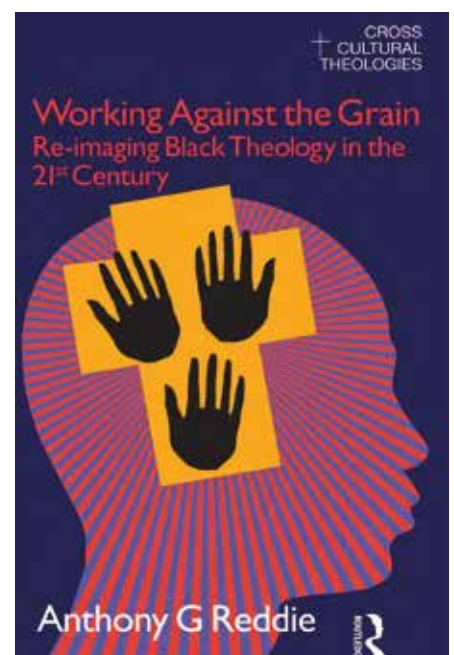
The Liberation theology course gives students exposure to the various iterations of 'Theologies of Liberation' (another way of talking about 'Liberation theologies' – plural). Theologies of liberation emerge from specific locations and reflect the concrete experiences of particular groups of people who have been marginalised and oppressed for a number of reasons. All Theologies of Liberation

(indeed all theologies per se) are contextual. By this, I mean that the nature of any theological enterprise is influenced by and responds to the critical issues and experiences of people in that particular time and space in terms of in their relationship to and with God.

All theologies of liberation are governed by the necessity of orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy. In using this statement, what I



Images taken from a London Missionary Society Magazine published in 1876. This magazine was used as an exemplar for the white, European, image of Jesus.



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mean to suggest is that one's starting point in talking about God is governed by the necessity to find a basis for acting in response to the lived experiences of struggle and the vicissitudes of life, which impinge upon one's daily operations in the attempt to be a sentient human being. The point of liberation theologies is to bring about societal change in order that those whose social identity of marginalisation (be it based on 'race', gender, sexuality, class, disability) can be liberated.

Although the primary purpose of the course is to educate young people on the historic development of various forms of liberation theologies, I am also honest with students in asking them to consider the socio-political and cultural significance of them undertaking this form of intellectual activity. I was reminded of this significance while in conversation with an Oxford theology graduate who took the course in 2021, the first year in which I taught it. The student in asking for a reference to undertake a masters' course at another university stated the following in their personal statement (used with their permission):

I first became interested in the idea of studying development during the Liberation Theology module of my Theology & Religion BA. I studied how religion should and could be used to implement social change and development. It also introduced me to the idea of 'orthopraxy (taking the right action) over orthodoxy (belief in a doctrine)': A comment made by my Tutor, Anthony Reddie really resonated with me: "If you are taking the class solely to get a 1st you are missing the point. I would rather see you being arrested on TV for protesting". I loved this module as it allowed me to look at mobilising social phenomena to make effective social change, in this case, religion.

The words of this statement accurately explain the underlying values of the course. Namely, that the basic intent of the course is to conscientize students, to help them to become critically aware of the ways in which particular social identities have been deemed as problematic, and transgressive, resulting in various forms of social and political oppression. This is then countered by the determination of various forms of religion (primarily Christianity) that seek to overturn these social and political ills, through the prism of faithful action – technically termed as 'Liberative praxis'.

Course Content

The course commences with an experiential exercise that students complete prior to the first class. They are given a series of fictional social identities and are asked to rank them in terms of their normativity when juxtaposed against a White, European image of Jesus, taken from a London Missionary Society Magazine published in 1876. In assessing the different positionalities of the various fictional figures, the students are invited to locate themselves along the continuum, from acceptability and normativity at one end to marginalised transgressive figures at the other.

The point of the exercise as I inform the students is not to make moral judgements on the fictional identities of the characters in the exercise; rather, the aim is to sharpen their critical analysis on the correlation between social identity and theological construction. I remind the students that all theology is contextual and that there is a relationship between the people undertaking their God-talk and their social location from which that discourse is undertaken. As I often state "the answers you came up with are not as important as the analysis that led to your conclusions."

The exercise and the critical reflections that emerge from the group discussions form the bulk of the first class. Subsequent classes then see the students explore Latin American Liberation theology, Feminist theology, Black theology, Womanist and Mujerista theologies, Queer-LGBTQI theologies, Non-Western forms of Liberation theologies (especially Dalit, Palestinian and Minjung theologies) and finally, assessing the future of Liberation theologies across the globe.

The classes of 2nd to 8th week comprise of myself offering a brief historical, socio-political and cultural background to the particular iteration of Liberation theologies in focus, deliberately using narratives and personal experience to frame the relevant theological issues that will be discussed in class. Following my initial framing, two students are usually assigned to make presentations exploring key issues in the development of the particular version of liberation theologies we are discussing that week. The two presentations are then followed by brilliantly incisive discussions on the contestations, theological and methodological problems, challenges and contradictions that arise from the assigned readings, my introductions and the two student presentations.

One of the key issues that arises from our weekly conversations is the tension between inclusive and exclusive forms of identity on which liberative forms of theologising are predicated. For example, when looking at say Feminist theology, we may explore differences between two former Oxford university academics – in this case Elaine Storkey and Daphne Hampson. The former, self identifies as an evangelical Christian for whom Christianity and women's experience can be synthesised, versus the latter, whose work rejects the Christian myth altogether. Every week sees students wrestling with theological contestation and controversy. Despite my own commitment to Liberation theologies, teaching as a committed Black theologian, my focus as an educator is to encourage students to think critically and to challenge conventional thinking and not to be afraid to confront existing liberationist dogma.

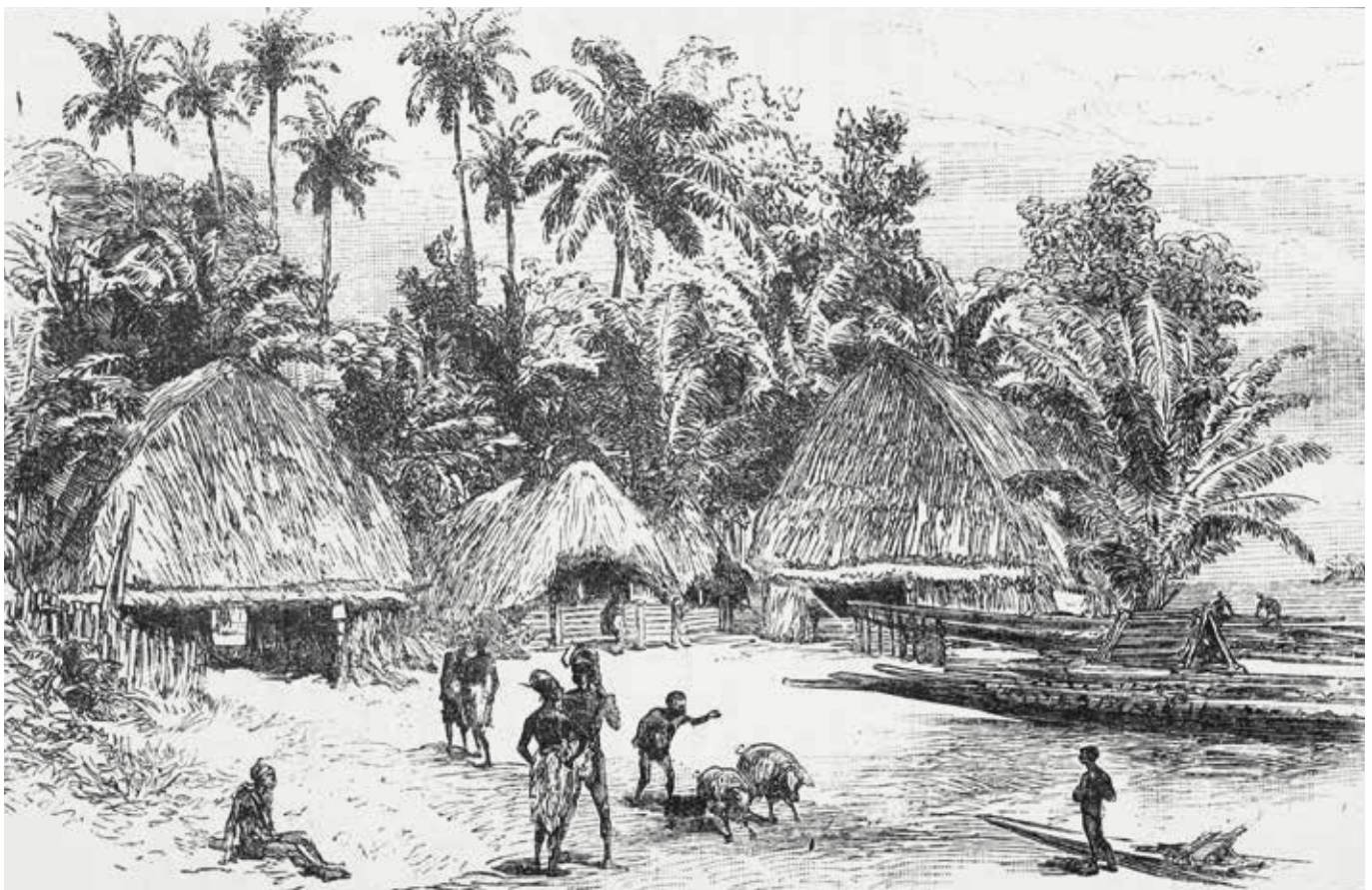
My pedagogical style is invariably based on humour and getting the students to take the study seriously, but not to take themselves too seriously. This deliberate approach to the teaching and learning process is used in order to dispel the often dour and didactic

perception people often have of liberation theologies. I want the class to be challenging and fun. As my favourite school teacher once told me “the opposite of funny is unfunny, not serious.... There is no oxymoron in seeking to be serious but using humour to do so.” It is my hope that part of the success of the class is due to the participative style of the teaching, which encourages students to correlate theological ideas with social justice, in a fun and affirming space.

I am often struck at the outset of each course of the seemingly strange anomaly of teaching social justice orientated forms of theology within one of the most elite and privileged spaces in the world. And yet the sheer joy of teaching a class on Liberation theologies in Oxford university is getting to engage with brilliant minds whose abilities to wrestle with complex ideas makes the

teaching and learning process deeply rewarding. I am also aware that in teaching this class to committed, bright and ambitious young minds, I hope to inspire an emerging generation of leaders to believe that they can change the world. James Baldwin, the great African American novelist and person of letters, whose inspiration enabled James H. Cone to develop Black liberation theology once opined “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” (*The Fire Next Time*, 1963). The FHS ‘Liberation Theology and its legacy’ course seeks to expose students to the ongoing challenge of using faith as the impetus for social justice. Students appreciate the complexity of this task. It is my hope that every person taking the class leaves believing they can change the world for the better. In the words of Desmond Tutu “If you think you’re too small to make a difference then you have never shared a bed with a mosquito.” ■

The basic intent of the course is to conscientise students, to help them to become critically aware of the ways in which particular social identities have been deemed as problematic, and transgressive, resulting in various forms of social and political oppression.



📍 A village on Wild Island, Admiralty Islands (courtesy of *Illustrated London News*).

Women in Theology

Sarah Apetrei, *Director of Graduate Studies*



Distinguished female scholars hold a good proportion of the senior academic posts and associations in the Faculty of Theology and Religion, and act as advocates, mentors, advisors, and exemplars.

Female and male colleagues alike have long sought to build an intellectual culture that is hospitable to women's perspectives and gender analysis, through its research, but also through its teaching. Indeed, back in 2016 there were headlines in certain periodicals lamenting that after 800 years as the University's custodian of tradition and orthodoxy, the Faculty was "swapping Christianity for feminism". (This was not quite an accurate characterisation of our undergraduate curriculum reform, of course.) We were dismayed, then, to observe in the analysis of our graduate admissions figures a falling off in the proportion of female students progressing to DPhil study. In the past academic year 2022-23, only 20% of the new intake of research students were women. This contrasts to around 30-40% of a typical Master's cohort, and more than 50% of a typical undergraduate intake. It should be acknowledged that this shrinking proportion of the student body reflects patterns across

the Humanities Division, and has a striking parallel in the Faculty of Philosophy.

Responding to this trend will be part of the Faculty's long-term agenda in the long term, but we decided as a more immediate response to devote some of the exceptional donation made by alumni for postgraduate professional development to a special event celebrating women's contributions as theologians, reformers, and religious artists, and the positive difference those contributions make. 'Women in Theology' afternoon colloquium was held in the Lecture Room at Campion Hall, on Saturday 3rd June 2023, with around thirty participants from all the different fields represented in our research community: study of religions, biblical studies, ethics, philosophical theology, history of Christianity, science and religion. It was organised by two members of the Faculty's Equality and Diversity



Committee: Buki Fatona, a DPhil researcher in the field of Science and Religion and the student representative, and Sarah Apetrei, Director of Graduate Studies and Chair. We were welcomed warmly at Campion by the Master, Nicholas Austin SJ.

