

Cutting edge research in the field of religion and politics - the complex history of their relationship.

DOCTORAL STUDENT SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

THEODROS ASSEFA TEKLU



Theodros Teklu is a first year doctoral student in Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester studying under Professor Graham Ward. Before coming to Manchester he completed two postgraduate programmes: MA in Biblical and Theological Studies (2003-2005) and PGDip in HIV and AIDS in Relation to Theological Studies (2006) at the Ethiopian Graduate School of Theology (EGST). Before that, he received a BSc in Biology (1991) from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. He served as a Registrar and HIV Course Leader (August 2007-January 2009) at EGST. Prior to that, he has had experience as a school-teacher, church minister (at different capacities mainly teaching and administration/leadership) and also as a Documentation Officer for a Faith-based Organisation (FBO) working on Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV (PMTCT) programme. The topic of his PhD research is "Towards a Theology of Ethnic Justice: The Case of Ethiopia." He can be contacted at: theodros.teklu@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk.

RICHARD BENDA



Richard Benda is a doctoral student in Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester studying under Dr. Michael Hoelzl. The working title of his thesis is "Weighed and Tested: Christian and Muslim Communities and the Rwandan Genocide." His research will address key questions in relation to religious authority and the role of faith in response to the complexity of African identity-based conflicts, of which the Rwandan genocide is an extreme case. This research is designed to be an invaluable academic contribution to the process of peace building and reconciliation for the people of Rwanda. In the context of the increasing visibility of religion in the public arena and in international politics especially, the project will assess the political potential of Christianity and Islam in Rwanda both as agents of conflict and actors in peacemaking. Before arriving in Manchester Richard was half-way through his first year of Law School when the Rwandan Genocide happened and life as he knew it ceased to exist. It took him three years to realize that despite personal abyssal loss, national moral collapse and a future without dreams, life had to go on for those who survived! So he returned to Law School and graduated with a Masters Degree. He then went on to study for a BA and Ma in Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester which has led him to his current doctoral work. He can be contacted at: richard.benda@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk

ANDY CROME



Andy Crome is currently a third year PhD student in Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester, working under Professor Graham Ward. His thesis title is "The Jews and the Literal Sense: Hermeneutical Approaches in the Apocalyptic Commentaries of Thomas Brightman (1562-1607)." His research is focused on seventeenth century millennialism and hermeneutics. He is particularly interested in the effect of millennial speculation on Christian views of the Jews in the early modern period. His other major research interest is the development of contemporary Christian Zionism and dispensational theology. Currently, he is a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the department and has spoken at a number of conferences on early modern history and has published a number of book reviews. He can be contacted at: andy.crome@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk.

KYLE GINGERICH HIEBERT



Kyle Gingerich Hiebert is currently a first year PhD student working under the supervision of Professor Graham Ward in the School of Arts, Histories, and Cultures at the University of Manchester. Broadly conceived, his doctoral work is an inquiry into the extent to which contemporary debates in political theology end up compromising the harmonious blending of differences rightly sought by employing a rhetorical violence that reduces non-Christian others to the wastebasket of nihilism. He holds a M.A. (by Research) in Philosophical Theology (Distinction) from the University of Nottingham, a H.B.A. in Philosophy (High Distinction) from the University of Toronto and a B.Th. in Theology and Ethics from Canadian Mennonite Bible College. His research is supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the University of Manchester. He can be contacted at: kyle.gingerichhiebert@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk.

CLARE GREER



Clare Greer is currently a third year PhD candidate, under the supervision of Professor Graham Ward. Her doctoral work explores the significance of the Hegelian philosophy of Gillian Rose (1947-1995) for contemporary orthodox political theology, particularly her interaction with John Milbank. She holds an MA in Religion, Culture and Society (Distinction) and BA in Religions and Theology (First Class) both from the University of Manchester. Her research is supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. She can be contacted at: clare.a.greer@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk.

