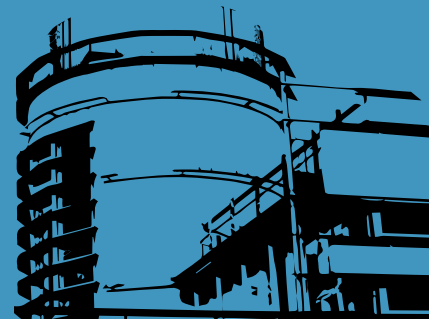


Faculty of Divinity Newsletter

THEOLOGY, RELIGION, & PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION



www.divinity.cam.ac.uk ISSUE 2, NOVEMBER 2017

Professor Janet Soskice: Update from the Chair



It's easy to be enthusiastic about the Faculty of Divinity at Cambridge. Once again we topped the league tables for our subject with 100% rating in the 'Complete University Guide' of 2017. Our satisfaction ratings from undergraduates and graduates are amongst the very highest in the University, which itself has one of the highest overall ratings in the country. Here is a snapshot of our doings.

Our subject, which treats of some of the most ancient texts and traditions, is also at the flash point of modern challenges. Interfaith relations are key. When I first joined the Faculty we had no lectureships in either Judaism or Islam (Professor de Lange had transferred his post from Oriental Studies, but this was only for his tenure). Now, thanks to imaginative and generous benefactions which have also established the Cambridge Interfaith Programme, we

have two posts in each field. We hope to become a hub for the extensive Jewish Studies network in the University, and also for burgeoning interest in late antiquity, the Mediterranean and the origins of Islam.

We have a new M.Phil. module on Islam in Modern Europe and Dr Ankur Barua, lecturer in Hinduism and director of the Cambridge Interfaith Program, has published *Debating Conversion in Hinduism and Christianity*, a work which analyses not only the contested 'conversions' to Christianity of the Victorian age but the current anxious state of India with regard to interfaith matters. The Cambridge Interfaith Program has worked in consort with the British Museum in the outreach on the Museum's *Faith After the Pharaohs* exhibition, which looked at Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities in Egypt's late antiquity, aligning with the work of our own Faculty members on Bible, Septuagint and Hellenistic Judaism.

Late antiquity has become an important new discipline, with classicists and historians taking lively interest in the philosophical and religious developments of the early centuries of our era and the emergence of Islam. In addition to the Sultan Qaboos Professor, Garth Fowden, whose specialism is the first millennium and especially the origins of Islam, we have recently appointed a new lecturer in Late Antique Christianity,

Dr Sophie Lunn-Rockcliffe, and Dr Holger Zellentin, our new lecturer in Rabbinics, is a specialist on relations between Christianity, Rabbinic Judaism and early Islam. World Christianity has seen a similar renaissance, with special strengths in African Christianity. Here we are assisted by the excellent team at the Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide, which is part of the Cambridge Theological Federation and just one of a number of satellite institutions which make the theological community at Cambridge so rich. Others of these include the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion, the Cambridge Muslim College, the Von Hugel Institute for Critical Catholic Inquiry and, of course, the other colleges of the Cambridge Theological Federation including the Woolf Institute (Jewish, Christian, Muslim relations) and the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies.

To the familiar roster of courses in history, philosophy of religion, New and Old Testament, Christian Theology, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism, undergrads can add papers on 'Theology and the natural sciences', 'Religious themes in literature', 'Political Theology', 'Jews, Christians and Muslims before and after Muhammad' and even a paper in anthropology of religion on 'Mesmerism, Spiritualism and Psychological Research'.

The new Regius Professor, Ian McFarland, is a Yale-trained systematic theologian, Lutheran by background



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Faculty of Divinity
West Road,
Cambridge CB3 9BS

INSIDE

New Faces in the Faculty	2	White-Hot: A Conversation with Three Women Professors	8
Theology and the Sciences: Sarah Coakley's Templeton Project	4	Cambridge Inter-faith Programme	10
Late Antiquity in the Divinity Faculty and Beyond	5	Divinity Faculty Outreach	11
Interview with an Undergrad	6	Faculty Publications	12
Reflections from an MPhil	7	Faculty News	12

and ecumenical by nature. We will be appointing to the Norris Hulse and Lady Margaret Professorships in the coming year.

With too much to mention, I'd like finally to mention the reconfiguration of our MPhil which is rapidly becoming the template for other Arts and Humanities MPhils at Cambridge. Previously this degree was seen primarily as groundwork for doctoral study. This is still possible and desirable for most, but it has become evident that many students want to do an MPhil as an end point – some have, for instance, already worked in NGOs and want to deepen their understanding, some seek an enrichment of undergraduate work, or part of a career change. We have made the MPhil modular in such a way that a student, with guidance, could do, for instance, Philosophy of Religion in their first term and a module on 'Theology and Tragedy' or 'Islam in Modern Europe' in the second. We offer a number of attractive modules (see the website) which can change year to year, and will next year pioneer a module shared with Medieval and Modern Languages on 'Poetics and performance'. On this same modular platform we have started an MPhil 'stream' in Anglican Studies - a terrific offering for ordinands and sabbatical visitors. The resources here are immense.