The papers presented at the colloquium together provided a fascinating cross-section of the richly diverse research undertaken in our Faculty. In the first session, entitled 'Historical perspectives on women and religion', papers were given by a current Ecclesiastical History MPhil student, Mary Whittingdale, and Edward David, the McDonald Postdoctoral Fellow in Christian Ethics and Public Life. Whittingdale offered a persuasive and finely nuanced interpretation of the Anglican polemicist and philosopher Mary Astell (1666-1731) as an 'early feminist exegete'. David's paper explored the pathologisation of female spirituality during the Second Great Awakening in New England, and the construction of a religious self in the asylum narratives of Elizabeth T. Stone (b. 1811).

The second parallel session was dedicated to an exploration of 'Women, culture, and religious symbolism', with attention to modernist and post-modern artists. Rupa Nolan, one of the current students on the Postgraduate Diploma in Theology and Religion, introduced the dimension of 'occult arts' or theosophical expression in three female artists of the twentieth century: Emma Kunz, Leonora Carrington, and Hilma af Klint. An advanced DPhil student, Rose Stair, presented on the gendered themes of desire and suffering in

the poetry of 'Dolorosa' or Maria Eichhorn (1879-1930), a prominent figure in the German cultural Zionist movement.

It was excellent to hear papers from those at the various stages of early career research, from a Diploma candidate to a postdoctoral fellow, and to examine together some of the different ways in which women's intellectual work and creativity have shaped religious cultures. The formal programme concluded with an electrifying and hugely engaging keynote talk from Sarah Foot, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History and recently appointed Dean of Christ Church, which was an autobiographical reflection on 'a personal journey towards Theology and Religion'. This more personal narrative, about the challenging path taken towards a position of considerable authority in the University as well as the Church, proved an excellent way to draw together the threads of the day and make its themes more immediate. Canon Foot's comic timing is impeccable, but her story was also affecting, and offered the example of a scholarly vocation resolving in the integrity of personal commitments and intellectual work.

Afterwards, there were drinks in the beautiful garden at Campion, and some of that precious unstructured time for conversation which was so missed during pandemic conditions. The connections made in that space are, of course, in their own way just as important as the more formal interactions. The event is something we would like to repeat in future years, and we would of course love to hear from any interested alumni.. ■



📍 Campion Hall is an international community of fellows, graduate students, and staff who share the motivation to serve 'all things human'.

Studying the New Testament from the Margins¹

Erin Heim and **Jenn Strawbridge**

Biblical scholar Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza writes that biblical texts should be marked with, ‘Caution, could be dangerous to your health and survival’ (*Rhetoric and Ethic*, 14).

The New Testament was not only a dangerous text for those who composed it – many of its books were written under Roman occupation with a very real threat of persecution and even death for following Christ (e.g. 1 Peter) – but the New Testament continues to be a dangerous text today, used to reinforce a variety of practices and standards including those that have dominating, destructive, or dehumanizing effects. When we study the New Testament, we study both the content of the text from a historical, literary, and for many, a theological perspective, and we also engage the use, and mis-use, of this sacred text across the centuries. While the New Testament is written for particular communities at particular times and can tell us much about these places and times, at the same time, one’s starting point or perspective has an impact on how one understands the texts of the New Testament.

Many faith based arguments

New Testament studies at Oxford focus on the interdependence of history and theology, the Jewish and practical contexts of Christian origins, and how the New Testament has been received since its writing. A new paper in New Testament, offered first in 2021 and provocatively entitled ‘Why Women, the Environment, Colonisation, and Black Lives Matter to New Testament Interpretation’, engages with each of these priorities. About to be offered for a third year, this paper invites students to reflect on interpretations of the New Testament and to think critically and carefully about how perspectives and approaches can determine our exegesis of Scripture. While such readings – many of which are faith-based – are often discounted as ahistorical and experiential, this paper challenges such assumptions by engaging scholars who demonstrate that no interpretation of Scripture is ‘neutral’ or value free and that readings from a particular perspective (e.g. feminist or African American) can be just as historically grounded as historical-critical ones. As one student reflected, this paper ‘demands a completely different perspective from one I’m used to at Oxford’ while another concluded that the paper ‘not only gave me greater understanding of the New Testament but has transformed my understanding of the power, nature, and issues’ within it.



Archbishop Thabo Makgoba (South Africa) and Cathrine Ngangira (UK)

‘Why Women, the Environment, Colonisation, and Black Lives Matter to New Testament Interpretation’ – also known as ‘Afterlife of the New Testament’ – is a unique paper not only in the Faculty of Theology and Religion but more widely, as noted by an external examiner in their report after the 2021/2022 academic year. They were especially impressed not only by the ‘strong grounding in core and traditional topics, methods, and themes’ in biblical studies at Oxford, but also specifically highlighted this new paper for its focus on ‘the work and analysis of marginalized scholars in the field of biblical studies.’ Noted as an ‘important and growing aspect of the field’, the examiner continued that this paper and biblical studies at Oxford were ‘at the forefront of biblical studies in the UK’.

Of the more than two dozen finalists who have taken the ‘Afterlife’ paper in its first two years, for some it was their first biblical studies paper at Oxford while for others it offered ‘a solid core’ which they were clear only deepened their ‘work in the Gospels and Paul papers.’ Other students reflected that the paper covered much more ground ‘in comparison with more specialist papers’ while also ‘giving a useful

1. With gratitude to the 20 students who took time to offer extensive anonymous feedback on the paper, ‘Why Women, the Environment, Colonisation, and Black Lives Matter to New Testament Interpretation’. Their comments are incorporated throughout this short article.

context for them (e.g. Liberation theology or Feminist theology)’ and ‘bolster[ing] my learning in other papers’.

Specifically, ‘Why Women, the Environment, Colonisation, and Black Lives Matter to New Testament Interpretation’ introduces seven contemporary approaches and perspectives for interpreting the New Testament: Black and African American, Womanist, Feminist, Postcolonial, Ecological, Queer, and Disability studies. Such approaches, with a deep dive into New Testament passages from Matthew to Revelation, encourage students to become more critically reflective about what it is we do when we interpret biblical texts. The deep dives into specific texts each week also ensured that the interpretative lenses studied were immediately applied, weaving together theological and theoretical methods with the New Testament. By engaging with each these perspectives and approaches and the many ways they intersect, students developed their own critical abilities to evaluate different approaches and to examine their utility for a variety of situations. Some examples include the Whore of Babylon in Revelation 17 through Feminist and Postcolonial lenses, Paul’s references to ‘unnatural’ through Queer approaches, the withering of the fig tree in Mark 5 through Ecological studies, and the character of Rhoda in Acts 12 through a Womanist lens.

The paper will be offered for the third time in 2023-2024 and since its inception in 2021 has been one of the top paper choices in the Faculty of Theology and Religion amongst final year students. The structure of the class is intentionally collaborative and students each year have reflected that they enjoy a paper where they are ‘able to learn from one another’ and that is ‘deliberately set up to be cooperative not competitive’, which includes working together in small groups ‘to have an extended discussion before coming to class and presenting.’ The cooperative and not competitive nature, as well as the safe space created for discussion, meant that for one finalist, this paper ‘was the only paper I’ve taken at Oxford where I have felt able to be

unapologetically myself and bring my experiences to the texts and the question I ask, which was refreshing!’

This paper has been, for us, a joy to teach as we learn extensively from the students, their deep engagement with the scholarship we read and the New Testament texts, and especially their challenging questions. The essays students have prepared have been stellar, including one on an ecological reading of Mark’s Gospel that has recently been accepted for publication in a major New Testament journal. This past Trinity Term (2023), the students in this year’s class decided that in place of a revision lecture for the exam, they wanted to prepare their own presentations for one another on what they had learned. They came together in the Faculty one afternoon with polished presentations and notes and listened to and learned from one another for well over two hours.

We are grateful to colleagues in the Faculty for supporting this paper and look forward to what the new academic year holds, including a fabulous related lecture series in biblical studies – the prestigious Speaker’s Lectures – given by Professor Lisa Marie Bowens (Princeton). Her lecture series on ‘Martin Luther King, Jr and the Apocalyptic Imagination’ will examine how the Civil Rights leader used apocalyptic literature, including numerous New Testament texts, in his writings. The lectures are free and open to all and will take place on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 24 October and 2 November 2023. ■

No interpretation of Scripture is ‘neutral’ or value free and that readings from a particular perspective (e.g. feminist or African American) can be just as historically grounded as historical-critical ones.



📍 Oxford Finalist (just finished) Lizzy Flaherty.

📍 Biblical scholar colleagues (from the UK, Kenya, Brazil, and India) after preaching at the Lambeth Conference.



Astrophoria Foundation Year

Improving circumstances
for promising students

Mary Marshall, *Director of Undergraduate Studies*

What is the Astrophoria Foundation Year (AFY)?

The AFY is a one-year, fully-funded programme for UK state-educated students whose ability to fulfil their academic potential so far has been impeded by significant disruption to their schooling and/or severe personal disadvantage. In the past, many such students have not been able to access an Oxford degree because they do not meet our standard entry requirement (AAA at A Level for courses involving Theology and Religion). In better circumstances, many of these students would have met or exceeded our standard offer and have been well placed to make a competitive application to Oxford and other universities. The AFY aims to provide these better circumstances. In other words, three terms of supported, intensive and challenging learning in which students will make up any shortfall in their levels of academic preparedness so that, by the end, they might not merely survive but thrive on a BA at Oxford or another competitive University. Students who complete the AFY successfully will be awarded Certificate in Higher Education (CertHE), which is accepted in respect of the entry requirement for competitive UK universities. AFY students achieving a result meeting or exceeding a threshold set by Oxford will automatically progress to the BA.

Why is this important to Oxford?

This year's review of the University's admissions statistics shows that in comparison with previous years, the University is welcoming more students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds in the UK. Nevertheless, students from these backgrounds (and especially, for example, those eligible for free school meals, leaving care, from a military family or with caring responsibilities) are less likely to progress to Higher Education.

Oxford is committed to widening access to Higher Education generally and to Oxford in particular for students in the UK. In 2019, the University announced two new flagship access programmes, Opportunity Oxford and Astrophoria Foundation Year (previously named Foundation Oxford). Opportunity Oxford has run successfully and included Theology and Religion students since then. Opportunity Oxford is a 'bridging' programme to support

The graphic features the University of Oxford logo and the Astrophoria Foundation Year logo at the top. Below is a row of six diverse student portraits. The main text reads: 'For UK state school students with significant academic potential who have experienced personal disadvantage or disrupted education'. It lists 'Courses in Science, Humanities, Law and PPE'. Three icons represent 'LOWER ENTRY GRADES', 'PROGRESS ONTO UG STUDY', and 'FULLY FUNDED'. A central icon shows 'UP TO 50 STUDENTS' surrounded by person icons. A calendar icon indicates the 'APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 2024'. The website 'foundationyear.ox.ac.uk' and a 'SCAN ME' QR code are at the bottom.

disadvantaged yet *qualified* applicants to make the transition to higher education and flourish on their courses. AFY, contrastingly is intended to attract and support disadvantaged students who would not otherwise qualify for admission to Oxford or manage to submit a competitive application. It builds on the experience of the Foundation Year recently run in Lady Margaret Hall but now operates across the collegiate University to offer up to 50 student places. Like Opportunity Oxford, the AFY has potential to make a significant positive impact on the education of more students and more severely disadvantaged students than ever before.

What will AFY students study?

The AFY is offered with a large number of subjects fitting within one of four 'strands': Chemistry, Engineering and Materials Science; Humanities; Law and PPE. All AFY students, whatever their subject, will undertake some common elements of the programme. At its core, the AFY is intended to equip students to thrive in undergraduate study and so they will undertake an assessed module focusing on study skills and exploring 'cultural capital' which may have been more readily available to their more advantaged peers. Students also take an academic course across three terms sitting alongside their subject pathway; humanities students may choose between learning

a language or improving their proficiency in mathematics. The major part of the course, however, will be devoted to a series of modules focusing on study of the Humanities and specifically Theology and Religion.

How has the course been designed?

As is routinely the case in Oxford, the finer detail will be determined by the team of tutors delivering the programme but for the past two years, I have served on a committee overseeing the academic content of the Humanities strand of the AFY. It's been a very interesting project which, predictably, has navigated the paradox of finding that the different subjects have almost everything in common, while at the same time they are very different and occasionally tricky to reconcile. It has been, I think, an especially remarkable journey for the Humanities strand in contrast with, say, the PPE strand. Philosophy, Politics and Economics have plenty of experience in muddling along together, they already had an Honour School and a Preliminary Examination together; creating a PPE Foundation Year extended a familiar exercise. With the exception of PPE, however, joint school BAs involving Humanities subjects don't combine more than two of them, like the BA in Philosophy and Theology. The Humanities Strand of the Astrophoria Foundation Year brings Theology and Religion together with English, History and Classics. That's a relatively big change in terms of the structure of the curriculum in an Oxford context and the result is something fresh, and I hope, intriguing, as well as valuable for students' learning.

So what did the design committee come up with?

