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Cover image: *Mosaics in the apse of the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy which has important examples of early Christian Byzantine art and architecture.* © Shutterstock.com

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY BOARD CHAIR

WILLIAM WOOD

No doubt I should use this space to reflect on how the Faculty of Theology and Religion survived and thrived during the second pandemic year of 2021–22. But the truth is that I can scarcely even remember the start of Michaelmas Term 2021, which seems more like ten years ago than ten months ago. And I do not much care to recall the start of 2022, when the newly emerging omicron variant threatened to force us all back into lockdown, and back online, yet again. I will say that Trinity Term 2022 has seemed remarkably normal, with almost everything fully in-person again, and with the expectation that this happy state-of-affairs will continue throughout the next academic year. Overall, my strong sense is that both the University as a whole, and our Faculty in particular, have arrived at this stage of the pandemic with our core commitments to in-person teaching and face-to-face collegiality fully intact. I am proud of that outcome, and of the work we have all done together.

Instead of dwelling on the pandemic, I would prefer to use this space to write about three close colleagues, all statutory professors, who will retire at the end of this academic year. They are all leaders in their respective academic fields, but also teachers, mentors, and exemplars of academic integrity. I have learned so much from all of them, and I am grateful to have worked alongside them.

I could not have been more pleased when Professor Anna Abulafia was made a Fellow of the British Academy in 2020, in recognition of her academic work on the interactions between Christians and Jews in the Middle Ages. Although Professor Abulafia spent only seven short years as our Professor of Abrahamic Religions, during that time she has had an unparalleled impact on the life and work of the Faculty. She made it her mission to ensure that we fulfill our promise to become a world-class Faculty of Theology and Religion, and as a result of her leadership, the study of Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism are now fully embedded in every level of our teaching and research. As Director of Graduate Studies, she has been a tireless advocate for our postgraduate students, while also insisting on the strict standards of academic rigour that drew them to Oxford in the first place. I am sure that I speak for students and Faculty colleagues alike when I say that we wish Professor Abulafia well, but we wish even more that she were not going at all.

When I took up my own tutorial fellowship at Oriel College, I noticed that the doorway to our Chaplain's rooms still said 'Nigel Biggar' even though Nigel Biggar had not been the Oriel Chaplain for more than ten years. Clearly, his legacy looms large—as indeed does the man himself. Since 2007, Professor Biggar has been Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology, and he is also the founding director of the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics, and Public Life. In both capacities, Professor Biggar has led a quiet, almost reclusive life, hardly ever attracting attention or courting public controversy... Ahem! (Well, a Faculty Board Chair can dream.) On the contrary, as a scholar and public intellectual, Professor Biggar has boldly—and I will also say bravely—taken on a variety of questions that are intrinsically and unavoidably contentious: war, euthanasia, colonialism. He has become one of the UK's strongest advocates for academic freedom, and in 2021 he was appointed Commander of the British Empire (CBE) for his services to higher education. Although he is stepping down from the Regius Chair, Professor Biggar will remain interim Director of the McDonald Centre in 2022–23, and I am confident that he will be neither out of sight, nor out of mind.

Professor Alister McGrath is, by any measure, one of the most prolific and influential theologians alive. Since 2014, he has been the Andros Idreos Professor of Science and Religion. During his tenure, our Science and Religion programme has flourished at every level: FHS, MSt, and DPhil. Under his directorship, the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion has also continued its track-record of world-class research. Throughout his long career, in addition to his primary work in science and religion, Professor McGrath has made signal contributions to our understanding of Christian doctrine, early modern theology, and natural theology. Few scholars reach the very top of their academic fields at all, let alone in multiple areas of expertise, as Professor McGrath has done. In 1999, as the Principal of Wycliffe Hall, the University granted Professor McGrath a personal Chair in Historical Theology. I am struck by the fact that this personal chair was not even in science and religion, and that it could well have been granted in any number of other fields too. I have long admired Professor McGrath as a scholar and as a person, and it has certainly been my honour to work alongside him in the Faculty of Theology and Religion. ■

Anna Sapir Abulafia

Retiring Professor of the Study of the Abrahamic Religions

Interview by **Rachel Cresswell**, *Departmental Lecturer in Ecclesiastical History*

The first time I spoke to Anna Sapir Abulafia, it was on the phone. It was the summer of 2016, and she had just been appointed to the Chair for the Study of the Abrahamic Religions. I was about to begin my doctoral project on Anselm of Canterbury, and Anna, an expert in the intellectual and religious life of the central middle ages, was calling to discuss supervising it. Six years later, on the eve of her retirement, I called Anna again. She had gone from my doctoral supervisor (or ‘Doktormutter’, as she would affectionately describe it), to professional mentor in my new role as Departmental Lecturer in Ecclesiastical History. She was in her flat at LMH, preparing to pack up all her books to be transported to a little personal library being built in the garden of her house in Cambridge. In the space between those two phone calls, Anna has become an irreplaceable presence in the Faculty of Theology and Religion. She will be greatly missed not only by former doctoral students like me, but by all of the colleagues, students and friends touched by her generosity. We talked about her time at Oxford, what she learned, what she’s proud of, and what she’ll miss.



➤ Anna (left) with Rachel in the Upper Library at Christ Church.

Tell us about the path that brought you to Oxford in 2016.

The path that brought me to Oxford was the advertisement for the Chair for the Study of the Abrahamic Religions! I had come from a post as a college lecturer in Cambridge at Lucy Cavendish College, where I had been for 28 years. I arrived at Lucy Cavendish as a research fellow and worked my way up; I became a college lecturer, I was college librarian, graduate tutor, then senior tutor, and then vice president. I did quite a bit to help build up Lucy Cavendish College, which until 2021 was a college for mature women. At Cambridge I was attached to the History Faculty, but when I saw this post in the Faculty of Theology and Religion at Oxford, it seemed to me to be the dream post, and I suppose the rest is history.

Why was this the dream post for you?

It allowed me to concentrate fully on my main interest: the study of Christian-Jewish relations within a historical setting. I'm a medievalist; I work on the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (the twelfth century, of course, being the best century!) and this post enabled me to concentrate on that work.

In Cambridge I had run a course with my husband David Abulafia on the presence of Jews in Christian society (which was also the subject of my book, *Christians-Jewish Relations 1000-1300. Jews in the Service of medieval Christendom*). Around that time, I was also becoming very interested in canon law and the position of Jews in Gratian's *Decretum*, a twelfth-century canon law collection. Looking at Gratian through the lens of Christian-Jewish relations was becoming a very exciting project. And the thought of being able to be part of a Faculty of Theology and Religion was something I found very interesting. Yes, I'm a trained medievalist and historian, but all my work is very theological, and I believed this post would offer a tremendous opportunity to develop what really has been the centre of my whole career: countering a Christo-centric appreciation of the history of medieval Latin Christendom, and taking on board the many non-Christian elements that went into the forming of the culture and the religion in Latin Christendom. There is so much more that can still be done in that area, and I thought that this would be a wonderful place to do it.

Where was this interest in Christian-Jewish relations born? Where does the story begin?

The story begins in Amsterdam. I moved to Holland with my family just before my fifteenth birthday and went through the Dutch secondary system. I then went to study History at the University of Amsterdam (I studied Mathematics and Physics for, I think, one whole month, but I quickly realised History was where I would be happier!). I was always interested in Theology, Christianity and Judaism, but it was in a seminar in my second year where I first encountered the Hebrew Chronicles of the First Crusade. I was so taken by the contrast between what is being described in the Hebrew Chronicles and the Latin sources for the Crusades, and that enormous gulf between the Christian accounts and the effect on these Jewish communities in

the Rhineland. I was absolutely fascinated by the language used in these sources to polemicize against Christianity – in the then available German translations of the Hebrew Chronicles, that language was considered too embarrassing even to be translated. For my thesis, I worked on the Hebrew sources for the Crusades, and then took up a post as 'wetenschappelijk medewerker' But by that time I had met my husband in Italy at a conference, and I moved to Cambridge and had to start all over again!

How do the identities of historian and theologian intersect in your work?

My interest in Theology has always been determined by an historical slant. The main focus of my work has been to read Latin sources through the lens of Christian-Jewish relations, which is very much a historical lens rather than a systematic-theological lens. The most important thing I've had to learn is how to deal with this kind of material in a very dispassionate way. I'm a firm believer in integrity; that it is our duty, our *ethical* duty, to be as accurate as possible and as dispassionate as possible. We're not looking for villains, we're not looking for heroes, we're looking for human beings. Human beings are complicated, and I firmly believe that you cannot impose the ethical values of today onto the past. I'm not suggesting that one can't think that some things are desperately wrong, but it's still your duty to analyse things dispassionately to the very best of your ability. To use the words of Quentin Skinner, what I've always felt was desperately important was to 'see things their way'. And I think you cannot really work in this period without a feeling for forms of religiosity and their significance.

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As the Chair for the Study of Abrahamic Religions, you were also involved in the Study of Religions subject group. How has engagement with Study of Religions impacted your own work?

The Study of Religions is different from anything I've done before. Indirectly, I engaged with the theoretical questions which arise in the Study of Religions – I have done a lot of work on in-groups and out-groups, and Gavin Langmuir was a great influence on my work – but never in any concentrated way. I found it incredibly interesting to be exposed to that, and being faced with very fundamental questions about what is 'religion'. I think it's a fantastic boon to be a medievalist when confronted with this question. As a medievalist you are completely aware of the problems of defining what 'religion' is: the interactions between the spiritual world and the temporal world,

between the private sphere and the public sphere. This is very relevant when talking to people coming at it from a more anthropological/sociological angle, because I find that quite often they are influenced by more modern discussions about the nature of religion. They often approach religion employing post-Reformation, Christian Protestant understandings of religion, and I think that coming at it from a medieval Abrahamic point of view, in which it is not that easy to separate the public and the private, one has the advantage of knowing first-hand how multi-valent the term religion can be.

What was your vision for this post?