Although numbers doing theology and religious studies are 'up' across the country at GCSE and A-level, they are 'down' in University applications, with Cambridge being no exception. Yet our grads go into all the fields and professions with the success of other Cambridge graduates – civil service, NGOs, law, journalism, grad schemes of all shapes and sizes, teaching, research, and even directing and acting on stage and screen. We encourage alumni to point potential applicants in our direction -- we're confident they will be delighted by their time in a Faculty that is convivial, with teaching that is dedicated and a degree which is both anchored in traditions and life of the living faith communities and addressed to the needs of our time.

Janet Soskice is Professor of Philosophical Theology and the outgoing Chair of Faculty Board

New Faces in the Faculty

Below we introduce you to some of our Faculty's recent additions and to their areas of research:

Dr Ankur Barua, Lecturer in Hindu Studies



I introduce myself to people with my designation of 'Lecturer in Hindu Studies', which is quite a convenient umbrella term to cover my three main areas of research: Hinduism and philosophical theology, Hinduism and science, and Hinduism and religiously-motivated violence. I studied physics for my undergraduate degree at St Stephen's College, University of Delhi, and this early training informs my abiding interest in the basic ('metaphysical') question: how many kinds of things are there? This question leads to another, equally momentous, question: given that different religious philosophers and theologians (massively) disagree in their inventories of 'the choir of heaven and the furniture of earth', is there a way of finding out if there is such a thing as *the* correct description of reality?

Under the first heading, I explore how certain Vedantic Hindu thinkers, between 800 CE and 1500 CE, grappled with the 'question of being' from logical, exegetical, and theological perspectives. The dialectical sophistication of these attempts is indicated by the fact that they resulted in five distinct world-views, ranging across a fine-grained continuum of 'monism', 'pan-en-theism', and 'theism'. These complex exercises in philosophical theology form the basis of some modern Hindu attempts to construct dialogues between classical Hindu thought and science. While some of these reconfigurations of Vedantic Hinduism in the light of scientific disciplines such as quantum physics, cosmology, and evolutionary biology make rather outlandish claims (for instance, that Einsteinian Relativity is taught by the Vedas), they can also be seen as part of ongoing debates, under the rubric of 'Science and Religion', relating to whether the empirical sciences need any theological support. I have

recently been examining the plausibility of the claim that forms of idealisms based on the Upanishads can solve (or dissolve) certain conceptual paradoxes in quantum physics. My research interests are not always as rarefied or arcane as all this might suggest – in fact, I have spent the most substantial part of my academic career studying patterns of Hindu-Christian conflict and Hindu-Muslim violence in British India and postcolonial India. While Hinduism is often represented in western circles as an 'essentially' tolerant, egalitarian, and pacifist system, my research explores the deep ambivalence towards violence in the diverse cultural universes of Hinduism – violence is alternately affirmed, valorised, regulated, negated or denied across a range of Hindu scriptural texts. I am therefore particularly intrigued by how diverse, and even conflicting, images of 'Hinduism' have been produced, circulated, and enacted over crisscrossing transcultural routes between India and Britain during the last three hundred years. One theme that I intend to explore over the next few years is how three British women, Annie Besant (Irish), Margaret Noble/Sister Nivedita (Scottish-Irish), and Madeleine Slade/Mira Behn (English), who became devotees of some key Hindu figures (Slade of Mahatma Gandhi), have crucially shaped the ongoing receptions in the west of distinctive inflections of modern Hinduisms.

Because of this range of interests, the Faculty of Divinity, a rich and vibrant hub of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of religious universes, is an ideal base for my research and teaching. I have published two books and several articles in the fields of Vedantic metaphysics, Hindu socio-political identities, and Hindu-Christian comparative theology.

Prof Garth Fowden, Sultan Qaboos Professor of Abrahamic Faiths



After twenty-eight years working for a Greek research institution, in July 2013 I became the first holder of the Sultan Qaboos Chair of Abrahamic Faiths in the Faculty of Divinity. Three decades had passed since my previous sojourn in Cambridge

as a research fellow at Peterhouse and subsequently Darwin. If I (born in Norwich) had been Europeanized in the meantime, Cambridge had been globalized. The process of re-adjustment required, as I had expected, some patience.

The first step was to deliver my inaugural lecture, in December 2013 (there is a video at <http://sms.cam.ac.uk/media/1635186>). Not only is the Chair new, so is the subject. This took some explaining, as did my historical approach, in line with my Oxford training in Modern History. But my colleagues in Divinity come from a wide spectrum of disciplines, and some would no more call themselves theologians than I do. In theory there are opportunities here for interdisciplinary and cross-faculty teaching and research. But that is best left to individual initiative, as the institutional framework is quite rigid. This is not necessarily a criticism, since scholarship is a discipline and young minds benefit from a structured approach.

My thinking, writing and teaching is, in fact, much concerned with one particular type of structuring, namely historical periodization. This may sound theoretical and arid, but try teaching or writing history as a continuous, undifferentiated flow. As an undergraduate, from 1971 to 1974, I witnessed the take-off of what turned out to be a very popular new periodization called Late Antiquity, particularly associated with my teacher Peter Brown. Late Antiquity saw the Christianization of the Roman Empire and the emergence of rabbinic Judaism. It conventionally ends c. 600 AD, thus excluding Muhammad and the rise of Islam even though the Qur'an brims with allusions to both the Jewish and the Christian scriptures. This is a strange way to periodize history in an age when we are struggling to understand how Islam relates to the other cultural traditions with which it interacts in its historic environment from Central Asia to the Atlantic, but also these days on the global stage.