Students begin with two modules that are interdisciplinary and centered around a theme. The thematic focus of the first is fame, and the second, social inequality. Each subject offers two classes and one tutorial, contributing an approach to or angle on the theme that is characteristic of English, History etc. Fortunately, the sheer breadth and richness of our field means that Theology and Religion has something to say about almost anything and everything!

After the second module, Humanities students divide along subject lines and pursue a course of classes and tutorials focused on methodologies relevant to their subject. Again, the number of disciplines encompassed by Theology and Religion provides a lot to choose from but, taking the Ten Commandments as a starting point students will develop skills in studying texts and their interpretations; in historical methods (in both an ancient and modern context); philosophical and systematic theological discourse, ethical debate, as well as a selection of other analytical tools that contribute to the study of religion. In all the modules there is an emphasis on encouraging students to hone not only their skills in writing but in speaking and listening, all of which are necessary to flourishing on the BA.

The fourth module comes closest to what many of our existing students would recognise as a Prelims paper: a series of tutorials

focused on a particular area of Theology and Religion, requiring students to research and compose an essay in preparation for a tutorial. For the fifth and final module students will, under the guidance of their tutors, select their own individual research topic for their own extended essay to be submitted for examination.

What is the Faculty's role?

AFY is administered and delivered from the University's office for Undergraduate Admissions and Outreach. The Faculty of Theology and Religion, *per se*, will not be delivering or examining the AFY course. However, AFY students will be matriculated members of the University and full undergraduate members of their colleges. We are expecting AFY students in Theology and Religion and Philosophy and Theology to commence their course in Michaelmas 2023 and therefore hope they will be joining us as BA students a year later. In the meantime, they will probably be living, working and socializing alongside our BA students, in libraries, JCRs and lectures and events, should they choose to attend them. Several Faculty members have contributed to the admissions process and course design and we look forward very much to welcoming the students in due course.

How else does the Faculty support widening access to Oxford?

In lots of ways. As well as supporting the AFY and Opportunity Oxford, each year we run two UNIQ summer schools, hosting a 3-day academic programme for UK state-educated students. (We have also supported UNIQ's recent expansion UNIQ+, an initiative to increase access to graduate study.) We participate in other projects, supported both by the Humanities Division and the OxNet initiative at Pembroke College. I and other Faculty members have made visits to schools and hosted visits from school groups, reaching students in Oxfordshire, Greater London and the North West. It's wonderful to be able to resume these visits, which were suspended during the pandemic. Readers can learn more on the Faculty website, on the 'Access' tab and about AFY at <https://foundationyear.ox.ac.uk/>. ■

This year's review of the University's admissions statistics shows that in comparison with previous years, the University is welcoming more students from the most disadvantaged backgrounds in the UK.

Frances Roach

Reflection on 9 years with the Faculty

Interview by **Claire MacLeod**, *Managing Editor*



MEMORIES OF THE FACULTY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION

What was your first day like in the faculty?

In the faculty, the first day was absolutely chaotic. We were transitioning from St Giles to this new building so it was all about packing, moving, and unpacking. I remember it was primarily just the administration staff; I don't recall seeing any academics. It took us three days to settle in.

What's changed in the Faculty?

Quite a lot, particularly when we've got new members of the team. I was temping at the time and thought I would only be there a few weeks. Sometimes people are on fixed-time deals and they're here for a couple of years and then swan off again. And sometimes a new person can really help to pull things together again. So there is a lot of change.

With annual events every year, are there any standout dinners, parties, or gatherings you recall?

They're all quite fun, to be perfectly honest. I mean, there's some great moments. When Graham Ward was Faculty Board Chair, he used to go off-piece and do these little speeches. There was one dinner where he thought that one of our temps was an external examiner. So those are the fun moments.

What about students?

So, with graduate students there was this bunch led by Anthony Buck—God love him, he's now gone to Italy, I think! We used to do drinks parties for them and I couldn't get them to leave the building. And in the end I had to hand them bottles and threw them out because otherwise I was going to be there all night. It was supposed to be two hours and we had been there for four!

And so what moment stands out?

I think there's lots of moments. There's been lots of great stuff that happened. People who are moving on, who get good jobs, they've got good places to go, or people staying, you know what the grad students get up to when they get their *vivas*, when they get their results. For some, I had a lot to do with them. Especially if you

harness them with Graham or Johannes because they had such a number of students so I was always trying to organize them. So it's been a joy to see them just...pass! And with some of them it's 'Oh no, here we go again.'

What have you enjoyed the most about your day-to-day?

What happens with my job is that there's such a variety to it. It goes from, you know, emptying the dishwasher to doing some fairly confidential stuff, working with committees and stuff like that. What I like is the variety. I love the fact that you come in in the morning, you switch on your computer, you look at the e-mail and you can't predict what's going to be in there. And I get some really wacky stuff. We could some correspondence sometimes which is really concerning [colloquially known as 'Correspondence of Concern']. It's also the people. Whether they're colleagues, academics, students, I've got quite a bit of a network that goes on with facilities and humanities and outside. So I enjoy that.

LIFE BEFORE THE FACULTY – TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Is there anything that interests you in Theology?

Not really, no, no, no. My father was a Church of Scotland minister. So I do come from a religious background, but that's not really why I took this job. I wanted a job that I didn't have to think about. I didn't want to take it back with me. I used to travel a lot from my work and all I wanted was something that I didn't really need to carry around with me.

What was your profession before joining the faculty? What led you here?

There's a couple of things: In another life I used to have a training and development consultancy business which I had with a business partner and a business manager. It was pretty successful for what it was but it was also 24/7. You have to be around for this and that. Then when my husband died, it was like everything changed. I revalued everything, went away for about five years, and then decided I wanted to come back to Oxford. I came back to Oxford and thought, 'Right, well, got to get a job.' and that was why I started temping.

What about your past experience do you think has been the most important here?

I did a lot of development because my particular interest used to be (and still is really) how people stop themselves from getting what they want. Or doing what they want to do. So it's about working with groups in organizations who are not functioning properly and about looking at how you will help them function better.

And how do you get them to function better?

You get them to do it. I can't make them do it. But you can provide the space so that you can explore some of the issues that might be going on and maybe front some of them. Which means that they'll work more effectively.

What prevents people from getting what they want?

Fear. A lot of it is about fear. Fear and self-esteem.

Have you encountered that with the faculty?

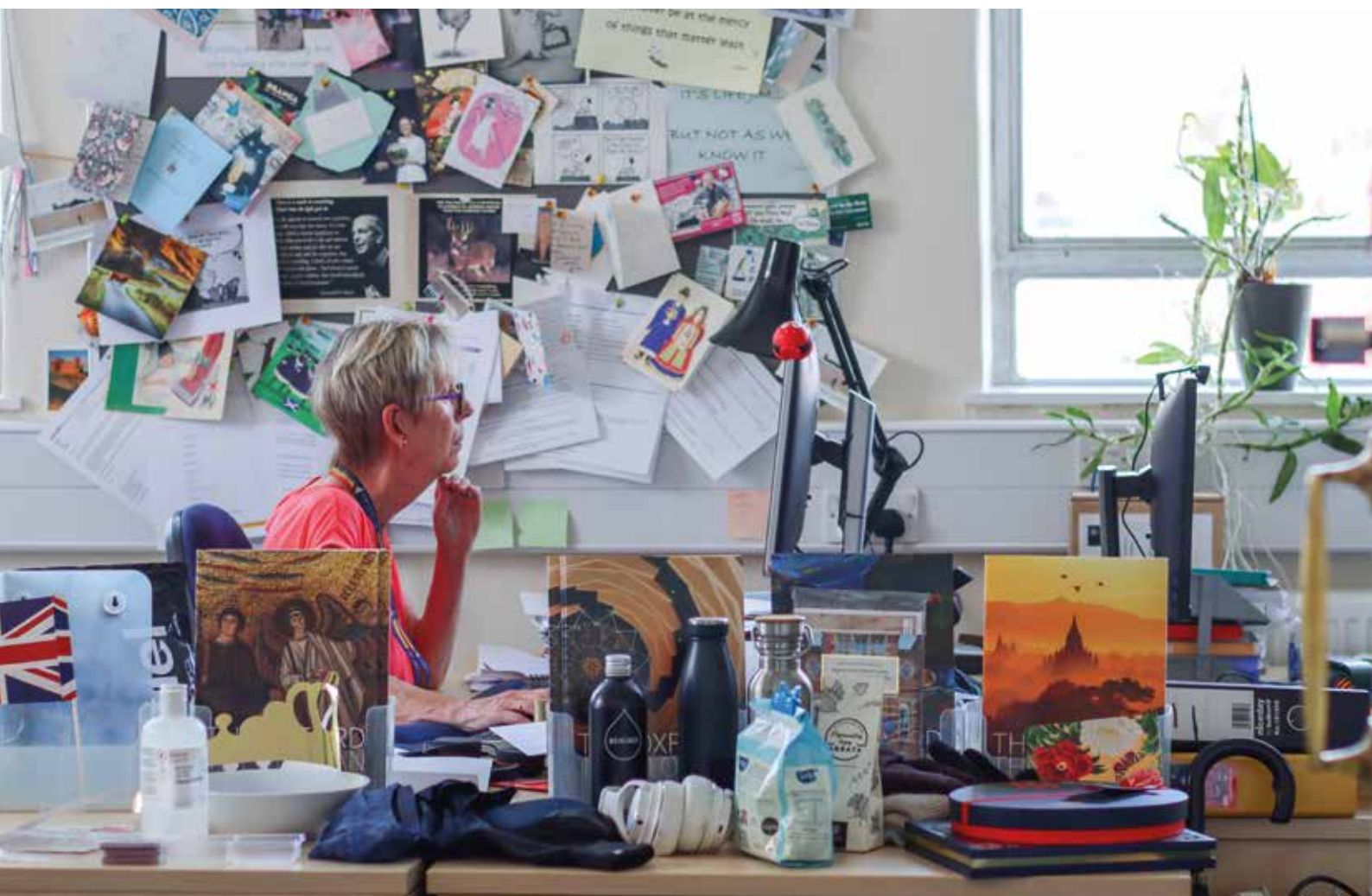
Oh yeah! It was actually one of the reasons I stayed! When I first got the job I was actually temping and was only going to stay for a

"I think I'm quite good at recognising and acknowledging when people do a good job, and I think people need to hear that. I don't concentrate on negatives."

couple of weeks. And in that time I was actually offered two or three jobs but I turned them down. Interesting to think because I was stopping myself from getting what I wanted. One of these jobs was at Brasenose and it looked like it'd be a really good job! But I think I'd already decided that I was going to apply some of my learning to try and heal some of the fractures in the Faculty admin team.

How do you do that?

Well, I think I'm quite good at recognizing and acknowledging when people do a good job, and I think people need to hear that. I don't concentrate on negatives. I never have done, never will do. You look



for the good—and it sounds a bit ‘Pollyanna-ish’, I know—but you look for the good in what’s going on and actually try to nurture that rather than try to fight against the negatives.

What first brought you to training and development and then to consultancy?

When I left university, I had done a lot of bar and restaurant jobs, so I continued to do that, then got married, and we moved to Manchester. So I was completely just in Manchester and not knowing anybody, whatsoever. I did a retraining programme in administration and got a job in an industrial training board which was in Munster. And then after about—I can’t remember how many years, maybe 5-6 years—they were closing down the regional office where I stayed. So, the option was I either took redundancy as the office manager there or move across into a training role. So I decided to move across into a training role because that seemed safer...and I got a car! Which was a very nice car—I like my car –anyway, so I did that and then stayed with the Industrial Training Board for about ten years. And then went off with a colleague from there when we set off on our own.

Why did you want to set off on your own?

Because it gives you more autonomy. And because it was work that I wanted to do. I wanted to concentrate on the developmental side rather the training side. The training is about imparting knowledge and skills but the developmental side I see as working with behaviors as student behaviors. I mean, I can still run a programme on food hygiene if you would really want me to, but I can’t imagine why you would!

What kind of programmes did you run for development, and what was involved?

It was more about experiential learning. The best programme we ran was it was a four-module residential programme. In the first month, you start looking at the individual or getting them to look at themselves. And you’re trying to build up trust. The second module was about processes i.e. the how, who, whatever. The third module was about manufacturing, because that’s the kind of business we were. And in the fourth module, we pulled it all together. And what was interesting about that was how people’s attitudes changed. And behaviours change throughout the modules cause a lot of them, it was a hard manufacturing environment. It was a very male dominated. There were a lot of very angry men. They really were, they were fed-up, swears, really angry. I was quite sure that this wasn’t going to work for them, so they would fight us for about a day and half. But then we would find our way in!

How do you find your way in with angry men?

Sometimes ABBA helps. David Cassidy we used a lot of too.

Did it work?

No. Maybe, not instantly. But actually, this thing got a joke. And that’s what turned it around: humour. In terms of getting them to laugh at

"The best programme we ran was a four-module residential programme. In the first month, you start looking at the individual or getting them to look at themselves."

us and then start to laugh at themselves. And once you’ve got that, yeah, it’s relatively plain sailing after that.

Are there any particular success stories you’re proud of from these programmes?

