



# **LINCOLN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE**

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**AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER**

**2003-2013**

**Welcome** to the anniversary conference, “Churches, Communities and Society”, that marks ten years of the Lincoln Theological Institute at the University of Manchester.

In the following pages, you will find reports on the work of the Institute. This work has been made possible by the unique collaboration between the Institute’s trustees and the University of Manchester. The embedding of the Lincoln Theological Institute in the Department of Religions and Theology within the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures has been secured by the co-inherence of two visions.

The first, provided by the Institute’s trustees, is that LTI should be a centre of excellence for advanced research in the relations between, theology, society, and publics (including the churches and other religious communities). The second is the School’s commitment to world class research and social responsibility which has provided an excellent context for the Institute’s work to develop.

The work of advancing theological literacy and engagement has never been more important and we look forward to supporting the work of the Institute as it takes forward its ambitious research and engagement agenda.

*Ad multos annos!*

Rt Revd Stephen Platten  
Bishop of Wakefield & Chair of the Trustees of the Lincoln Theological Institute

Prof. Jeremy Gregory  
Head of the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures, The University of Manchester

# From the Director—

**Welcome** to the Lincoln Theological Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, and its anniversary conference “Churches, Communities and Society”.

In the following pages, I hope to give you a glimpse of the range of the work of the Institute and a sense of its history. First, however, what are the Institute’s aims and what is the scope of its work?

The Institute is a national and international centre of expertise in the theological study of religion and society and a promoter of theological research and study into a variety of ethical, pastoral, social and ecclesial issues.

The theological research of the Lincoln Theological Institute coalesces around the following themes:

1. Place, locality, habitation, and ecology
2. Global threats and powers
3. Religion and civil society
4. Technology, limits and transformation
5. Power and institutions (including the church)
6. Liberation, political, ecological and public theologies
7. Culture—including religious cultures—and resources of hope
8. Theologies of education

The Institute was inaugurated in 1997 and is the successor body to the Lincoln Theological College, a residential centre for Anglican training that closed in 1995. The Institute transferred to the University of Manchester in 2003. William Jacob, one of the Institute’s trustees, provides a brief account of the College and my predecessor as Director, Martyn Percy, writes about the first years of the Institute up to and including its arrival at Manchester.

Over the last 10 years, there have been four research projects at LTI led by a postdoctoral research associate. You will find a report on each of these projects in what follows.

Two projects that have been particularly significant for LTI's development are then presented. *Belonging & Heimat* is at the centre of the Institute's concerns. The same may be said for the project, *Divinity after Empire*, led by doctoral researcher Joe Duggan at the Institute, that has gone on to have international impact through the development of Postcolonial Networks in theology.

Finally, I provide a report on other projects that the Institute has led over the last ten years.

There is a full list of the major projects undertaken at the Institute 2003-2013 at the very end of this brochure.

This brochure reports a record of substantial and sustained achievement. Yet it also, both explicitly and by implication, identifies issues and events that require detailed theological critique and major theological constructive efforts.

Looking forward to the 20 year anniversary in 2017, it is to this work of critique and construction in the service of church, society and academy that the Lincoln Theological Institute is dedicated. You are most welcome to participate in its work and contribute to its agenda.

Prof. Peter Scott  
Director of the Lincoln Theological Institute

# The Origins of the Lincoln Theological Institute

Lincoln Theological Institute for the Study of Religion and Society has its origins in the Scholae Cancellarii, subsequently Lincoln Theological College, established in 1874 by E.W.Benson, then Chancellor of Lincoln Cathedral, and subsequently first Bishop of Truro and Archbishop of Canterbury. Benson's vision was for a 'school' that would train ordination candidates in the context of the socio-economic life of the then heavy-industrial city of Lincoln, with the ordinands teaching apprentices and young men in the evenings, reading and writing, and maths and literature, and assisting in parishes, and living in approved lodgings. This was an idea ahead of its time, and, after Benson's preferment, the very conservative Bishop Christopher Wordsworth, bought the former County Hospital, to establish the 'school'; as a conventional theological college.

