



# THE OXFORD THEOLOGIAN



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OXFORD UNIVERSITY THEOLOGY & RELIGION FACULTY MAGAZINE

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY BOARD CHAIR

## WILLIAM WOOD

**When I agreed to serve as Faculty Board Chair, I certainly did not imagine that I would be taking the reins in the middle of a global pandemic.** (Had I known, would I still have agreed? Probably—but it's best not to dwell too much on that particular counterfactual. . .) At the start of the pandemic, in March 2020, the Faculty had to pivot very rapidly to online teaching and examining. Thanks to the exceptional work of so many colleagues, there can be no real question that we met this challenge, and that our students were not disadvantaged by the unexpected changes to their Trinity Term.

In the 2020-21 academic year, the pandemic posed more persistent, and in some ways more difficult, challenges. The majority of our Faculty's lectures and classes moved online for the whole year, which meant that nearly everyone had to come to grips with new forms of teaching, while maintaining our usual standards of excellence. An even more significant challenge was the potential loss of community. One of the real glories of Oxford is the sense of academic community fostered by living, working, and socialising in one of the most beautiful places in the world. This year, amid two national lockdowns, and with many of us unable to come to Oxford at all, we had to find other ways to nourish that sense of community.

Given these challenges, I am especially happy that there is so much good news to report. It has indeed been a difficult year, but it has also been—truly—a great year for the Faculty. We had a strong year of undergraduate and postgraduate admissions, and so we can be confident that notwithstanding the pandemic, Oxford remains one of the world's top destinations to study Theology and Religion. On the fundraising front, the Ian Ramsey Centre received an additional \$665,000 (on top of a previous grant of nearly \$3 million) from the John Templeton Foundation to support the Centre's work on science and religion in Central and Eastern Europe. The Faculty also appointed a new Development Officer, Julia Thaxton, to lead our fundraising efforts.

Several Faculty colleagues have received prestigious awards since the *Theologian* last appeared. In July 2020, Professor Anna Sapir Abulafia, Professor of the Study of Abrahamic Religions, and Professor Paul Fiddes, Professor of Systematic Theology were elected to Fellowships

of the British Academy. (Their election brings the total number of FBAs in our Faculty to six—almost certainly more than all other British Theology and Religious Studies faculties *combined*.) Nearly a year later, towards the end of Trinity Term, Professor Nigel Biggar, Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology, was appointed Commander of the British Empire (CBE), for his services to higher education. One of the Faculty's newest members, Professor Laura Quick, received a £100,000 Philip Leverhulme Early Career Prize to study beauty and aesthetics in the Hebrew Bible. Professor Anthony Reddie, Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture at Regent's Park College, received the Lanfranc Award for Education and Scholarship from the Archbishop of Canterbury for his 'exceptional and sustained contribution to Black Theology in Britain and beyond'.

*It has indeed been a difficult year, but it has also been – truly – a great year for the Faculty.*

Looking ahead, two senior colleagues, Professor Anna Sapir Abulafia (Abrahamic Religions) and Professor Alister McGrath (Science and Religion) are both planning to retire at the end of the next academic year. Accordingly, we hope to advertise for and appoint their successors—the word 'replacements' would be singularly inapt here—in time for them to be in post by Michaelmas 2022. In 2021-22, I also hope that we can launch a review of our 'new' undergraduate syllabus. Since we have now had the benefit of seeing several student cohorts complete the full three-year course, we are in a good position to begin thinking about what has worked well, and what might be improved.

Over the past year, we have all faced continual uncertainty, not just about our work but about our lives and the lives of our dear ones. We remain ever hopeful that things are finally about to return to 'normal'. None of us knows the future course of the pandemic or whether we might face even more difficult challenges next year. Yet whatever challenges arise, I am confident that the Faculty will work together to meet them, as we have for so long. ■

# The Oxford Character Project

**Rebecca Park**, *The Oxford Character Project*

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**The Oxford Character Project is an interdisciplinary initiative at the University of Oxford dedicated to research and education that focuses on character and leadership.** We have recently embarked on a 3-year research project funded by the John Templeton Foundation exploring the intersection between character formation, leadership development and institutional culture. Our work integrates research methods from the humanities and empirical social sciences to explore philosophical, theological, educational and sociological aspects of character and leadership development.

It's no secret that around the world the trust we have in leaders in both public and private sectors is worryingly low, with well-publicised leadership failings only contributing to this 'character gap' or 'leadership crisis'. Trust in leaders and in the professions needs to be reinstated, and the cultivation of virtues is central to this. A desire

for leaders with qualities such as empathy, humility and hope has only grown during the recent pandemic, environmental crisis and civil rights movements. We also know that each year the University of Oxford educates many students who go on to hold prominent leadership positions across different global industries. Our mission, then, is to help these talented students develop the character and virtue needed to become the *wise thinkers and good leaders* that the world needs. If we are to think of universities as the 'training grounds' for such leaders, then our role is to train and develop these leaders to be those who act for societal betterment, rather than for personal gain.

In September 2020 we began a major project funded by the John Templeton Foundation, directed by Edward Brooks and Jonathan Brant under Nigel Biggar in the Faculty of Theology and Religion as Principle Investigator. This 'Character and Responsible Leadership' project comprises an interdisciplinary team from across the social



*Global Leadership Initiative students at one of an Oxford-based in-person event.*

*Whilst we are only in the first year of our new project, we have much to be excited about and look forward to learning and contributing to the study of character across disciplines...*



sciences and humanities, working together to explore the character qualities most important for leadership and how they are developed in relation to organisational environments that constitute moral and intellectual ecosystems. We aim to develop empirically-grounded insights relevant to the specific sectors of finance, law, technology and business more broadly, which will be published and used in the development of character and leadership development programmes for university students as well as existing and emerging leaders within the industries themselves.

We believe both of these approaches are important for leaders to develop the moral and intellectual virtues and practical wisdom needed to embody virtue in their fields. Firstly, character is a *life* work which never ends and with the current public discourse and interest in good leadership and character, our work can make important contributions within industry and existing leaders directly. We have built several relationships with organisations in each of our sectors to gain insights from the industries, to invite them to take part in our research and to create pathways directly into organisations and standards boards themselves for the dissemination of results and resources.

Secondly, our student work focuses on developing leadership skills and character reflection within *emerging adulthood*, an important developmental stage in many respects, but importantly for identity and character aspirations. Whilst much character education research and resources exists for children and adolescents, we, along with our colleagues at Wake Forest University and Harvard University, are working to ensure that good, empirically grounded character development resources are available and developed specifically for emerging adults.

So why focus specifically on finance, law, technology and the broader business industries? Between 2012 and 2017, more than 25% of Oxford postgraduates moved into one of these sectors, and we have clear distinct professional education programmes within the university leading into these industries. We have a clear opportunity here to answer the call for character education in the training of practitioners and to have a significant impact on society as a result of developing leaders who are not only exceptionally trained for their positions, but are virtuous leaders who have thought

deeply about their own character and the impact they wish to have in the world. To reach this point of sector-specific leadership development, there is clear foundational work which needs to be done. The first year of our project serves this purpose, with three separate strands of research.

Firstly, we are conducting a qualitative analysis of over 220 organisational annual reports and websites to identify a) the most frequently cited values in each sector; b) how organisations tend to define these values; c) the benefits perceived to arise as a result of the values and; d) how the values are created, embedded and measured within the organisations. This project will give us a good look at what companies are *publicly* saying about virtues and values and their role within organisational life. Of course, this only gives us the party line, so our second project explores the 'lived experience' of this by employees in these organisations.

Our biggest project for this year is a large-scale interview project, in which we're interviewing around 160 professionals across various levels of leadership in UK organisations of different sizes in our focal sectors. These hour-long interviews look to identify a) the character strengths that are most important in each of the sectors and how these are understood and defined by companies; b) the role of these character strengths in responsible leadership and ethical practice; and c) the organisational patterns that help develop and embed the virtues within professional practice, all by drawing on personal experiences of those working in the organisations. These interviews are a foundational piece of our research in identifying the commonalities and differences in lived experiences of character and leadership in each of our focal sectors.

To complement our interviews, we also have a quantitative survey which will be completed by different individuals from the same participant pool which will explore the characteristics and attributes associated with good leadership in each of our sectors. This 3-part study will help us to identify a psychological 'prototype' of good leadership in each of the sectors and to explore how these perceptions differ depending on position within the company, length of tenure within sector, experience in previous sectors and a selection of additional demographics. Across sectors and each of the three studies we are aiming to survey over 4700 participants.

All together, these three projects feed into our student leadership programmes which we call the 'Global Leadership Initiative'. We've been running programmes on leadership and character for postgraduates at Oxford since 2014, taking on a new cohort each year for a 16-week programme running through Hilary and Trinity terms. This programme brings together diverse groups of postgraduate students from across the University of Oxford to discuss readings, learn from experienced guest speakers and take part in a mentorship scheme all focused on character and leadership. Our previous research has shown these programmes contribute to character development among participants, and contribute an important element of leadership education alongside Masters and DPhil programmes. Many students remain involved through our alumni network, returning to share their experience of life and leadership beyond Oxford.

Over the next two years, we are seeking to take this previous work further and create sector-specific programmes for our focal sectors, building on our research findings from the first year of our project. This will take the form of adaptations of the Global Leadership Initiative for each sector for postgraduates, along with short intensive programmes which will be created for use within the industries themselves. Our hope is that these programmes will become useful tools, grounded in empirical research, which can be used at universities and organisations globally to change the landscape of leadership for the better.

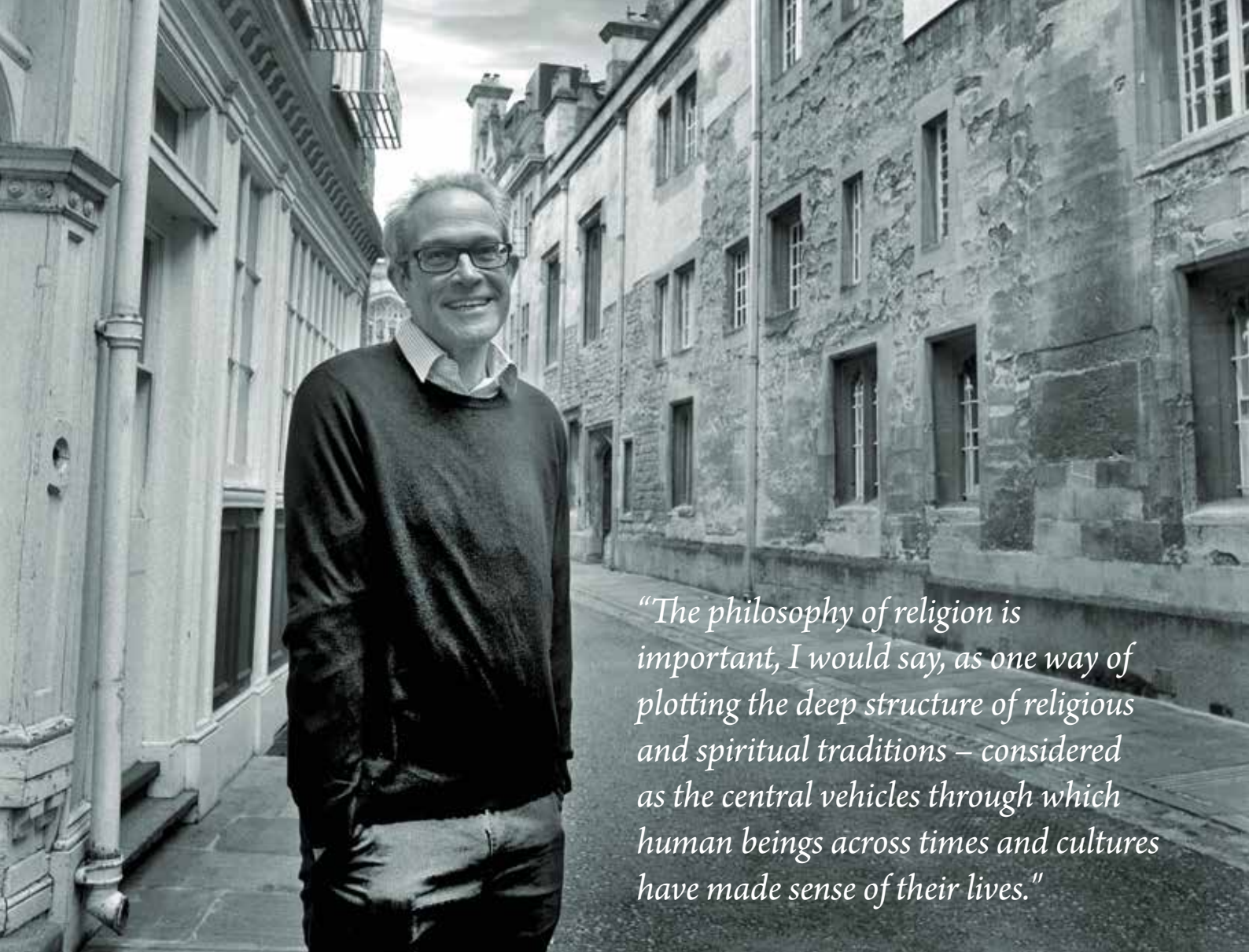
It's been an exciting journey so far with our new team and learning to work in a truly interdisciplinary way has been challenging but hugely rewarding. Whilst our research methodology and design very much draws on psychology (as is my background), our new team is made up of theologians, philosophers, psychologists, sociologists and business practitioners, all of whom bring unique expertise and insight to the variety of work that OCP undertakes. Many in the team, including myself, are early-career researchers, and as such are continuing to develop our own research and interests as well as engaging in the many career development opportunities available through the faculty and university. Most recently, our team of post-docs have completed a course on qualitative research methods and qualitative interviewing skills, under the guidance and training of Jonathan Brant and Grant Blank from the Oxford Internet Institute.