Yeah. There was one guy on our programme who was a shop steward. His father had been a shop steward, his grandfather had been a shop steward. He was covered in tattoos. He was really, really, hard and very angry with everybody, was always yelling and shouting. He had loads of problems. But actually when we did the work with him in a group, what came out was that he only ever really wanted to be a primary school teacher. That had been his aspiration but nobody had ever listened to him because, you know: ‘This is what we do. We’re working on the shop floor.’ And he is now out in Africa. We collect cranes and send them to him, so he’s still out there and teaching kids. And he’s loving it, absolutely loving it. So that was my first ever, ‘Wow.’

How did you convince him to go do it?

I didn’t. He had to convince himself. You can’t convince somebody to do it. You can help them to talk about it, and look at how they might go about that. So, the first step stuff is if they don’t know ‘it.’ And then you just encourage them to fess up with everybody, go talk to their families and say ‘This is what I really want to do.’ And just reassure and have his back. But he did it himself. He was really astonishing. He’s still teaching. Every year we got an e-mail from him asking for crayons for the kids. We collect pencils and crayons and send them out to him. He’s amazing. He is a really astonishing human being.

ADVICE

What are some of the features of a good academic?

I think ones who recognise that the admin staff have a role to play. I think it’s also about giving the appropriate amount of time to whatever it is they’re doing. Obviously, from an academic point of view, most of their concern is about teaching or research. But the ones who made a difference are the ones who participated in committees or, you know, take some time to do some faculty work rather than just their individual stuff.

Any advice for newcomers to the faculty?

Find something to laugh at every day. Even if you have to go out and dig it up! Find something that entertains you.

What about advice for students?

They won't listen to this. It's just remember to have fun. Well, some of the world I guess have far too much fun. But it's something more. It's about the whole person, not just about the academic.

What's the secret to throwing a big party for a collection of graduate students and their supervisors?

It's about the venue. Make sure it's not too big so that they can stray into corners and little cliques. Events work in the lecture room, the combined room, or at Champion Hall because they're all enclosed spaces. It's also about making sure there's enough booze even though many of the grads don't drink, the academics need it more sometimes. And then just, you know, let them get on with it!

And then what about yourself? What's your plan for after the faculty?

Lying down, I'm hoping to get some voluntary work. I'm hoping that I'll be able to work with the courts. They do Witness Support which is

basically about looking after people who are witnesses during the day, a bit of hand holding, telling them what's going on, reassurance etc. But it's not going to happen immediately so, definitely lying down. I'll need to find something to get some structure and maybe a part time job.

Do you think you'll stay in England or will you go back to Scotland?

I think I'll probably stay in England. Yeah, I mean, I am Scottish and I am fiercely Scottish, but most of my support networks are around here. I've got a brother left, but he's in Aberdeen. I don't want to go up to Aberdeen. I have a really great bunch of friends around here so the plan, as far as it goes at the moment, is to stay around. And parties. I'm coming back for parties.

What would be the ideal way to spend your last day on September 28th? Any wishes?

Oh, well I think we should probably have some kind of party... **Maybe, yeah. It is entirely possible....** ■



📍 Faculty Graduate Drinks, Trinity Term 2023. (Left to right) Victoria Xiao (MPhil Theology), Frances Roach (Office Manager), Claire MacLeod (Communications Officer), Mary-Grace Costello (Graduate Studies Administrator), Madeleine Southey (Administrative Assistant), Mary Phillips (Undergraduate Studies Administrator), Simone Landman.

The Journal of the Graduate Theological Society (JOGTS) A Year In Review

Dallas Callaway, *DPhil Student, Magdalen College*



The third year of the *Journal of the Oxford Graduate Theological Society* (JOGTS) saw the publication of the third instalment, 'Hope and Time in Theology and Religion,' edited by Natasha Chawla (St Cross College). Apart from a host of engaging articles, the issue included feature contributions from Celia Deane-Drummond (Director of the Laudato Si' Research Institute and Senior Research Fellow in Theology at Campion Hall), 'Hope in Time,' as well as Ryan Mullins (author of *God and Emotion* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 'The Ontology of Time and Hope in the Resurrection: A Critical Examination of Eschatological Presentism.' The issue further included a feature interview with Professor Rowan Williams (Honorary Professor of Contemporary Christian Thought at the University of Cambridge and 104th Archbishop of Canterbury, 2002–2012). The full issue including all articles and contributions is accessible on the [JOGTS website](#) and the full interview with Professor Williams is available on the [JOGTS YouTube channel](#).

Moving into the fourth year of JOGTS brings with it the fourth issue, due out in Michaelmas 2023, the topic of which is 'Faith and Fighting: Warfare and Its Theological and Religious Contours.' When published, the full volume will be available on the [JOGTS website](#). From a range of perspectives including, but not limited to, the study of religion, science and religion, hermeneutics, comparative religion, textual studies, sociology and psychology of religion, politics and political theology, philosophical theology, history and historical theology, systematic theology, and practical theology, the issue is intended to explore the ways in which theologians and scholars of religion relate to warfare and how civil and international conflicts are precipitated, shaped, and/or brought to resolution by theological and religious beliefs and practices. How have theologies and religions throughout the ages responded to warfare and conflict? In what ways have theological and/or religious doctrines and beliefs shaped and characterised particular conflicts? As warfare reaches the environment, what are the theological, ecclesial, and religious responses to the damage of the earth? How have implements of science, technology, religious texts, hymns, poems, battlefield pamphlets, radio, film, and other media deployed to theological and religious ends characterised conflicts in both hot and cold wars? How have specific beliefs about doctrines such as reincarnation

or personal immortality shaped how certain groups view what is at stake in war? Has eschatology ever had a direct impact on attitudes toward conflict? Finally, in what ways does war itself shape eschatology? All these questions and more fall under the rubric of 'Faith and Fighting' and the call for papers disseminated at the end of Michaelmas 2022 sought submissions furnishing answers.

Relative to the capacious volume of last year, there has been a reduction in the number of submitted article and book reviews. However, what the fourth issue of JOGTS lacks in volume, it more than makes up for in quality. Of note, the issue contains an excellent feature interview with Canon Professor Michael Snape (author of *A Church Militant: Anglicans and the Armed Forces from Queen Victoria to the Vietnam War* (Oxford University Press, 2022) and Michael Ramsey Professor of Anglican Studies at Durham University). The interview is published both in the journal (on the [JOGTS website](#)) and on the [JOGTS YouTube channel](#). The issue also includes a feature article by Sarah Apetrei (Director of Graduate Studies, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford) in anticipation of her forthcoming book with Oxford University Press, *The Reformation of the Heart: Gender and Radical Theology in the English Revolution*, and an interview with Mark G. Pomar (author of *Cold War Radio: The Russian Broadcasts of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* (Potomac Books/University of Nebraska Press, 2022)), 'Religion as a Weapon: United States Radio and the Cold War.' As well, the issue includes a sermon by Professor Cyril Hovorun (Professor of Ecclesiology, International Relations and Ecumenism at Sankt Ignatios College, University College Stockholm, and Director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles), 'A Child of the Father of Lies,' given at the University Church of St Mary the Virgin (Oxford) in March 2023. A special thanks goes to Reverend Canon Dr William Lamb and the entire University Church team for providing the organisation and forum for Professor Hovorun's sermon and enabling the publication of the timely homily within JOGTS.

JOGTS is a student peer-reviewed journal which publishes scholarly articles, critical book reviews, media reviews, and featured contributions in theology and religion. It is operated by current

graduates of the Faculty of Theology and Religion and is intended for graduates and early career researchers in fields such as the study of religions, biblical criticism, modern and systematic theology, philosophy of religion, patristic studies, ecclesiastical history, science and religion, anthropology, sociology, and psychology of religions, and other related areas. Each year JOGTS publishes (1) submissions which respond to the theme of the given issue *and* (2) those which fall under the general scope of the journal. As an affiliate of the Faculty of Theology and Religion at the University of Oxford, the general scope of the journal is defined by the breadth of research undertaken by fellows and postgraduate students of the faculty. The fifth call for papers will be released in late 2023 or early 2024.

JOGTS continues to enjoy generous support from the Faculty of Theology and Religion. Current Oxford graduate students who would like to join the Editorial Board of JOGTS are encouraged to contact editor@jogts.org or consult [the website](#) for further details. Thank you to the faculty for the enduring support over the previous years and to all those students who served in one capacity or other on the Editorial Board. Major thanks goes to the former Editor, Natasha Chawla, and this year's Editorial Board members: Mimi Nicholson (St Stephen's House), Victoria Phillips (Wolfson College), and Tom Topel (Harris Manchester College). Finally, best wishes to Victoria and Elizabeth Clayton (Keble College) as the dynamic tandem embark as Co-Editors upon the fifth issue of JOGTS. ■

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THEME: FAITH AND FIGHTING — WARFARE AND ITS THEOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTOURS

CALL FOR PAPERS

Whether one considers the war-torn ancient Near East, the military conquests waged by Alexander the Great, the two World Wars, or the contemporary conflicts in Europe and other regions around the world, warfare seems an enduring element in human relations, governance, and culture. If often ignored or otherwise treated as ancillary to political and economic analyses, the theological and religious factors influencing, underlying, or resulting from warfare are nevertheless immeasurably important areas of inquiry. For example, studying church doctrine, religious movements, and specific beliefs about doctrinal topics such as immanence, transcendence, eternity, reincarnation, the afterlife, and immortality can shed valuable light upon the complex sociocultural and ideological reasons and dynamics giving rise

to and shaping warfare. So, too, carefully studying theologians and religious scholars who have lived through war may disclose the ways in which thinkers past and present have used theological, philosophical, and religious resources to address the hellish realities in which they find themselves. For this issue of The Journal of the Oxford Graduate Theological Society, the Editorial Board invites papers exploring queries falling under the broad theme of 'Warfare and Its Theological and Religious Contours' from a variety of perspectives including study of religion, science and religion, hermeneutics, comparative religion, textual studies, sociology and psychology of religion, politics and political theology, philosophical theology, history and historical theology, systematic theology, practical theology, and others.

COMINGS & GOINGS

We warmly welcome the Faculty's new members



MARK HARRIS

I always regarded it as a great academic weakness of mine that I find it hard to settle, flitting around from area to area. Luckily for me, I discovered the one field (Science and Religion) where this is a strength. Not only is the field in a state of constant flux (in tandem with the modern sciences), but it relies on probing many disciplines and building bridges between them.

I was trained initially in earth science at Cambridge, and my PhD there took me from geology into mineralogy and then into condensed matter physics. I was able to consolidate this dizzying evolution by moving to a postdoc in physics at Oxford and then to a permanent research position at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory. It was there that I established my interests in the physics of magnetic materials, and became the co-discoverer (with Steve Bramwell of UCL) of 'spin ice' in 1997, a novel magnetic model that overturned much of the received wisdom of the time and has since become a major research area in its own right. At my last count

(end of 2020), more than 6,000 journal articles had been published on spin ice. I continue to work on the physics of magnetism when I can (I have very understanding and long-suffering collaborators), but everything changed for me in 1999.

At that time, I was becoming interested in ordained ministry. I was advised to take the Oxford BA in Theology as a prelude, but I was reluctant. A very arrogant scientist, I thought theology would be easy compared to physics, and that I already had a good grasp. How spectacularly wrong I was, on both counts. I experienced a Damascus Road conversion in those first few weeks as a theology undergraduate at Oxford and haven't looked back since.

Not long after ordination, I became Chaplain of Oriel College, which (besides the very fulfilling liturgical and pastoral work) opened many doors in research and teaching, and allowed me to find a way of resolving my Jekyll and Hyde identity by exploring links between biblical studies and the sciences. Eventually, the University of Edinburgh was looking to start a Science and Religion programme and recruited me to build and manage it. The Edinburgh programme has gone from strength to strength over the years, and, with all of the many research projects, grants and PhD theses it has fostered, I like to think that we have done a lot to shape the science-and-religion field as it exists now, although Oxford has always been our main competitor!

Needless to say, I couldn't pass up the chance for a possible return to Oxford when the Andreas Idreos Chair in Science and Religion fell vacant upon Alister McGrath's retirement. I was stunned to be offered the job.

Returning to Oxford brings me back full circle, to the place where I began my

scientific career and was later re-made as a theologian. Since my current research works with new currents in philosophy of science (especially in quantum mechanics, a strength at Oxford), my new role will be just perfect for the building of new bridges between the sciences and theology.



ALEX MUIR

In September 2023, I am joining the Faculty of Theology and Religion as a Departmental Lecturer in New Testament. I am very grateful to be returning to Oxford, where I was an undergraduate student in Classics and French. Much of my subsequent theological formation took place in Edinburgh, Scotland, where I initially studied for an MTh in Biblical Studies before going on to the PhD programme in New Testament and Christian Origins that I completed last year.

In my research, I seek to combine my classical and theological training, and I am committed to reading the New Testament in both of its ancient Jewish and Graeco-Roman contexts. My doctoral thesis comprised a comparative project that explored Paul's and Seneca's contributions to the ancient consolation tradition. I aim to publish a version of this thesis in an academic series this coming year

and, once completed, to articulate some of its key findings for a wider audience. My next project – which I intend to start work on this year in Oxford – will explore ancient Jewish and early Christian understandings of the Stoic concept of *eupatheiai* ('good emotions').