During the 1930s, Leslie Owen, as Warden of the College, established it as the only English theological college with a strong academic base. Christopher Evans recalled that when Sir Edwin Hoskyns, who taught him at Cambridge, learned that he wanted to be ordained told him he must go to Lincoln, for it was the only theological college where theology was taken seriously and properly taught. The staff then included the neo-Thomist, E.L.Mascall, Michael Ramsey, subsequently Archbishop of Canterbury and George Sims, subsequently Archbishop of Armagh. A steady stream of students, including Christopher Evans, went on to have distinguished academic careers.

Lincoln continued to pioneer new approaches to ministerial training. It was one of the first colleges to closely engage with a university to provide graduate level training specially designed for ordination candidates, at Nottingham University. It also pioneered admitting married ordination candidates, and providing housing for them, breaking the long tradition of a monastic discipline as an

aspect of ordination training. As part of the growing rapprochement between the Church of England and the Methodist Church, in 1968, when the Church of England voted not to enter in to union with the Methodist Church, Lincoln appointed a Methodist minister to its staff, and subsequently was recognised for training Methodist ministers. It was also the first college to train women (as candidates for the deaconess order and accredited lay ministry) alongside men, when it amalgamated with Gilmore House in 1970.

By the early 1990s, the overwhelming majority of students were married and lived out of the College, so paying lip service to being a residential community. Maintaining a large residential building seemed a luxury that neither the College trustees or the Church of England could or should afford to continue to do. E.W.Benson's original vision was re explored, and a proposal was developed for full-time, non residential training, closely linked to a university theology department, and linked into the life of a local community and church. The University of Lincoln was then an idea only just beginning to be developed and it was not envisaged that there would be an arts or humanities faculty, so sadly, the proposal needed to be explored elsewhere, initially with Nottingham University, but the Theology Department had misgivings about too close an engagement with confessional vocational education.

John Rogerson, Professor of Biblical Studies at Sheffield University and Professor David McClean, then a pro-vice chancellor (and also chair of the General Synod's House of Laity) welcomed an approach. A building as a possible centre for teaching, administration and the library was identified in the heart of the University, along with a parish to be a focus for daily prayer and worship. However, the House of Bishops, in January 1995, by a very small majority, decided that this was an idea too far ahead of its time, and that, anyway, as part of an intermittent series of culls of theological colleges, going back to 1968, in which colleges not situated in the vicinity of universities were closed, Lincoln was superfluous to the Church of England's requirements.

As no more ordination candidates could be recruited, the trustees of the College looked to ways in which their assets might continue to be used for the benefit of the Church, and developed a proposal for a research institute for the theological study of religion and society, for which they had the funds to provide premises for the library, and seminar rooms and offices, and to pay a director, an administrator/manager, and possibly a post-doctoral fellow. The director's primary task would be to seek grants to fund research projects, to be undertaken by post-doctoral fellows and research students. John Rogerson and his colleagues in Sheffield University continued to show great enthusiasm for the project, and, as the building previously identified was still available, it was leased and the core of the College moved to Sheffield, as the Lincoln Theological Institute for the Theological Study of Religion and Society, funded by leasing the former College building to the University of Lincoln, and the proceeds of the sale of the houses the College had acquired over the years to let to married students.

The governance of the trust that had supported the College was reshaped to be able to support the new Institute, and some trustees continued in office, and new trustees were recruited from Sheffield University and the diocese of Sheffield to establish the Institute in the University and city and local church. Martyn Percy was appointed first Director in 1997, and Caroline Dicker, who had been Librarian and then Bursar of the College moved the core of the College to Sheffield and continued as the manager and Librarian.

W. M. Jacob

# Lincoln Theological Institute: The Early Years

The research centre that eventually evolved in 1997 as the Lincoln Theological Institute, with Martyn Percy as its first Director, was first established as an affiliate college of Sheffield University – based in Wilkinson Street, Sheffield, in the heart of the university campus. During Martyn Percy's tenure as Director, the Lincoln Theological Institute was then fully integrated into the University of Manchester in 2003. The library of the college now resides in Norwich Cathedral, where it continues to serve candidates for ministerial training. The original college buildings in Lincoln are still owned by the Lincoln Theological Institute for the Study of Religion and Society (a registered charity), and currently house departments of the University of Lincoln and the Diocesan School of Ministry.