I suggest we experiment with a new periodization, the First Millennium CE, within which Christianity, rabbinic Judaism and Islam all grew up, flourished and cross-pollinated. My programmatic book, *Before and after Muhammad: The First Millennium refocused*, appeared during my first

term back in Cambridge. I am teaching a course for third-year undergraduates, but also a number of graduates, on 'Jews, Christians and Muslims before and after Muhammad'. And I am writing a narrative history of the whole period aimed at a wide audience and contracted to Allen Lane. Cambridge is not yet a centre for these studies comparable to Oxford. But for just that reason, it lacks the inertia of tradition. I have been able to think and write here almost as freely as I did in the National Research Foundation in Athens; and Cambridge adds the teaching dimension too. In other words, the new institutional horizons opened up by Sultan Qaboos of Oman's generous benefaction have also stimulated fresh personal perspectives, for which I am grateful.

Prof Ian McFarland, *Regius Professor of Divinity*



My area of study is usually called 'systematic theology', a phrase which I am always afraid comes across as more confusing than helpful. What it means is that I am a scholar of Christian doctrine: my interest is in examining what Christians teach ('doctrine', of course, is just the Latin word for teaching), and then exploring both what they mean by their teaching and the reasons they give for teaching in the way they do. As a Christian myself, I am also interested in evaluating doctrines – that is, discerning whether they are what Christians *should* teach. All this is 'theology' (literally, 'God-talk') because Christian teaching centres on God; and it is 'systematic' in that it addresses the question of whether all the different things Christians say about God 'hang together' (the literal meaning of the Greek root of 'systematic') to form a more or less coherent whole.

I have been teaching theology for eighteen years. Although I was born and educated in the United States, my first academic post was in Scotland, at the University of Aberdeen, where I taught from 1998-2005. I then moved back to the U.S. to teach at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, where I held joint appointments at the Candler School of Theology (a seminary focused

on the training of religious leaders) and the Laney Graduate School (where I supervised doctoral students). I was both surprised and honoured to be appointed to the Regius Chair in Divinity at Cambridge last year and am very much looking forward to working with colleagues and students here in what I hope (!) is my final university appointment.

My research interests have focused broadly on the way in which Christians understand God relates to what is other than God. Most of my books have focused specifically on God's relationship to human beings ('theological anthropology'), but my most recent book (*From Nothing: A Theology of Creation*, 2014) treats more broadly of how God as Creator relates to the diversity of created beings. The concern that has animated much of my work has been to show that the internal logic of Christian belief should lead us to value the diversity of creation, whether the focus is on the differences that mark us out as individual human beings, or the much more extreme differences that distinguish the full range of creatures from one another. For if God freely created everything to be just as it is, then each creature must have its own significance – none can simply be instrumental to the flourishing of any other and thus treated simply as a means to an end.

My current research area is Christology, or reflection on the character and work of Jesus of Nazareth. In one sense, this is a continuation of my previous work, for because Christians confess that Jesus is God incarnate, he encapsulates in particularly concentrated form the question of how God relates to what is not God. In claiming that Jesus is fully human as well as fully divine, Christians have wanted to say that God does not overwhelm creatures – that God's presence and action among us is not (as critics of Christianity like Marx and Nietzsche thought) a threat to our integrity as free and responsible beings, but somehow enables it. I want to examine the basis on which Christians can make that sort of claim.

Theology and the Sciences: Sarah Coakley's Templeton Project



theoretical physics and fine-tuning arguments, and debates concerning divine foreknowledge, fatalism, and the eschatology of a meaningful human life.

Peter Woodford's research on the evolution strand investigates problems at the intersection of the study of animal cooperation, the philosophy of biology, and the philosophy of religion. He examines whether scientific understandings of the evolution of cooperative and 'eusocial' behaviour across species can inform philosophical reflection on the natural basis of human ethical and religious dispositions. In May 2016 Peter organized his international symposium entitled 'Cooperation from Cells to Humans: Theoretical, Empirical, and Philosophical Perspectives on Inclusive Fitness.' The symposium examined explanations of the evolution of social cooperation across the living world and how they have informed discussions of human nature.

Daniel De Haan's research investigates the ways neuroscience, comparative animal psychology, and developmental psychology can inform and challenge certain conceptions of the human person from philosophical and theological anthropology and the philosophy of mind. Daniel's October 2016 symposium on 'Probing Practices of Psychological Attribution' brought together theologians, philosophers, comparative animal psychologists, psychiatrists, and neurologists to discuss diverse forms of psychological attribution in humans and other animals as well as clinical practices, specifically with dementia patients.

Each member of the programme has been preparing a monograph out of their research, as well as publishing the outcomes of their symposia and other related articles.