I look forward to interacting with undergraduates through lectures, postgraduates through text classes and around research seminars, and other colleagues in Theology, Classics, and beyond.



JOHN OLSON

I am serving as Departmental Lecturer in Historical and Systematic Theology for 2023-2024 while Johannes Zachhuber is on leave. Originally from Nebraska in the United States, I received my DPhil from Oxford in 2022, working under Joel Rasmussen on Martin Heidegger and the doctrine of revelation. I have been teaching at Oxford since 2020, offering tutorials in Systematic Theology, Christian Ethics, Science & Religion, the Nature of Religion, and Themes in Nineteenth Century Theology & Religion. During that time, I have co-taught the Systematic Theology set-text classes and provided lecture cover in the Nineteenth Century paper while Professor Rasmussen was on leave. In addition to my lecturing in Systematic Theology this year, I teach tutorials at Oriel and Trinity colleges.

My research interests center on the intersection of phenomenology, embodied cognition, and theological epistemology. My first book,

Taste and See: Eucharist as Revelation in Phenomenological Perspective, will be released this fall by Lexington Books/Fortress Academic. There I argue that Christians know the person of Christ most intimately through embodied activity in the sacramental world. My current research is developing these themes in a phenomenology of sin in the information age, suggesting that the modern disembodiment of truth reveals something distinctive about the human predicament which can illuminate classical theological definitions of sin.

We sadly say goodbye to the Faculty's long-serving members



BARNABAS ASPRAY

I joined the Theology Faculty in 2019 as a JRF in 'Religion & the Frontier Challenges' at Pembroke with a research project on the theology of refugees. After that I joined the Virtues & Vocations team to teach the Global Leadership Initiative, a course on character and virtue for graduate students in any department. I'm very grateful for the warm welcome and I have received here, for the kindness and friendliness of the administrative staff, and for the tireless support and advocacy of Joel Rasmussen and Josh Hordern.

Only a permanent academic position could have tempted me away from this beautiful city with its lively research environment

and stimulating students. I am moving to Baltimore, Maryland, USA, to take up an Assistant Professorship in Systematic Theology at St. Mary's Seminary and University.

My four years in Oxford have been eventful to say the least, featuring a global pandemic, a European war, and the birth of my two children. But they were also professionally fruitful and formative. I had the great privilege of teaching the Modern Theology MPhil class with some of the highest achieving theology students in the world. I was able to publish my first monograph, *Ricoeur at the Limits of Philosophy*, and make a lot of progress towards my second which will be on refugee ethics. I also launched a podcast which is going from strength to strength as the number of weekly listens keeps rising. You can find it at www.faihatthefrontiers.com. Finally, I am excited to be a part of Bishop Graham Tomlin's new enterprise, the Centre for Cultural Witness, which aims to offer an accessible Christian voice on current affairs by means of its online magazine. www.seenandunseen.com.

It has been an enormous privilege to be part of the Oxford Theology Faculty and I hope not only to stay in touch with the many friends I have made here, but to swing by and see everyone during the summer – and perhaps even participate in some events!



COREY CROSAN

I am departing the Faculty of Theology and Religion after a short but full one-year

placement with The Oxford Character Project team. I will be continuing on with the team as we make the move into the Department of Politics & International Relations. I had moved to Oxford from Canada to begin my position and still remember how warm and welcomed I felt by both my team and the Faculty of Theology and Religion. In reflecting on my year, three highlights come to mind. First, I never doubt the importance of the work we do focusing on elevating character alongside the competencies students learn in university. Our work encourages students to focus on who they are and who they want to be in the midst of their learning and future work. And I am grateful for the nature of my work as it helps remind me to do the same and also allows me to learn from the students. I have vowed to be more joyous, playful, and curious as I engage in my work next year. Second, being reminded of how valuable it is for both professional performance and personal wellbeing to work alongside such lovely individuals. My team was so supportive throughout the entire year and I will miss those who are moving onto different paths. And third, the importance of taking pause to admire and explore the beauty around us. Oxford has helped remind me to do this because of its inherent beauty and depth of history. I have been fortunate to explore its many gems and look forward to exploring more in the years ahead.

VIRGINIA (GINNY) DUNN

I'm one of the 'old-timers', having been in the Faculty of Theology & Religion since 2008 when the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics and Public Life was originally founded with a generous benefaction from the McDonald Agape Foundation as a 5-year project. It was subsequently endowed in perpetuity in 2012.

The mission of the Centre is to bring a Christian intelligence to bear on ethical issues of public concern, with a view to:

- developing Christian ethics' grasp of contemporary issues;



- commending a Christian vision of moral life in society at large;
- raising the quality of public deliberation about ethical issues; and
- encouraging Christian ethicists in the art of honest engagement with fellow members of a 'secular' (i.e., plural) public.

When the post of administrative officer in the Centre was advertised by the Faculty, I applied and was offered the job. Although I was a nursing specialist in cancer and palliative care, I also had some background in secretarial and administrative work. I have always seen my role as an administrator as primarily that of helping to resolve the real and potential blocks that can hinder the flourishing of an endeavour. It's been a challenging but stimulating role.

The riches of the post have included facilitating colloquia and conferences exploring topics as various and stimulating as 'Is Forgiveness Possible in Northern Ireland?', 'The Ethics of Intelligence Gathering', and 'Christianity and the Flourishing of Universities' – as well as two series of lectures about the causes and impact of the First World War during the four-year centennial commemoration. Working with groups ranging from thirty to a hundred and thirty people, it was very satisfying to help create an environment where diverse individuals – theologians, philosophers, civil servants, journalists, students, and members of the

general public – could discuss these topics. It has also been wonderful to be part of a college, Faculty and University with the people, resources, and systems to create these opportunities.

In addition, I have relished the opportunity, through the Centre, to foster the Christian Ethics community by working out the logistics of events such as annual pre-Michaelmas Term rambles in the countryside, biennial reading parties in Northumberland and Dorset, and a memorable three-day trip to explore First and Second World War battle-sites in Belgium and Normandy.

It has been a 'job' that I have really enjoyed, meeting students and colleagues and supporting the development of Christian Ethics here in Oxford. As for retirement, watch this space!



ANDREW MAILE

My time as a Research Fellow in the Faculty, working on the Virtues and Vocations project, has come and gone in almost the blink of an eye. Yet, during this somewhat fleeting period, I have been so incredibly blessed with the most wonderful and enriching conversations and interactions. Joining a research project towards the end of a grant phase is not the easiest task – relationships have been forged, decisions made, and there are tight timelines to work around. However, the wonderful people with whom I have been able to work has meant any such challenge has been easily

overcome, or dwarfed, in the presence of such delightful company. While one might expect reflections on the erudite discussions and intellectual stimulation experienced during a research fellowship – and I can confirm that these did occur – for me it has been all about the people. Most significantly to the wonderful colleagues I shared an office with, Lani Watson and Edward David. Thank you for your wonderful hospitality and the many lunches, dinners, and pub visits around Oxford. I am grateful for your inspiring academic insights and perspectives, and most especially your friendship. Special mention also to Fran Roach, Kristine MacMichael, Mary Grace, Mary Philips, Claire MacLeod and Maddie Southey – I have such fond memories of pub visits and Faculty socials spent together. Lastly, I will miss hearing Mary Marshall's beautiful singing in the kitchen, Cian Power reading Hebrew down the corridor, and Lisa Driver's warmth and professionalism. I hold dearly onto these memories as I take up a fellowship at Birmingham University, where

I will be researching phenomenology of psychopathology and childhood bullying at school – and yes, virtue ethics shall feature in both projects.



DR LANI WATSON, RESEARCH FELLOW

I have been a Research Fellow in the Faculty of Theology and Religion for the past three years, including a first tumultuous year working from

home in Edinburgh during the Covid-19 pandemic before moving to Oxford in 2021. I have received excellent support from many of the permanent staff working in the faculty and feel I have found friends among colleagues during my time here. I will be sad to leave the faculty and my temporary Oxford home in Summertown, but am looking forward to the coming year when I will be returning to Edinburgh. I have been given a fantastic opportunity to dedicate myself full-time to writing a trade book for a popular audience on the topic of my philosophical research, which is all about questions. The book is due for publication in the UK and commonwealth with The Bodley Head, Penguin, and in the US with Viking, Penguin, in 2025. To my amazement it is also currently due to be translated into at least ten different languages. My dream is that you may one day spot it in the windows of the wonderful Daunt Books in Summertown, where I have spent many happy weekends browsing. ■



STUDENT PRIZES

Prizes awarded annually in the Faculty of Theology and Religion

Lucy Taker

Regent's Park
BA Theology and
Religion

FACULTY PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION PRIZE:

Awarded for the best performance in the Preliminary Examination in Theology and Religion.



Rose Webster

Regent's Park
BA Philosophy and
Theology

CANON HALL PRELIMINARY GREEK TESTAMENT PRIZE:

Awarded for outstanding performance in New Testament Greek in the Preliminary Examination.



Jonathan Cheung

Harris Manchester
BA Philosophy and
Theology

FACULTY PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION PRIZE:

Awarded for the best performance in the Preliminary Examination in Philosophy and Theology.



Alina Khokhlova

Regent's Park
BA Theology and
Religion

JUNIOR PUSEY AND ELLERTON PRIZE

: Awarded for the best performance in Biblical Hebrew in the Preliminary Examination.



Sami Haroon

St Peter's College
BA Philosophy and
Theology

FACULTY PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION PRIZE:

Awarded for the best performance in the Preliminary Examination in Philosophy and Theology.

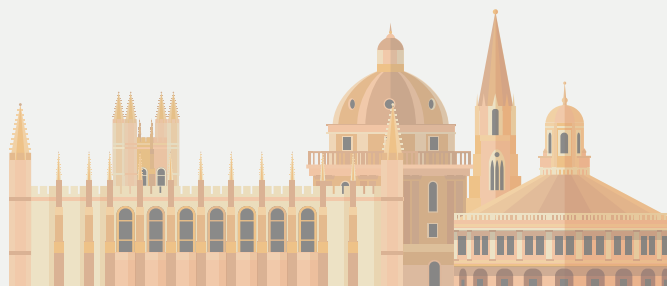


Felix Kirkby

Christ Church College
BA Theology and
Religion

GIBBS PRIZE : Awarded for the best performance in the Honour School of Theology and Religion.





Dylan Savage
Pembroke College
BA Philosophy and
Theology

GIBBS PRIZE: Awarded for the best performance in Theology papers in the Honour School of Philosophy and Theology.



Oliver Wright
Wycliffe Hall

**HALL-HOUGHTON
SEPTUAGINT PRIZE:**

Awarded for outstanding work on the Septuagint for the MSt or MPhil examinations.



Millan George
Oriental College
BA Philosophy and
Theology

GIBBS PRIZE: Awarded for the best performance in Philosophy papers in the Honour School of Philosophy and Theology.



William Knight
St Peter's College
MSt Philosophical
Theology

**ELLERTON
THEOLOGICAL
ESSAY PRIZE:** Awarded for the best dissertation submitted for MSt examination.



Andrew Karpinski
Regent's Park
BA Theology and
Religion

GIBBS ESSAY PRIZE: Awarded for the best Theology and Religion Thesis submitted for the Honour School of Theology and Religion or Joint Schools.



Pia Regensburger
Oriental College
BA Theology and
Religion

**SENIOR PUSEY AND
ELLERTON PRIZE:** Awarded for the best performance in Biblical Hebrew in the Final Honour School.



Frances Caroe
Ripon College
BA Theology and
Religion

DENYER AND JOHNSON

PRIZE: Awarded to the candidate whose performance in the Final Honour School of Theology and Religion is judged to be the best and of sufficient merit.

CATHERINE OF ALEXANDRIA PRIZE:

Awarded for the 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.



Tian Chen
LMH
BA Religion and Oriental
Studies

YESHE KHANDRO PRIZE

: Awarded by the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies for an outstanding thesis in the field of Tibetan Studies.



CANON HALL JUNIOR GREEK TESTAMENT

PRIZE: Awarded for outstanding performance in New Testament Greek in the Final Honour School.

Amanda Higgin
Regent's Park
MPhil Theology (New
Testament)

CANON HALL SENIOR GREEK TESTAMENT

PRIZE: Awarded for outstanding performance in New Testament Greek in MSt and MPhil examinations.



St Catherine of Alexandria by Raphael, c. 1507–1509, oil on wood. National Gallery, London

Tyler Brown
Keble College
MPhil Theology (New
Testament)

ELLERTON THEOLOGICAL

ESSAY PRIZE: Awarded for the best dissertation submitted for MPhil examination.

CANON HALL PRELIMINARY GREEK TESTAMENT

PRIZE: Awarded for outstanding performance in New Testament Greek in MSt and MPhil examinations.