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*Martyn Percy (Director, 1997-2004) writes:*

It was an enormous privilege to be appointed as the first Director of the Lincoln Theological Institute in 1997. For our first few years, there was not enough income to cover our core expenditure, and so we set about the task of developing income-generating research programmes almost immediately. A major grant from the Kings' Fund on hospital chaplaincy resulted in the appointment of Dr. Helen Orchard as a Research Fellow, and a series of landmark publications followed. Other research income enabled us to appoint Dr. Simon Taylor as a Research Fellow (looking at the work of churches on poverty and the jubilee), Dr. Ian Jones (an ethnography and analysis of women priests in the Church of England, 1994-2004), Dr. Ralph Norman (Stephenson Fellow) and other associates. The Lincoln Theological Institute also hosted some significant conferences that resulted in later publications:

2000 *Healthcare Chaplaincy: Modern, Dependable?* (by Helen Orchard), Sheffield Academic Press, 170pp. [pb]

- 2000 *Previous Convictions: Studies in Religious Conversion* (Ed. M. Percy) SPCK, [pb]
- 2000 *Managing the Church? Order and Organisation in a Secular Age*, (Eds. M. Percy & G.R. Evans), Sheffield Academic Press/T&T Clark International, [hb]
- 2000 *Calling Time: Religion, Society and Change at the Turn of the Millennium*, (Ed. M. Percy), 268pp, Sheffield Academic Press/T&T Clark International, [hb]
- 2001 *Restoring the Image: Essays in Honour of David Martin* (Eds. M. Percy & A. Walker), 238pp, Sheffield Academic Press/T&T Clark International, [hb]
- 2002 *Fundamentalism, Church and Society*, (Eds. M. Percy & I. Jones), SPCK, [pb]
- 2004 *Women Priests: Reception and Communion* (by Ian Jones), CHP, 180pp. [pb]

There were also some significant doctoral projects undertaken through the Lincoln Theological Institute during these early years at Sheffield, including:

- *David Harvey* – Cell Group Churches.
- *Colin Brady* – Psychotherapy and Spiritual Direction: Comparative Approaches [jointly with Psychotherapeutic Studies].
- *Chris Swift* – NHS Chaplaincy in Postmodern Society [jointly with ScHARR].
- *Louise Goodwin* – Conversion in Prisons [jointly with Sociology].
- *Michael Wright* – Spirituality in Palliative Care [jointly with Medicine].
- *Joe Gouverner* – Charismatic Renewal and the Third Wave.
- *Simon Bell* – Art Therapy, Spirituality and Palliative Care.

The Institute was also well-served with exceptional support in its early years. Wesley Carr, Bill Jacob, John Rogerson, Michael Sadgrove and David McLean all provided expertise as trustees. Caroline Dicker undertook the administration with great attentiveness and zeal. We were also strengthened by a range of associates, including Professor Ken Medhurst and his ‘Christianity and the Future of Europe’ network (CAFE), which was housed in the Institute.

From the outset, the Lincoln Theological Institute set out to be an interdisciplinary and collaborative research centre that worked with other disciplines and across academic fields. There was always a sense in which this honoured some of the key and influential scholars who had worked or studied at the College when it trained students for ordination. This included John Moses (Dean of St. Paul's), Richard Chartres (Bishop of London) and Chad Varah (founder of the Samaritans). Former staff such as Michael Ramsey (Archbishop of Canterbury, 1961–74), Eric Lionel Mascall, Eric Symes Abbott, Oliver Stratford Tomkins and Alan Webster are just a few of those who served the College and wider church with great distinction.