The Templeton World Charity Foundation Research Programme in Theology, Philosophy of Religion, and the Sciences, supervised by Professor Sarah Coakley, the Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity, was launched at the beginning of Michaelmas Term 2014. The project's aim has been to address a serious blockage to interchange between the sciences and theology and philosophy of religion, namely the lack of adequate knowledge of actual scientific practice on the part of theologians and philosophers of religion. Three postdoctoral fellows with backgrounds in theology and philosophy of religion have each been embedded within a different strand of interdisciplinary scientific research. Dr Natalja Deng has worked on the cosmology strand of the project and is situated within the Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics and the Philosophy Faculty. Dr Peter Woodford is situated in the Large Animal Research Group led

by Prof Tim Clutton-Brock within the Department of Zoology, and is working on the evolutionary science strand of the project. Dr Daniel De Haan is working on the neuroscience strand of the project within the Translational Cognitive Neuroscience Laboratory in the Department of Psychology.

Natalja Deng's research in cosmology and the philosophy of religion has addressed questions pertaining to time and arguments for the existence of God. Can one make sense of a designer's, and a theistic God's, relation to time at all, and if so how? What is the relation between divine foreknowledge and the possibility of human freedom? What does this imply for possible responses to arguments from evil? In December 2016, Natalja organized an interdisciplinary symposium at the University of Cambridge on 'Time and Religion' which addressed problems about God's relation to time, the connection between advances in

Late Antiquity in the Divinity Faculty and Beyond

For some decades now, the study of Late Antiquity has been booming in university departments of Theology, History, and Classics, in large part inspired by the works of Peter Brown, who has rescued the period from obscurity and the negative reputation of the ‘dark ages’. It is a period whose historical limits continue to be debated: some see it running from as early as the mid-second century CE to as late as the Islamic conquests and the Carolingians in the seventh and eighth centuries, while others define it in narrower terms as the period of the Roman empire’s political and administrative decline, from the late third to late fifth centuries CE.

The intellectual excitements of Late Antiquity are manifold. This is a period which witnessed the enmeshing of Christianity in imperial and state structures in and after the reign of the emperor Constantine, often at the expense of a complex of polytheistic cults and mystery religions which are lumped for convenience’s sake under

the label of ‘paganism’. It also saw the efflorescence of rabbinic culture, and, if one encompasses the period from the seventh century, the rise of another global monotheism - Islam. Late Antiquity has bequeathed us canonical texts from Augustine’s *Confessions* to the Talmudim and Qur’an, and richly decorated buildings from the synagogue at Dura Europos to the church – and later mosque – of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople. It is also notable for the sheer quantity of its textual and material remains, many of which are still relatively unexplored and provide scholars with a fresh seam to mine.

The study of Late Antiquity in Cambridge has ebbed and flowed over the decades, both and in and beyond the Divinity Faculty. However, the recent appointments of Professor Garth Fowden, Dr Sophie Lunn-Rockcliffe and Dr Holger Zellentin have added to existing strengths in the areas of patristics and Jewish-Christian relations (represented especially by Drs James Carleton Paget, Simon Gathercole, Thomas Graumann and Professor Judith

Lieu). The scope of the faculty’s coverage of Late Antiquity has now expanded both geographically and chronologically to encompass important topics such as the rise of Islam, rabbinics, and Syriac Christian culture; indeed, our research interests notably circle round the relations and exchanges between, as well as the individual particularities of, the religions of Late Antiquity. These interests will soon be well reflected across the range of undergraduate papers, and we plan to introduce a new MPhil pathway which covers topics in Late Antiquity from a variety of angles. There is also considerable scope to deepen connections with scholars working in other Faculties - particularly Classics and History – and with this in mind we are planning a research event in 2017-18 to bring together scholars in Cambridge who study religions of Late Antiquity to reflect on the current state of the subject locally and globally, and to explore possible future research collaborations.

Dr Sophie Lunn-Rockcliffe is Lecturer in Patristics in the Divinity Faculty





Interview with an Undergrad

Hina Khalid

What degree are you taking in the Divinity Faculty?

I have just completed the Theology and Religious Studies Tripos, beginning in October 2014 and finishing in June 2017.

It is sometimes said that studying religion presents special opportunities and special challenges to students who identify with a particularly religion themselves. Do you think that's true?

As a Muslim student, I can certainly say that studying three years of theology at Cambridge has allowed me to look at my own faith through a different lens. This has been formative in my study of both Islam and Qur'anic Arabic.

As well as this, I have delved into the study of other religions and ways of approaching the world that are very different to my own.

In my first year, I was both nervous and excited to study Christian doctrine, particularly as it was so unfamiliar to me. I found myself enjoying it so much - (especially the first year Christology paper -) that in even within my second and third year papers, I focused on Christian doctrine (for instance, in the Theology and Science paper).

Throughout my three years, I have also had the opportunity to study papers a bit closer to home – namely, Qur'anic Arabic and the two Islamic theology and philosophy papers.

Being personally committed to my faith, it has often been difficult to approach Islamic theology from a purely academic perspective. Reading Western critiques of Islamic feminism was especially challenging, particularly as so much of what I was reading forced me to reconsider (- or at least critically reflect on) - the ideas I had grown up believing from childhood. Being able to assess Islamic theology both objectively and critically has been a skill I have nurtured and developed over my past two years at Cambridge – and it is through this that I have come to a renewed understanding of my own faith tradition.

What was one of your favourite papers and why?