Whilst we are only in the first year of our new project, we have much to be excited about and look forward to learning and contributing to the study of character across disciplines and in our focal industry sectors, and provide useful, actionable insights grounded in empirical research.

We know that Oxford theologians are a diverse bunch with a wonderful variety of interests and career paths. Whether you are an undergraduate with an interest in questions of character, or a corporate CEO, or anywhere in between, if you would be interested to hear more about our work, we would love to hear from you. ■



*Dr Ed Brooks, Executive Director (left) speaking with Global Leadership Initiative participants.*



*“The philosophy of religion is important, I would say, as one way of plotting the deep structure of religious and spiritual traditions – considered as the central vehicles through which human beings across times and cultures have made sense of their lives.”*

# Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion

## An interview with Mark Wynn

**Dallas Callaway**, *Magdalen College*

**Congratulations on your appointment as Nolloth Professor of the Philosophy of the Christian Religion. Would you be able to say a bit about your background prior to taking up this appointment?**

Well, to begin at the beginning, I was born in Khartoum, but I mostly grew up in Liverpool, where I attended St. Edward's College, in those days run by the Christian Brothers. Then I was myself a student at the University: many years ago now, I came to Hertford College to read PPE, before changing in my second year to Philosophy and Theology, which was then a very small honours school – so small that I only came to know about it through a chance encounter with a student who was enrolled in the programme. After a year of work as

a nursing auxiliary, I returned to study for my DPhil at Linacre, under the supervision of Brian Davies and Richard Swinburne.

Over the years, I have held quite a number of academic appointments – and I have appreciated working in departments, and to some extent universities, with their own ethos and approach, and in each case, I have found myself with quite different teaching and research roles. My first appointment was at King's College London, and there I worked for two years as a specialist in the Philosophy of Religion. Then I moved to the Australian Catholic University, at the time fairly newly established – which was exciting, as everything was up for discussion, including the sense in which the University was to

count as ‘Catholic’ and indeed ‘Australian’. There I was very much a generalist: the campuses of the University were distributed across the eastern seaboard and, as the only member of the Philosophy School based in Brisbane, I taught the entirety of the undergraduate curriculum, from the pre-Socratics to current debates in analytic philosophy of mind and language. Then I returned to the UK, to a position in a Department of Theology and Religion, at the University of Exeter. There, I could range freely, and without really thinking too much about the overall drift of my interests, I designed and taught a succession of modules on religion and embodiment – including courses on the contribution of the emotions, responsiveness to place and sensory experience to the spiritual life.

Then I moved to Leeds as Professor of Philosophy and Religion, where I established a programme in Liberal Arts, and found myself co-teaching a raft of new modules aimed at this cohort, with colleagues from a wide range of Humanities and Social Science disciplines. Pedagogically, this was an exciting time – while I’d taught texts by medieval philosophers and theologians before, I’d never before taught them in conversation with a medieval historian! Then, in 2020, I returned to my roots: I am

now back in Oxford, and once again specialising in Philosophical Theology, but with a breadth of perspective, I hope, that derives from this rather varied intellectual formation.

**How has your work been going in your new position, and, specifically, how has the Covid-19 pandemic impacted your role and research?**

I love being back in Oxford. It is my favourite place in the world – and having spent my formative years here, every street is crowded with memories from my youth, in general good memories, and being back here, I feel a kind of completeness, sensing my youthful self and my present self being woven together. I remember the day when I first figured out what my teaching role here would involve, some time after my appointment as it happens, and feeling quite amazed at the array of opportunities that I would have. And that sense of wonderment at the role has continued – it is the most extraordinary privilege to be able to work one to one with master’s and doctoral students who are pursuing their primary intellectual love, and specialising in precisely my field, and along the way to get to know them as people with their own life narrative and commitments.

*Stained glass window showing Jesus at the Last Supper, installed between 1872-3 in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.*

© Tony Baggett





As for the impact of Covid, one of my regrets from this year has been the limited opportunity to build a graduate community in philosophical theology – but at some point before we disperse for the summer, I am hoping it will be possible to assemble the students in person, so they can get to know each other better – and exchange ideas on themes in philosophical theology and much besides.

**You have a new research project funded by the John Templeton Foundation, *God-Concepts and Spiritual Wellbeing*, getting underway. Could you describe the issues that you aim to look at with this project and where you see this project headed?**

The project has led to two appointments – a DPhil student began work in January 2021, and a postdoc will start in September. The central ambition of the project is to consider the interaction between conceptions of God and ideals of spiritual practice. For instance, if all goes to plan, one strand of the research will involve interviewing spiritual directors, or others with experience of offering spiritual counsel, with a view to charting the connections between their conception of God, or the Sacred, and their sense of the shape of the well-lived life, and what it takes to lead such a life. Alongside this empirical approach, we will also be using philosophical methods, to think about the range of ways in which God-concepts may ground an account of spiritual goods and, moving in the other direction, about the extent to which a God-concept may be assessed as more or less adequate by reference to its implications for spiritual practice and wellbeing. So this line of enquiry aims to deploy some of the conceptual skills that are core to the work of philosophical theology as standardly conceived, while at the same time considering the relationship between these theoretical reflections and real-world judgements about how to navigate the varied circumstances of ordinary life.

**Let's talk a bit about your most recent book, *Spiritual Traditions and the Virtues: Living Between Heaven and Earth*. What are the issues you engage in that book and how do they relate to your forthcoming work?**

The book's subtitle is an allusion to an idea that Thomas Aquinas develops when setting out his notion of 'infused' moral virtue. In brief, his thought is that our relations to the everyday material world can be assessed not only by reference to what he calls a 'rule

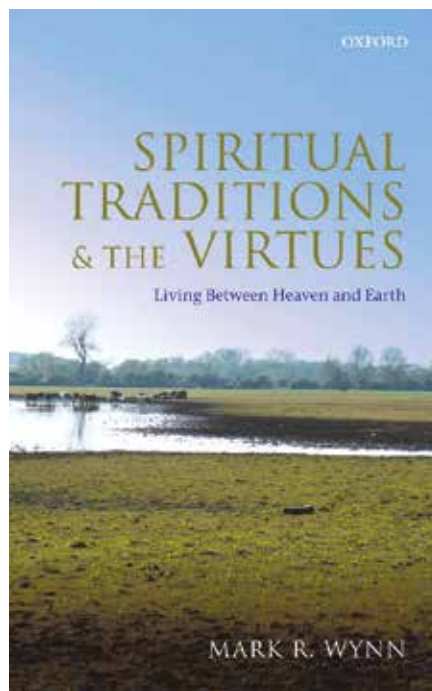
of reason', but also for their congruence with religious narratives. In effect, Aquinas is concerned, then, with the question of what difference is made to a human life, in practical, emotional and attitudinal terms, by the introduction of a religious perspective on the world. What I like about this approach is its determination to consider religious narratives not simply as bundles of metaphysical claims, but in terms of their role in defining human identities and thereby a mode of engagement with the sensory world. In the book, I was particularly interested to explore whether it might be possible

to extend Aquinas's account, by showing how this perspective can be applied in other domains, in addition to those he examines – for instance, by considering the place of bodily demeanour and habits of perception in the Christian life. As for next steps, I am currently trying to extend some of these reflections in the direction of an account of liturgy and ritual – another context in which we may speak very readily, of course, of living between heaven and earth.

**Finally, why do you think the study of theology, and the philosophy of religion in particular, is important and can significantly contribute to both society and academia at large?**

This term (Trinity '21), I have been attending a reading group on recent philosophies of the 'meaning of life'. If the material we have been considering to this point is representative, quite a bit of the work in this field is an attempt to articulate how a human life might bear some deep-seated significance independently of its location within any religious framework. As it happens, I think that this literature could be refined, in conceptual terms, by attending more closely to religious perspectives on how it is possible for human lives to count for something, or to go well. These religious forms of understanding are, I think, part of

our universal human inheritance – and secular philosophers, too, can learn from them, if they are trying to establish the conditions under which a human life may be deemed 'meaningful'. So the philosophy of religion is important, I would say, as one way of plotting the deep structure of religious and spiritual traditions – considered as the central vehicles through which human beings across times and cultures have made sense of their lives. And if it is faithful to this task, then it may just be that it can draw us into newly productive relations with one another, and our material context, here and now, in the present. ■



*The book's subtitle is an allusion to an idea that Thomas Aquinas develops when setting out his notion of 'infused' moral virtue.*

# Keeping Oxford reading

## The theology collections during the pandemic

**Hilla Wait**, *Philosophy and Theology Librarian*



**Librarians generally like to plan ahead, but the sudden rise of Covid-19 cases and the introduction of the first lockdown in March 2020, not only closing the libraries to readers but also separating staff from the collections, was a very sudden and unprecedented situation.** I'm glad we didn't know then how long it would take to recover any degree of normality, or that the daily adjustments would become our new normal.

The first few days were largely taken up with adapting to working from home, sorting out places to work, resolving computer issues, desperately trying to buy web-cams like the rest of the wfh population, deciding which staff should be furloughed and which not, and trying to reassure staff. As University employees, we were largely shielded from the national concerns about job security and redundancies, but with a recruitment freeze, staff on short-term contracts, such as graduate library trainees faced particular difficulties.

Library priorities during the pandemic were of course to continue to support our readers in this changed world. We were fortunate in that e-provision for journals and to a lesser extent books had been scaling up in recent years, so we were not left utterly bereft by the loss of access to print.

Acquisitions policy switched very quickly to e-only. While we avoided cancelling print subscriptions to journals and series, with both publishers and libraries in lockdown, new titles in print were either not produced or not delivered. In 2019-20 the ebook share of the theology library materials budget rose from a projected 36% to 51%. 2020-21 is looking fairly similar.