Because I have the only statutory chair in the Study of Religions subject group, I realised very quickly – something I had not at all expected – that my responsibility couldn't only be for the Abrahamic religions. There is a tremendous interest in the subject group in Hinduism and Buddhism. When talking about Hinduism and Buddhism, the word 'religion' is not the best word to use: we're talking about religious traditions, cultural traditions, and about a much greater fluidity in terms of interaction between Hinduism and Buddhism than you might expect between the Abrahamic religions. This has widened my understanding of what it means to talk about 'religion' or 'religious traditions', and it has tremendously expanded my understanding of different forms of cultural and personal piety, of mysticism, and of the many ways there are of expressing spirituality, which can sometimes be completely different from what one is used to expecting from an Abrahamic perspective. Being exposed to colleagues doing the most fantastic work in Hinduism and Buddhism has been completely transformative for me in obtaining a much wider view of what Religious Studies is about, and that made me understand much better my own vision for the Faculty of Theology and Religion. I realised that a lot of work needed to be done to help the subject group cohere and expand, so that we could offer academically what was needed in Hinduism and Buddhism as well as in the Abrahamic Religions.

If you had another six years, what would you do with it?

This is very easy to answer! I would see through devising and implementing an MPhil in the Study of Religions. This takes time; the work has been done for Hinduism, and I've worked very closely with the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, especially with Bjarne Wernicke-Olesen, Jessica Frazier and Rembert Lutjeharms. But Hinduism is only one of the streams where we need to expand. The next step is Islamic Studies, and for that we need to employ a lecturer in Qur'anic and Classical Arabic, and then of course there is Jewish Studies. There is a lot of work for my successor to do, and it's a tremendously exciting prospect. If I had another six years, there is no doubt that is what I would be concentrating on.

You were also Director of Graduate Studies. Why has the contribution of graduate studies been so important to you?

I care desperately about my students at every level. At Cambridge I was very involved in undergraduate teaching, but that wasn't part

of my contract here, so I had a lot more contact with the graduates. I am incapable of keeping quiet in meetings, so within a few months I was deputy DGS, and before I knew it I was DGS. I feel strongly that graduate students need a lot of attention because being a graduate student can be very lonely. We don't form research teams like the scientists do. I also came with experience in student funding – I'm one of those strange creatures interested in finance! – and there is no greater pleasure than putting together a financial package for a graduate student. Working together with my colleagues, we were able to increase access to language teaching. I'm a great believer in graduate students being able to read their sources for themselves and not to rely on translations. I'm delighted to see the wonderful way in which Sarah Apetrei continues to develop the role of DGS as she looks after the Graduate community.

I'm a great believer in graduate students being able to read their sources for themselves and not to rely on translations.

What happens next?

I'll have more time for my research. I am continuing to work on Gratian, the twelfth-century Christian canonist, and on reading Gratian's *Decretum* and its glosses, this amazing collection of canons and all its commentaries, through the lens of Christian-Jewish relations. The work I've done so far really does help us better understand the evolution of Gratian's *Decretum*. I think using my lens there is a lot that can be added to our understanding, especially of one amazing manuscript which is the centre of my research: an Oxford manuscript showing how canon law was taught in Oxford in the 1190s with signed glosses from the earliest masters of Oxford University. The fact that these glosses mention Jews and Muslims means it's important to try to understand what these references mean, and the story behind them. I've done a lot of formative articles on this while I held the chair, and there are more articles to be done, but this is slowly developing into what I hope will be an important monograph.

What will you miss about Oxford?

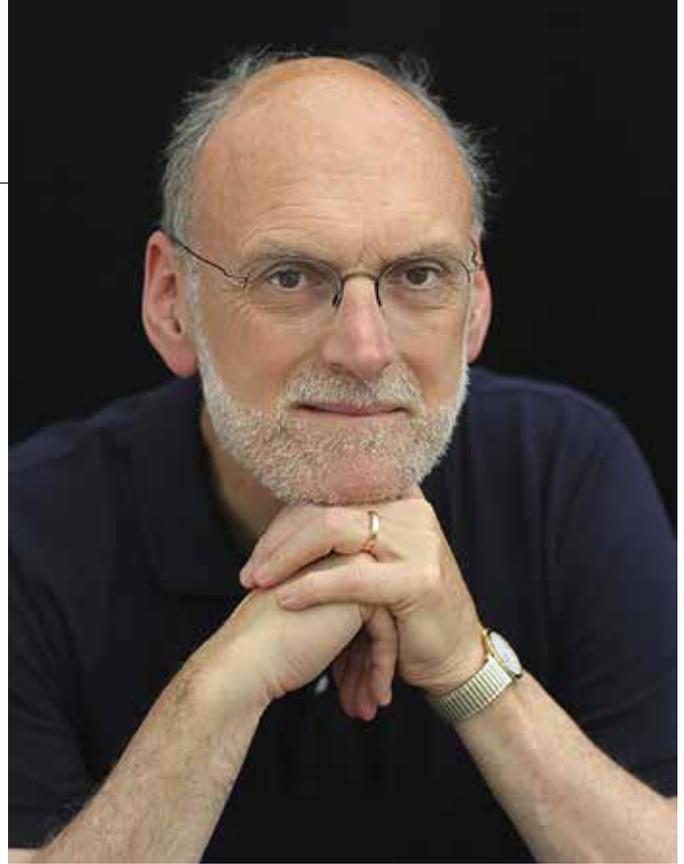
I'll miss everything! I love Oxford, I love the community, I love being with the graduate students, I love being with my colleagues. I really love being part of a team; I've really enjoyed being part of the Faculty of Theology and Religion, and I will miss that desperately. I've made good friends there, and I've worked so happily together with so many people, not just the academics, but the administrative staff as well. I'll miss my college, Lady Margaret Hall, so I'll have to come back regularly! ■

➔ Gratian's *Decretum* Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge MS 283/676, fol. 184v reproduced by Permission of the Master and Fellows of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

Nigel Biggar

Retiring Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology

Interview by **David Williams**, *DPhil student,*
Keble College



On 13 May I had the privilege of joining several of the world's leading Christian ethicists for a dinner at the Cherwell Boathouse. The occasion was a celebration of Nigel Biggar's retirement from the Regius Professorship of Moral and Pastoral Theology, a post he had held here at the University of Oxford for fifteen years, and there was a great deal to celebrate. Several of his friends and colleagues, as well as a few former students—now themselves professors of theology and ethics—toasted his mentorship, his institutional leadership, and his contributions to the field. During his tenure as Regius Professor, Nigel has supervised dozens of postgraduate students, published five books and scores of articles, and established a research institute at the University of Oxford, the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics & Public Life.

In a cultural moment dominated by hot-takes and broad brushstrokes, Nigel has gained a reputation for taking up some of the thorniest issues in public life—war, euthanasia, immigration, and, most recently, the ethics of colonialism and empire—and for handling them with scrupulous attention to detail, logical rigor, and a sort of unflinching moral clarity that can recognise agonising moral complexity. At the end of the evening, Nigel remarked that his years occupying this chair were the most fulfilling years of his life: “I have felt, for these last fifteen years, that I was at last doing what God made me to do.”

Whether they are running a race, summiting a peak, or retiring from years of distinguished service, it is a powerful thing to witness someone finishing well, and, as one of his students, I was grateful for the opportunity to celebrate Nigel that night. A few weeks later, I had the chance to sit down with Professor Biggar in his rooms in the South-West Lodgings of Christ Church College, probably for the last time in that setting, to ask him about his life and work as a Christian ethicist.

Can you tell me a bit about your upbringing? Were your parents religious? Were they academics?

I was born in southwest Scotland. My father was Scottish, my mother English. My father had been to agricultural college in Edinburgh and my father's family for generations had been in various forms of agriculture. He worked for a family firm that produced cattle feed and fertilizer. My mother's father was an accountant from northeast England. So neither had been to university. Although in Britain of that period—I was born in 1955—that wasn't unusual.

As for religion, no. My mother's father had been a Methodist lay preacher. I never met him. But my mother didn't go to church, nor did my father. They sent me to a boarding school which was run by an evangelical Anglican couple. That's where I began to be attracted to the Christian religion, to my parents' benign bewilderment, particularly when I started to grow in my personal religious commitment. Then, after I finished my first degree in history at Oxford, when I decided to go and do some theology, they were unstinting in their support even though they weren't quite sure what to make of it.

How did you first become interested in questions of theology, ethics, and public life?

There was a particular period that inspired me. As I said, I had become a committed Christian in my early teens. I came up to Oxford to study history in Michaelmas Term, 1973. I was at university for three years to 1976, and that period was a period of considerable political turbulence in the UK. The oil crisis had led to industrial unrest, as well as miners and dock strikes. The violence in Northern Ireland began in 1969 and reached its height in the early 70s. And The Times newspaper, when I was an undergraduate, at one point ran a series of leading articles under the title 'Is Britain Governable?' So that was a very politically anxious time, and, as a young Christian, I wondered what the Christian religion has to offer a political crisis of that kind.

It was then, toward the end of my studies in history, when I took a course on the life and times of Saint Augustine. I identified quite strongly with Augustine, partly because he too was living in the early fifth century when the Roman Empire, at least in its western part, was in the process of collapsing. So I identified closely with Augustine. Thereafter, I went off to Canada to Regent College and then to the University of Chicago at the end of 1970s. When I applied to the PhD

program in Chicago in 1980, the first sentence of my application says that my reason for doing this is because I want to put myself in a position of being able to say something useful to the political life of my country, or the public life of my country. So the moral, political, public motive for my study of theology has been fundamental.

How did you come into your current role as Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology?

I spent seven years in North America as a graduate student. In 1982 I married my American wife, and we lived in Toronto for two years. Then we came back to a job here in Oxford at a private Anglican research institute called Latimer House. I was there from 1985 to 1990. At the end of the 1980s I decided that I should present myself for ordination as a priest in the Church of England, partly because I thought it was about time I committed myself and partly because I thought it would be good for me to be exposed to pastoral responsibility. (I thought it might not do anyone else any good but it would certainly do me some good.) And just as I was preparing to be trained for ordination, the chaplaincy at Oriel College became free in 1990. I asked the Bishop of Oxford if he would ordain me to it and he said he would. So I was ordained as Oriel's chaplain with very little practical training at all in 1990.



📍 Nigel Biggar in his garden at Christ Church, speaking at his final Christian Ethics End of Year Party, June 2022.

From left to right: Ed Stroud (DPhil student); Dr Claire Hordern; Steven Firmin (DPhil student); Prof. Nigel Biggar; Dr Ashley Moyse; Dr Dafydd Daniel.