FACULTY NEWS



SUE GILLINGHAM

Emeritus Professor of the Hebrew Bible
Emeritus Fellow of Worcester College

Retirement does at least provide more opportunities for academic travel. In mid-October the Örebro School of Theology, Sweden, hosted a conference 'Song, Prayer, Scripture: Aspects of the Use of the Psalms from the Hebrew Bible to the 21st Century'. I decided to move out of my comfort zone and compared Luther's and Calvin's approaches to the Psalter, looking especially at their interpretations of Psalms 1 and 2. Six weeks later was the November SBL in Denver, where the Psalms Section had joined forces with other sections using innovative approaches to Hebrew poetry. New Year was the Nottingham SOTS meeting. In late January I was in the Bahamas for two weeks, giving a series of papers for the clergy and lay leaders of the Anglican Church, at the invitation of an old student, Rubie Nottage, and Laish Boyd, the Bishop of the Bahamas and the Turks and Caicos Islands, following up historic links between that Diocese and ours. In June I was in Vienna University, at a conference convened by both the Catholic and Protestant Faculties for Jewish and Christian scholars who are writing commentaries on the Psalms



"One highlight was dinner on the rooftop of the Vatican Hotel, watching the sun set over the Old City, highlighting monuments of three world faiths – albeit to the sound of gunfire to the north."

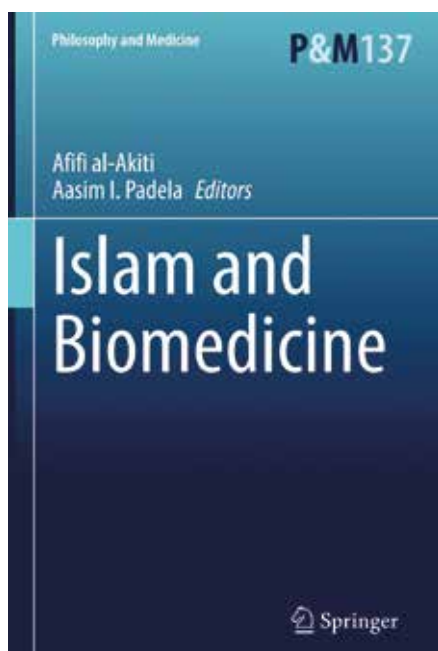
(and there were several of us, believe it or not!). July took me to Israel, at exactly the time when the troubles broke out in Jenin Refugee Camp, as a guest of Notre Dame University at Tantur Ecumenical Institute, close to Bethlehem and the West Bank. The theme of the conference, 'Justice and Righteousness in Scripture and Christian Doctrine', had an unexpected relevance. One highlight was dinner on the rooftop of the Vatican Hotel, watching the sun set over the Old City, highlighting monuments of three world faiths - albeit to the sound of gunfire to

the north. Two weeks later I was in Osnabrück for a few days, giving a plenary paper for Bibelwoche, a Jewish/Christian forum, on Psalms 1 and 150 as 'Gateways' to the Psalter. I've also produced a couple of articles for *The Encyclopaedia of the Bible and its Reception*, as well as some papers in edited works, and I'm almost halfway through the commentary in the Penguin Classics Series on the Book of Psalms as a 'universal classic'. My self-advice for the next academic year is to reflect more and travel less: whether I'll heed it has yet to be seen. ■



AFIFI AL-AKITI

Dr Afifi al-Akiti, the Islamic Centre Lecturer in Islamic Studies for the Faculty, in collaboration with Dr A. I. Padela, a medic from the University of Chicago, has recently completed a major 3-year project supported by the Templeton Religion Trust. It resulted in a book published by Springer, entitled *Islam and Biomedicine*. This project brought together theologians, medics, and intellectual historians, and represents an original, serious, attempt to integrate theological, moral, and epistemic frameworks by providing a holistic approach to lay the foundations for bridging the bodies of knowledge of Islam and biomedicine. The Springer volume showcases multidisciplinary



research at the intersection of the Islamic tradition and biomedicine. Within this broad area of scholarship, the book considers how Islamic theological constructs align with the science and practice of medicine, and in so doing offer resources for bridging the challenges of competing ontological visions, varied epistemic frameworks, and different theologies of life and living among the bodies of knowledge. By bringing together theologians, medical practitioners and intellectual historians, the book spurs deeper conversations at the intersection of these fields and provides fundamental resources for further dedicated research. HRH Sultan Nazrin Shah, the Deputy King of Malaysia, will officiate the book launch later this year, on 12 August 2023. This Royal book launch will inaugurate a one-day International Symposium on Islam and Biomedicine that will be organized by the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, along with the involvement of the International Islamic University Malaysia, the University of Malaya, the Royal College Medicine of Perak, and the Jenner Institute, University of Oxford. ■



JENN STRAWBRIDGE

In August, Professor Jenn Strawbridge was awarded the Cross of St Augustine, the second highest international award for service within Anglicanism, by the Archbishop of Canterbury for her service through biblical scholarship to the worldwide Anglican Communion. Over the last four years, Jenn served as Chair of

the St Augustine Seminar and oversaw the preparation of all the biblical materials for the Lambeth Conference (a gathering of more than 1000 bishops and colleagues from approximately 90 countries in Canterbury, UK). She led a team of scholars from 19 countries to create the biblical materials on the New Testament book of 1 Peter, which formed the foundation of the Conference. With four colleagues from Kenya, the UK, Brazil, and North India, Jenn also helped lead a two-day retreat for the bishops, including preaching at Canterbury Cathedral, and she assisted the Archbishop of Canterbury with five hour-long expositions on 1 Peter given across the Conference. ■



HYWEL CLIFFORD

A video podcast for Timeline Theological Videos (St John's Timeline) hosted by Revd Dr Tim Hull. It introduces Philo of Alexandria (c.15 BCE–c.45 CE). Educated for citizenship via the *encyclios paideia*, in later years Philo led an embassy to Emperor Caligula on behalf of his persecuted Alexandrian Jewish community. He is the first individual author from whom a large number of commentaries on biblical texts, especially the Torah/Law and often in an allegorical mode, survive from antiquity. His writings attest a religiously observant monotheist who used Platonist, Pythagorean, and Stoic traditions for Judaism, including an exalted role for the logos in multiple dimensions. Philo's rich yet complex legacy in Christianity, Judaism, and philosophy is also outlined in the video. It draws, in part, on my recent

publications on monotheism in Second Temple and Hellenistic Judaism for the *Encyclopedia of the Bible and its Reception* and on an essay about Deuteronomy 23:1–8 for a 70th birthday *Festschrift* for Prof John Barton. www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkaeSld8sVM&t=451s. ■

REVD CANON DR MICHAEL BRIERLEY

2023 marks the 125th anniversary of the Bishop's College, Ripon – the college for training Church of England ordinands that moved to Oxford as Ripon Hall (first in Parks Road opposite Wadham College, and then, when that site was acquired by the expanding Bodleian Library, at Foxcombe House on Boar's Hill). The college developed a reputation for critical scholarship, and merged with Cuddesdon College in 1975 to become Ripon College Cuddesdon.

2023 also marks the 125th anniversary of the movement that became associated with Ripon Hall, the Modern Churchmen's Union.

Both anniversaries, and the tradition of theological rigour that they represent, were celebrated by a day conference held at Cuddesdon in May. The theme for the conference was a neglected aspect of modernist history, namely the contribution of women to theological progressivism in the early twentieth century.

Sixty students, alumni, staff and scholars gathered to hear presentations from an array of established and emerging academics, chaired by Jacqui deVries, professor of history at Augsburg University, Minneapolis. Professor Frances Knight of the University of Nottingham spoke on Henrietta Barnett, the

social reformer and advocate of women's ministry. Dr Joanna Rzepa of the University of Essex discussed the novelist Mary Ward. Professor Mark Chapman of the Oxford faculty outlined the career and thought of the historian of religion, Alice Gardner. Dr Joy Dixon, associate professor of history at the University of British Columbia, addressed the sexual theology of Maude Royden.

The centrepiece of the day was a thanksgiving eucharist for the legacy of Ripon Hall, at which the bishop of Reading presided, and a powerful sermon was given by Professor Jane Shaw, principal of Harris Manchester College and pro-vice-chancellor of the university, who hoped that the Ripon 'inheritance' would be celebrated in another 125 years' time, along with progressive theology of the current day. ■



📍 Gathering for the 125th Anniversary of the Bishop's College, Ripon.

WORKSHOPS & PROJECTS

CENTRE FOR THEOLOGY, LAW, AND CULTURE AT PUSEY HOUSE

Edward David

Edward's 2023 Recollection Lecture at Pusey House, Oxford — entitled "Religious liberty, corporate metaphysics, and virtue" — attracted an in-person audience of 20 and has over 130 views thus far on the Pusey House YouTube channel. At the same symposium, Edward's short paper ("Church autonomy and the corpus mysticum tradition") encouraged Christians to view church liberties from a sacramental perspective, not a combative rights-based perspective. Between 40 and 50 people were in attendance. The symposium featured papers on the theme of "corporate persons" and was hosted by the Centre for Theology, Law, and Culture at Pusey House, Oxford. 23 – 24 February 2023.



My papers can be found online here.

- "Church autonomy and the corpus mysticum tradition", Centre for Theology, Law, and Culture, Pusey House, Oxford, 24 February 2023. <https://ora.ox.ac.uk/objects/uuid:3479fa1a-b885-4bec-bb5d-25012b10cd1d>
- "Religious liberty, corporate metaphysics, and virtue", Recollection Lecture, Pusey House, Oxford, 23 February 2023. <https://youtu.be/QuoWT6VyN08>

Financial Conduct Authority. 23 November 2023

To an audience of 220 regulators, Edward presented research on role models and middle management at the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Attendees described the session as "thought-provoking" and generative of "practical ideas". The event was part of the FCA's Leadership and Middle Management series, hosted by the institution's Culture and Remuneration Team. The series brings in guest experts to help regulators understand how best to support firms across the financial services sector in the UK.

Global Network for Advanced Management, Saïd Business School. 19 October 2022

Edward shared research on workplace role models with MBA students from the Global Network for Advanced Management. Hosted by Saïd Business School, the session discussed three types of role models in business. The sage who embodies a pro-social form of practical

wisdom; the hero who exemplifies empathy above all; and the novice, who is morally curious. The session, entitled "Role models and leadership", was "very popular" among the 60 participants.

11th Annual European Compliance & Ethics Institute, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 20 March 2023

Edward presented research on role models and moral psychology at the European Compliance and Ethics Institute. Appreciative of Edward's integration of the humanities and social sciences, attendees said: "What an insightful and engaging session! Thank you so much for sharing your wisdom", and "It was great session ... It's always refreshing to be reminded of the theory behind our daily practices". The session was entitled, "Ethics in the workplace: incentives, role models, automaticity." 60 compliance professionals from around the globe were in attendance.

PODCAST ON THE POLITICAL THEOLOGY OF BRUNO LATOUR

Tim Howles

Associate Director, Laudato Si' Research Institute
 Research Fellow, Campion Hall
 Associate Member, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford



My current research focuses on the work of French philosopher and anthropologist Bruno Latour (1947-2022). In recent years, Latour has made important contributions to the discipline of political ecology, both theoretical and applied. In books such as *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climactic Regime* (2017) and *On the Emergence of an Ecological Class: A Memo* (2022), he calls attention to the delicate processes of the earth system and provides a vision for a new form of human social, cultural and political life at this time of planetary crisis. Paying tribute to him on news of his death last year, President Macron remarked: "his writings, his reflections, have inspired us towards a new relationship with the world".

Less well-known is the importance of religion to Latour's political ecology. "I am a professing Roman Catholic", he declared. His reflections on human engagements with the natural world are informed by (what we might call) a theological metaphysics. And many of his policy proposals are inspired by principles from the Catholic social teaching tradition.

My own work, including via archival research and personal interviews, traces this influence and seeks to explain why it matters for contemporary environmentalism more broadly. My forthcoming book – *The Political Theology of Bruno Latour: Globalisation, Secularisation and Environmental Crisis* (Edinburgh University Press) – will be published early in 2023. In the meantime, you can dip into the topic further via a series of podcast interviews (<https://podtail.com/en/podcast/hermitix/bruno-latour-s-facing-gaia-with-tim-howles/>) or via an hour-long recorded presentation hosted on the Theology Timeline (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hst1fWmHYEQ>).

THE IAN RAMSEY CENTRE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Andrew Pinsent

Research Director, IRC

The Ian Ramsey Centre continues to lead a massive project in Central and Eastern Europe, thanks to a grant of over \$3.6M from the John Templeton Foundation. This five-year project involves participants across twenty-four countries and regions, aiming to stimulate world-class research into Big Questions in science and religion within and beyond Central Europe, the Balkans, the Baltic, the Dnieper Basin, and Transcaucasia.



This project is aimed especially at young and early career scholars and is broadly organised around the themes of Science and Religion in the CEE, Reason and Faith; and Persons, Mind, and Cosmos. The events of the project include multiple conferences, study weeks, and paper competitions, but the most significant outputs are over fifty subgrants awarded across the region, ranging from \$5k to \$200k. Despite the challenges of a pandemic and an ongoing war at the time of writing, over 100 papers, 80 videos, and several books have been published. Project participants have also received important awards and academic positions, and academic networks have been established, promoting the resumes, connections, and careers of many young and early-career scholars across the region.