During the "first" lockdown many publishers generously gave free access to many eresources. In the first three months of lockdown (March-June 2020), the Bodleian added 1.64 million eBooks and 7,483 eJournals to the existing collections. Access to the Hathi Trust's Emergency Library Access Scheme was a major factor here. Oxford was the first (and in fact the only UK library during the first lockdown) to negotiate access for our university members. We benefitted also from the generosity of our regular suppliers, such as Brill, Brepols, Cambridge University Press, De Gruyter, Oxford University Press, Bloomsbury, Taylor & Francis and many others. Most of these courtesy packages expired by September 2020, leaving us to devise new strategies to accommodate reader needs. From September 2020 onwards, while our libraries gradually reopened, many readers remained away from Oxford and the UK, and those who had returned were faced with libraries transformed in order to make them Covid-safe, but sadly with the result being a significant reduction in seat numbers and an advance booking system. Ebooks therefore remained a key part of our reader support strategy for 2020-21.

Usage statistics for the pandemic are not of course complete, but, from March-December 2020, 2,039,605 ebook chapters were accessed, plus 25,758 Hathi Trust titles. E-journal articles accessed in the same period totalled 8,826,620.

A major support for graduate students has been the Faculty graduate book scheme. The budget for the "normal" scheme was doubled and the scope was extended from D.Phil students to taught graduate courses as well. While the scheme still gave preference to fulfilling requests by ebook, the scheme was adapted for print-only items so that students could order directly with delivery to their home

address and then claim the costs back from the faculty. These print copies will subsequently be added to library stock. The scheme is very popular with students:

Another way we managed to deliver content to non-Oxford based students was via our Reading List platform, ORLO. ORLO is a dynamic reading list platform linking to the library catalogue (SOLO), and also providing direct links to full text journal articles and ebooks and to digital scans of print-only material. During the pandemic, copyright restriction for library scans for teaching purposes have been somewhat relaxed with publishers' consent, increasing the % of the book which can be made available via the reading list. This presented especial challenges when there was no access to the library, and we were reduced to searching scan repositories and scanning personal copies of texts and calling on our academics to do the same. Once staff access to the libraries was restored, the scanning operations have been scaled-up massively, benefiting students still away from Oxford and reducing the need for access to the limited number of library seats.

In the first pandemic phase (roughly March-June 2020), we had no access to our libraries or buildings, except for necessary building security checks, generally carried out during the hour of daily exercise. The Philosophy and Theology Faculties Library (PTFL) had a special role at this time, as the only Bodleian Library with an external book returns box. At the start of the pandemic, 39,548 books were on loan from the Bodleian Libraries, many sadly to students who would finish their courses without ever returning to Oxford. PTFL was the recipient of over 10,000 books borrowed from other Oxford libraries, and being returned by readers leaving Oxford, either for lockdown or for good. The books were quarantined and then crated and stored until the "owner" libraries were open again to receive them. The flood of returns was at times overwhelming.

For students who had managed to take their books home, the libraries created a new global system for postal returns (at no cost to the students), and a courier collection service for those who were vulnerable or isolating and therefore unable to visit a post office. Staff working to support this service became very familiar with postal and customs requirement in far flung corners of the world.

Provision of texts is only part of the libraries' work. Inquiries flooded in, both on procedural issues such as renewing books (we set all our books to extended loans for the duration), concerns about library fines (waived for the duration), returning books (we set up a postal returns service), queries about using the vital resources, and bibliographic inquiries, which might normally have been resolved by consulting a print item. The LiveChat service, accessible via SOLO was expanded to run until 7 p.m. M-F and over weekends. Library staff enhanced their skills in screen-sharing and troubleshooting online queries and teaching online.





The later phases of the pandemic have been in many ways more challenging than the initial phase. From autumn 2020, we were allowed to open a very small number of reading rooms and to give staff access to other libraries, including PTFL. In January 2021, PTFL opened its reading rooms again. Being able to consult printed texts again has been amazing, but our staff and reader spaces have had to be re-designed to make them safe. We currently have screens between staff and readers, separation of readers' seats to provide 2m distancing between readers [see picture], one-way systems round our building and enhanced cleaning operations. Until recently, returned books were quarantined for 72 hours before being returned to circulation. A booking system "SpaceFinder" was created to allocate our reduced numbers of reader seats, and to comply with Track and Trace needs. New services, such as Click&Collect were introduced. At PTFL, this enabled Oxford-based readers to request lending copies from PTFL or our closed stacks, and collect them in safe conditions from the library back door, without needing to enter the building or take up the limited number of library seats. Browse&Borrow was another creative way to give readers short-term access to the collections, and the ability to borrow without planning too far ahead. This was offered for 1 hour daily after the Click&Collect service had finished for the day.

*The library and what you are all doing to support us is pretty much the heart of what keeps me going at the moment.*

All of these arrangements required paperwork, risk assessments, approvals from Health and Safety and yet more paperwork, in order to keep staff and readers as safe as possible. The Radcliffe Observatory Quarter has also been the university's base for Covid-testing and latterly for Lateral Flow Test distribution as well, so the

pandemic has been ever-present on our doorstep. The "pingdemic" has been an especial joy recently, as staffing levels, tight at the best of times, have been affected by the sudden need to self-isolate. Library staff have been fantastic at stepping-in, switching libraries and roles at short notice, in order to keep our services running.

Co-operation between the Bodleian libraries and the college libraries has also been a major life-saver throughout the pandemic.

Colleges tripled their purchases of ebooks, and also managed to provide scans of essential print chapters for ORLO, presumably as part of their daily exercise. A college-organised scheme also helped to deliver print books to students in isolation in college rooms and halls of residence.

As I write, the university is taking a cautious approach to "Freedom Day" given the high level of infections in Oxford. For now, we are retaining a booking system for our restricted seat numbers and



face coverings will continue to be required in the libraries. We hope that by Michaelmas Term many of these restrictions will have been removed. However, we have learned to be cautious. The bad things about the pandemic, from my perspective (and I have been amazingly lucky in that none of my family have been touched closely by it), have been the loss of access to the collections and the loss of face-face contact with readers. In some cases, despite all our creative solutions, there has been no way to provide a specific book or article when it was needed, and that always feels like a failure. Conversely, when readers have made the effort to express satisfaction, it has meant even more than normal:

What else have we learned from the pandemic? We have a better understanding of the requirements for remote study and that should benefit part-time students in the future. Our e-first policy has proved its worth, and I am hoping to have fewer conversations about the evils of ebooks. I have become a convert to meeting on Teams, rather than trekking across Oxford for meetings. It wasn't really a surprise, but I am delighted with the ingenuity and dedication of library staff and the willingness of readers to adapt and make the best of what we can offer. Conversely, the difficulties of getting seats in reading rooms has shown how much our libraries are needed, as study spaces as well as for the books they hold. However much I love ebooks, their immediacy of availability and breadth of access, their flexibility, it is clear that we can't manage without the print book or the physical library. ■

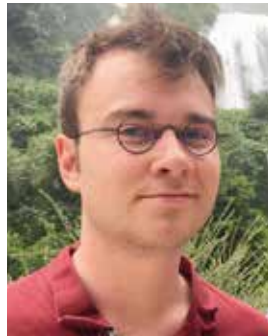


# Journal of the Oxford Graduate Theological Society (JOGTS)

The first 3 years

## **NIKOLAAS DEKETELAERE,** DPhil student, Editor (2019-2020)

In the summer of 2019, I wrote to Professor Graham Ward—then chair of the faculty—to ask whether the faculty would welcome an attempt by its graduate students to set up an academic, peer-reviewed journal, entirely run by the graduate community, that would publish papers covering the research areas in which the faculty is active. Professor Ward immediately invited me to lunch to discuss the details of the project. At the time I was not yet sure whether such a journal would even be feasible, so had very few details to offer. Indeed, I was mostly hoping to find out whether the faculty would be willing to entertain the idea of letting its brand be associated with a project entirely run by graduate students. Without an explicit link with the faculty, I felt, there would be no point in pursuing the project any further. At this stage, I was not thinking too much about practical details such as funding. After all, I thought, a basic website is very inexpensive these days, so we would not need much money to start out.



At our lunch, Professor Ward assured me that he felt a journal run by students was a great idea: one that could benefit both the graduate community and the faculty itself. Not only did he encourage me to pursue the project further by drawing up a formal proposal to put to the faculty board later that year, but he also suggested that I immediately apply for funding to get the project off the ground.

Quite a lot of funding, in fact; much more than I had ever considered possible. This, in turn, transformed what was possible for the journal. Instead of a basic website, we were suddenly looking at software that would provide us with an online portal in which all editorial tasks could be handled: submission, communication with authors and reviewers, the review process itself, revisions, copyediting, typesetting, and so on. Of course, aside from the practical benefits, this also made the website look and feel much more like that of an actual journal. The proposal was warmly received by the faculty board, who initially decided to fund the project for three years. I am therefore very glad to say that you can now visit the website, read the articles published in the journal, and perhaps even submit your own, on [www.jogts.org](http://www.jogts.org).



However, funding and a website will only get you so far. Setting up the journal and publishing its first issue, as we did last year on the topic of 'Religious Life', involved an enormous amount of work. The faculty's graduate community nevertheless rose to the challenge with great skill and commitment. The resulting journal is a testament to the talents of the faculty's graduate students. Of course, through their involvement with the journal, these students are all acquiring editorial skills that will be valuable in their future careers, whether inside or outside academia. I am therefore very grateful to the faculty for their ongoing support of the journal. ■

**TIM MIDDLETON, DPhil student  
Editor (2020-2021)**

When Nikolaas handed the journal over to me, he left very big shoes to fill. Not only had he founded a high-quality publication from a standing start in under a year, but he had also cultivated a great deal of goodwill for the project from students and faculty alike. My job, as I saw it, was to try and embed his brilliant idea as a permanent fixture.

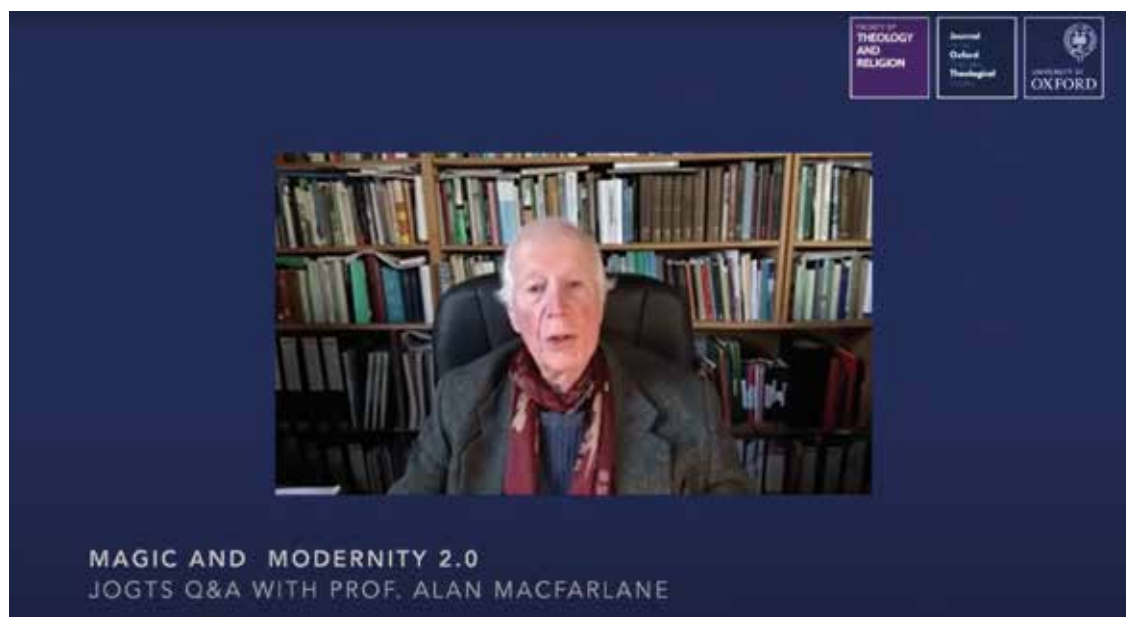


I was particularly heartened right at the outset when no fewer than thirty-six of the new graduate students applied to join the Editorial Board at the beginning of Michaelmas term 2020. It has been this level of enthusiasm from fellow graduate students that has really carried us through this year, as we have sought to build on the journal's success without a single face-to-face meeting! Early on, we chose 'Theology, Religion and Crisis' as the theme for our second

issue. We certainly had the COVID-19 pandemic in mind as we discussed this, but we also felt that we could not ignore the urgency of the Black Lives Matter movement and the mounting seriousness of ecological collapse. At the same time, we were aware that theologies and religions are not just called to respond to contemporary events but have also both shaped and been shaped by numerous crises of the past—and this was something we wanted to explore.