I served there for nine years, primarily in a pastoral role, but I also taught. Oliver O'Donovan was in the Regius chair here at that time and I helped him teach the master's program. So I got some teaching under my belt and did some writing and publishing. But after nine years as chaplain it was time for me to do something fresh. So I applied for a number of full-time positions, mainly in the UK, but I also applied to one or two places in North America, and eventually in 1999 I was offered the chair of theology at the University of Leeds. So we left Oxford for Leeds. Under four years later, in 2003, I was offered and decided to take the chair of theology at the University of Dublin (otherwise known as Trinity College Dublin). So in 2004 we moved from Leeds to Dublin for what we thought would be the best part of ten years.

But in 2006 Oliver O'Donovan, who had occupied the Regius chair here for about twenty four years, decided to leave this post to move to Edinburgh about six years before he would have had to retire and six years before I expected him to leave. Well, I had always been aware of the chair here with its combination of moral and pastoral aspects. The fact that it was in this country, not in North America, appealed to me since I have always felt my vocation was to serve public life in England. So in 2007, I applied for the chair, was offered it, and took it up in September 2007. So I only spent about three and a half years in Dublin, as it happens.

Who have been the thinkers who have most shaped you?

Different people have shaped me, and different thinkers have shaped the different periods. There was a period very early on after I left Oxford and went to Regent College when existentialist thought engaged me a lot. So I read lots of sermons by Paul Tillich, even before I left Oxford as an undergraduate, and at Regent I did a master's dissertation on Blaise Pascal. Although, I lost my taste for Paul Tillich after a while, the existentialist approach taken by Pascal and Kierkegaard has always attracted me partly because it is existentially serious.

And there is, of course, an existentialist dimension to Karl Barth and Barth is where I rested for about 10 years in Chicago. My interest in Barth was mainly ethical. But there's no doubt that Barth was a major influence, and I wrote my doctoral dissertation on Barth's divine command ethics. And then after I got my doctorate in 1986, I spent another six years before I finished expanding my dissertation into the text that became *The Hastening that Waits: Karl Barth's Ethics*. So Barth certainly was an early major influence.

Since then, there have been all sorts of influences. I will often call myself 'a Christian Realist,' so that obviously alludes to Reinhold Niebuhr. And, because of my original, fundamental and persistent interest in public affairs, I found Barth very good in terms of a kind of theological architecture. But when it comes down to judging or analysing practical problems morally, Barth felt a bit haphazard,

Different people have shaped me, and different thinkers have shaped the different periods.

really, and I wanted something more systematic, more methodical, more precise. Therefore, the Scholastic method of Thomas Aquinas, and, indeed, the kind of logical clarity and precision of analytical philosophy subsequently attracted me.

As you look back on your tenure as Oxford's Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology, what are you most thankful for and what will you most miss?

Well, the McDonald Agape Foundation's benefaction in 2008, then further in 2011, and then establishing the research centre changed the shape of my working life and enabled me to realise something I wanted to realise for a long time, but I had not been able to. So the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics & Public Life was the perfect vehicle for what I've always wanted to do. So the first thing I have to say is I'm deeply grateful to the Agape Foundation for enabling that to take off.

But, also, the University of Oxford, unlike some universities, is pretty generous in enabling its staff to take regular sabbaticals. So I've been able to write more in the last fifteen years than in the previous twenty – much more – and that's been fantastic.

Then there's the quality of students we get. I've taught both undergraduates, in the 1980s and 90s, and, then, since coming back to the chair in 2007, almost exclusively postgraduates. The quality of students we get here is very good, and that's a pleasure. It's exciting to have that quality of students.

What will I miss? Well, the one thing that I clearly will leave behind are the students. As you know, I have a few doctoral students to see through to the completion of their studies, which I will. But I shan't take any more students on. So that part of my life will end. I don't think I feel sad about that, because it's been so enriching and I've made lifelong friends out of some of my students. So in that sense, the fruits of that work carry on. But I'm just very grateful for it. And although I'm leaving my post, I'm not stopping my work.

What is next for you?

My trajectory was always toward becoming a theologically, ethically informed public intellectual. So I'll continue to write, and I'll continue to look for appropriate opportunities for public service. My center of gravity will lean more on the public service and less than the academic foot going forward. But that's not a change, it's just a shift of weight. ■



Alistair McGrath Retiring Andreos Idreos Professor of Science and Religion

Interview by **Emily Qureshi-Hurst**, *Junior Research Fellow, Pembroke College*

On a sunny summer morning, once the hustle and bustle of the academic year had faded and the long vacation had begun, I had the pleasure of sitting down with Professor Alister McGrath to discuss his venerable academic career. We sat in Harris Manchester's gardens amidst the greenery for an informal chat before moving to Alister's office to conduct the interview (both for this magazine and for the podcast *Faith at the Frontiers*, where the full interview will soon be available to download). On walking into his office, a place where I have spent many hours benefitting from Alister's expert supervision, I was struck once again by how many books lined his shelves. These books reflect but a glimpse of the life's work of one of the world's greatest living theologians. It is hard to imagine a living academic who has written more prolifically, or more broadly, on the key issues surrounding the Christian faith. His writings span historical theology, the life and works of C.S. Lewis, scientific and religious epistemology, and the relationship between science and religion, to name but a few! It was on this last point that our interview focused. This year, Alister will be retiring as the Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at the University of Oxford, and in this interview, surrounded by many of the books that informed his thinking, he reflected on the state of the field, its challenges, his hopes for the future, and his personal story.

How did you come to be interested in Science and Religion?

Well, I loved science as a teenager, and in many ways I saw myself going into science. I really fell in love with the theoretical side of Chemistry when I was in my late teens, and that led me to Oxford to study Chemistry. So it all looked very straightforward – here was I, on the way to becoming a professional scientist – except it wasn't! One of the reasons it wasn't so straightforward was that I began to change my religious thinking. I used to be an atheist and I became a Christian, so I wondered whether I had to compartmentalise these things. In other words, was there a bit of my life which was devoted to science and another bit of my life devoted to religion? Or, can I get them to talk to each other, either to synthesise them or at least to hold them together meaningfully?

I found I just had to think about these things. When I was an undergraduate at Wadham College, one of the fellows there was Charles Coulson, who was Oxford's Professor of Theoretical Chemistry. He had this way of holding science and religion together, which I thought worked rather well! Actually, and I've always been very explicit about this, my own ideas are an expansion of his. In many ways, it was personal. I wanted to be able to hold these things together. Having said that, it is also very interesting academically, so alongside my personal interest there was a wider disciplinary interest in getting these two very important areas of life to talk to each other.

Did you know, at the time, that you would end up devoting a substantial amount of your career to this subject?

No. I thought this was simply something I am going to try to sort out, and then move on. Except, it was so interesting that I stayed with it. Whilst I was thinking about what my future was going to be, I was awarded a scholarship at Merton College, Oxford, which allowed me both to continue my D.Phil in molecular biophysics *and* do a first degree in Theology at the same time. I have to say, I don't recommend it! But I suddenly found that I was competent as a scientist and was also beginning to develop as a theologian. I won another scholarship that allowed me to develop my theology further. That then gave me this basis for thinking this might be a career, as opposed to something I would only pursue as a matter of personal interest. However, I didn't think that was very likely, so my fall-back option was always going to be that Science and Religion was something I would do in my spare time.

What did you see as the most pressing challenges for Science and Religion at that time?

There were several. One of them was that you need a knowledge base in both science *and* in religion to be able to make a meaningful connection. My problem was that my first degree was in Chemistry and was very much orientated towards theoretical issues like quantum theory, and my theological knowledge base was quite small. Therefore I had to really expand it. It was only when Oxford made me Professor of Historical Theology in 1999 that I felt I had

arrived as a theologian. I felt, once that happened, that I was qualified enough – both theologically and scientifically informed – to begin to look at some serious interconnections. In many ways, it took a long time for me to climb the scientific mountain, climb the theological mountain, and make connections.

How do you view the field of science and religion today?

I don't think there is a single discipline 'Science and Religion', like there is with Chemistry or Biology. What you have is, in effect, a broad area of interdisciplinary interaction which varies from one person to another depending on what they are interested in. The core theme is that science and religion – in the broad sense of those terms – can talk to each other and have meaningful conversations. Perhaps some people place the emphasis here, and others there, but there is sufficient interest in this to generate a sense that there is something out there that designates a really interesting, broad, field of study. We would *now* call this interdisciplinary, but back in the 17th century, we didn't have those disciplines. What was once seen as a coherent area of thought called natural philosophy has actually fragmented over time – it was obvious to people like Robert Boyle here at Oxford that science and religion and philosophy could talk to each other. Now, these have kind of gone their separate ways and the conversation now seems artificial. Back then, it was natural.

My own view is that we should think of Science and Religion as disciplinary imaginaries, drawing on Charles Taylor's idea of a social imaginary. That is to say, there is a way we look at something, and it makes sense to us, but it is a personally constructed imaginative synthesis in which we can hold all these things together. It works for me, it makes sense for me, but that doesn't necessarily mean it has to make sense to anybody else. However, there are enough people out there for whom there is a partial overlap for this to be meaningful.

Science and religion engage our complicated world from different perspectives, and at different levels. Between them, they offer us a kind of bi-focal lens like you might get in spectacles. One lens gives you a two-dimensional image, but *two* lenses give you a three-dimensional image. In other words, they bring depth. You can engage questions not just about functionality, but also about meaning and value. For me, it's about having a richer and deeper quality of engagement with our world than either of these can offer on their own. Whilst I want to respect their disciplinary identities, I think they can talk to each other and give us a richer understanding of reality.

Throughout your career you've pursued these issues using various formats, ranging from academic monographs and articles to popular books and public debates. What was the reason for this?

In my own case, I have always thought of myself as an academic. But people would say to me that I spoke clearly and rather well.

Science and religion engage our complicated world from different perspectives, and at different levels. Between them, they offer us a kind of bi-focal lens like you might get in spectacles.

Now that is because I was a scientist, and in science you have to be clear! Apparently, this was a little more unusual for a theologian, so I began to realise that maybe I ought (without giving up on my academic world) to think a bit more about public engagement. It all happened, really, from about 1987/8 when I was here at Oxford teaching theology, and I gave a series of lectures to clergy in training. Afterwards, a person called Michael Green, rector at St Aldates, came up to me and said I had really excited these people, and asked me if I'd thought about writing at a more popular level – we needed people like that, who could express themselves very clearly. I hadn't really thought of that, I have to say, but I started to think about whether I could make space to do some more popular, public-facing, work alongside my academic work. So I thought to myself, I'll see if I can do this. It was very much a 'let's see what happens' kind of thing, but it worked out. I kept getting asked to do more, and then of course Richard Dawkins came along and I began to argue with him and others in public. This began to give me a profile I felt rather uneasy about. The danger is, if you are an academic engaging with the public, that you oversimplify and trivialise. I felt this was a risk, so I decided I was going to engage but only at a limited level. That's why, although I engaged a lot, I always reigned it in so that it didn't ever become an end in itself. Really, I am a scholar, I am rooted in the academy, but I am a scholar who thinks it's really important to speak to audiences beyond the academy.