The IRC also continues to host a seminar series in Oxford, with recent topics including personal identity, panpsychism, and medieval communism. The Centre also supports many national and international events in schools, as well as campaigning for science and religion in schools. Since the summer conference of 2022, dedicated to Alister McGrath as the retiring Andreas Idreos Chair of Science and Religion, we are delighted that Prof. Mark Harris has been appointed as the new Idreos Chair, due to start in October 2023. ■

📍 Devastation in Kyiv, Ukraine, testifying to the violence of the war there. Nevertheless, participants continue to deliver outputs for the Ian Ramsey Centre project in the region. Source: Shutterstock.





Transforming our academic landscape

The vision for our new home at the Schwarzman Building

As the Faculty of Theology and Religion prepares for its transition into the forthcoming Schwarzman Building, we are thrilled to share the enhanced opportunities this move will offer to our academic community. Designed as a cutting-edge interdisciplinary space, the Schwarzman Building is set to elevate our capabilities in learning, teaching, and research, particularly in practice-based and collaborative projects.

For the first time in the University's history, Oxford's programmes in English, history, linguistics, philology & phonetics, medieval & modern languages, music, philosophy, and theology & religion will be housed together in a space designed to encourage experiential learning and bold experimentation through cross-disciplinary and collaborative study.

Our faculty will have its own distinct "hub" within the building, serving as a dedicated home for both staff and students. This hub will

be adorned with materials that encapsulate our unique disciplinary identity, from insightful books to photographs that narrate our history and underscore our scholarly priorities.

Among the building's innovative features is a 'Black Box' digital hub, aimed at pioneering new research methodologies and immersive creative practices. This will be a significant asset for our faculty, allowing us to explore interdisciplinary approaches and broaden our research horizons.

"It is essential that philosophy and ethics engages with those disciplines developing and using AI. If AI is to benefit humanity we must understand its moral and ethical implications. Oxford with its rich history in humanities and philosophy is ideally placed to do this." – **Sir Tim Berners-Lee**, founder of the World Wide Web

The Schwarzman Building also brings the exciting addition of performance and public engagement spaces. These are designed to be integral platforms through which we can amplify the impact of our research and teaching to external audiences. Whether we're collaborating with cultural institutions, other universities, or commercial sectors, these spaces offer endless possibilities for co-creation and public engagement.

We're incredibly excited for this new chapter and believe that the Schwarzman Building will prove instrumental in advancing our academic mission while deepening our public engagement. This move will not only allow us to enrich public dialogue by engaging with diverse audiences but will also align with Oxford's sustainability goals through the building's environmentally conscious design. We look forward to sharing more updates as we get closer to the move. Stay tuned! ■

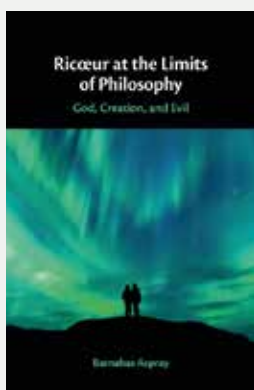


Bringing together the entire Humanities Division into a single building will transform the pedagogic, research and interdisciplinary possibilities for the departments and institutes for the future. *Source: Hopkins Architects.*





FACULTY BOOKS



Barnabas Asprey

.....
*Limits of Philosophy:
 God Creation and
 Evil*

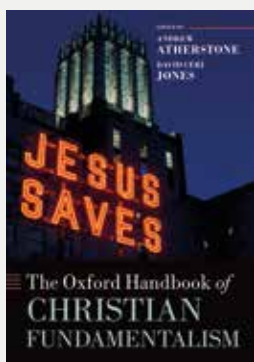
Cambridge University Press,
 2022

ISBN: 9781009186742

Can finite humans grasp universal truth? Is it possible to think beyond the limits of reason? Are we doomed to failure because of our finitude? In this clear and accessible book, Barnabas Asprey presents Ricoeur's response to these perennial philosophical questions through an analysis of human finitude at the intersection of philosophy and theology. Using unpublished and previously untranslated archival sources, he shows how Ricoeur's groundbreaking concept of symbols leads to a view of creation, not as a theological doctrine, but as a mystery beyond the limits of thought that gives rise to philosophical insight. If finitude is created, then it can be distinguished from both the Creator and evil, leading to a view of human existence that, instead of the 'anguish of no' proclaims the 'joy of yes.'

Review from Rowan Williams

'Paul Ricoeur is one of the most important French philosophers of the later twentieth century - distinctive and significant not least because of his sympathetic engagement with theological themes. In this beautifully clear and insightful study, we are shown the development of Ricoeur's intellectual agenda through his encounters with the conflicting styles of French thought. This is a model of how a monograph in intellectual history should be written, and a major contribution to our understanding of the frontiers of religion and philosophy.' – *Rowan Williams, University of Cambridge*



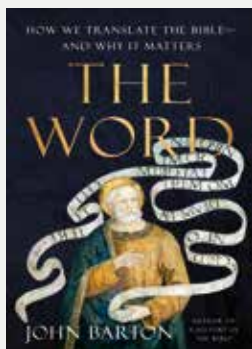
**Andrew Atherstone and
 David Ceri Jones (eds)**

.....
*The Oxford
 Handbook
 of Christian
 Fundamentalism*

Oxford University Press, 2023

ISBN: 9780198844594

Christian fundamentalism is a significant global movement which originally took its names from The Fundamentals, a series of booklets defending classic evangelical doctrines, published in the 1910s. *The Oxford Handbook of Christian Fundamentalism* traces the roots of fundamentalism from the late nineteenth century and explores the development of the movement up to the present day. Since its inception, fundamentalism has proved a highly contested category. By some the label is recognized as a badge of honour, by others as a term of abuse. This volume does not offer a simple definition of fundamentalism. Rather, it acknowledges its many interpretative and definitional complexities, and allows multiple identities to jostle together under the "fundamentalism" label. Research-led chapters cover significant historical developments, key doctrines, such as biblical inerrancy, creationism, and separatism, and an extensive range of moral and cultural questions to which the contribution of fundamentalism has been significant, including popular music, alcohol, sport, and family life. Recognizing the prominence of fundamentalism beyond the church, the Handbook explores its contribution to public debates concerning political influence, education, abortion, civil rights, business, global warming, sexuality, Israel and the Middle East, the shaping of contemporary culture, and much else.



John Barton

The Word: On the Translation of the Bible

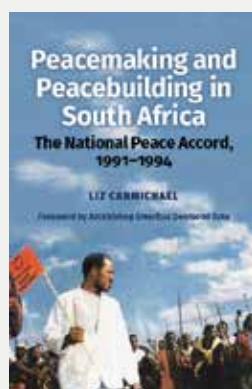
Allen Lane/Penguin, 2022
ISBN: 9780241448816

Almost everyone in the world who reads the Bible reads it in translation. This makes the Bible an extraordinarily rich example of how translation has been and should be done. Theories of translation have often begun with Bible translators, before being generalized. At the same time, in modern times these theories have then in turn influenced the practical work of the individuals and committees that have produced the enormous range of Bibles now available, especially in English.

The Word introduces the general reader, who may know no biblical languages, to the debate about how the Bible should be translated. I try to dispel the idea that there is or could be a single, ideal version of the Bible, and argue instead that different translations are appropriate for different purposes. I look at the vexed question of 'inclusive language', at how words change their meaning over time, with examples from the Bible ('faith', 'soul', and 'salvation'), and at literalism – now enjoying renewed popularity—versus 'free' translation, even verging on paraphrase, in some recent versions. Above all I show how important translation has been in the reception of the Bible, and in driving doctrinal change. It has also informed reflection on the interpretation of texts in general. Translators are more powerful than we, or even they, realize.

First published in November 2022 in the United Kingdom, *The Word* has now appeared in a (verbally identical) American edition with the title *The Word: How We Translate the Bible and Why It Matters* (Basic Books, 2023).

John Barton, FBA, is Emeritus Oriel & Laing Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture, and Emeritus Fellow of St Cross and Oriel Colleges. He is currently a Senior Research Fellow at Campion Hall.



**Revd Dr Liz Carmichael
MBE**

Peacemaking and Peacebuilding in South Africa. The National Peace Accord 1991-1994

Woodbridge: James Currey,
Boydell & Brewer, 2022
ISBN: 9781847013682

This first full account of the South African National Peace Accord (NPA) of 1991, and the work of the peace structures established under it, fills a significant gap in knowledge of the key transitional phase in the country's history, from apartheid to democracy. It brings out the vital role played by civil society, led by the churches and business, in facilitating the political transition. Four years before his appointment to chair the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which held its hearings in 1996-98, Archbishop Desmond Tutu had been among twelve church and business leaders who, having achieved reconciliation among themselves, proved uniquely capable of convening the warring political organizations and facilitating their negotiation of the NPA, South Africa's first multi-party agreement.

The NPA was signed by the ANC Alliance, Government, Inkatha Freedom Party and other political and labour organizations on 14 September 1991. It declared that their common goal was a united, non-racial, democratic South Africa, and it provided practical means for achieving this end: codes of conduct for political organizations and police, a standing Commission of Inquiry into the prevention of political violence and intimidation; the creation of national, regional and local peace committees for conflict resolution, prevention of violence, and peacebuilding; the implementation of the codes of conduct through peace monitoring; and guidance on socio-economic reconstruction and development. This book recounts the NPA's background in secret talks, its negotiation, and its implementation for which churches and other religious bodies provided key personnel at national, regional and local levels. The NPA was recognized

internationally as South Africa's first consensus document, and Observer Missions from the UN, EU, Commonwealth and OAU were assigned to its structures. The author, now an Emeritus Research Fellow in Theology at St John's College, served as a churches representative on peace committees in the Johannesburg area.



Paul S. Fiddes (ed.)

*Loving the Planet:
Interfaith Essays on
Ecology, Love and
Theology*

Oxford: Firedint Publishing,
2022)

ISBN: 978-1999940744

In this book, Jewish, Muslim and Christian scholars explore the question: what can it mean to love Planet Earth? The writers consider how love might be a practical response to the ecological crisis into which the human and non-human world is plunged at the present time. Correspondingly, they enquire whether this love can be reciprocated by non-human forms of life and even by apparently inanimate objects. As believers from three main Abrahamic faiths they ask how this love for nature connects both with the act of loving God and with receiving the love that God pours into all creation. Thus they dare to maintain that love of God can be a practical response to environmental emergency. In a concluding essay Paul Fiddes sets out the outlines for a new discipline of 'Eco-love-theology'. The book was the basis for a two-day conference in April 2023 (on site in Oxford and online) organized by the Project for the Study of Love in Religion at Regent's Park College Oxford, in collaboration with the *Laudato Si'* Research Institute at Campion Hall, whose director, Celia Deane-Drummond, contributed an essay to the volume.



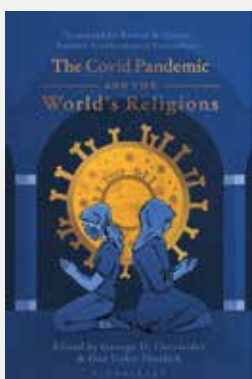
**Jennifer Strawbridge
(Ed.), Jarred Mercer,
Peter Groves**

*Love Makes Things
Happen*

SCM Press, 2022

ISBN: 9780334059936

Doctrine leads to practice and practice is informed by doctrine. We can't truly participate in prayer, or worship, or the sacraments, or the reading of Scripture, and so on, in a way that is divorced from the doctrine of the Trinity, or the Incarnation, or the Resurrection: all the practices of the everyday Christian life are lived expressions of the depths of Christian theology. Following on from its predecessor, *Love Makes No Sense* each chapter in this book deals with central issues of Christian practice, and presents an introduction to Christian doctrine without losing focus of the lived Christian life. The book sets forth central aspects of Christian living and practice that are the natural expression of those doctrines when they are understood properly as a lived phenomenon.



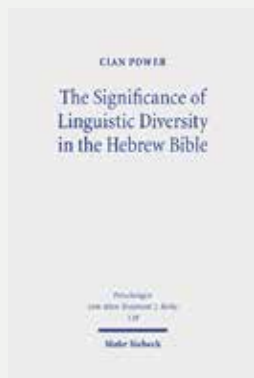
**George D. Chryssides
(Editor), Dan Cohn-
Sherbok (Editor)**

*The Covid Pandemic
and the World's
Religions*

Bloomsbury Academic 2023

ASIN: B0C2V7T7V1

Christopher Lewis wrote the opening theoretical/historical chapter in *The Covid Pandemic and the World's Religions*, Bloomsbury Academic, ed. George Chryssides and Dan Cohn-Sherbok. The aim of the chapter is to reflect on the impact of plagues through the centuries and their double effect on the advance of science and on the reaction of religions. In the book there are a number of contributions from different religions. What one might call 'the theology of plagues' has changed, although there are still some who see their religion as making medical prevention unnecessary.



Cian Power

The Significance of Linguistic Diversity in the Hebrew Bible: Language and Boundaries of Self and Other

Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2023
ISBN: 978-3-16-159324-6

Published in English.