As I write, we have half a dozen articles and four book reviews—many of them on this theme—currently undergoing revision and copy-editing. All being well, our second issue is due to be published after the summer break. This issue will also feature the transcript of an interview with historian and anthropologist Alan Macfarlane about the crisis of modernity, which formed the centrepiece of our first live (online) event as a journal. You can watch the full interview on the Journal of the Oxford Graduate Theological Society YouTube [channel](#).

In a further bid to extend our reach, this year has also seen the exciting development of a new collaboration with the Society for the Study of Christian Ethics (SSCE). We are currently in the process of publishing proceedings from this year's SSCE postgraduate conference on 'Cities of God: Politics, Theology and Ethics'. So, there will in fact be not just one, but two new issues of the journal to look out for in the autumn. I am especially delighted that, across both issues, we are now attracting many authors and peer-reviewers from beyond the graduate community here in Oxford, and even internationally. We are keen that our Editorial Board continues to be made up of graduate students in the faculty, but we are excited by the possibility that we could become a well-known publication venue for graduate students and early career researchers from other universities.



*Prof. Alan Macfarlane, University of Cambridge discusses 'Magic and Modernity' of the first JOGTS event, available to view on the Journal of the Oxford Graduate Theological Society YouTube channel. ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCvMARw3LULwul67tC7Qgysg/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvMARw3LULwul67tC7Qgysg/) featured)*

We continue to be very grateful for the faculty's support of our endeavours, especially from the new journal Advisory Board, made up of senior members of the faculty, who have been assisting us by circulating our call for papers, suggesting peer-reviewers, offering feedback on the journal, and providing unstinting moral support. At the Advisory Board's suggestion, we have now registered the journal with its own International Standard Serial Number (ISSN).

Our publicity team have also been working very hard this year, and you can now follow us on Twitter [@TheJOGTS](#) or Facebook [@JOGTS.OX](#) for more information about our published papers, events, and submission deadlines. You are also very welcome to get in touch via email on [editor@jogts.org](mailto:editor@jogts.org). Meanwhile, I remain indebted to my fellow graduate students for all their hard work in contributing to this evolving project. Many, many others have been involved, so do visit our website for a full list of those who have made the journal what it is. ■

**NATASHA CHAWLA**, DPhil student,  
Editor (2021-2022)

When Tim asked me to consider becoming editor of the journal in the coming year, I was initially taken by surprise! I had joined the Editorial Board because I was curious to understand how journals worked, learn about the editing and publishing procedures, improve my own editing skills, and contribute where I could in whatever way was required; in short, to gain behind the scenes experience in an important aspect of a scholar's work life. It was not long before I realised that the JOGTS, although still in its infancy, was—through the work and commitment of Nikolaas, Tim, and the faculty's graduate community—a visionary initiative that did indeed provide a wonderful platform for the Theology and Religion graduate community to sharpen their skills and gain experience.



For this upcoming year, the Editorial Board have already discussed some wonderful ways to expand the reach of the journal and encourage quality submissions from a wide range of institutions, both in the UK and internationally.

One suggestion, following a conversation with Professor Mark Wynn, is to offer an essay prize to the best article published in each issue. For student authors, this would be an opportunity to demonstrate research excellence on the 'prizes and awards' section of their academic CV. The Editorial Board also agreed that an essay prize would help to distinguish the journal from the plethora of 'Calls for Papers' that land in email inboxes, further increasing our number of high-quality submissions.



*The Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies.*

As Tim mentioned, this year's themed interview with Professor Alan Macfarlane was the JOGTS's first live online event. The idea worked well, aligning with the theme of the journal, and gave attendees the chance to ask questions in real time. So, it is something we hope to continue. The [JOGTS's YouTube](#) channel was set up as a platform to upload the interview, and also now includes a series of clips named 'JOGTS Shorts'. YouTube is increasingly becoming a forum where people engage with academic content, so our marketing team is planning to continue creating and sharing these short form videos. The hope is that we can make JOGTS accessible to a wider audience, increase the reach of our online presence, and generate interesting content from within the faculty—as well as directing people to download and read the published journal.

One further idea is to augment our book reviews section by publishing a book symposium in which multiple reviewers respond to a recently published book by a senior member of the faculty. This would also provide a platform for a member of the Theology and Religion faculty to discuss their book with an interested and engaged audience!

Over the course of the year, we hope to continue to fulfil JOGTS's founding aim to produce a high-quality, peer-reviewed, graduate journal—as well as creating a space to engage with contemporary academic discussions and current research within the faculty. The enthusiasm for the JOGTS by the department's faculty and graduate students has been heartening and we very much look forward to further Advisory Board and alumni support as we continue to grow the journal. ■



# MEET OUR FIRST YEAR DPhils

## NATASHA CHAWLA

St Cross College

Prior to entering the DPhil, I enrolled on the Postgraduate Diploma in Theology and Religion here at Oxford in 2017—as a “conversion” course from my previous study, an MA in Fashion Marketing from the University of the Arts, and before that, a BA in Business and Economics. This move to religion stemmed from unpalatable answers to the questions a much younger and perhaps more naive self raised, such as “Where are the ethics in marketing?” to which the professor promptly replied, “I’m a marketing lecturer, don’t ask me about ethics!” And “Why are economic models and policy based on assumptions that just aren’t true?” (I still hope to meet a completely rational person (‘agent’) who has perfect knowledge). Together with these haunting and half-answered questions, some eye-opening life experience in the fashion world



in parallel with an active teaching and organising role in my local Vedanta (a branch of Hindu philosophy) centre, and a decade of studying and teaching yoga philosophy, enrolling on the PGDip in order to gain a more objective and comparative view of the study of religions seemed an oddly natural progression.

An MA in the Religions of Asia in 2018 at SOAS followed the PGDip. My dissertation looked at the concept of *prakṛti* (Nature) in the *Bhagavad Gītā* and its relevance to today’s environmental concerns. This formed the basis for my DPhil proposal. My thesis looks at the environmental concerns of today from the perspective of the polymath, Rabindranath Tagore (1861 – 1941). Tagore engaged with Nature and the environment in multiple ways and his vast literary outflow as well as his public lectures and private correspondence illustrate his deep sensitivity to and foresight of issues surrounding humans relationship with and behaviour towards Nature, creation and creativity, and ‘progress’, that can perhaps provide an alternative perspective.

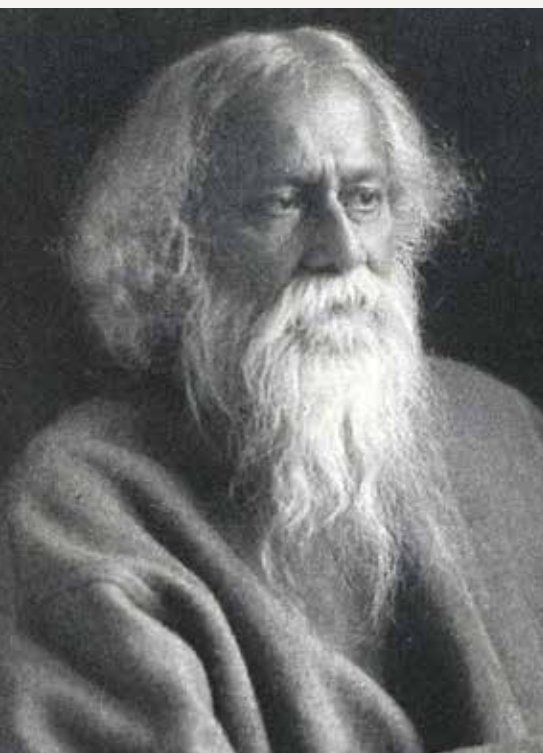
*“My thesis looks at the environmental concerns of today from the perspective of the polymath, Rabindranath Tagore ...”*

Religious and philosophical ideas and figures are rich with enquiry and to be able to use that enquiry to gain a more nuanced understanding and alternative solutions to contemporary challenges is what I enjoy most about the study of religions.

## ARIEL DEMPSEY

Wycliffe College

I am a DPhil student in Science and Religion studying under Dr Alister McGrath. I am also an MD. After the DPhil, I will return to the States to do medical residency in Psychiatry with a fellowship in Palliative Care. My aspiration is to become a Palliative Care physician walking alongside those at the end of life, and an academic theologian drawing on resources of religious traditions to reflect on healthcare and better serve those who suffer. My



*Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941), Indian polymath – poet, writer, playwright, composer, philosopher, social reformer and painter. Photograph taken in c. 1925.*

dissertation is on the topic of acting in uncertainty and I am applying insights from William James's pragmatism to medicine and theology. For me, the study of theology is a way of worshipping the Lord I love.

I grew up in Grand Rapids, Michigan with three brothers and a black lab. My premedical studies were at the University of Michigan, and I earned my MD at Michigan State University. Between my second and third year of medical school, I completed the MSt in Science and Religion at Oxford.

On the side of my studies, I love aerial silks and circus arts. I am part of a troupe called Bangarang Circus and travelled the coast of California street-performing to raise money for the charity WorldVision and its "Fundraise for Health Cause." I also love running and ran track and cross country with University of Michigan and played mid-field on the Oxford University Women's Association Football Club Blues.

*"My dissertation is on the topic of acting in uncertainty and I am applying insights from William James's pragmatism to medicine and theology."*

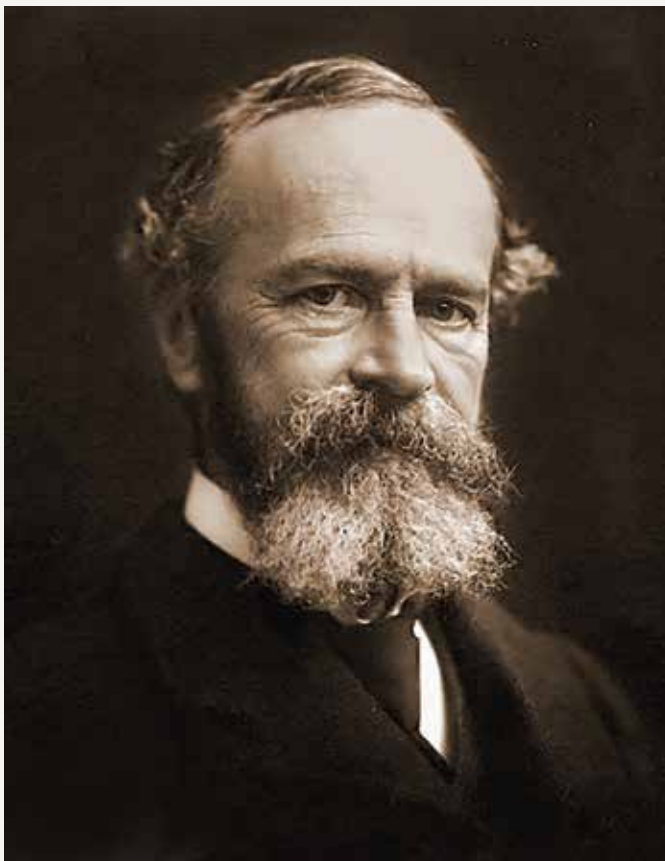
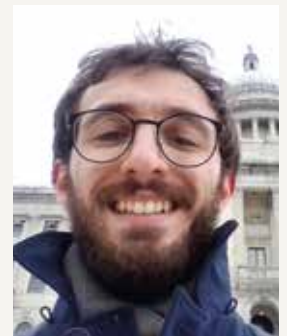
While at Oxford working on the DPhil, I will be running a Trauma Healing Program for refugees through the Rotary Foundation Global Grant Scholars Program. God's grace has carried me through some traumatic circumstances, and I've shared this testimony publicly in a TEDxTalk, "Live Like You're Dying: Acting in Uncertainty."