How has your experience of teaching at Oxford been?

I love teaching. I love it because a) it forces me to test out various ways of presenting ideas and to ask which areas I should be looking at (you get better and better at this as you keep on doing it), and b) when I first started in the field of theology, I found it very difficult. I was a

scientist, moving into this strange area, and that is where the Oxford tutorial system came into its own. People like John Barton who taught me Old Testament, or Paul Fiddes who taught me Systematic Theology, would be able to explain things to me, taking it very slowly, knowing that I would get there. And I did. But it was because of them.

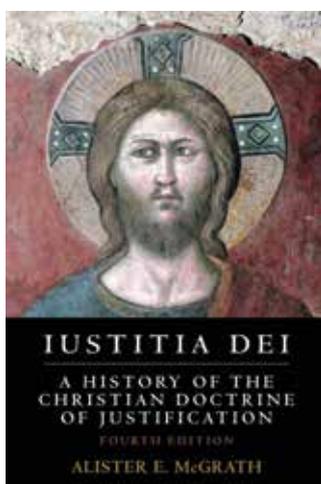
I am very much aware of how important a good teacher is in enabling students to grasp something. That is actually why I wrote theology textbooks. I couldn't find a good theology textbook when I was studying back in the 1970s, so I thought 'one day I am going to write the kind of book that an idiot like me needed to get started!'

What are your career highlights?

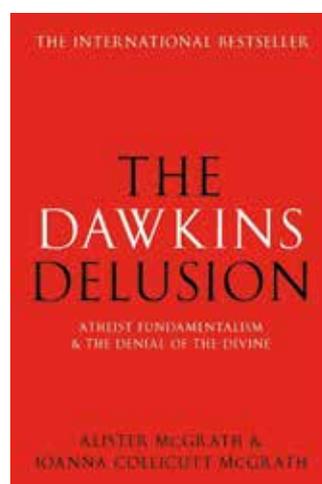
If you are an academic, there are two things you will always point to. The first is publications, and I have written a lot of books, but the second is students. My own feeling is that my legacy will be the students I've taught. We really have seen some very able students come through, and I think the most important thing to say is that in the end, a field develops, gains confidence, and grows, because you've got good people who are there writing and teaching and advocating.

I'm stepping back now, and I am doing so feeling I have done what I can. Its time to hand it over to somebody else.

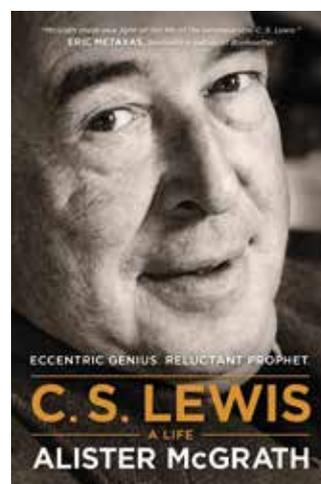
We were able to delve deeper into discussions about science and religion interaction, covering issues like vaccine hesitancy, science education in schools, and Alister's debates with the New Atheists. The full interview will be available to listen to on the podcast *Faith at the Frontiers* later this summer, which can be accessed by following this link: <https://www.theology.ox.ac.uk/article/faith-at-the-frontiers> ■



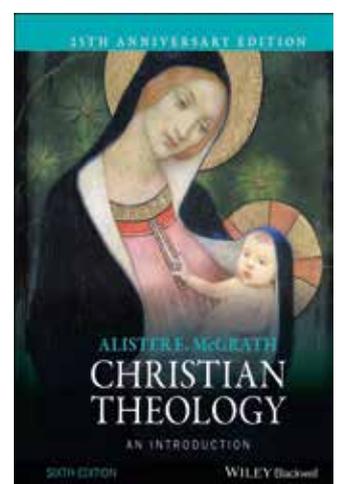
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The Journal of the Graduate Theological Society (JOGTS) A Year In Review



Natasha Chawla, *DPhil Student, St Cross College*

The second year of the Journal of the Graduate Theological Society (JOGTS) (founded in 2019 by Nikolaas Deketelaere, now at the Institut Catholique de Paris) saw the publication of the second issue, 'Crisis in Theology and Religion' edited by Tim Middleton (Lincoln College) with an introductory reflection by Christopher Key Chapple (Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology at Loyola Marymount University) and a feature interview with Professor Alan Macfarlane (Emeritus Professor of Anthropological Science and Life Fellow of King's College, University of Cambridge). Snippets of this interview can be seen on the [JOGTS YouTube channel](#) which are consolidated in a series called *JOGTS Shorts: with Alan Macfarlane*. As well as in the journal, the full interview can be found on [Professor Macfarlane's YouTube channel](#).

Alongside the main issue, the proceedings from the postgraduate conference of the *Society for the Study of Christian Ethics* were published in a special issue of JOGTS, guest-edited by James Hooks (Lincoln College). Both issues were published in Michaelmas 2021 and can be found on the [JOGTS website](#).

The third year brought with it the second series of *JOGTS Shorts: 'God Talk: An Introduction to Theology and Religion.'* This series comprised a collection of clips taken from seven interviews held with members of the University of Oxford's Faculty of Theology and Religion. We asked the same seven questions to all seven speakers, which were then compiled into seven separate episodes, in the hope of bringing some of the fascinating insights and research that theological and religious studies in the University of Oxford offers to a wider audience around the world.

Many thanks to all of our speakers: Jessica Frazier (Research Lecturer in the Study of Religion), Alister McGrath (Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion), Diarmaid MacCulloch (Emeritus Professor of the History of the Church), Katherine Southwood (Associate Professor in Old Testament), Anthony Reddie (Director of the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture), Hindy Najman (Oriental and Laing Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture) and Anna Sapir Abulafia (Professor of the Study of the Abrahamic Religions), for their wonderful insights and for generously contributing to the project.

"God-Talk: An Introduction to Theology & Religion" is a YouTube mini-series introducing key theological and religious concepts through commentary by seven scholars within the Faculty. The discussions are organised around a set of seven questions, including: 'What is theology and religion?', 'In what ways are theology and religion relevant today?', 'Where does God fit in?', 'What role can religious practice play in contemporary society?' and 'How has your study impacted your personal beliefs?.'

A special thanks also goes out to Reverend William Lamb of the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin for providing a beautiful setting, the Old Library, where many of these interviews took place.

The theme of the third volume of JOGTS, due out in Michaelmas 2022, is 'Hope and Time in Theology and Religion,' and is intended to be a continuation from last year's theme taking us from crisis to hope *in* time and *of* time. The issue explores how religious scholars and theologians engage (or will engage) with questions of hope and time. It asks what can we learn from scriptural and religious texts regarding time, timelessness, temporality, and eternity? Can creation narratives and myths and science and/or history be integrated into a symbolic rather than a literal formulation? And how do ideas of hope and time impact those working with more contemporary issues such as gender studies, ethics, racial and economic justice, and environmental and climate change studies through diverse disciplinary vantages such as science and religion, biblical studies, modern theology, comparative religion, and philosophical and political theology?

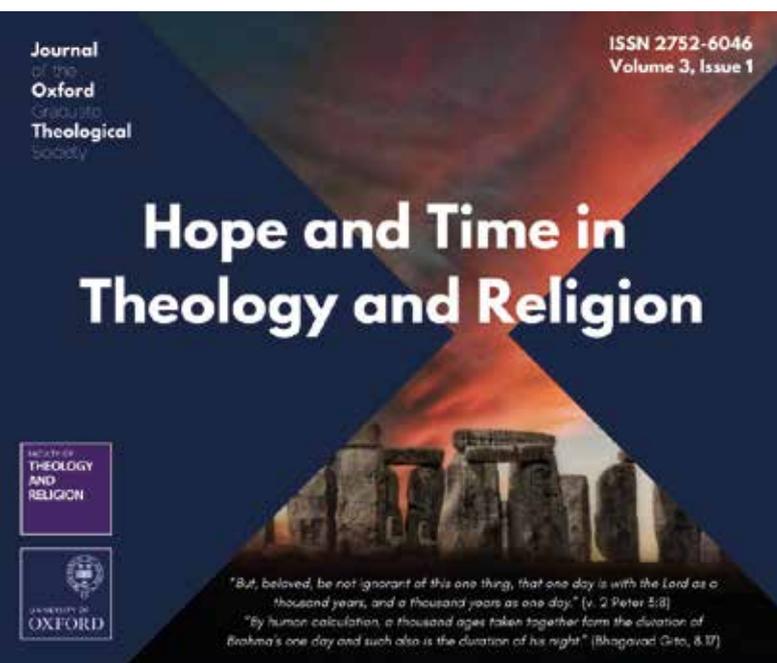
The theme of the third volume of JOGTS, due out in Michaelmas 2022, is 'Hope and Time in Theology and Religion'

We have had many wonderful submissions from students and scholars from across the UK on this theme, which the JOGTS Editorial Board (which expanded due to the volume of papers) tirelessly reviewed and edited. Alongside the peer-reviewed articles and book reviews, the issue also contains three wonderful feature pieces including papers by

Celia Deane-Drummond (Director of the Laudato Si' Research Institute and Senior Research Fellow in theology at Campion Hall), Ryan Mullins (author of *God and Emotion* (Cambridge University Press, 2020) and host of *The Reluctant Theologian*, a podcast on God, time, and everything in between), and an interview with Professor Rowan Williams (Honorary Professor of Contemporary Christian Thought at the University of Cambridge and 104th archbishop of Canterbury, 2002–12). The interview is published both in the journal (which can be found on the [JOGTS website](#)) and also on the [JOGTS YouTube channel](#).

JOGTS is a peer-reviewed journal which publishes scholarly articles in the field of theology and religion. It is run by graduates of the Faculty of Theology and Religion for graduates and early career researchers within these disciplines. For Oxford graduate students who would like to join the editorial board, please contact editor@jogts.org. Article submissions and book reviews from those who specialise in biblical criticism, modern and systematic theology, philosophy of religion, patristics studies, ecclesiastical history, study of religions, science and religion, as well as the anthropology and sociology of religion are welcomed. The fourth call for papers will be released toward the end of 2022 or early 2023.