In 2000, it had become clear that the best interests of the Institute would be served by a fuller and more complete integration with a University Department of Theology and Religious Studies. At the time, Sheffield University only offered biblical studies, and were keen to retain this focus. A number of options were explored, with the University of Manchester always figuring strongly in the running. With Manchester's focus and expertise in practical and pastoral theology, the department seemed to be the best fit for the Institute, and a formal agreement was signed in 2003, with staff transferring to the University in time for the new academic year. It has clearly proved to be a good development.

The Lincoln Theological Institute has continued to honour its legacy: that of open, broad Anglicanism, rich in training and formation, and a deep scholarship that is concerned with understanding the place of the church in the world today. It is wonderful to see this tenth anniversary of the Institute at Manchester University being celebrated this weekend. It is a great testimony to the leadership of Peter Scott, and indeed all those fellows and scholars who have served the College and the Institute in the past.

Martyn Percy

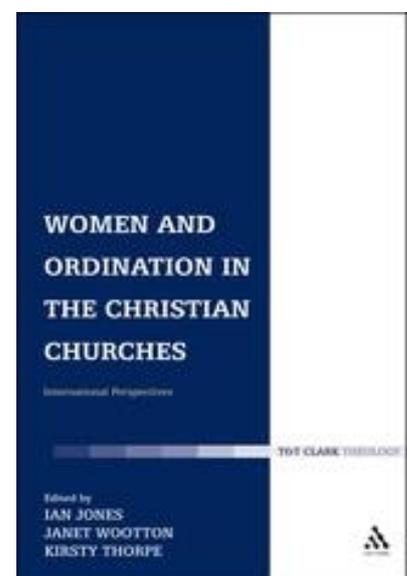
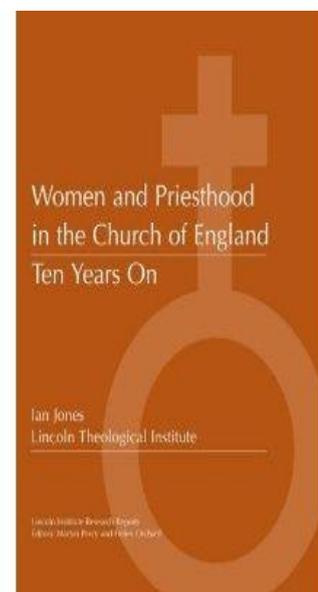
During the first decade of the Lincoln Theological Institute's existence, a major research focus was the understanding and evaluation of different forms of Christian ministry & leadership, notably in the Church of England. In 2000, LTI received funding to research the impact women's ordination to the Anglican priesthood had made since the historic vote in 1992 and the first priestings two years later. After years of sometimes fraught debate, and the high-profile events of the early 1990s, much theological ground had been covered, but impressions of the practical outworking of the move, and its acceptance (or otherwise) at the grassroots, remained largely anecdotal.

Between 2000 and 2004, LTI researcher Ian Jones undertook a large-scale piece of social research (yielding 147 interviews and over 900 questionnaire responses from six diocesan and deanery case studies) to begin to assess the impact of women's ordination to the priesthood ten years on. How far had women's priestly ministry been accepted by fellow clergy and congregations? What practical challenges had arisen from the 1992-4 settlement which had seen women ordained as priests but had also made provision for those opposed? And, looking to the future, what clues could be gathered as to the likely reception of women into the episcopate?

The findings were striking: 81% of clergy surveyed supported the 1992 decision, with clear evidence that many had become more favourable over the course of the decade. A majority of participants in the study made a positive assessment of the impact of women in priesthood, frequently noting the additional gifts and insights women had brought to the role. Though a minority of clergy and lay Anglicans remained firmly opposed to women's ordination as priests, 78% of clergy reported 'good working relationships' with those who took a different view to themselves.

LTI 2000-04

The Impact  
Of Women's  
Ordination in the  
Christian  
Churches  
**Ian Jones**  
PDRA, 2000-07



Nevertheless, some aspects of the 1992-94 settlement had proved challenging to manage, with notable concerns over fair and equal access to clerical appointments; over the handling of deanery and diocesan gatherings where those of different views were present specifically in a priestly capacity; and over the practical implementation of the opt-out provisions for those who were opposed (only a fifth of clergy surveyed saw good theological grounds for such provisions). 69% of clergy, and a similar proportion of lay Anglicans questioned, supported women's entry into the episcopate – a figure which was in many cases well exceeded when draft legislation to open to the episcopate was eventually put to Anglican dioceses in 2011-12.