Religious and philosophical ideas and figures are rich with enquiry and to be able to use that enquiry to gain a more nuanced understanding and alternative solutions to contemporary challenges is what I enjoy most about the study of religions.

## ALBERTO GARZONI

Keble College

I read for the DPhil in Theology (Patristics and Christian Ethics) at Keble College, and I am a Middle Reader at the Canterbury Institute. I was born and raised in the Lombard Prealps, and I hold an MA in Philosophy (Hons) from the University of Padua and a Diploma in Moral Sciences (Hons) from the Galilean School of Higher Education. Part of the coursework towards those degrees was completed at Boston University.



*William James (1842-1910), philosopher and 'father of American psychology'; perhaps best-known for his 1901-1902 Gifford Lectures, published as 'The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature' (1902).*



*Fresco by Gersam Turri (1927-1929) of St Augustine in Santuario del Santissimo Crocifisso, Como, Italy.*

My current research focuses on bringing Augustine's political thought back to the forefront of Christian public engagement. I believe that, by highlighting Augustine's pastoral efforts for the inclusion of religious dissidents, liberal polities can find new resources to embrace a civic ethos of patience and humility, and marginalised citizens can learn how to raise their voices in microsocal contexts. Additional interests of mine include Catholic Social Teaching, Gregorian chant, and the poetry of T. S. Eliot.

*"I believe that, by highlighting Augustine's pastoral efforts for the inclusion of religious dissidents, liberal polities can find new resources to embrace a civic ethos of patience and humility ..."*

I envision my work as happening through teaching, writing and research, either within the academic world or in think tanks. Although I hope to find a way to pursue all those career paths, my greatest aspirations remain living up to the moral standard set for me by my grandfather and singing at the everlasting liturgy of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

### FILIP SYLWESTROWICZ

Mansfield College

In my native Poland, we say that someone is an 'eternal student' if she or he chooses to stay in academia for many years instead of facing the 'normal' routines of adulthood. It seems that this designation would fit my journey, which started with a BA in Hebrew (with a bit of Classics) at the University of Warsaw and continued through an MDiv at a small seminary in Canada [ask Filip for name of institution] and an MPhil in New Testament at Cambridge. Now, I am one year into the DPhil programme at Oxford. Looking back on this educational pilgrimage, I have to say that it was a very gratifying and enriching experience. It gave me ample opportunities for both engaging with various aspects of Christian theology and deepening my faith.

My current research focuses on the motifs of blessing and cursing in the letters of St. Paul. I am interested in, among other things, their role in community formation and boundary marking. My project also involves situating Paul within the Jewish and Greco-Roman world through a comparative study of how the motifs of blessing and curse are used in various sources. One thing that fascinates me



about blessings and curses is their relative 'otherness' to modern western society. With minor exceptions, we no longer encounter them in our daily existence, but they played significant role in the world of biblical writers. My project is, therefore, an exercise in bridging ancient and modern contexts to better understand the Holy Scripture. As a biblical scholar, I am striving to understand how blessings and curses operated in the world of Paul. But as a Christian theologian, I want to reflect on how they might be significant for believers today.

### IMRAN VISRAM

St Antony's College

Before starting my DPhil at Oxford, I graduated with an MPhil in South Asian Studies from the University of Cambridge. Previously, I pursued an Islamic Studies graduate course at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, and completed undergraduate studies in my home country, Canada, at the University of Waterloo. My past academic work at these institutions laid the foundations for my current DPhil research, which is focused on a body of religious songs known as the *gināns*.



The *gināns* are lyrical poems of North Indian provenance which play an important role in the daily liturgy and devotion of Indo-Islami Muslims. My DPhil project investigates how Ismaili *gināns* have been preserved into and over the twentieth century—a time period which not only saw the formalisation of their lyrics into a textual, religious canon, but also one in which the preservation of the *gināns* began to take place in the recorded analogue sound mediums of the gramophone disc and the magnetic cassette tape.

*"I recently served as a teaching assistant for a graduate-level module on Islam in South Asia under Professor Ali S. Asani at the Institute of Ismaili Studies."*

Since I started doctoral studies in October, I have also been involved in other research-related commitments. For example, I recently served as a teaching assistant for a graduate-level module on Islam in South Asia under Professor Ali S. Asani at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. I will also soon be a tutor of religion on Oxford's Access Programme, a summer initiative designed to help prepare Year 12 students in their transition to higher education studies. ■

# NEW ARRIVALS

We warmly welcome the Faculty's new members



## ISIDOROS C. KATSOS

Isidoros C. Katsos is joining the Theology Faculty in October 2021 as British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow to work on a 3-year project on 'Christian Human Rights: Ancient and Postmodern' under the mentorship of Nigel Biggar. He was previously based at Jerusalem as Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for the Study of Christianity, Hebrew University. Isidoros has studied law in Athens, Paris and Berlin, holding a PhD in Human Rights Law and Sustainable Development from the Freie Universität Berlin; and philosophy and theology in Athens and Cambridge, with a PhD (Cantab.) on the early Christian natural theology of light under the supervision of Rowan Williams. His most recent publications include the augmented version of his PhD thesis, forthcoming as a monograph with OUP under the title: *The Metaphysics of Light in the Hexaemeral Literature: From Philo of Alexandria to Gregory of Nyssa*; a chapter on early Christian theories of analogy and metaphor in the *The T. & T. Clark Companion to the Early Church* (forthcoming with Bloomsbury); and a chapter on the Nicene language of light, to appear with OUP.

During the British Academy Fellowship, Isidoros will explore the historical and conceptual roots of the idea of human rights in the Greek patristic corpus, with a focus on the Origenian and the Cappadocian

traditions. Far from merely antiquarian research, the aim of the project is to scrutinise current debates on 'Christian human rights' in East and West from the viewpoint of the common anthropological tradition of the church, aiming to retrieve the relevance of the early Christian reflection on the human condition for contemporary debates on human dignity, individuality and freedom.

Isidoros C. Katsos is a Greek-Orthodox priest, bearing the rank of Archimandrite.



## KHAI WAGER

In October, Khai Wager will join the Faculty of Theology and Religion as a Postdoctoral Researcher on the 'God-Concepts and Spiritual Wellbeing' project led by Professor Mark Wynn. The project marks an important investigation into relationships between the details of God-concepts and the goods of the spiritual life.

Before arriving at Oxford, Khai received a PhD in Philosophy from the University of Birmingham, where his research was primarily rooted in the philosophy of mind, supervised by Professor Yujin Nagasawa and funded by an Arts and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Studentship in Philosophy. Before that, and also from the University of Birmingham, he received an MA in Philosophy of Religion and Ethics, funded

by an Arts and Humanities Research Council Research Preparation Studentship in Religious Studies. Accordingly, his research interests span the philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion and ethics.

Khai's doctoral research focused on outlining and developing a novel approach to the problem of phenomenal consciousness, called 'cosmopsychism'. The view is among the class of fundamental approaches to consciousness which hold that consciousness is, in some sense, a fundamental feature of reality. However, unlike other members of the class, cosmopsychism says that the cosmos itself is conscious and that all instances of sub-cosmic consciousness (like our own) are derived from this one fundamental cosmic consciousness. This is an attractive position because, arguably, it avoids some of the most persistent problems of both materialism and other fundamental approaches in its class. It is interesting to note that cosmopsychism can be construed theistically, either as a version of pantheism or panentheism.

Not entirely unrelated, Khai's interests in the philosophy of religion centre around two inter-related worries about the discipline; first, that, in practice, its scope is limited to the effect that alternative concepts of the divine are not given the serious treatment they deserve, and second, that work in the field often exemplifies a disconnect with the lived experience of religious practitioners. He believes the task of expanding the scope of the philosophy of religion, especially in the analytic tradition, so as to address these worries, is an important one.

Khai very much looks forward to working with (and learning from) Professor Wynn, as well as other project members and Faculty colleagues, and to bringing his interests and experience to bear on this important enquiry. ■

# STUDENT PRIZES

Prizes awarded annually in the Faculty of Theology and Religion

**Pia Regensburger**  
Oriell College

**JUNIOR PUSEY AND ELLERTON PRIZE:** Awarded to the candidate with the best performance in the Biblical Hebrew paper.



**Amy Ward**  
St. John's College

**JUNIOR PUSEY AND ELLERTON PRIZE:** Awarded to the candidate with the best performance in Biblical Hebrew in the Final Honour School of Theology and Religion.



**Alistair Reid**  
Wycliffe Hall

**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.



**Alistair Reid**  
Wycliffe Hall

**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.



**Matthew Bowen**  
Mansfield College

**CANON HALL PRELIMINARY GREEK TESTAMENT PRIZE:** Awarded to the candidate with an outstanding performance in relation to the New Testament in the original Greek in respect of translation, criticism, and interpretation as demonstrated in any part of the Preliminary Examinations in Theology and Religion or Joint Schools..



**Alistair Reid**  
Wycliffe Hall

**CANON HALL JUNIOR GREEK TESTAMENT PRIZE:** Awarded to the candidate with an outstanding performance in relation to the New Testament in the original Greek in respect of translation, criticism, and interpretation as demonstrated in any part of the Final Honour School of Theology and Religion; Philosophy and Theology; and Religion or Joint Schools.



**Miriam Segal**  
Pembroke College

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



**Nicolas Rix-Perez**  
St. John's College

**GIBBS PRIZE:** Awarded for the best Performance in the Preliminary Examination in Theology and Religion.



## STUDENT PRIZES

**Rory Kunz**  
St. Benet's Hall

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**GIBBS PRIZE:** Awarded for the best performance in the Preliminary Examination in Philosophy and Theology.



**Aamir Kaderbhai**  
Mansfield College

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**ELLERTON THEOLOGICAL MST ESSAY PRIZE:** Awarded for the best dissertation.



**Frederica Schager**  
Worcester College

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



**Noel Cheong**  
Keble College

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**ELLERTON THEOLOGICAL MPHIL ESSAY PRIZE:** Awarded for the best dissertation.



**Lorcan O'Brien**  
Jesus College

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



**Charles J. Styles**  
Christ Church College

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**ELLERTON THEOLOGICAL MPHIL ESSAY PRIZE:** Awarded for the best dissertation.



**Timothy Lee**  
Wycliffe Hall

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**HALL-HOUGHTON SEPTUAGINT GREEK PRIZE:** Awarded to the Masters candidate with an outstanding performance in relation to the Septuagint version in its twofold aspect, vis-à-vis the Hebrew Bible and/or the Greek New Testament.



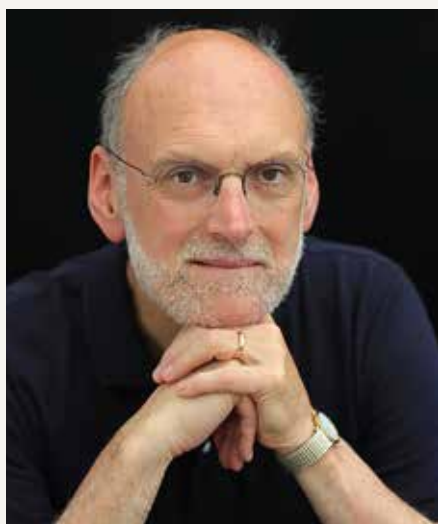
**Marcus Bailey**  
Keble College

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**CANON HALL SENIOR GREEK TESTAMENT PRIZE:** Awarded to the Masters candidate with an outstanding performance in relation to the New Testament in the original Greek in respect of translation, criticism, interpretation and inspiration.