RUTH HADLEY



Ruth Hadley's undergraduate degree was conducted in Religious Studies at Lancaster University. Since then, she has returned to her native city of Manchester to pursue her particular interest in the contemporary interrelation between religion and politics at the Centre for Religion and Political Culture for both her MA and now PhD degrees. She is studying under Dr. Michael Hoelzl, and her research focuses on the concept of tolerance under the working title, "The Intolerance of Tolerance." It challenges the validity of the contemporary promotion of tolerance as *the* long term solution to the "dilemma of difference;" the question of how people with different and even opposing value-belief systems might peacefully co-exist. The research undertakes a genealogical survey of tolerance from its Latin origins in the term "tolerare," to "tolerance" as promoted in the 1995, UNESCO sponsored, "Year of Tolerance." It also examines the contemporary academic arguments for and against a public political policy of tolerance. The aim is to situate tolerance firmly within the historical process; expressive of particular historical values and particular historical interests. The question is ultimately addressed whether alternative solutions to the "dilemma of difference" ought perhaps to be upheld and what, if necessary, abandoning the current policy of tolerance might entail? She can be contacted at: ruth.hadley@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk.

KATJA STUERZENHOFECKER



Katja Stuerzenhoffer is a first year doctoral student in the Professional Doctorate in Practical Theology programme supervised by Professor Elaine Graham in the Manchester Centre for Public Theology (a partner centre of the CRPC). Her dissertation title is: "A Critical and Comparative Evaluation of Christian Campaigning in the UK on Sex Trafficking of Women and Children: A Case Study in Practical Theology as Action-Research." This research interest has grown out of her work experience, study and teaching of feminist inquiry in theology, international political economy, and the sociology and geography of work and employment. She has been "around" Manchester's Religions and Theology Subject Area since 1997 (after a year at Sheffield's Biblical Studies) as a student (MA with David Law on Kierkegaard), friend and part-time tutor (Elaine Graham's 'Religion, Culture and Gender' module). Later she studied in Manchester for an MA (Econ) in Labour Studies after working in a worker's cooperative for several years. She also worked as finance manager in a FE college serving women from disadvantaged backgrounds. Currently, she is commissioned to investigate what "Education for Sustainable Development" means to theologians and their teaching in Higher Education. Although she admits to having no previous explicit grounding in theology and politics, she has started to read Soelle, Bonhoeffer and everything else she can get her hands on at the moment! She hails from a German Lutheran background with four years' study of protestant theology at Heidelberg University. She can be contacted at: Katja.Stuerzenhoffer@manchester.ac.uk.

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FIONA WILSON



Fiona Wilson's doctoral research concerns an evaluation of key ecumenical differences yielded by the theological hermeneutic of analogy, which is employed to interpret the divine relation to the world. She is on a part-time doctoral programme under the supervision of Professor Graham Ward, and due to submit her thesis in summer 2011. She studied theology and religious studies for her undergraduate MA at the University of Glasgow and Trinity College, Dublin. After researching ecclesiological and Christological interpretations within Bonhoeffer scholarship for her undergraduate dissertation, her ambition when arriving at Manchester was to locate an unexplored lens to critically assess his ontology. Her early research concentrated on the ontological implications of Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of analogy, and the subsequent interpretations provided by Duns Scotus and scholastic Thomism. Aquinas' existential insight of a rational distinction of essence and existence in God and, analogously, of their real differentiation within man's being, is a cornerstone of the *analogia entis* set out by Bonhoeffer's Catholic contemporary, Erich Przywara. Przywara's discriminate appropriation of metaphysics and speculative theology will place him as the major conversation-partner for Bonhoeffer's *analogia relationis* in her work. She is particularly concerned to examine the coherence of Bonhoeffer's correlation of the natural and fallen reason and conscience. To date, his Christology and ontology of relationality have not been examined through the hermeneutical centre of analogy. On the other hand, Przywara's *analogia entis* has not been engaged from the standpoint of Bonhoeffer's brief, but insightful critique. She can be contacted at: fiona.wilson@postgrad.manchester.ac.uk.

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