On its publication the report *Women and Priesthood in the Church of England: Ten Years On* (Church House Publishing 2004) received prominent (though not entirely accurate!) coverage in *The Times* newspaper, and key findings were quoted in: *Women Bishops in the Church of England? A Report of the House of Bishops Working Party on Women in the Episcopate*, the report which laid the initial groundwork for the process which is still ongoing. Indeed, one conclusion of the original research was that supporters of women's inclusion in the episcopate appeared ready to wait longer for the right legislative framework rather than move hastily towards women bishops at the price of an unsatisfactory settlement. Arguably, this is proving to be the case. In 2006, an international conference on women and ordination organised by LTI was held at the University of Manchester, resulting in the collection *Women and Ordination in the Christian Churches: International Perspectives* (ed. Ian Jones, Janet Wootton and Kirsty Thorpe, Continuum 2008, paperback 2012) with further articles published in the September 2008 issue of *Feminist Theology*.

# Religion and Climate Change (2007 – 2010)

LTI Postdoctoral Research Associate: Dr Stefan Skrimshire



## **In brief:**

The objective of this project was to investigate key themes in the relationship between religious faith and political responses to climate change. Principal among these were eschatological and apocalyptic belief. Specifically, the role of such belief in informing and (in some cases) contesting an emerging vocabulary in environmental policy and campaign literature: ‘tipping points’; ‘points of no return’; ‘climate catastrophism’. How were activist groups and policy makers engaging, understanding or manipulating beliefs about the future? What could a theological sensitivity to those concepts contribute to the debate?

## **Outcomes:**

Workshop series, *Future Ethics: Climate, Action and the Future of the Human* (2007-2009)

A. Three one-day workshops held in Manchester brought together campaigners/activists, policy workers, and academics from disciplines ranging from climate science to fine art, to reflect upon distinct challenges to groups responding to climate change. These were:

- 1) What is to be done? Apocalyptic rhetoric and political action
- 2) What price security? New issues in the ethics of risk
- 3) A world without us? Imagining the end of the human

Participants included a researcher at DEFRA, climate scientists from the Tyndall Centre, Plane Stupid activists, religious leaders and ecovillage pioneers.

B. Edited book, *Future Ethics: Climate Change and Apocalyptic Imagination* ed. Stefan Skrimshire (London: Continuum, 2010)

This collection of essays addressed apocalyptic imagination under the headings of ‘History’, ‘Ethics’, ‘Action/Inaction’ and ‘Religion’. It features contributions from a range of theologians, social scientists, as well as as notable writers on climate change and ethics, such as Stephen Gardiner and Mike Hulme.

C. Documentary film, *Beyond the Tipping Point? Conversations on Climate, Action and the Future* produced and edited by Stefan Skrimshire (2010)

The purpose of this 30 minute educational film was to stimulate debate by articulating some of the conceptual challenges faced by climate activists, particularly surrounding the notion of ‘tipping points’. By taking a film crew to the UN Climate summit in Copenhagen in December 2009, footage from interviews, actions and workshops (in Copenhagen and from around the UK), were used to contextualise the questions and provoke further discussion.

### **Notable impacts:**

Notable invitations to deliver workshops, host film showings, and talks based on the project findings included an interfaith workshop at Lambeth palace; a day workshop for GCSE RE students in Leeds; an interparliamentary film showing at Westminster; and a workshop for Buddhist activists at a retreat centre. Requests for film showings came from over 400 institutions in 26 different countries, and representing groups as diverse as religious orders, trades union colleges, transition town initiatives and local government departments.

Stefan Skrimshire

# Intersex, Identity and Disability: Issues for Public Policy, Healthcare and the Church (2011-13)

LTI Postdoctoral Research Associate: Dr Susannah Cornwall

Intersex conditions, those where someone is born with a physical “ambiguity” of sex (such as atypical genitalia, or a disjunction between their chromosomes and their physical appearance), remain understudied by Christian theologians.