# FACULTY NEWS



## NIGEL BIGGAR

Prof. Nigel Biggar was made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2021 for his 'outstanding contribution to Higher Education in defence of free speech'. The honour is in 'recognition' of the fact that, 'as Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Oxford University and Director of the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics and Public Life', he is both 'a distinguished academic' and one 'committed to preserving academic freedom and the philosophical ideology that goes with it'. Nigel's new book, *What's Wrong With Rights?* (Oxford University Press, 2020), was launched with a discussion between Nigel, John Larkin QC, Baroness O'Neill, and Lord Sumption, chaired by David Goodheart, and hosted by the think-tank Policy Exchange. *What's With Wrong With Rights?* has been reviewed in the *Times* (Jonathan Sumption), *Telegraph* (Simon Heffer), *Literary Review* (Michael Ignatieff), *Prospect* (Baroness Hale), *The Critic* (Baroness Hale), and *New Statesmen*, where, in the latter, philosopher John Gray described this latest book as part of Nigel's ongoing 'body of work of the highest intellectual quality which has made him one of the leading living Western ethicists'.



## JEREMIAH COOGAN

Jeremiah Coogan, a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow in the Faculty, has been recognised with two major international awards for research excellence. His article 'Reading (in) a Quadriform Cosmos: Gospel Books and the Early Christian Bibliographic Imagination' (forthcoming from the *Journal of Early Christian Studies*) has received the Society of Biblical Literature's 2021 Achtemeier Award, recognising 'the finest and most penetrating work in New Testament studies' by a scholar within ten years of receiving their PhD. His 2020 Notre Dame dissertation *Eusebius the Evangelist* (now forthcoming as a monograph from Oxford University Press) was recognised for 'excellent and innovative contributions to manuscript studies' by the 2021 J. P. Gumbert Dissertation Award from the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures at the Universität Hamburg.



## DAFYDD DANIEL

Dr Dafydd Mills Daniel appeared on *BBC Radio 4's The Moral Maze* to discuss *Rights and Rules*, and was a panellist on two editions of *BBC Radio 3's Free Thinking: Individual and Community*, where he discussed themes from his new book, *Conscience and the Age of Reason* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), and a programme commemorating the life of *Saint John Henry Newman*. Together with a colleague in the Philosophy Faculty, Dafydd ran the online event *Are Humans Responsible For Natural Disasters?* at the *Being Human Festival 2020* and the *IF: Science + Ideas Festival 2020*. Dafydd was also awarded two fiction prizes: he came 3<sup>rd</sup> on the *Bridport Prize 2020* and was one of only six authors shortlisted for the *Society of Authors' ALCS Tom-Gallon Award 2021*. His appearance on *The Story of God with Morgan Freeman* (Series 3, Episode 4) was released on *Disney+*.

*Professor Nigel Biggar was made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2021 for his 'outstanding contribution to Higher Education in defence of free speech'.*



**DAVID DOWNS**

**"1Clement.VMR"**

**(<https://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/web/1clement/welcome>)**

Led by Dan Batovici (Leuven) and David Downs (Oxford), this project, "1Clement.VMR," aims to produce transcriptions for all manuscript witnesses of the ancient letter known as 1 Clement. This letter, written by the Christ-believing community in Rome to encourage the cessation of conflict among Christians in Corinth, was composed in Greek but has also been preserved in Syriac, Coptic, and Latin versions. In cataloging, indexing and transcribing all manuscript witnesses of 1 Clement, this project will serve as a resource for a new critical edition of the Greek text of 1 Clement. Yet the directors of 1Clement.VMR also hope that this project demonstrates the value of a digital approach to the transmission and reception of the body of early Christian literature known as the Apostolic Fathers. In connexion with the [AnTrAF project](#) (Ancient Translations of the Apostolic Fathers), 1Clement will illustrate the potential for a larger digital project on the textual transmission and reception of a number of important early Christian texts (1 Clement, 2 Clement, Didache, the Epistle of Barnabas, the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch, the Epistle of Polycarp, the Martyrdom of Polycarp, the Shepherd of Hermas, and Papias' Expositions of the Sayings of the Lord), and Papias' Expositions of the Sayings of the Lord).



**SUE GILLINGHAM**

Perhaps the most memorable experience of Zoom during Covid was a nine-hour 'Psalmathon' with Exeter Diocese, where we read through Psalms 1-150 in different translations in different languages without a single break. My role as Canon Theologian was to add a commentary when we ran ahead of time, and to answer questions *en route*.

Real-life encounters have included a paper on Psalm 119 at Exeter and later for TORCH (both in early March 2020) and a paper on 'Lockdown Psalms' (*sic*) in The Hague (July 2020). Otherwise, papers have been courtesy of Teams and Zoom, including two in September 2020 for Liverpool Diocese, and one for the Scottish Theology Society in January 2021. Other papers to be given in person are on hold until 2022.

Four articles are awaiting publication, as also the third volume of *Psalms through the Centuries: Psalms 73-151* with Wiley-Blackwell, which is due to be out by the end of this year.

The most interesting Faculty commitment has been working with the indefatigable Justin Jones, our REF Officer, as the Lead Applicant for an Impact Study from the Oxford Psalms Network. Its title is *The Oxford Psalms Network: Influencing Musical, Poetic, Artistic, and Liturgical Practice June 2017-December 2020*. It has been an inspiration to continue directing the Psalms Network, and hopefully by 2022 it might host a celebratory concert bringing together some internationally known composers of psalms.

Talking of celebration, the postponed knee surgery actually took place during the height of Covid, and although unlike the lame man in Acts 3 I'm not quite leaping and dancing, I'm certainly pleased to be on my feet again.

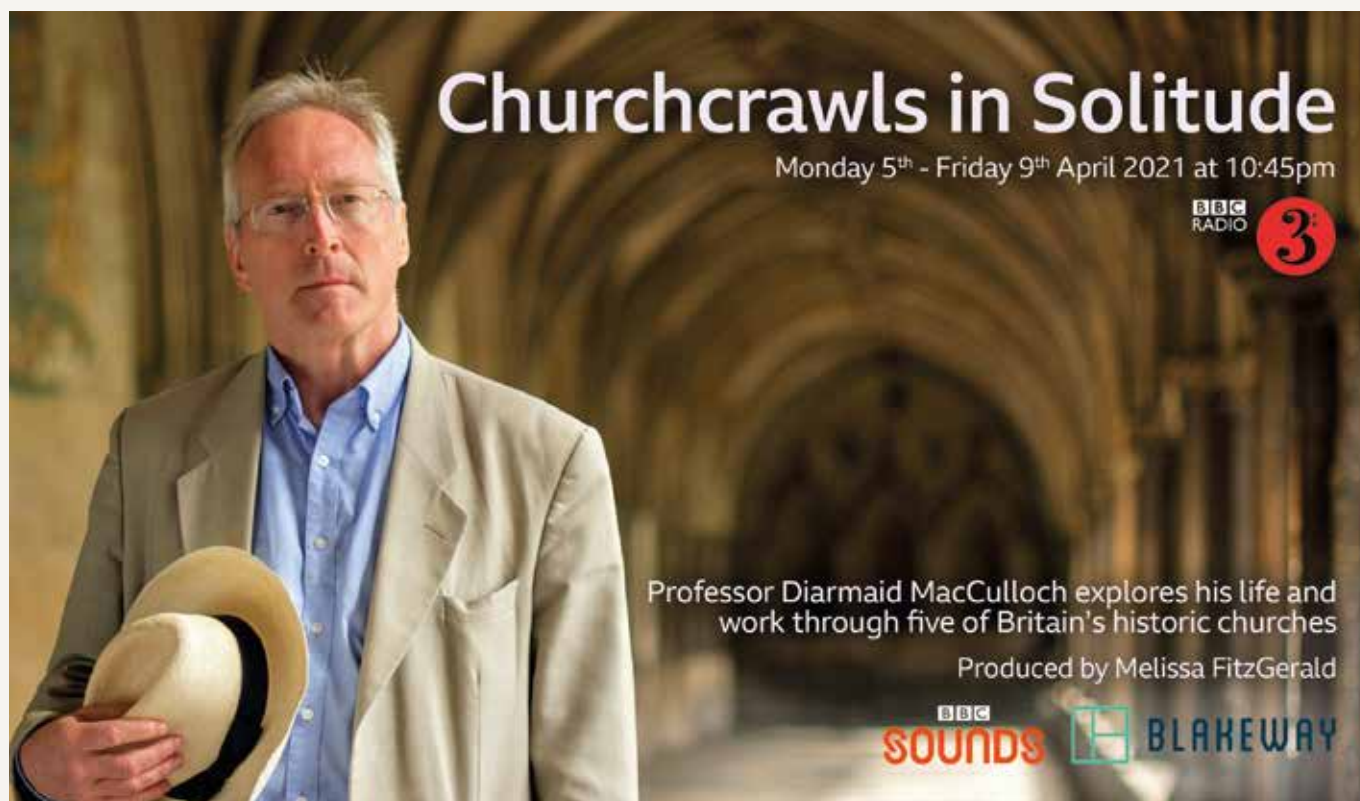


**DANIEL HERSKOWITZ**

From more than 200 applicants, Daniel Herskowitz was awarded the Salo W. and Jeannette M. Baron Young Scholar Award for Scholarly Excellence in Research of the Jewish Experience, awarded by the University of Vienna.

*Perhaps the most memorable experience of Zoom during Covid was a nine-hour 'Psalmathon' with Exeter Diocese, where we read through Psalms 1-150 in different translations in different languages without a single break.*





*Diarmaid MacCulloch visited five churches across five nights for his 2021 series of BBC Radio 3 'Essays: Churchcrawls in Solitude'.*

## DIARMAID MACCULLOCH

Diarmaid MacCulloch presented a series of five BBC 3 Essays each night from April 5 to April 9 for Easter Week 2021. The series, entitled Churchcrawls in Solitude, is available on BBC sounds, and is described as follows: 'At the end of the first lockdown in September 2020 the Oxford Professor of History, Diarmaid MacCulloch, sought sanctuary in his favourite hobby "churchcrawling", which he defines as the relentless pursuit of churches of all shapes and sizes just for the fun of it, "like a pub crawl, only with churches". It's been his passion since his early childhood growing up in a rectory in rural Suffolk. In five essays, Diarmaid MacCulloch takes us on journeys around some of Britain's ancient and atmospheric churches to help us get lost in the history, art and personality of these churches as well as digging deeper to reflect on his own experiences of "a historian's life, measured out in churches".



## JENNIFER STRAWBRIDGE

Professor Jennifer Strawbridge was appointed this year to serve on the newly founded Scholarship and Fellowship Committee of the St Augustine Foundation - an educational charity. Serving on a committee with colleagues from 11 countries (including the DRC, South Africa, Brazil, Uganda, Taiwan, Uganda, and the USA), the committee works together to offer support for promising students from the Global Majority/Third World

through assistance with grant applications, funding, mentoring, and seminars.

This year, Professor Strawbridge was also appointed for a 3-year term to the new Anglican Communion Science Commission. Composed of 20 international scientists and theologians, task of the Anglican Communion Science Commission is to resource the Anglican Communion for courageous and confident leadership in issues involving science through theological engagement and education. The Commission is chaired jointly by the Archbishop of Capetown/Primate of Southern Africa and the Bishop of Oxford. ■

*With colleagues from 11 countries... the committee works together to offer support for promising students from the Global Majority.*

# WORKSHOPS & PROJECTS

## WOMXN IN THEOLOGY

**MARY WHITTINGDALE**, BA student  
President of WIT

*Womxn in Theology* is a faculty-funded society set up in 2020. We are a group for both undergraduate and postgraduate female-identifying students studying Theology and Religion within the faculty. Our founders, Charlotte Moore and Alison Zilversmit, set up the society with three goals: to provide a space to support womxn’s perspectives in the faculty; amplify womxn’s voices in theology; and network with other female-identifying students to foster solidarity and mentorship.



This year, WIT has really come into its own. We have maintained both the social and academic vision of our founders. Social highlights from our first year have included a fresher’s goodie bag scheme, a Black Lives Matter discussion with guest speakers Ijeoma Ajibade and Evie Vernon, and a fantastic evening with the queer feminist theologian and poet Rachel Mann. Academic highlights have included talks with Oxford based faculty members and alumni speakers – we have hosted wonderful evenings with Francesca Stavrakpoulou, Kirsten Macfarlane, Bethany Sollereeder, Jessica Frazier, and Jennifer Strawbridge. It has been hugely inspiring to gain insight from our speakers about careers in academia, exciting new research projects, and navigating the discipline of theology as womxn. Due to the pandemic all our events have been virtual; it has been important to us to foster a greater sense of community for students experiencing a more isolated year than usual.

