

**Christian Ethics Research Seminar  
Trinity Term 2026**

All seminars will be held **4-5.45pm** and take place at the **South West Canonry, Christ Church** unless otherwise notified. *It is expected that all Christian Ethics graduate students, postdocs, and research fellows who are resident in or near Oxford will attend the seminars unless there is a good reason to be absent, in which case apologies should, please, be sent a week in advance.*

**Thursday May 7<sup>th</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> week)**

**Michael Mawson**

**‘Faith in Protest: Liberation Theologies and Activism in Aotearoa New Zealand’**

Michael Mawson is Maclaurin Goodfellow Chair at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Previously he taught at Charles Sturt University, Sydney, and the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, following doctoral studies at the University of Notre Dame. He has research interests spanning a range of themes in theology and ethics, including German theology (especially Dietrich Bonhoeffer), disability theology, ageing, religion and politics, environmental ethics, decolonisation, and contextual theologies in Aotearoa and the Pacific. Key publications include books *Christ Existing as Community* (2018) and *Standing Under the Cross: Essays on Bonhoeffer’s Theology* (2023), as well as recent essays on theology in settler colonial contexts. Mawson has also edited numerous volumes, including *Bonhoeffer and Contemporary Challenges: Crisis and Hope* (2026), *Unsettling Theologies: Memory, Identity and Place* (2024), and *The Oxford Handbook of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (2019).

**Thursday May 21<sup>st</sup> (4<sup>th</sup> week)**

*NB. different location (but same time)*

**Vincent Lloyd**

**‘What is political theology?’**

**Book launch and discussion with response**

**Michael Dummett Lecture Theatre, Christ Church**

*Drinks and Canapes Reception Afterwards – please register by emailing*

[mcdonaldcentre@theology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mcdonaldcentre@theology.ox.ac.uk)

Vincent Lloyd is Professor of Theology & Religious Studies and Directs the Center for Political Theology at Villanova University, having earlier taught at Syracuse University and Georgia State University. He has held visiting positions at the University of Durham, University of Wisconsin, the University of Virginia, and the University of Notre Dame. Lloyd is a leading thinker in Black religious studies and critical theory, his research focusing on the philosophy of religion, religion and politics, and race. He has published extensively in the media on topics related to religion and politics, and has received widespread acclaim and recognition for his work through various awards and grants. His numerous sole authored and edited volumes include: *Black Dignity: The Struggle Against Domination* (2022); *Religion of the Field Negro: On Black Secularism and Black Theology* (2017); *Black Natural Law* (2026); *Law and Transcendence: On the Unfinished Project of Gillian Rose* (2009). He is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship for which he is working on a book entitled *Harold Cruse: Contrarian Radical*, a biography of one of the forgotten founders of Black studies. In addition to his academic work he created and led for a number of years the Political Theology Network.

Ahead of the book launch, Dr Sam Tranter (McDonald Postdoctoral Fellow) will lead a reading group on the book. This is open to anyone interested.

- **Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May**, 11am-12noon (*discussing Intro & Chapter 1*)
- **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May**, 11am-12noon (*discussing Chapters 2, 3, 4*)

The reading group will meet at **Christ Church**. Get in touch at [samuel.tranter@theology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:samuel.tranter@theology.ox.ac.uk) to sign up and for further details.

**Friday May 29<sup>th</sup> (5<sup>th</sup> Week)**  
*NB different time & location*

*Joint seminar with the New Testament Studies Seminar*

**Ruan Bessa and Sam Tranter, with response by Oliver O'Donovan**  
**Oliver O'Donovan's *Resurrection and Moral Order: An Outline of Evangelical Ethics* (1986) Forty Years On: Two Responses to O'Donovan's Engagement with Scripture**

**Location:** Lecture Theatre, H B Allen Centre, Keble College,  
**Time:** 2:30-4:00

*Do keep the conversation going in the pub afterwards*

Ruan Bessa is a Research Fellow in Christian Ethics in the Faculty of Theology and Religion. He earned his PhD from Calvin Theological Seminary (Grand Rapids, MI), where he served as a teaching/research assistant and associate director of Admissions. His research interest includes questions in meta-ethics, the relationship between Scripture and Christian ethics, and Oliver O'Donovan's moral and political theology. He edited Oliver O'Donovan's *The Courage of Truth* and translated *Resurrection and Moral Order* into Portuguese.

Samuel Tranter is McDonald Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Christian Ethics and Public Life in the Faculty of Theology of Religion. He has taught theology and ethics in theological colleges and universities across the UK and, for a year, in Southeast Asia. Most recently he served as Academic Dean at St John's College, Durham University. His Durham PhD was published in 2020 as *Oliver O'Donovan's Moral Theology: Tensions and Triumphs* (Bloomsbury T & T Clark). More recently he has published essays on the connections between sin and agency, ecological responsibility and eschatology, and social justice and spirituality in journals including *Scottish Journal of Theology*, *Practical Theology*, and *Studies in Christian Ethics*.

**Thursday June 11<sup>th</sup> (7<sup>th</sup> week)**  
*NB different time & location*

**Slavica Jakelić**  
**'Religious and Secular Humanisms: Politics Beyond Power'**

Public Lecture as part of the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics, and Public Life  
Reimagining Humanism Conference (11-13<sup>th</sup> June)

**Location:** Michael Dummet Lecture Theatre, Christ Church  
**Time:** 5.30-7.15 (with drinks & canapes reception afterwards)  
*please register by emailing [mcdonaldcentre@theology.ox.ac.uk](mailto:mcdonaldcentre@theology.ox.ac.uk)*

Slavica Jakelić is Richard P. Baepler Distinguished Professor in the Humanities at Valparaiso University, USA. Combining political theology and social science, her scholarly interests and publications centre on religion and nationalism, religious and secular humanisms, theories of religion and secularism, and interreligious conflict and dialogue. She is a Senior Fellow of the "Religion & Its Publics" at the University of Virginia, where she was a faculty member and co-director at the UVA's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture for several years. She has held a number of fellowships at interdisciplinary institutes in Europe and the United States and is currently a Senior Research Fellow at the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics and Public Life for the academic year, 2025-26. Jakelić's writings have appeared in journals such as the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, *Journal of Religious Ethics*, *Political Theology*, *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, *Studies in Religion*, and *Sciences Religieuses*. Alongside numerous articles and several co-edited volumes, she has published the following books: "Collectivistic Religions" (2010/2016); "Both Freedom and Belonging: Essays on Religion, Nationalism, and Solidarity" (2024); and "Pluralizing Humanism" (2025). She is currently working on a book titled 'Ethical Nationalisms.'

**Friday June 19<sup>th</sup> (8<sup>th</sup> week)**

**Summer Party**

Weather permitting a drinks party will be held for seminar participants in the gardens of the South West Canonry at Christ Church. An invitation will be sent out nearer the time to determine numbers wishing to attend.