Professor Janet Soskice's third year paper, 'Love and Desire'. Although this paper centres on Christian doctrine and theological reflections on love and desire (both between humanity and God and within human relationships), I found that the insights gained from class discussions and readings slowly began influencing the way I approached my own personal relationships, and made me aware of something profoundly sacred and fulfilling in nurturing those relations that make us who we are. Before this year, I had enjoyed all my papers from an academic and educational point of view, but this paper had the added personal dimension that gave the readings a special kind of vibrancy.

What would you say to someone who is thinking about studying theology and religion at Cambridge?

Go for it! The theology and religious studies course at Cambridge is so brilliantly diverse, that no matter where your interests lie – philosophy, systematic theology, sociology of religion – you will be able to tailor your own 'path', and maybe even discover new interests along the way!

Hina Khalid completed the undergraduate Tripos in 2017 and is now working with St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation and Peace on an interfaith activist programme, working with refugee communities across the UK and Europe.



Theological reflection inside and outside the academy: reflections from an MPhil

Jessica Scott

When I arrived as an undergraduate at the divinity faculty in 2012 I didn't have a particularly clear idea of why I was at university – teachers had encouraged me to further study, like they encouraged most people to further study. It just seemed to be what people did if they got good A-Level results. I had an even sketchier sense of why I had chosen Theology and Religious Studies. It certainly had a lot to do with indecision (TRS allowed me a range of broad interests), and with getting the timings wrong for the Art History meeting I intended to attend at a different University Open Day. I missed it, in what turned out to be a very formative mistake, as I wandered into a theology faculty instead. As

the relentless work of essay writing in first year began, there wasn't the time, it seemed, to stop and ask why I had ended up at university studying theology, and why any of it mattered. That was until, in the middle of my second year, I read Augustine's *Confessions*.

It was reading Augustine that first and powerfully forced me to ask *why* any of this learning mattered. His *Confessions*, a text I was reading for an exam in which I would need to be rhetorically skilled to obtain a high mark, itself contained a scathing critique of rhetoric. He seemed to gesture towards a way of learning and speaking that was restored to its profound communality – far from

the longing to stand out as clever and original which seemed to be the game we were playing in exams. And, so much of the time, Augustine's speaking about God was interwoven with speaking *to* God – a vast and strange notion which once more provoked the question of where this work and effort was directed. If it's not about qualifying ourselves to sound clever and become an expert in a specialist area for the sake of being an expert, what are we doing when we seek to speak truthfully about what is good and true and beautiful?

The closest I feel I have come to answering that question came in my involvement in the *Learning Together* course in which I participated, along with a number of other members of our faculty, at Whitemoor Prison. Over Lent term we would meet together with prisoner students over theological texts to discuss our topic of 'The Good Life and the Good Society.' In the setting of Whitemoor and with our company in those meetings, it was clear that theological speaking intertwined with seeking the good – wanting the 'good life' and wanting, ourselves, to grow in goodness. This is where theology led us.

Leaving the university for a day a week helped me make better sense of it in this way; spending time with those without any experience of academic theology clarified its direction and gift. The question of *why study theology?* – first articulated with an undergraduate's cynicism for impending exams – now strikes me as itself requiring theology to answer. Behind it lie profounder questions of why meaning matters at all, and why it is that we long for the good – questions gleaned from the work and friendship I knew in Whitemoor prison, which propels me now with new energy into my own theological study at our faculty.

Jessica Scott completed her MPhil in 2017 and is now a PhD student in the Faculty.

White-Hot: A Conversation with Three Women Professors

Simone Kotva and Ruth Jackson

The coming academic year sees the retirement of three distinguished professors in our faculty: Sarah Coakley, Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity; Judith Lieu, Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity, and Janet Soskice, Professor of Philosophical Theology. All three are leaders in their respective fields, and over their careers they have witnessed great changes in the practice and ethos of theology at the University. We spoke with them to find out what motivated them to study theology and their thoughts on the future of the discipline.

Sarah and Janet both work in the area of philosophical theology or philosophy of religion, while Judith specialises in the study of the New Testament; but all three came to theology serendipitously. Judith found herself gravitating toward theology after a last-minute switch from Mathematics and Science to Classics and Religious Studies at GCSE level, and only decided to pursue research after first testing an alternative career as a school teacher. Janet stumbled into theology from cultural anthropology, thinking she would use the discipline as preparation for a doctorate on metaphor and religious language amongst rural migrants in northern Brazil: 'I hate to admit it, but it didn't occur to me then that women could be theologians, or really that theology could be taught in universities. I realised that I could follow my interests within philosophy of religion. That's where I started out. I would not have presumed

to be a theologian as I knew so little'. Sarah, though she knew she wanted to become a theologian already at the age of twelve, likewise did not think that women could become theologians—at least, not the kind of theologians that were teaching in the academy at the time: 'I did a bit of searching around but couldn't see any evidence of women theologians in the academy'.