In Trinity term 2021 we also launched our first WIT blog which features many impressive and fresh contributions. You can find us at <http://www.womxnintheology.com>. Our first series of blogs highlighted womxn in theology who inspire us (including Katharina von Bora, Amina Wadud, Hannah Tillich, Joan of Arc, the Hindu goddess Radha, Hildegard of Bingen, and the female speaker of Song of Songs). We are always looking to amplify new voices and perspectives, whether this be through written or visual contributions, so please do get in touch if you have an idea.

This year we hope to continue to grow the community and host more speaker events. We have a new committee and co-president too which is very exciting. Looking ahead to the new academic year, we have lined up several inspiring speakers. On the socials front, we’re also hoping to be able to host more in-person events including

group study sessions and a museum visit. Our term card is always released at the beginning of term, with a variety of different events for everyone to get involved in. ■

Please reach out to [mary.whittingdale@mansfield.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mary.whittingdale@mansfield.ox.ac.uk) to get involved, join the new committee, or contribute to the blog; we’d love to hear from you!

To follow us on Facebook, please join our group here: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/78476338866870>

You can also follow us on Instagram at *womxnintheology*.

## POSTGRADUATE THEOLOGICAL ETHICS CONFERENCE: CITIES OF GOD

**DAVID BENNETT**, DPhil student

During the challenges of 2020 and the last academic year, it became clear that a conference surrounding the ethical questions of the city, political protest and theology was needed. From turmoil in the USA, Brexit in the UK, and the Hong Kong Protests to navigating a pandemic world, political realities were importantly calling for theological and ethical reflection. In the third year of my DPhil which examines the City of God I was inspired by Augustine’s own thought world in which he similarly wrestled with ethical questions within huge political and civic upheaval, the idea for the conference was born. Through the Society for the Study of Christian Ethics (SSCE) and with two other co-covenantors, James Hooks (Oxford) and Gillian Chu (St Andrews), I organised a postgraduate conference entitled *Cities of God: Politics, Theology and Ethics* in March this year. With the help of Oxford Ertegun scholar and graduate student, Maikki Aikko, Ertegun House generously provided a small grant toward the costs of the conference. In the end, the online move with Covid-19 restrictions also meant that the conference attracted a highly diverse array of submissions.



The conference called participants to explore how Christianity informs political realities. We welcomed submissions from postgraduate students and practitioners interested in Christian ethics as well as related disciplines. The conference attracted over 120 attendants with two papers by Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, Joshua Hordern entitled ‘Loyalty and identity:

ecclesial and political considerations' and Professor Wai-luen Kwok from Hong Kong Baptist University entitled "Can a theology of peace be a theology of resistance? A moral theological reflection in the contemporary Chinese context.' We received a very high volume of paper submissions related to scripture and biblical studies, feminisms, trauma, anti-human and sex trafficking movements, ecologies and climate issues, gender and sexualities, consent, patristics, citizenship, migration, among other themes. These papers will be published in a special edition of the Journal of the Oxford Graduate Theological Society (JOGS) this next academic year. ■

### McDONALD CENTRE CONFERENCE 2021

The annual McDonald Centre conference, sponsored by the McDonald/Agape Foundation, focused on 'Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation? Missions and Empire in the Modern World'. The topic arose out of conversations between Dr Nicholas Wood, then Director of the Oxford Centre for Christianity and Culture at Regent's Park College, and Professor Nigel Biggar in relation to the McDonald Centre's 'Ethics and Empire' project. Dr Wood proposed that the question of Christianity, and especially Christian missions, and its relationship with colonial and imperial authorities remained a topic of interest and relevance. A leading historian of missions, Professor Brian Stanley of Edinburgh, worked with Nick to identify potential contributors and possible topics.

The theme became even more relevant during the planning process with the emergence of the 'Black Lives Matter' movement in May-June 2020 and renewed interest in colonialism and its legacy. The Covid-19 pandemic complicated matters and in the end the event was held on-line, with contributors from 3 continents and with over 200 registrations from more than 40 countries.

Professor Stanley gave a keynote address opening up the ambiguities involved which was followed by four sessions on the topics of: 'History' (Profs Alec Ryrie, Durham & Hilary Carey, Bristol); 'Justice' (Prof Kirsteen Kim, Fuller, California, & Drs Cathy Ross & James Butler, Oxford & Roehampton); 'Languages, Translation and Printing' (Profs Bob Woodberry, Baylor, Texas & Ashish Alexander, SHUATS, Allahabad), and 'Missions and the Military' (Prof Michael Snape, Durham & Dr Nicholas Wood, Oxford). Each session gave opportunity for interaction with and between the speakers, whose disciplinary backgrounds included History, Theology/Missiology, Literature and Social Science. In a closing session Dr Kang-San Tan, General Director of BMS World Mission, offered an overview and response to the discussions and further questions were addressed from the participants around the world. Despite the sometimes contentious topics under review the discussions were carried out in a positive spirit of open enquiry. It is hoped to publish a volume of essays and reflections from the conference next year. ■



'The Arrival at Lake Ngami'; illustration from 'The Life and Explorations of Dr Livingstone'; published circa 1870. David Livingstone's motto, 'Christianity, Commerce and Civilisation' forms the title for this McDonald Centre Conference.

# FACULTY BOOKS

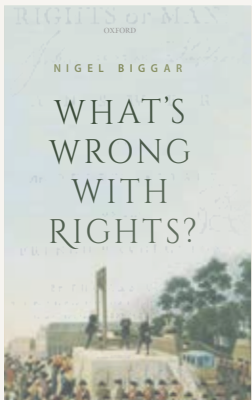


**Andrew Atherstone,  
Mark Hutchinson  
and John Maiden  
(eds.)**

*Transatlantic  
Charismatic  
Renewal,  
c.1950-2000*

Leiden: Brill, 2021

This volume brings together an international team of historians for fresh analysis of one of the globally most important religious movements of the late twentieth century. The charismatic ‘renewal’ was a key Christian response to globalisation, modernity and secularisation, but these archivally-rich case studies challenge the standard interpretations of its origins and development. The chapters focus on the transatlantic flow of ideas and personnel, in contexts ranging from California to Cambridge, Paris, and Wales; and from Notre Dame Roman Catholics to Pennsylvanian Mennonites. They examine major charismatic publishing networks like Christian Life and Logos International; and global personalities from South African ecumenist David du Plessis (‘Mr Pentecost’) to rock musician turned ‘power evangelist’ John Wimber.



**Nigel Biggar**

*What's Wrong with  
Rights?*

Oxford University Press, 2020

Are natural rights ‘nonsense on stilts’, as Jeremy Bentham memorably put it? Must the very notion of a right be individualistic, subverting the common good? Should the right against torture be absolute, even though the heavens fall? Are human rights universal or merely expressions of Western neo-imperial arrogance? Are rights ethically fundamental, proudly impervious to changing circumstances? Should judges strive to extend the reach of rights from civil Hamburg to anarchical Basra? Should judicial oligarchies, rather than legislatures, decide controversial ethical issues by inventing novel rights? Ought human rights advocates learn greater sympathy for the dilemmas facing those burdened with government?

These are the questions that *What's Wrong with Rights?* addresses. In doing so, it draws upon resources in intellectual history, legal philosophy, moral philosophy, moral theology, human rights literature, and the judgments of courts. It ranges from debates about property in medieval Christendom, through Confucian rights-scepticism, to contemporary discussions about the remedy for global hunger and the justification of killing. And it straddles assisted dying in Canada, the military occupation of Iraq, and genocide in Rwanda.

*What's Wrong with Rights?* concludes that much contemporary rights-talk obscures the importance of fostering civic virtue, corrodes military effectiveness, subverts the democratic legitimacy of law, proliferates publicly onerous rights, and undermines their authority and credibility. The solution to these problems lies in the abandonment of rights-fundamentalism and the recovery of a richer public discourse about ethics, one that includes talk about the duty and virtue of rights-holders.

*Courageous ... ‘What’s Wrong With Rights?’ is a rich and challenging book. Not everyone will agree with Biggar’s views, but anyone writing about human rights who wishes to be taken seriously will need to engage with his arguments.”*

**Jonathan Sumption, *The Times***

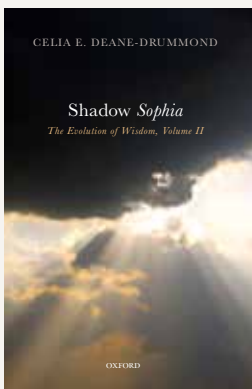


**Edward A. David**

*A Christian Approach to Corporate Religious Liberty*

Palgrave Macmillan, 2020

This book addresses one of the most urgent issues in contemporary American law—namely, the logic and limits of extending free exercise rights to corporate entities. Pointing to the polarisation that surrounds disputes like *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby*, David argues that such cases need not involve pitting flesh-and-blood individuals against the rights of so-called “corporate moral persons.” Instead, David proposes that such disputes should be resolved by attending to the moral quality of group actions. This approach shifts attention away from polarising rights-talk and towards the virtues required for thriving civic communities. More radically, however, this approach suggests that groups themselves should not be viewed as things or “persons” in the first instance, but rather as occasions of coordinated activity. Discerned in the writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas, this reconceptualisation helps illuminate the moral stakes of a novel—and controversial—form of religious freedom.

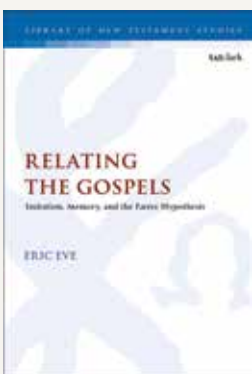


**Celia E. Deane-Drummond**

*Shadow Sophia: Evolution of Wisdom Volume II*

Oxford University Press, 2021

Why do humans who seem to be exemplars of virtue also have the capacity to act in atrocious ways? What are the roots of tendencies for sin and evil? A popular assumption is that it is our animalistic natures that are responsible for human immorality and sin, while our moral nature curtails and contains such tendencies through human powers of freedom and higher reason. This book challenges such assumptions as being far too simplistic. Through a careful engagement with evolutionary and psychological literature, it argues that tendencies towards vice are, more often than not, distortions of the very virtues that are capable of making us good. After beginning with Augustine’s classic theory of original sin, the book probes the philosophical implications of sin’s origins in dialogue with the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur. Different vices are treated in both individual and collective settings in keeping with a multispecies approach. Areas covered include selfishness, pride, violence, anger, injustice, greed, envy, gluttony, deception, lying, lust, despair, anxiety, and sloth. The work of Thomas Aquinas helps to illuminate and clarify much of this discussion on vice, including those vices which are more distinctive for human persons in community with other beings. Such an approach amounts to a search for the shadow side of human nature, shadow sophia. Facing that shadow is part of a fuller understanding of what makes us human and thus this book is a contribution to both theological anthropology and theological ethics.



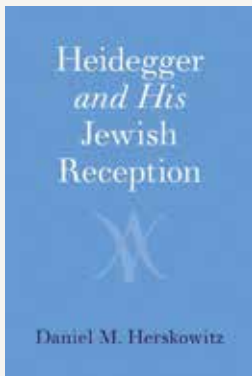
**Eric Eve**

*Relating the Gospels: Memory, Imitation and the Farrer Hypothesis*

T.& T.Clark Ltd, 2021

This volume examines the synoptic problem and argues that the similarities between the gospels of Matthew and Luke outweigh the objections commonly raised against the theory that Luke used the text of Matthew in composing his gospel. While agreeing with scholars who suggests that memory played a leading role in ancient source-utilisation, Eric Eve argues for a more flexible understanding of memory, which would both explain Luke’s access of Matthew’s double tradition material out of the sequence in which it appears in Matthew, and suggest that Luke may have been more influenced by Matthew’s order than appears on the surface.