The journal is supported by the University of Oxford's Faculty of Theology and Religion. Thank you to the faculty for their encouragement over the last three years and for their continued support over the coming years. Many thanks to the former editors (Nikolaas and Tim) for all their support and to Dallas Callaway (Magdalen College), this year's reviews editor for all his input and congratulations and best wishes to him for taking up the role of the next JOGTS editor! Wishing Dallas and the entire Editorial Board much success as the JOGTS continues on its hopeful and timely journey... ■



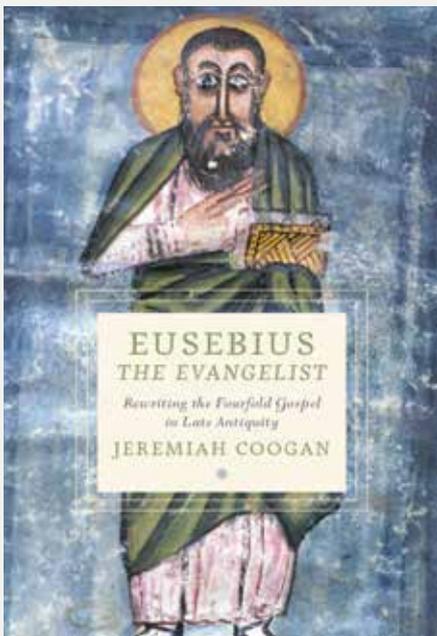
VALETE

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



JEREMIAH COOGAN

I am departing the Faculty of Theology and Religion after two years as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow (2020–2022). I will be taking up a tenure-track position as Assistant Professor of New Testament at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California. During my time here in Oxford, my research has focused on material texts and reading practices in the Roman Mediterranean, with particular



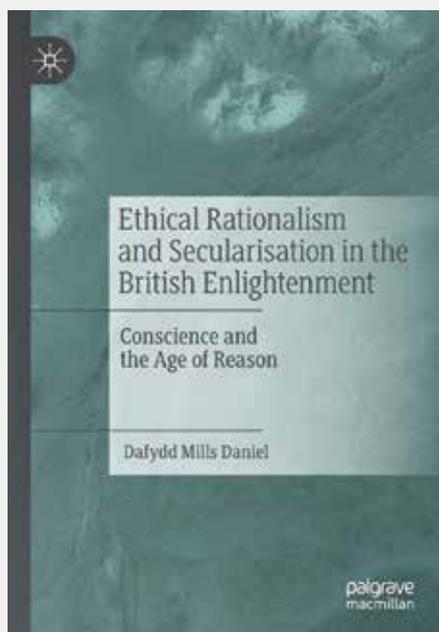
attention to early Jewish and early Christian readers. My first monograph, *Eusebius the Evangelist*, will appear this autumn from Oxford University Press. The book analyses Eusebius of Caesarea's fourth-century reconfiguration of the Gospels as a window into broader questions of technology and textuality. It was awarded the 2022 Manfred Lautenschlaeger Award for Theological Promise from the Universität Heidelberg. My current book project, *The Invention of Gospel Literature*, analyses how readers in the Roman Mediterranean conceptualised "Gospel" as a category. This novel account of ancient literary criticism advances historical scholarship in the fields of religion and classics, and informs ongoing conversations about the influence of philological practices, ancient and modern, on negotiations of knowledge, authority, and cultural value. Other publications arising from my research here in Oxford have been published or are forthcoming in *Early Christianity*, the *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, the *Journal for Ecclesiastical History*, the *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha*, the *Journal of Theological Studies*, the *Scottish Journal of Theology*, and *Studies in Late Antiquity*. Despite the constraints of the pandemic, Oxford and the Faculty of Theology and Religion have been a collegial and stimulating academic home. I am deeply grateful to colleagues — and especially to Professor Markus Bockmuehl, Professor Martin Goodman, Professor Hindy Najman, and Professor Jennifer Strawbridge — for their generosity, insight, and friendship over these past two years.

I am deeply grateful to colleagues for their generosity, insight, and friendship over these past two years.



DAFYDD DANIEL

I'm leaving Oxford to take up the full-time permanent post of Lecturer in Divinity at the University of St Andrews. Of course, I'm beyond delighted to be taking up such a position, even if it does seem somewhat strange to be leaving a place I've called home for more than a decade — as a DPhil student, then as a PGCE student, now as the McDonald Lecturer in Christian Ethics — and to be leaving behind numerous friends and colleagues that have made Oxford in general, and the Theology Faculty in particular, such a wonderful home for so long; here, special mention must be made of those who have helped me to fulfil, and to enjoy, my current role in a way which has enabled me to advance to the next one, including: Sarah Apetrei, Mary Marshall, Kristine MacMichael, Fran Roach, and everyone in Christian Ethics. I shall look forward to return trips both to Oxford and to the Theology Faculty, as well as taking on both different and familiar challenges in my new post for which Oxford Theology has helped to prepare me — but this time with the added novelty of facing them across-the-border and by the sea! Out of innumerable highlights over the last five years as McDonald Lecturer, three which stand out are: publication of a major article on the Scottish



Enlightenment in *The Journal of Religion*; publication of my monograph, *Ethical Rationalism and Secularisation in the British Enlightenment: Conscience and the Age of Reason*; and, being made an AHRC and BBC New Generation Thinker, which has seen me write and present five *BBC Radio 3* documentaries; feature numerous times on *BBC Radio 3's Free Thinking*; and, appear on *BBC Radio 4's Moral Maze*, National Geographic's *The Story of God with Morgan Freeman*, and as a panellist at the *English National Opera*.



RUTH GORNANDT

My position as a Marie Curie fellow will end in September. I have spent three wonderful and very unique years on the fellowship.

When I started in October 2019, nobody could anticipate what was to come and the challenges we would be confronted with. Like many others in similar positions, the pandemic meant that I lost about half the time of my fellowship over the closure of the university, home schooling, and subsequent effects on my children. However, I could always count on the amazing support from the Faculty, particularly the HAF Lisa Driver Davidson, the Faculty Board Chair William Wood, and Office Manager Fran Roach. I am deeply grateful for this. During my fellowship, I investigated the Cognitive Science of Religion (CSR) and how theology could accommodate its research. I connected this question with theological models from the past which mastered similar challenges in their time. Particularly medieval theology in its openness and willingness to integrate new perspectives proved helpful to me – obviously Thomas Aquinas but also Armenian Orthodoxy because of its unique combination of mystical and rational approach. Despite the pandemic I was able to expand my network in the area of Armenian Studies, not only here in Oxford but also internationally. Together with colleagues from Armenian Studies, I am developing my next project, which will look into medieval anthropology and how the Western-Eastern intellectual interchanges shaped the Armenian-Orthodox understanding. Insights from this research will shed new light on CSR's theories about the role of religion for being human and the question of how to accommodate them in theology. It is not yet clear when we will be able to start with this project. Therefore, I am glad that I will stay connected with the Faculty.

ROGER REVELL

I arrived in late August 2020 to support the Templeton-funded Virtues & Vocations project. In taking my leave, I am returning to service in the church, transitioning into a rectorship. Alongside this responsibility, I will be lending a hand with theological education in my new ecclesial locality. I depart with gratitude for the opportunity



to support the broad-ranging scholarly activity of one of the university's oldest faculties. In reflecting on my work over the past few years, three highlights spring to mind. First, I am tremendously encouraged by our students' keen recognition that responsible leadership is not merely a 'what' question (i.e., what skills, strategies, or tactics do I need in order to lead well) but additionally, and perhaps more fundamentally, a 'who' question (i.e., who do I need to become, what virtues do I need to acquire, in order to lead well). Second, I am delighted to have been afforded research space to explore early Protestant appropriations of virtue ethics, with an eye to how this particular inheritance might resource contemporary approaches to moral formation and virtuosity. It has been a gift to become more conversant with this under-appreciated harvest. Third, I would be remiss not to mention all that I have learned from my colleagues on the project. Through conversations and collaborative undertakings, I have been exposed to social-scientific and philosophical perspectives on formation and virtue which would have otherwise remained obscure. Further, I have gained experience in new modes of enquiry. Together, these aspects of my fellowship have been stretching and at times uncomfortable. Yet they have left me capable of asking better questions and, in the years ahead, will no doubt position me to pursue my academic interests in a more full-orbed manner. ■

STUDENT PRIZES

Prizes awarded annually in the Faculty of Theology and Religion

Max Benster
Oriol College

FACULTY PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION PRIZE: Awarded for the best performance in the Preliminary Examination in Theology and Religion.

JUNIOR PUSEY AND ELLERTON PRIZE: Awarded for the best performance in Biblical Hebrew in the Preliminary Examination.



Giacomo Belloli
Ripon College Cuddesdon

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



Eva Plajer
Trinity College

FACULTY PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION PRIZE: Awarded for the best performance in the Preliminary Examination in Philosophy and Theology.



Giacomo Belloli
Ripon College Cuddesdon

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.



Zoya Danayal
Lady Margaret Hall

FACULTY PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION PRIZE: Awarded for the best performance in the Preliminary Examination in Religion and Oriental Studies.



Giacomo Belloli
Ripon College Cuddesdon

CANON HALL JUNIOR GREEK TESTAMENT PRIZE: Awarded for outstanding performance in New Testament Greek in the Final Honour School.



Xanthe Luckham-Down
St Peter's College

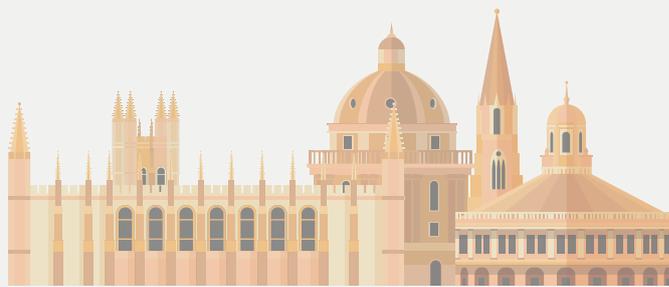
CANON HALL PRELIMINARY GREEK TESTAMENT PRIZE: Awarded for outstanding performance in New Testament Greek in the Preliminary Examination.



Sea Yun Joung
Oriol College

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





Freddie Feltham
Jesus College

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



Hunter Brown
St Benet's Hall

CANON HALL SENIOR GREEK TESTAMENT PRIZE: Awarded for outstanding performance in New Testament Greek in MSt and MPhil examinations..