When our professors were starting out, not only were women theologians difficult to find in university departments, they were also difficult to find on reading lists. Sarah explains: 'The two women I did come across, read, and admired in the subsequent year or two (Evelyn Underhill and Simone Weil) were obviously only clinging to the edges of the university and both decidedly *strange* - both in their ways "white-hot neo-platonists". But that made them all the more intriguing'. Today, however, Weil is often found on course syllabuses: as theology has broadened to let women into the academy, it has also broadened the boundaries of its field. This expansion of what might be considered 'theology' is perhaps the most significant change that Janet and Judith witnessed over the course of their careers. 'If we go back to the times at which I was a student, not at this university', reflects Janet, 'I'd say that theology was presented, even by some of the professors, as a busted flush, dependent on outdated metaphysics. The senior professors

of my student days were still scarred by logical positivism and ferocious attacks on theology as an academic discipline. The first welcome signs of change (and these I sensed from some quarters, like the English faculty, from the first year I was in Cambridge) was a recognition that theological texts were intrinsically participatory and novel in genre, not trying to systematise in the way of the natural sciences but still exploring valid ways of knowing and being. Since then I've seen the interest in theology grow year by year, greatly enhanced by recovery of interest in Hellenistic Judaism, late antiquity and such things as feminist work and medieval history'. Judith reflects on similar changes in Biblical studies: 'In Biblical studies, historical critical approaches were the norm when I started; now there are the competing claims of literary (narrative, reader-response, reception), social scientific, and ideological (feminist, gender, post-colonial) readings. Parallel with that has been a move from a fairly strict emphasis on the canonical boundaries to interest in non-canonical texts and recognising the continuities from first to second century, and between the "Christian" and "Jewish" world-views. I am very much at home in the more fluid and open-ended explorations that follow'. With this broadening of the discipline, questions of recognising women and women theologians have become less of a struggle. Janet, enumerating the wide array of subjects which are now considered part of



theology, finds herself exclaiming: ‘The fact that I haven’t mentioned women and religion just shows how fully that is taken for granted and integrated across the board—a big change from when I started!’

Despite these advances Judith recognises the fight facing the discipline. ‘We face a lot of challenges, especially with the increasing emphasis on accountability and on the need to appear relevant, in what can feel like very market-driven terms’. Sarah and Janet, however, also point out that with religion being the hot topic of political and international affairs, its study is more popular and essential than ever before. As Sarah puts it, ‘fashions come and go—some parents are probably telling their offspring right now that a degree in Theology, Religion and Philosophy of Religion won’t deliver a well-paid job; but they are quite wrong about that, as the University employment statistics will readily show. This subject equips you for just about anything: it requires a dazzling range of intellectual and personal skills’. Janet agrees: ‘theology graduates go into all the professions any arts candidate might enter and are, I believe, enriched by this diverse degree’.

In Janet’s opinion, what allows theology to assert its relevance to contemporary society is its connection with ‘living and living faiths’. For Sarah it is this connection which brings God into the picture: ‘One hopes that the major influence [on the discipline] is, and

will remain, God in Godself. But that requires a certain practice of attention, vulnerability and hope; and it’s not our business in the University, as such, to proselytize. Still, whenever theology reduces itself to endless talk about what other people have said about God (“theologology” rather than theology) then it has begun to lose its meaning and power. Hence the paradox: theology (and philosophy of religion in concert with it) is at its best when it is radically open to other disciplines and their critiques, but even more radically open to that which it attempts to speak of as Reality’. Judith reflects a similar awareness when she concludes that ‘intellectually, theology has always been responsive to the changing conceptual and methodological frameworks shaping or emerging from other disciplines of enquiry—whether philosophical, scientific, historical, literary etc. I do not think that is a bad thing, so long as we sustain a critical self-awareness, and a respect for the scholarly enquiries and insights of our past’.

We want to thank Sarah, Judith and Janet for their time in the Faculty of Divinity. They have been inspiring examples to many, and will be greatly missed by students and colleagues.

Dr Ruth Jackson and Dr Simone Kotva are Junior Research Fellows in Sidney Sussex and Emmanuel Colleges, respectively.

“When our professors were starting out, not only were women theologians difficult to find in university departments, they were also difficult to find on reading lists.”

Cambridge Inter-faith Programme (CIP)

The Cambridge Inter-faith Programme has been continuing its work of mediating between the worlds of academic research and public interest in matters involving religion. Complementing our academic research, we have run a range of exciting public events, which have brought together academics and inter-faith leaders to address some complex and pressing themes relating to religion in the contemporary world.

These included a panel event about the new Cambridge mosque on Mill Road, and its wider context of tradition and transformation in British Muslim architecture. This occasion brought together mosque architects, architecture scholars, and the new mosque's founders to discuss questions of history, heritage, style, function, and community. We were also delighted to work in partnership with the British Museum on their acclaimed 'Egypt: Faith after the Pharaohs' exhibition, which looked at the relation between Jews, Christians and Muslims in Egypt in the first millennium, reflecting on the contemporary implications of this long history of largely peaceful coexistence and exchange. In Cambridge, we hosted a 'behind the scenes' lecture with the exhibition's curator, in discussion with historians and biblical and textual scholars from the Faculty and the University Library, as well as running a series of Scriptural Reasoning workshops addressing the themes of the exhibition in the museum itself.