Eve also considers the widespread ancient practice of literary imitation as another mode of source utilisation the Evangelists, particularly Luke, could have employed, and argues that Luke’s Gospel should be seen in part as an emulation of Matthew’s. Within this enlarged understanding of how ancient authors could utilise their sources, Luke’s proposed use of Matthew alongside Mark becomes entirely plausible, and Eve concludes that the Farrer Hypothesis of Matthew using Mark, and Luke consequently using both gospels, to be the most likely solution to the Synoptic Problem.

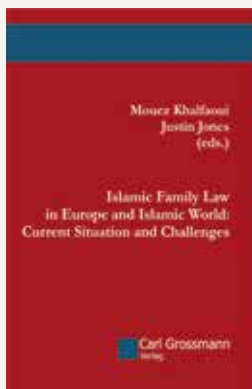


**Daniel M. Herskowitz**

*Heidegger and His Jewish Reception*

Cambridge University Press, 2020

In this book, Daniel M. Herskowitz examines the rich, intense, and persistent Jewish engagement with one of the most important and controversial modern philosophers, Martin Heidegger. Contextualising this encounter within wider intellectual, cultural, and political contexts, he outlines the main patterns and the diverse Jewish responses to Heidegger. Herskowitz shows that through a dialectic of attraction and repulsion, Jewish thinkers developed a version of Jewishness that sought to offer the way out of the overall crisis plaguing their world, which was embodied, as they saw it, in Heidegger's life and thought. Neither turning a blind eye to Heidegger's anti-Semitism nor using it as an excuse for ignoring his philosophy, they wrestled with his existential analytic and what they took to be its religious, ethical, and political failings. Ironically, Heidegger's thought proved itself to be fertile ground for re-conceptualising what it means to be Jewish in the modern world.

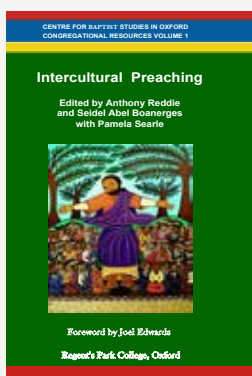


**Mouez Khalfaoui and Justin Jones (eds.)**

*Islamic Family Law in Europe and Islamic World: Current Situation and Challenges*

Carl Grossmann Verlag, 2020

In 2020, Justin Jones (Associate Professor in the Study of Religion) published three edited volumes on the subject of Islamic family laws (such as marriage or divorce laws) as practiced among minority Muslim populations around the world. The first, 'Muslim marriage and divorce practices in contemporary Britain', was a seven-part blog series published via the Harvard-based Islamic Law Blog. It brought together a series of testimonials presented by Muslim community leaders active in England, reflecting on their experiences. The second, 'Reformulating Muslim matrimony: Islamic marriage and divorce in the contemporary UK and Europe' was co-edited by Justin and Yafa Shanneik (University of Birmingham), as a special issue of *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* (40, 1, 2020). This volume brought together ten papers examining Muslim communities in the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and elsewhere, and their interactions with both state and non-state legal regimes. The third, *Islamic family law in Europe and the Islamic world: current situation and challenges* (Berlin, 2020), was co-edited with Mouez Khalfaoui (University of Tübingen), and compiled ten papers exploring family law debates and trajectories of reform among Muslim communities around the world.



**Anthony Reddie, Seidel Abel Boanerges and Pamela Searle (eds.)**

*Intercultural Preaching*

Independently published, 2021

Preaching is for many an imparting of God's inspired word to his people. Indeed, Paul's charge to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:1-2) indicates that preaching is a task for one who is sent with God's authority.

How Ministers, lay preachers, or teachers, engage with the text has changed over the years. The process engaged in this process will be a personal one, that may be tried and tested. For many, a time of prayerful thought is engaged with prior to undertaking the preparation period for creating the sermon. This is a time in which to mull over the chapter and then focus in on the verses. Maybe asking questions on context and what is God trying to say to me, and how do I formulate these words into a well-crafted sermon for my particular church context? This book explores the development of preaching in church contexts that are culturally diverse and interpreting the Bible and the Christian message, using the insights of postcolonial and liberationist optics.

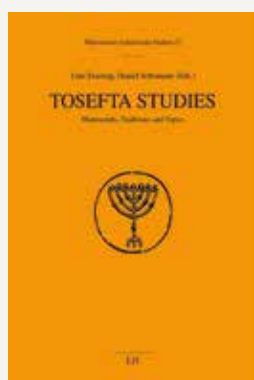


**Daniel Schumann**

*Gelübde im antiken Judentum und frühesten Christentum (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 111)*

Leiden: Brill, 2021

The book, awarded with the Hanns-Lilje-Price by the Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen in 2020, aims to trace the earliest discourses on vows, as they are recorded in ancient Jewish and early Christian sources from the time of the Second Temple. Daniel Schumann shows how Judaism and Christianity have participated in ancient forms of vow-making since late antiquity and how they also have developed these discourses further. By presenting these discourses on the basis of a broad range of sources, he reveals how in Jewish as well as in Christian perception, voices of esteem but also of reservation have been raised throughout the centuries. After all, vows are a cult-practical exercise in which well-being and disaster are in closer proximity than in most other acts of devotion.

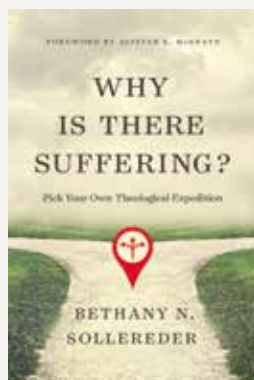


**Lutz Doering, Daniel Schumann (eds.)**

*Tosefta Studies: Manuscripts, Traditions, and Topics*

LIT Verlag, Münster, 2021

The volume offers contributions to two basic questions of the study of the Tosefta: How can we describe the character and relationship of the Tosefta manuscripts? And how does the Tosefta relate to other rabbinic traditions and texts? It also sheds light on other topics of Tosefta research: “magic”, emotions, and gender. The volume, based on two international colloquia in Münster in 2016 and 2017, marks the beginning of a new phase in the study of Tosefta, encouraging an international conversation between scholars on method and contents.



**Bethany N. Sollereeder**

*Why is There Suffering? Pick Your Own Theological Expedition*

Zondervan, 2021

Take a Unique Adventure as You Explore Questions about God, Suffering, Evil, Pain, and Final Destiny

This popular-level book gives control of theodicy to the reader, similar to novels that allow readers to choose their own adventures through the plot. Readers will face multiple possibilities regarding suffering and its theological explanations and have to make choices about which one they find most plausible. Each decision leads them to a different section of the book, and leads to further complexities and new choices, helping readers see how theological choices lead to certain conclusions. This book does not offer final answers. Instead, it introduces the “theological” possibilities, both Christian and non-Christian, that readers can explore and wrestle with so they can make informed decisions about their beliefs.

Taking an intentionally light-hearted approach to a heavy topic, this accessible and winsome book presents an introduction to the problem of suffering and the most commonly offered responses to it. Suggestions for further reading are provided with each choice.



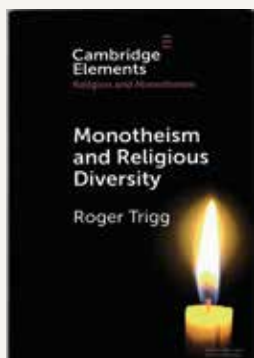
**Justyn Terry**

*The Five Phases of Leadership: An Overview for Christian Leaders*

Langham Global Library, 2021

*The Five Phases of Leadership* is practical theology, written to prepare anyone about to take on a significant leadership responsibility, and to help experienced leaders stand back and see where they are on the leadership journey. It sets out the typical lifecycle of leadership in five phases: establish trust, cultivate leaders, discern vision, implement plans, and transition out, with examples to illustrate them, mainly from my experience of leading a church in West London, and a theological college in Pittsburgh, USA. It draws on biblical and theological insights as well as the leadership literature. Since it includes, ‘implementing plans,’ the book also offers an overview of the management of people, money and time that leaders need to know.

This revised and expanded version of the book, first written in the USA, has been reshaped for a global audience, and with a special concern for the majority world. This has involved conversations with Dr Finny Philip, Principal of Philadelphia Bible College, Udaipur, India, and reading literature about leadership from around the world. The hope is that this will make the book a resource suitable for wide usage, and that it will broaden perspectives on the role of a leader. Since these five phases of leadership seem to apply to any leadership role, it is also hoped that the book will not only be read by Christians, but also by leaders who do not share the distinctly Christian vision that the book sets out.



**Roger Trigg**

*Monotheism and Religious Diversity*

Cambridge University Press, 2020

‘If there is one God, why are there so many religions? Might all be false? Some interpreters revert to a relativism that allows different ‘truths’ for different people, but this is incoherent. The book argues that monotheism has provided the basis for a belief in objective truth. Human understanding is fallible and partial, but without the idea of one God, there is no foundation for a belief in one reality or common human nature. The shadow of monotheism lies over our understanding of science, and of morality.’





**Martin Whittingham**

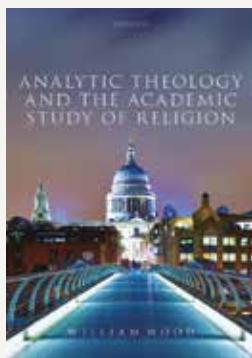
*A History of Muslim Views of the Bible: The First Four Centuries*

De Gruyter, 2020

This book is the first of two volumes that aim together to produce something not previously attempted: a synthetic history of Muslim responses to the Bible. Stretching from the rise of Islam to the present day, it combines scholarship with a genuine narrative, so as to tell the story of Muslim engagement with the Bible.

Covering Sunnī, Imāmī Shī'ī and Ismā'īlī perspectives, the first volume offers a scholarly overview of three areas of Muslim response in the first four centuries of Islam. These three are ideas of corruption of the Bible, use of the Biblical text, and abrogation of the text. It identifies important figures and dominant trends, along with exceptions, while exploring the interplay between using and criticising the Bible. It seems from Muslim evidence that use of the Bible to serve the cause of Islam is much more prominent than criticism, until the polemical work of Ibn Ḥazm in the eleventh century CE, though criticism is also present. However, earlier Christian writings regularly seek to refute the charge that the Bible is textually corrupted, indicating that this must have been a common point of dispute even though early Muslim texts do not give great weight to it.

*A History of Muslim Views of the Bible* scrutinises received views on the subject and sheds light on an important area of interfaith concern.



**William Wood**

*Analytic Theology and the Academic Study of Religion*

Oxford University Press, 2021

Analytic theology is theology that draws on the tools and methods of Anglo-American analytic philosophy. *Analytic Theology and the Academic Study of Religion* argues that analytic theology can flourish in the secular academy, and flourish as authentically Christian theology. The book explains analytic theology to other theologians and scholars of religion, while simultaneously explaining those other fields to analytic theologians. It defends analytic theology from such common theological criticisms related to idolatry, 'ontotheology' and 'univocity', but it also argues that analytic theologians have much to learn from other forms of inquiry. Analytic theology is a legitimate form of theology, and a legitimate form of academic inquiry, and it can be a valuable conversation partner within the wider religious studies academy. *Analytic Theology and the Academic Study of Religion* articulates an attractive vision of analytic theology, fosters a more fruitful inter-disciplinary conversation, and enables scholars across the religious studies academy to understand one another better.

# OXFORD THEOLOGY & RELIGION MONOGRAPHS 2020-21

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**Madeleine Pennington**

*Quakers, Christ, and the Enlightenment*

**Claire Hall**

*Origen and Prophecy: Fate, Authority, Allegory, and the Structure of  
Scripture*

**Simon Lewis**

*Anti-Methodism and Theological Controversy in Eighteenth-Century  
England: The Struggle for True Religion*





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

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**[www.development.ox.ac.uk/theology](http://www.development.ox.ac.uk/theology)**

**Thank you**





Buddhist temples in Bagan, Myanmar  
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