Luca Williams
St Peter's College

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



Joseph Tulloch
Blackfriars Hall

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



James Lawson
Ripon College Cuddesdon

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



James Pennell
Christ Church College

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



Owen Pembery
Wycliffe Hall

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



Oliver Wright
Wycliffe Hall

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



FACULTY NEWS



MARKUS BOCKMUEHL
New Testament Studies at Oxford

Undergraduate New Testament papers remain consistently among the Faculty's most popular electives, while our current and incoming Master's and DPhil students from 11 countries on 5 continents may constitute the most international resident NT graduate community in the UK or beyond.

Work continues to secure much-needed scholarship support: in addition to small numbers of University-funded awards, we are grateful to the Fernside Trust for fully funded DPhil scholarships supporting two current students. More is needed!

Current and ongoing projects include:

- 2-year ERC-funded Marie Curie-Sklodowska postdoctoral fellowship (Jeremiah Coogan, due to take up a permanent post at Jesuit School of Theology/Santa Clara University in September 2022);
- Grant-funded project producing transcriptions of ancient manuscripts of 1 Clement (David Downs with Dan Batovici of KU Leuven);

- CBA grant-funded project resulting in a 2022 volume on the NT and the Creed (Markus Bockmuehl with Nathan Eubank of Notre Dame University) leading an international team to produce biblical resources for the postponed 2020 Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion (Jennifer Strawbridge);
- A database documenting the early Christian reception of St Paul's letters: <https://paulandpatristics.web.ox.ac.uk> (Jennifer Strawbridge);
- *The Light of the World in Oxford*, an international conference in May 2022 to celebrate 150 years since Holman Hunt's famous painting was donated to Keble College (Markus Bockmuehl). ■



DAFYDD DANIEL

Dafydd Mill Daniel wrote and presented the BBC Radio 3 Sunday Feature *Dylan and the Ferry*, exploring the story behind the photograph of Bob Dylan waiting to board the Aust Ferry during his 1966 'Judas' tour, which Martin Scorsese chose as the cover for his Dylan documentary, *No Direction Home*. In October 2021, Dafydd was an invited

panellist at the *Scottish Land Commission* annual conference, discussing *Land governance – the time for new models?* And, in June 2021, as an Ashmolean Museum Public Engagement Research Associate, he released the Ashmolean Museum podcast *Passion and Painting, Beauty and Virtue* and accompanying TORCH blog *Talking Emotions: The 'Sentimental' Ashmolean Painting that was nearly the Great Seal of the United States*. In June 2022, he organised and chaired the one day conference, *The Church and the British Moralists*, which took place at Wycliffe Hall the proceedings of which will appear in a *History of European Ideas* journal special issue, of the same name, he is guest editing. At the start of this academic year, the Theology Faculty and Wycliffe Hall selected Dafydd as the new Coordinator of the MTh in Applied Theology – a position which he has enjoyed holding this year, but which he will leave in September 2022 to take up his new appointment of Lecturer in Divinity at the University of St Andrews. ■



SUE GILLINGHAM

Looking through forthcoming publications from Bloomsbury, I was somewhat 'miffed' to find *Psalms and the Use of the Critical Imagination*, because that was the title of a paper I gave in 2018 when President of The Society of Old Testament Study. Only when I read on did I realise it was a (surprise) *Festschrift* in my honour. I then had to pretend I knew nothing about it until the memorable book launch in early June. I am immensely grateful to all those graduates and friends who contributed, not least to Katherine Southwood and Holly Morse who were the editors of it. And now, after twenty-five years of research and writing, the final volume of my trilogy *Psalms through the Centuries: Psalms 73-151* is also out: another book launch is forthcoming, to which anyone who wants to celebrate is invited! Four papers have also been published and several others are in the press. My new endeavour is a theological and literary commentary on the Psalms in the Penguin World Classic series.

Three memorable psalms activities throughout this past year come to mind. The first was a series of workshops with Bodleian Education Outreach on the 'Psalms as Therapeutic Texts', with a most inspiring colleague, Gulamabbas Lakha: we now hope to write a joint paper on how Muslims and Christians read the Psalms. A second is a series of recordings, 'Reflections on Psalms',

BBC

SUNDAY FEATURE

3

Dylan And The Ferry

New Generation Thinker and Bob Dylan fan Dafydd Mills Daniel investigates the story behind the iconic image of the singer/songwriter that appeared on the poster for the documentary *No Direction Home*.

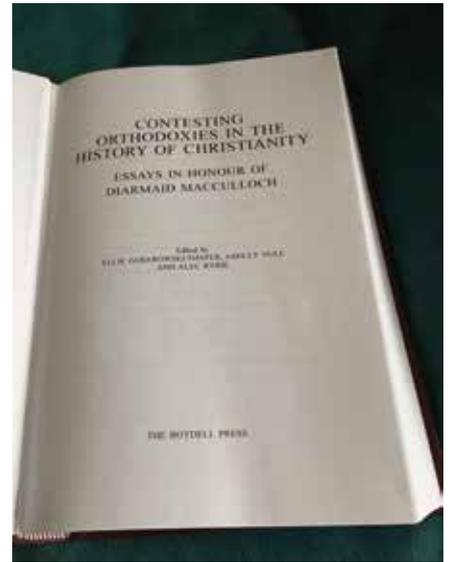
Available now
14 minutes

It's a black and white photo of Dylan on a small car ferry. The ferry was called The Severn Princess and it transported drivers across the River Severn, between England and Wales. Dylan was using the Aust Ferry to convey his new electric guitar and sound into Wales – a sound that for audiences at the end of that ferry ride was perceived as new and destructive, signalling the end of traditional folk music and culture – just as, ironically, the old ferry Dylan was travelling on was itself under threat from something new that was about to replace it: a new bridge and roadway that would make it and its ethos obsolete.



📍 Prof. Sue Gillingham (left) with Prof. Katherine Southwood on the occasion of her *Festschrift: Psalms and the Use of the Critical Imagination*.

📍 Frontispiece of Prof. Diarmaid MacCulloch's *Festschrift: Contesting Orthodoxies in the History of Christianity*.



with the poet Malcom Guite and artist Roger Wagner, discoverable on YouTube. The third is a paper entitled 'The Spirit in the Psalms' for the conference 'Descent of the Dove', hosted by Pusey House: I now understood why scarcely anything has been written on the topic! In addition, as Covid recedes, the Psalms Torch Network programme will soon be resurrected, hopefully showcasing some interesting musical performances.

All in all, this has been a more fulfilling year than cancelled in-person conferences, although I don't think research and teaching will ever be the same, now we can so freely use Teams, Webex or Zoom. ■

DIARMAID MacCULLOCH

What it is to have friends that keep a secret. Back in September, I had a date in my diary to chair the Advisory Board of the *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, which in earlier decades I helped to edit. Early in the pandemic the two current Editors of the *Journal* had suggested that we take the gamble of scheduling a face-to-face



meeting of the Board in 2021 rather than Zooming it, and though slightly puzzled by this foolhardiness, who was I to object? So, I duly toiled up on the train to Cambridge, chaired the meeting, and was then lured on to Peterhouse College dutifully to attend as I thought a small dinner in memory of a distinguished and deceased scholar who had been a good friend to the *Journal*. I found instead a room full of beaming

historians and theologians, thrusting at me a magnificent *Festschrift* volume, from a rich variety of former students and old friends of fifty years' span. Among them were Felicity Heal, who taught me when I was a Cambridge undergraduate, and the great Morna Hooker, whose friendship I have enjoyed since my first academic job in Bristol. They had chosen a theme that they knew would appeal to me: the shifting and unpredictable nature of what constitutes 'orthodox belief' through two millennia of Christian history. Quite a seventieth birthday present. Chief conspirators in this astonishing coup were the editors of the volume, Alec Ryrie, Ellie Gebarowski-Shafer, and Ashley Null, but I'd point an accusing finger also at other members of the sprightly *Journal* editorial team: James Carleton Paget, Mandy Barker, and Christine Linehan. Between them all, they had enlisted between fifty and a hundred different folk to keep the truth from me over at least four years, right up to the door of the dining-room. Their covert operations extended to our arrival at Peterhouse, when various of them nimbly dodged in front of the helpful signs through the College pointing the way to DINNER IN HONOUR OF PROFESSOR MacCULLOCH, to which I therefore remained completely oblivious up to the first glass of bubbly. NB: Time's Whirligig: Peterhouse turned me down for an undergraduate place at Christmas 1968. ■

I found instead a room full of beaming historians and theologians, thrusting at me a magnificent Festschrift volume, from a rich variety of former students and old friends of fifty years' span.

WORKSHOPS & PROJECTS

THE CHURCH AND THE BRITISH MORALISTS

Dafydd Daniel

On 24 June 2022, a number of international scholars, as well as DPhil, MPhil, MSt, and MTh students, gathered at Wycliffe Hall for a one-day symposium: *The Church and the British Moralists*. Organised by Dafydd Daniel, and generously sponsored by the Theology Faculty, this symposium – and the forthcoming *History of European Ideas* journal special issue of the same name, to be edited by Dafydd – has two principal aims: (1) to demonstrate the centrality of ‘church’ to ‘the British moralists’, and the central role of ‘the British moralists’ in debates about, and within, ‘the church’ in the early modern period; and (2) to use the novel focus on ‘church’ to broaden and to redefine the category of ‘the British moralists’ itself: here the symposium and special issue posit that it’s when we recognise church debates as central to the ‘conventional’ British moralists that we start to recognise other ‘non-conventional’ figures as British moralists, not least because they played an active part in those same church debates. The forthcoming special issue includes papers from 13 international scholars on the theme of the church and the British moralists; nearly half of those contributors were able to attend the symposium in Oxford, where speakers included: Dafydd Mills Daniel, University of Oxford; Karen Green, University of Melbourne; Eileen M. Hunt, University of Notre Dame; Tessa Whitehouse, Queen Mary University of London.



↪ *Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism*. Engraving by William Hogarth, 1762.

Used to illustrate a poster for *The Church and the British Moralists*, an interdisciplinary symposium held at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, 24 June 2022.