Last year, CIP extended a formal welcome to our new partner, Coexist House, a University project, which was confirmed as an independent charity in October 2016. As well as the University, Coexist House is working in partnership with the V&A Museum, the Honourable Society of the Inner Temple, and the City of London Corporation. Coexist House is working to create a landmark centre in London, which will be open to all, and in which visitors can celebrate the diversity of the world's faiths. In 2016, Coexist House and CIP were involved in a major inter-faith art

exhibition and pilgrimage in London, based around the tradition of the fourteen Stations of the Cross. This comprised existing works in venues such as the National Gallery and Wallace Collection, as well as several commissioned pieces by artists that weaved a meditation on the meaning of Jesus' suffering together with the consideration of contemporary issues, such as the refugee crisis and homelessness. As part of its engagement, CIP hosted a panel event at the Faculty, 'Stations of the Cross – Exploring Art & Religion', showcasing the artists and academics behind the exhibition.

In its public engagement, Scriptural Reasoning, the practice at the heart of CIP, has spread far and wide and in new directions in recent years. One of the most exciting projects that CIP supported was the 'Story Tent', an idea inspired by Scriptural Reasoning and developed by a PhD candidate at the University of Warwick, Anne Moseley, to help primary school children to learn about religious scriptures. You can read more about the Story Tent at this link www.interfaith.cam.ac.uk/news/storytent. CIP also teamed up with British Muslim TV to produce a twelve-episode series on Scriptural Reasoning, which is free to watch online at www.britishmuslim.tv.

As part of its work in training religious leaders, CIP ran two summer schools in 2014 and 2015, which were aimed at emerging religious leaders. Participants came from over twenty nations, with many coming from conflict zones or areas of heightened religious tension. Scriptural Reasoning was at the heart of the programme, which also included workshops tailored to dealing with conflict resolution, mediation, and peace-making. They were a great success, with participants taking new tools back to their home countries, helping to develop inter-faith relations among and beyond their respective communities.

On the research side, in partnership with the Northwestern University, CIP hosted a colloquium with the

team from Imperial College London who are developing new Gene Drive technologies, which could potentially eliminate malaria-carrying mosquitoes. The colloquium gave a space for theologians, ethicists and scientists to come together and reflect on the ethical implications of this technology, and how religious leaders can work to inform not only wider public opinion, but also governmental policy on this research and its applications, especially in the developing world.

The international academic working group, 'Scriptural Reasoning in the University,' has also continued to flourish and to provide one of the main seedbeds for academic writing about Scriptural Reasoning. Under the direction of Daniel Weiss, the group is currently working on compiling and publishing a book on Scripture and Violence, an exciting and highly relevant insight from academic theologians into the phenomenon of religiously-inspired violence.

Finally, CIP said a heart-felt thank you and goodbye to the Programme's Founding Director, Professor David Ford OBE, who retired in 2015, and welcomed the Faculty's Lecturer in Hindu Studies, Dr Ankur Barua as our new Director. Dr Barua reports that he enjoys working with a vibrant and energetic team and looks forward to continuing CIP's activities, in particular with Scriptural Reasoning and public engagement.

In addition, CIP and the Faculty thank Ms Nadiya Takolia, Mrs Miriam Lorie and Mrs Barbara Bennett for their extensive contributions to the flourishing of CIP.

Divinity Faculty Outreach



Dr Emma Salgård Cunha, Faculty Access and Outreach Officer

The past four years have been an exciting time for the Faculty's outreach activities.

To increase awareness of what is involved in studying for the Tripos degree, the Faculty has developed a new prospectus for use at open days, fairs and sending out to schools; produced learning materials for the university's online resource HE+ (www.myheplus.com); and is continually updating a series of web pages dedicated to potential applicants (www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/study-here/undergraduate). We've also delivered more events to help promote our Tripos. In addition to visiting schools and receiving them in Cambridge, we now take part in the Oxford and Cambridge Student Conferences in Swansea, Birmingham, Newcastle and Aintree; run a subject Masterclass; offer taster days in conjunction with The Fitzwilliam Museum and University Library; hold sessions for the Festival of Ideas; and run a film competition for students in Years 9-13 which has resulted in creative and sensitive approaches to issues that touch on religious topics.

We have taken the bold step of renaming our Tripos degree to better indicate what the course involves. Students that begin their studies on or after 1 October 2017 will be studying for the Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion Tripos. This title gives a clearer indication of the course's content and will attract students taking A-level Philosophy and Ethics.

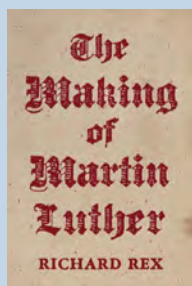
Nonetheless, our subject still has a low ratio of applicants to places compared to cognate Arts and Humanities disciplines. Those who attend Faculty events are already convinced of the benefits of studying Theology, Religion, and Philosophy of Religion, but the university open days provide an opportunity to engage with parents and students who are investigating subjects such as English, Philosophy, and History. Conversations suggest that there are still misconceptions about our subject: many believing that applicants need to be religious, need to have taken Religious Studies A-level, and/or be looking to undertake vocational, ministerial training. While we welcome applications from students that feel that one or all of these apply to them, they are in no way criteria for studying Theology at Cambridge. The perception that they are, means

that many potential applicants don't even think about picking up our latest prospectus, looking at the web pages, or attending a taster day to find out more.