Cian J. Power explores how the biblical authors viewed and presented a fundamental human reality: the existence of the world's many languages. By examining explicit references to this diversity – such as the ambivalent account of its origins in the Tower of Babel episode – and implicit acknowledgements that included the use of strange-sounding speech to portray alien peoples, he illuminates ideas about Aramaic, Egyptian, Akkadian, and other ancient languages. Drawing on sociolinguistics, Power detects a consistent link between language and – ethnic, political, religious, and divine/human boundaries, and argues that changing historical circumstances are key to the Bible's varying attitudes. Furthermore, the study's findings regarding the biblical authors' ideas about their own language and its importance challenge our very notion of Hebrew.



Emily Qureshi-Hurst

God, Salvation, and the Problem of Spacetime

Cambridge University Press,
2022
ISBN: 9781009269612

Much has been written on the relationship between the nature of temporal reality and the God of Classical Theism. Despite the popularity of this general area, what the physics and metaphysics of spacetime might mean for specific theological doctrines has received less attention. Recently, however, interest in this rich and dynamic interplay of ideas has seen rapid growth. This book provides both an introduction to the physics and metaphysics of spacetime and a jumping-off point for understanding how these can – and in fact should – inform both Christian theology and the philosophy of religion more generally. The author argues that the nature of spacetime raises particular and pressing problems for Christianity, specifically the interrelated doctrines of salvation and eschatology, and explore whether adequate solutions to these problems are available.



**Anthony Reddie,
Carol Troupe (eds.)**

Deconstructing Whiteness, Empire, and Mission

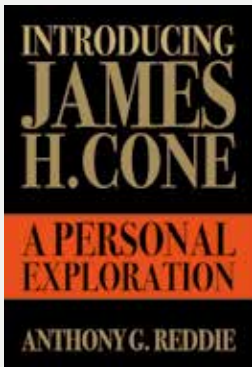
SCM Press, 2023
ISBN: 9780334055938

What happens when 'go, make disciples' meets 'Black Lives Matter'? Arising from the Council for World Mission's "Legacies of Slavery" project, this book offers an unapologetic exploration of Christian Mission and its history, and the ways in which this legacy has unleashed notions of White supremacy, systemic racism and global capitalism on the world. Contributors reflect on the past and consider the future of world mission in an age of renewed understandings of empire and its impact. Contributors include Mike Higton, David Clough, Eve Parker, James Butler, Cathy Ross, Jione Havea, Peniel Rajkumar, Victoria Turner, Carol Troupe, Michael Jagessar, Paul Weller, Jill Marsh, Kevin Ellis, Rachel Starr, Kevin Snyman, Al Barrett and Ruth Harley.

Reviews

"...A marvelous achievement: The first of its kind broad based examination of the problem of whiteness in theology, theological education, and society in the United Kingdom. The contributors to this powerful volume capture both the evasion of many British theologians to confront their own racial empire and its intellectual legacies and a way forward in how to think a life of faith not bound to whiteness. These courageous scholars have marked a new beginning for theology in the UK and beyond. This book is the turning point and therefore it must be find its way into the hands of every student, pastor, and scholar interested in a viable future for the church and theology." – *Willie James Jennings*

"This is a landmark collection, drawing on a wealth of experience, theological scholarship and critical self-reflection. It should change the conversation about race and empire in British theology, and more importantly it should make white theologians think differently about how theology is produced and transmitted". – *Rachel Muers*



Anthony Reddie

Introducing James H. Cone: A Personal Exploration

SCM Press, 2022
ISBN: 9780334061083

It is rarely the case that an intellectual movement can point to an individual figure as its founder. Yet James Cone has been heralded as the acknowledged genius and the creator of black theology. In nearly 50 years of published work, James Cone redefined the intent of academic theology and defined a whole new movement in intellectual thought. In *Introducing James H. Cone* Anthony Reddie offers us an accessible and engaging assessment of Cone's legacy, from his first book *Black Theology and Black Power* in 1969 through to his final intellectual autobiography *I Said I wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody* in 2018. It is an indispensable field guide to perhaps the greatest black theologian of recent times.

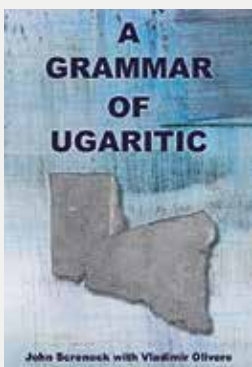
Reviews

"As James H. Cone's former doctoral student and the first research assistant of his academic career, I can testify that Professor Reddie has written the most definitive book on James H. Cone. It captures Cone's thought, voice, and his key vocational concerns. And thank goodness it is both complex and readable together. Moreover, this work continues to solidify Professor Reddie as the leading black liberation theologian globally." – *Dwight N. Hopkins*

"Anthony Reddie has done his mentor proud with this moving and insightful tribute to one of the great radical thinkers of the twentieth century. It is an excellent starting point for anyone with an interest in understanding Black Theology and its key foundational architect." – *William Ackah*

"Anthony Reddie is the ideal companion for those seeking to get to grips with James H. Cone's towering contribution to Christian theology. Reddie's excellent book provides an introduction to key themes and texts in Cone's work that is expert, accessible, and engaging." – *David Clough, University of Aberdeen, UK*

"This is a perceptive, passionate and engaging account of one theological pioneer by another. Anthony Reddie captures the intellectual excitement of James Cone's work and shows us why and how Cone continues to matter for the academy, the churches and wider society." – *Rachel Muers*

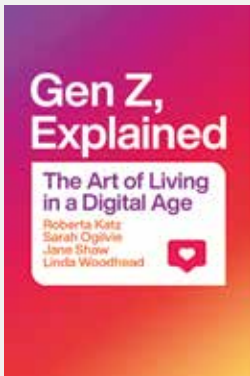


John Sorenock with Vladimir Olivero

A Grammar of Ugaritic

Atlanta: SBL Press, 2022
ISBN: 978-1628374513

A Grammar of Ugaritic is an accessible yet academically rigorous textbook for first-year students of Ugaritic. Eight digestible lessons include more than 150 exercises to strengthen readers' understanding through translation and composition – strategies that develop language skills and provide a sound basis for classroom teaching. Exercises consist of vocalized Ugaritic, transcribed texts, and cuneiform script. Short stories interspersed among the lessons help students consolidate their knowledge and bolster recognition of forms. An introduction to the language and its historical context, glossaries, paradigms, and a bibliography and guide for further learning supplement the lessons. Students who work through the grammar in the classroom or individually will be rewarded with the ability to read real Ugaritic texts in cuneiform.



Roberta Katz, Sarah Ogilvie, Jane Shaw, and Linda Woodhead

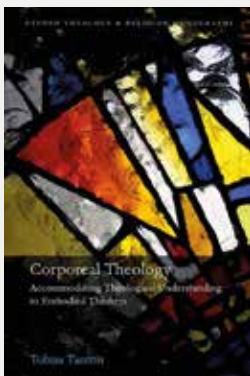
Gen Z, Explained: The Art of Living in a Digital Age

University of Chicago Press,
2021
ISBN: 9780226823966

An optimistic and nuanced portrait of a generation that has much to teach us about how to live and collaborate in our digital world.

Born since the mid-1990s, members of Generation Z comprise the first generation never to know the world without the internet, and the most diverse generation yet. As Gen Z starts to emerge into adulthood and enter the workforce, what do we really know about them? And what can we learn from them? *Gen Z, Explained* is the authoritative portrait of this significant generation. It draws on extensive interviews that display this generation's candor, surveys that explore their views and attitudes, and a vast database of their astonishingly inventive lexicon to build a comprehensive picture of their values, daily lives, and outlook. Gen Z emerges here as an extraordinarily thoughtful, promising, and perceptive generation that is sounding a warning to their elders about the world around them – a warning of a complexity and depth the “OK Boomer” phenomenon can only suggest.

Much of the existing literature about Gen Z has been highly judgmental. In contrast, this book provides a deep and nuanced understanding of a generation facing a future of enormous challenges, from climate change to civil unrest. What's more, they are facing this future head-on, relying on themselves and their peers to work collaboratively to solve these problems. As *Gen Z, Explained* shows, this group of young people is as compassionate and imaginative as any that has come before, and understanding the way they tackle problems may enable us to envision new kinds of solutions. This portrait of Gen Z is ultimately an optimistic one, suggesting they have something to teach all of us about how to live and thrive in this digital world.



Tobias Tanton

Corporeal Theology, Accommodating Theological Understanding to Embodied Thinkers

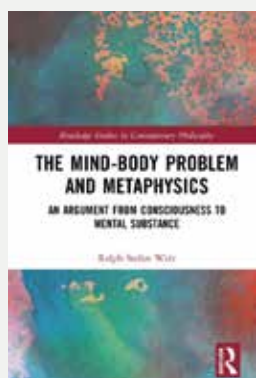
Oxford University Press, 2023
ISBN: 9780192884589

Appropriating insights from empirical findings and theoretical constructs of 'embodied cognition', this study explores how theological understanding is accommodated to the bodily nature of human cognition. The principle of divine accommodation provides a theological framework for considering the human cognitive capacities that are accommodated by theological concepts and ecclesial practices. A rich portrait of the nature of human cognitive capacities is drawn from an emerging paradigm in cognitive science, embodied cognition, which proposes that cognition depends upon bodily sensorimotor systems to ground concepts and to draw upon environmental resources.

Embodied cognition's hypothesis that human concepts are grounded in sensorimotor states poses a theological quandary for God-concepts, since identifying God with sensorimotor content risks idolatry. The incarnation resolves this problem in theological epistemology by grounding God-concepts in bodily understanding, while avoiding idolatry. Thus, the incarnation represents an accommodation to human conceptual capacities.

Embodied cognition further hypothesises that cognition relies on sensorimotor engagement with the world rather than internal mental representations. Subsequently, in addition to the brain, bodily states and environmental artefacts 'scaffold' cognitive processes. A scaffolded view of cognition highlights the cognitive import of embodied religious practices, which choregraph the body and curate material culture. Tobias Tanton applies dozens of studies identifying mechanisms by which bodily or environmental factors influence cognition to the embodied and material dimensions Christian practices. On account of their inherent

cognitive effects, practices are theorised to have intrinsic 'embodied' meanings alongside 'symbolic' ones established by conventions. Consequently, liturgy is seen as a bearer of theological content rather than merely an expression of it; a locus of religious experience; and a crucial determinate of religious and ethical formation. Again, the embodied nature of Christian liturgy is understood in terms of accommodation. Embodied cognition research helpfully illuminates the details of human embodiment to which theological understanding must be accommodated.



Ralph Stefan Weir

The Mind-Body Problem and Metaphysics

Routledge, 2023

ISBN: 9781032457680

More or less every culture, historically and globally, says that humans have immaterial souls. The last fifty years or so of Western philosophy differs. This book argues that recent Western philosophy is wrong, and everyone else is right. The discussion focuses on widespread preference in philosophy of mind for varieties of property dualism over other alternatives to physicalism. It takes the standard motivations for property dualism as a starting point and argues that these lead directly to nonphysical substances resembling the soul of traditional metaphysics.

In the first half of the book, the author clarifies what is at issue in the choice between theories that posit nonphysical properties only and those that posit nonphysical substances. The crucial question, he argues, is whether one posits nonphysical things that satisfy an Aristotelian-Cartesian independence definition of substance: nonphysical things that could exist in the absence of anything else. In the second half, the author argues that standard and Russellian monist forms of property dualism are far less plausible than we usually suppose. Most significantly, the presuppositions of one of the leading arguments for property dualism, the conceivability argument, lead by parity of reasoning to the view that conscious subjects are nonphysical substances. He concludes that if you posit nonphysical properties in response to the mind-body problem, then you should be prepared to posit nonphysical substances as well. Mainstream philosophy of mind must take nonphysical substances far more seriously than it has done for the best part of a century.

The Mind-Body Problem and Metaphysics will be of interest to scholars and advanced students working in philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion, metaphysics, and the history of philosophy.



LEAVE A LEGACY: Invest in the future of Theology and Religion at Oxford

We are tremendously grateful to everyone who pledges to make a gift. Many of our past achievements and those we hope to celebrate in the future have been made possible by the legacies of our generous alumni and friends.

In the Faculty of Theology and Religion we educate the brightest and best students from across the world and undertake research in areas from Biblical Studies and Modern Theology, to Patristics and the Study of Religions.

Religion and theological scholarship has been intrinsic to the history of the University and the Faculty continues this tradition of making a significant contribution to global religious understanding.

As we look to the future, we would like to ensure that our research endeavour and teaching provision is sustainable for generations to come.

A legacy gift will help the Faculty to continue to support our leading research programmes and exceptional students.

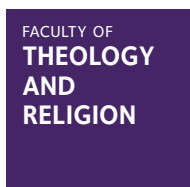
Your support will really make a difference. Whether large or small, for graduate scholarships, academic positions, or to support core activities, every gift is valued and appreciated.

If you have already left a gift in your will, please let us know so that we have an opportunity to thank you properly.

If you would like to know more about leaving a gift to the Faculty of Theology and Religion in your will, please contact **+44 (0) 1865 611624** or **humanities@devoff.ox.ac.uk**

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Thank you





Landscape in Tuscany at sunset in summer.
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