HANS JONAS: THE EARLY YEARS

Daniel Herskowitz

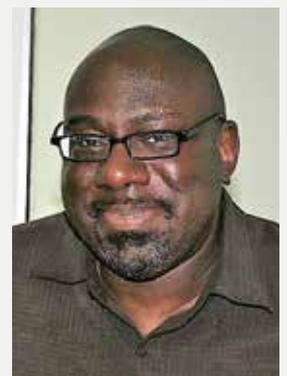
An international workshop on ‘Hans Jonas: The Early Years,’ took place on 4-6 July 2022 in Oxford, under the auspices of the Oxford Centre for Hebrew & Jewish Studies, the Faculty of Theology & Religion, and the Centre for the Study of the Bible. Bringing together twelve leading scholars from Europe, the US, and Israel, it is dedicated to the formative years of this important German-Jewish thinker. In the wake of a general resurgence in Jonas research, this workshop seeks to shed light on one of the most important facets of Jonas’s work that has so far been under-researched: the early years of his intellectual work. This period was dedicated mostly to the deep analysis of philosophical and religious movements in late antiquity, such as the Gnostic movements and Christian authors such as Paul and Augustine. During these years Jonas also developed his interest in Judaism and Zionism. Major intellectual influence on Jonas in these years was exercised by his two doctoral advisors in Marburg, Martin Heidegger and Rudolf Bultmann, but also by figures such as Husserl, Cassirer and Spengler. Geographically, Jonas’s early period is located mostly in Germany and then in Palestine, before his move to North America. Politically and existentially, Jonas’s early period ends with and within the Second World War. Participants were invited to cover all facets of Jonas’s early work, in their conceptual, historical, genealogical and biographical contexts, in themselves as well as in relation to Jonas’s later, more well-known oeuvre. The aim is to publish reworked versions of the papers delivered at the workshop as an essay collection, together with a set of hitherto unpublished texts by Jonas. The workshop is organised by Daniel M. Herskowitz (University of Oxford), Elad Lapidot (University of Lille), and Christian Wiese (University of Frankfurt).



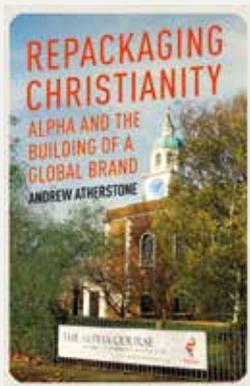
PODCAST

Anthony Reddie

A Podcast for the *Theology Timeline* hosted by Revd Dr Tim Hul. The recorded interview is a preview of my forthcoming book (*Introducing James Cone: A Personal Exploration* -SCM press, c. June 2022) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2EILCMW-2I>



FACULTY BOOKS

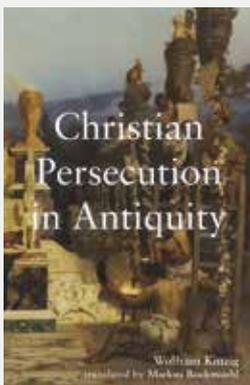


Andrew Atherstone

Repackaging Christianity: Alpha and the Building of a Global Brand

Hodder and Stoughton, 2022
ISBN: 978-1399801515

The Alpha Course, one of the most famous and controversial brands in Christian evangelisation, was launched globally in 1993 and has now grown into an international movement. It has attracted considerable attention in the secular media, from mainstream journals like *The Economist* and *The New York Times*, to fashion magazines like *Elle* and *Fabulous*. Over a million people attend Alpha every year and celebrity participants have included Samantha Fox, Geri Halliwell, Will Young, and Bear Grylls. Its pioneer and figurehead, former barrister and Oxford-trained theologian Nicky Gumbel, has won plaudits as a new Billy Graham for the modern age. *Repackaging Christianity* provides the first historical, archival analysis of Alpha, from its origins in the West London dinner party set of the 1970s through to its latest digital evolutions in the 2010s and 2020s. It examines themes such as Alpha's marketing strategies, social and moral activism, friendship with the Vatican, and charismatic brand of Christianity.



Wolfram Kinzig

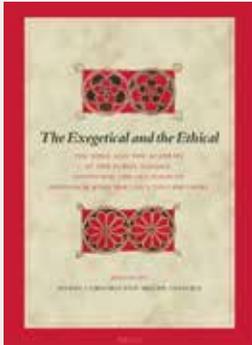
Translated from the German by
Markus Bockmuehl

Christian Persecution in Antiquity

Baylor University Press (2021)
ISBN: 978-1481313889

For centuries into the Common Era, Christians faced social ostracism and suspicion from neighbors and authorities alike. At times, this antipathy erupted into violence. Following Christ was a risky allegiance: to be a Christian in the Roman Empire carried with it the implicit risk of being branded a traitor to cultural and imperial sensibilities. The prolonged experience of distrust, oppression, and outright persecution helped shape the ethos of the Christian faith and produced a wealth of literature commemorating those who gave their lives in witness to the gospel. Wolfram Kinzig, in *Christian Persecution in Antiquity*, examines the motivations and legal mechanisms behind the various outbursts of violence against Christians, and chronologically tracks the course of Roman oppression of this new religion to the time of Constantine. Brief consideration is also given to persecutions of Christians outside the borders of the Roman Empire. Kinzig analyzes martyrdom accounts of the early church, cautiously drawing on these ancient voices alongside contemporary non-Christian evidence to reconstruct the church's experience as a minority sect. In doing so, Kinzig challenges recent reductionist attempts to dismantle the idea that Christians were ever serious targets of intentional violence. While martyrdom accounts and their glorification of self-sacrifice seem strange to modern eyes, they should still be given credence as historical artifacts indicative of actual events, despite them being embellished by sanctified memory.

Newly translated from the German original by Markus Bockmuehl and featuring an additional chapter and concise notes, *Christian Persecution in Antiquity* fills a gap in English scholarship on early Christianity and offers a helpful introduction to this era for nonspecialists. Kinzig makes clear the critical role played by the experience of persecution in the development of the church's identity and sense of belonging in the ancient world.



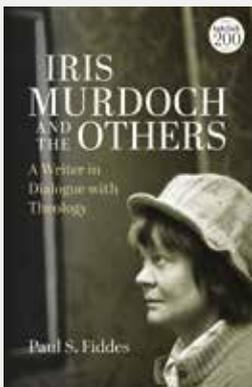
**Hywel Clifford and
Megan Daffern (eds)**

*The Exegetical
and the Ethical*

Brill (2022)
ISBN: 978-9004505483

The Exegetical and the Ethical: The Bible and the Academy in the Public Square. Essays for the Occasion of Professor John Barton's 70th Birthday.

Exegesis has ethical dimensions. This is the case for the Bible, which has a foundational status in traditional perspectives that is simultaneously contested in the modern world. This innovative essay collection, largely about Hebrew Bible/Old Testament texts, is written by an international team – all *Doktorkinder* of a pioneer in this area, Professor John Barton, whose 70th birthday this volume celebrates. With interdisciplinary angles, the essays highlight the roles and responsibilities of the biblical scholar, often located professionally between religious and secular domains. This reflects a broader reality: all readers of texts are engaged ethically in the public square of ideas.

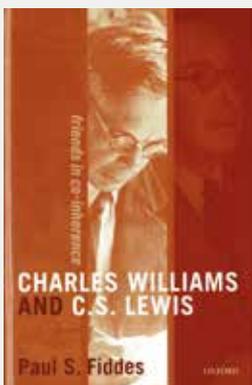


Paul S. Fiddes

*Iris Murdoch and
the Others: A Writer
in Dialogue with
Theology*

T. & T. Clark Ltd (2021)
ISBN: 978-0567703347

Paul S. Fiddes published four more books between October 2021 and April 2022, three of them monographs in the inter-disciplinary area of 'theology and literature.' *Iris Murdoch and the Others. A Writer in Dialogue with Theology* (T & T Clark, 2021) explores the interaction of this philosopher and novelist with a surprisingly large number of theologians, as well as philosophers who were interested in theology, especially teasing out Murdoch's aim to replace 'God' with 'the Good' and her sense of 'the mystical Christ.'

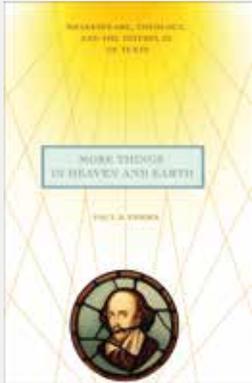


Paul S. Fiddes

*Charles Williams
and C.S. Lewis:
Friends in
Co-inherence*

Oxford University Press (2021)
ISBN: 978-0192845467

Charles Williams and C. S. Lewis: Friends in Co-inherence (Oxford University Press, 2021) studies the literary relationship between Williams and Lewis and their mutual influence on each other's thought. This is the first substantial account of the way that the idea of 'co-inherence' (a mutual participation) shapes their work, and the book also includes an account of the place of 'co-inherence' in modern theology.

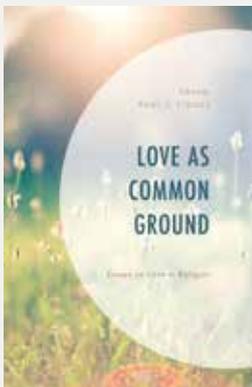


Paul S. Fiddes

More Things in Heaven and Earth: Shakespeare, Theology, and the Interplay of Texts (Richard E. Myers Lectures)

University of Virginia Press
(30 May 2022)
ISBN: 978-0813946528

More Things in Heaven and Earth: Shakespeare, Theology and the Interplay of Texts (University of Virginia Press, 2022) is an intertextual approach to the work of Shakespeare and is concerned not only with the way that Shakespeare uses biblical and doctrinal texts, but also the way that the texts of Shakespeare himself can inform and help to create modern theological texts. Further, the book shows how Shakespeare develops a non-dogmatic spirituality against the background of blurred confessional boundaries of the time.

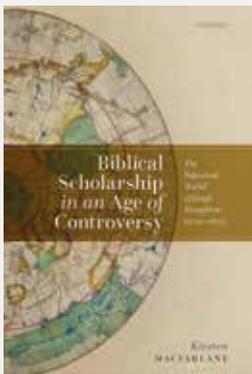


Paul S. Fiddes

Love as Common Ground: Essays on Love in Religion

Alban Books (2021)
ISBN: 978-1793647801

The fourth book, *Love as Common Ground. Essays on Love in Religion* (Lexington Books, 2021) is a volume edited by Professor Fiddes, gathering up nine years of work in the Project for the Study of Love in Religion which he directs at Regent's Park College, Oxford. The book contains essays on the place of love in their tradition from Muslim, Jewish and Christian scholars, with a key-note essay by the editor entitled 'Towards a Theology of Love as Knowledge.' The book establishes love, not as a minimal point of agreement between faiths, but as a ground on which meetings can happen and meaningful conversations can take place.