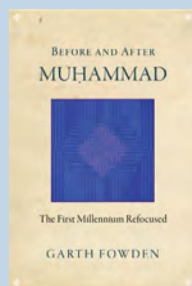
We are developing a constantly evolving set of alumni entries on our website to display to potential applicants. (See here: www.divinity.cam.ac.uk/study-here/undergraduate/alumni-profiles) If you have graduated in the last 20 years, and would be interested sharing how your career has developed and how you make use of transferable skills or subject-specific knowledge, we would be very glad to hear from you at outreach@divinity.cam.ac.uk.

To help communicate the nature of the course more widely, we are appealing to all those who work with young people to encourage them to think about studying the subject at university and, ideally, at Cambridge. If you're reading this as a student and want to find out more, please do look at our web pages or, better still, come and visit the Faculty either for an official event or at another time of year. Please do get in touch if you would like more information about the degree or copies of our prospectus.

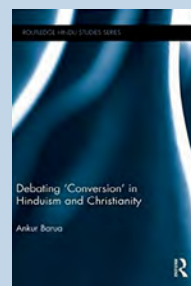
Recent Faculty Publications



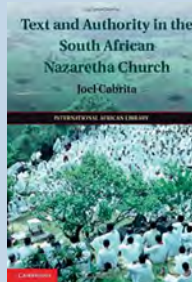
Richard Rex, *The Making of Martin Luther*, Princeton University Press, £22.95



Garth Fowden, *Before and After Muhammad: The First Millennium Refocused*, Princeton University Press, £19.95



Ankur Barua, *Debating 'Conversion' in Hinduism and Christianity*, Routledge, £35.99



Joel Cabrita, *Text and Authority in the South African Nazaretha Church*, Cambridge University Press, £ 22.99



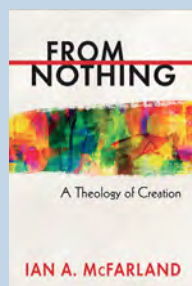
Katharine Dell, *Who Needs the Old Testament?: Its Enduring Appeal and Why the New Atheists Don't Get It*, SPCK, £9.99



Robbie Duschinsky, Simone Schnall, Daniel H. Weiss, eds., *Purity and Danger Now: New Perspectives*, Routledge, £35.99



Judith M. Lieu, *Marcion and the Making of a Heretic: God and Scripture in the Second Century*, Cambridge University Press, £24.99



Ian McFarland, *From Nothing: A Theology of Creation*, Westminster John Knox, £17.11



Douglas Hedley, *The Iconic Imagination*, Bloomsbury, £27.99

Faculty News

Recent Research Funding Grants received by Faculty Members include:

Dr Joel Cabrita, 'Empire of Healing: South Africa, the United States and the Transatlantic Zionist Movement,' AHRC; Leverhulme Prize.

Dr Nathan MacDonald and Dr Andrew Mein, 'The Book And The Sword: The Bible in the Experience and Legacy of the Great War,' AHRC.

Prof Catherine Pickstock, "Plato's theology of mediation," Leverhulme Research Fellowship.

Prof Douglas Hedley, 'The Cambridge Platonists at the origins of Enlightenment: texts, debates, and reception (1650-1730),' AHRC.

Dr Timothy Jenkins and Dr Andrew Davison, 'Inquiry on the Societal Implications of Astrobiology,' CTI Fellowship.

Recent Faculty Promotions:

Catherine Pickstock to Professor and Simon Gathercole to Reader in 2015; Richard Rex to Professor and James Aitken, Nathan MacDonald and James Carleton Paget to Readers in 2016; Douglas Hedley to Professor and Daniel H. Weiss to Senior Lecturer in 2017. Many congratulations to all these colleagues.

Recent Faculty Appointments:

Dr Andrew Davison, Starbridge Lecturer in Theology and Natural Sciences, 2014

Prof Ian McFarland, Regius Professor of Divinity, 2015

Dr Jonathan Linebaugh, Lecturer in New Testament, 2015

Dr Sophie Lunn-Rockliffe, Lecturer in Patristics, 2016

Dr Holger Zellentin, Lecturer in Classical Rabbinic Judaism, 2017

The Faculty notes with sadness the death on 8th March 2017 of Dr Matthew Neale, Post-Doctoral Associate in Buddhism, and the death on 10th November 2017 of Mr Don Stebbings, Chief Custodian of the Faculty from 1985 to 2015. Both are greatly missed.

Upcoming events of interest

2017-2018 Stanton Lectures, to be delivered by Prof. Joel Robbins (Cambridge, Social Anthropology). Six weekly lectures, commencing Wednesday 24 January 2018.

2018 Hulsean Lectures, to be delivered by Prof. Marilynne Robinson, essayist and novelist, and winner of the 2005 Pulitzer Prize for *Gilead*. 7-8 March 2018; 2-3 May 2018; 15-18 October 2018.

Open days for prospective undergraduates:

Faculty of Divinity Open Day, 23 April 2018

University of Cambridge Open Days: 5 and 6 July 2018

For more details concerning these various events, please visit the Faculty website: www.divinity.cam.ac.uk

The Divinity Faculty Newsletter is edited by

Dr Daniel Weiss and Dr Nathan Lyons
Faculty of Divinity, West Road, Cambridge CB3 9BS

Please send comments or communications to newsletter@divinity.cam.ac.uk or via the Faculty address above.