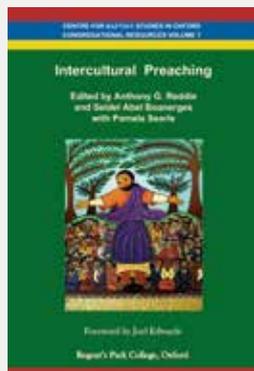
Kirsten Macfarlane

Biblical Scholarship in an Age of Controversy: The Polemical World of Hugh Broughton (1549-1612)

Oxford University Press (2021)
ISBN: 978-0192898821

Biblical Scholarship in an Age of Controversy provides a new account of an important but forgotten moment in the history of pre-modern biblical scholarship. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Christian scholars were investing heavily in techniques for studying the Bible that would now be recognised as the foundations of modern biblical criticism. According to previous studies, this process of transformation was caused by academic elites whose work, regardless of its original motivations, paved the way for the Bible to be seen as a human document rather than a divine message.

At the time, however, such methods were not simply an academic concern, and they pointed in many directions other than that of secular modernity. *Biblical Scholarship in an Age of Controversy* establishes previously unknown religious and cultural contexts for the practice of biblical criticism in the early modern period and reveals the diversity of its effects. The central figure in this story is the itinerant and bitterly divisive English scholar Hugh Broughton (1549-1612), whose prolific writings in Hebrew, Greek, Latin and English offer a new and surprising image of Reformed Protestant intellectual culture. In this image, scholarly advances were not impeded but inspired by strict scripturalism; criticism was driven by missionary ideals, even as proselytization was side-lined; and learned neo-Latin texts were repackaged to appeal to ordinary believers. Seen through the eyes of Broughton and his neglected colleagues and followers, the complex and unexpected contributions of reformed Protestant intellectuals and laypeople to longer-term religious and cultural change finally become visible.



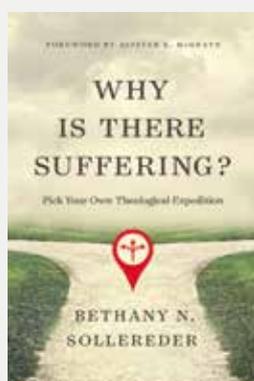
Anthony Reddie

Intercultural Preaching

Independently published (2021)

ISBN: 978-8713613747

Our churches in Britain today are becoming increasingly multicultural. This will be for some both a delight and a challenge, not least for those called to preach inside them. Whether we like it or not, this is a reality with which the church must engage. It is a challenge to our understanding of mission in Britain. *Intercultural Preaching* consists of a series of essays in which scholars and practitioners, ministers, and lay people, all of whom are preachers, share their insights on the joys and challenges of preaching in diverse contexts. This is a practical resource for those charged with preaching the word of God to God's people in changing and complex times. The book also includes sample sermons as examples of sermons preached in multicultural contexts.



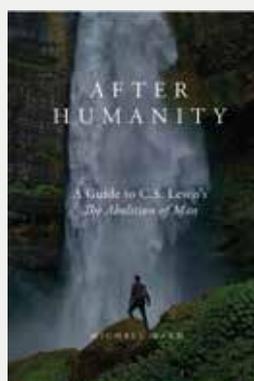
Bethany N. Sollereder

Why Is There Suffering?: Pick Your Own Theological Expedition

Zondervan Academic (2021)

ISBN: 978-0310109020

Similar to novels that allow readers to choose their own “paths,” *Why Is There Suffering?* by Bethany Sollereder invites readers to make choices that lead them on an exploration of theological explanations of suffering. Every few pages, readers face multiple possibilities regarding suffering and its theological explanations and have to make choices about which one they find most plausible. Each decision turns them to a new part of the book which will lead to further complexities and new choices, helping readers see how theological choices lead to various 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. It trains people how to think like a theologian rather than telling them what the strongest position is. Taking an intentionally light-hearted approach to a heavy topic, this accessible book presents a helpful introduction to the problem of suffering and the most commonly offered responses to it. It is appropriate for A-level students and non-theologians and may provide a useful way into a dense and complex area of study for undergraduate and graduate students as well. An extensive bibliography allows the book to act as a doorway to the relevant scholarly literature.



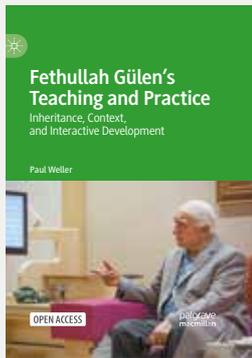
Michael Ward

After Humanity: A Commentary on C.S. Lewis' Abolition of Man

Word on Fire Academic (2021)

ISBN: 978-1943243778

The Abolition of Man is the published version of the 1943 Riddell Memorial Lectures delivered by C.S. Lewis at the University of Durham, in which he mounts a philosophical defence of the objectivity of value and forecasts the trajectory of thorough-going subjectivism. *After Humanity* provides historical background and intellectual context to Lewis's work, detailing the relevant biographical factors and explaining the many recondite allusions and quotations with which the argument is sprinkled. It also surveys the reception history of *Abolition*, noting how it has been commended for its “keen accuracy” (Joseph Ratzinger), its “taut brilliance” (Hans Urs Von Balthasar), and its “prescience” (John Gray). Rowan Williams's verdict: “C.S. Lewis's analysis of the anti-human trend of modern Western culture has perhaps even more and sharper pertinence now than when it was written. In this vigorous and widely researched book, one of our leading Lewis scholars helps us see this analysis in its full intellectual context, and confirms beyond doubt Lewis's stature as a genuine public intellectual for our own day as well as his.”



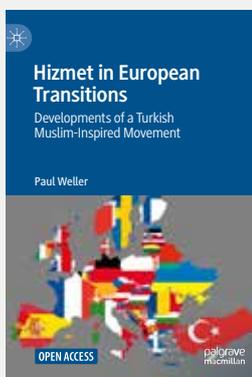
Paul Weller

***Fethullah
Gülen's Teaching
and Practice:
Inheritance,
Context, and
Interactive
Development***

Palgrave Macmillan (2022)

ISBN: 978-3030973629

This is the first book of its kind about the Turkish origin Sunni Muslim scholar, Fethullah Gülen, since the July 2016 events in Turkey, the trauma experienced by Gülen, and the disruption to initiatives inspired by his teaching, known as Hizmet. This book discusses what it calls the 'distinctive normativity' of the teaching and practice of Fethullah Gülen in the Qur'an and Sunnah in dynamic engagement with their geographical, temporal and existential reception, translation, and onward communication. It argues that just as Hizmet cannot be understood apart from Gülen and his teaching, Gülen and his teaching cannot be understood apart from Hizmet, while exploring the future potential heritage of both.



Paul Weller

***Hizmet in
Transitions:
European
Developments
of a Turkish
Muslim-Inspired
Movement***

Palgrave Macmillan (2022)

ISBN: 978-3030937973

This book explores how the movement known as Hizmet (meaning "service") is undergoing a period of transitions in Europe. Inspired by the teaching and practice of the Turkish Islamic scholar, Fethullah Gülen, Hizmet has been active in Europe (and other continents) for several decades. It has always been subject to some degree of contestation, which has intensified following the July 2016 coup attempt in Turkey, for which the current Turkish government holds Fethullah Gülen and Hizmet as responsible – a claim they strongly deny. In Turkey, thousands of people associated with Hizmet have been imprisoned. In Europe, pressures have been brought to bear on the movement and its activities. In charting a way forward, Hizmet finds itself in a significant transitional period, the nature and possible future trajectories of which are explored in this volume. This book contends that properly to understand Hizmet in Europe, one has to situate it in its interactive engagement both with its diverse European national contexts and with Fethullah Gülen's teaching and practice.

A book launch and panel discussion of these books took place at Regent's Park College on Monday 9th May, organised by the Oxford Centre for Religion and Culture (<https://www.rpc.ox.ac.uk/research-life/oxford-centre-christianity-culture/>) in collaboration with the Dialogue Society (<https://www.dialoguesociety.org/>). *Fethullah Gülen's Teaching and Practice* was responded to by: Dr Martin Whittingham, Supernumerary Research Fellow, Regent's Park College and Director, Centre for Muslim-Christian Studies Oxford and by Revd. Professor Paul Fiddes, Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Oxford and Director of the Study of Love in Religion Project, Regent's Park College, University of Oxford. *Hizmet in Transitions* was responded to by: Emeritus Professor Jørgen Nielsen, Emeritus Professor of Contemporary European Islam and Affiliate Professor, University of Copenhagen and by Dr Serena Hussain, Associate Professor, Research Institute for Peace, Security and Social Justice, Coventry University. In November 2022, extended book reviews based on these responses and from papers in an associated series of seminars on inter-religious and inter-convictional dialogue will be published in a Special Issue of *The Journal of Dialogue Studies* (<http://www.dialoguestudies.org/>)

UNIVERSITY RESPONSE TO THE INVASION OF UKRAINE

The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine by Russia is causing a humanitarian catastrophe to unfold in Europe. Members of our community are appalled by Russia's action and in awe of the bravery shown by Ukrainians as well as the bravery of those Russians who have denounced their government's aggression.

Many of us would like to do something to help. We are compiling here details on support services for students and staff, of actions being taken by the university, of work by our academics, and on ways you can contribute:

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/university-response-invasion-ukraine>



Lviv, Ukraine - May 16, 2022: A funeral of Ukrainian servicemen killed during Russia's invasion of Ukraine, at Lychakiv cemetery in city of Lviv. © Shutterstock.com

FACULTY OF
**THEOLOGY
AND
RELIGION**



UNIVERSITY OF
OXFORD

OXFORD THEOLOGY & RELIGION MONOGRAPHS 2021-22

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*

Samuel Andrew Shearn

.....
Pastor Tillich: The Justification of the Doubter

Megan Loumagne Ulishney

.....
Original Sin and the Evolution of Sexual Difference





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

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

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

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

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

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

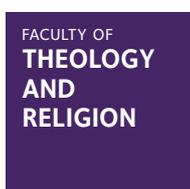
Your support will really make a difference. Whether large or small, for graduate scholarships, academic positions, or to support core activities, every gift is valued and appreciated.

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

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Thank you





Mosaics in the apse of the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy which has important examples of early Christian Byzantine art and architecture.
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