In her postdoctoral project with the Lincoln Theological Institute (2011-13), Susannah Cornwall undertook theological analysis of the links between intersex and other types of “unusual” embodiment such as disability. She conducted empirical work, through questionnaires and one-to-one interviews, about the faith community affiliations (if any) of people in Britain who identify as intersex and Christian.

This work is being used to help communicate with groups such as hospital chaplains and social responsibility officers from the Christian denominations in Britain about the pastoral and spiritual needs of intersex people and their families.

Other project events included an international conference drawing together members of intersex support groups, scholars working on theology and sexuality, and those working in policy on gender and sexuality from the Christian denominations. The papers from this conference will be published by Palgrave Macmillan as *Intersex, Theology and the Bible: Troubling Bodies in Church, Text and Society*.

Notable achievements of the project include:

1. First theological work drawing on empirical interviews with intersex people.
2. Leading to first edited collection on intersex in theological perspective (including systematic theology, pastoral

theology, biblical studies, autobiography, sociology of religion).

3. Application of intersex to systematic theologies in e.g. “Asking About What Is Better: Intersex, Disability, and Inaugurated Eschatology”; “Sex Otherwise: Intersex, Christology and the Maleness of Jesus”.
4. Application of intersex to practical and pastoral theologies in e.g. “British Intersex Christians’ Accounts of Intersex Identity, Christian Identity and Church Experience”; “To Name Those Experiences Often Denied or Silenced: Intersex Conditions, Gender Identity and Pastoral Theology”.
5. Production of work aiming to improve pastoral and spiritual care for intersex people, e.g. briefing paper targeting chaplains and pastoral carers.
6. Invitations to speak about intersex to clergy at e.g. Sarum College (residential course on sexuality and spirituality, 2013); Ripon College Cuddesdon CSCS theological educators’ conference on human sexuality (2014).

Susannah Cornwall

# Individualism and Public Theology (2013-15)

LTI Postdoctoral Research Associate: Dr Ben Wood

One of the central concerns of Public Theology today is the extent to which Christians should be committed participants in the task of sustaining liberal-democratic institutions. In recent years an influential cross-section of theologians (including John Milbank, Stanley Hauerwas and Graham Ward) have cast doubt on the desirability of such participation on the grounds that Christian witness is in danger of secular domestication. In particular, they have argued that the many of the values underlying liberal models of citizenship function in opposition to demands of Christian discipleship. For instance, opponents have characterised the liberal virtue of tolerance as potentially blunting the necessarily confrontational nature of much of Christian identity and witness.

In contrast to this highly negative portrayal of liberal citizenship, this research focuses upon what Western Christians can usefully retrieve from contemporary culture, despite obvious tensions. What ideologies and practices facilitate and support the radical ethical, economic and social vision of the Gospel and what can be meaningfully adapted for use by Christians in their public work? And what gifts and tools might liberal politics have for Christian reflection? This research project builds on these concerns by highlighting points of compatibility and dialogue between models of liberal individualism and contemporary Christian communities.

Ben Wood

# Belonging & *Heimat*

Lead researcher: John Rodwell

The Belonging & *Heimat* project has developed from research on a theological critique of sustainability carried out by Professor John Rodwell for the M.B. Reckitt Trust, a charitable foundation that funds work challenging social and economic assumptions and releasing energy for change.

This project aims to foster an exchange between English and German speakers on such questions as belonging, *Heimat* and citizenship. It involves academics in theology and ecology, practitioners in regeneration and landscape architecture, and those with commitments to reflecting on place among communities of the faithful in the Christian churches of both countries. The project aims to foster a permanent legacy of a deeper mutual respect and understanding of the various interpretations of belonging and *Heimat*, and a sense of how to negotiate shared ways of belonging together in intellectual understanding and faith, better to secure the future.

How did this project come about? A renewed interest in the theology of place has moved away from narrower preoccupations with sacred space to a wider engagement with ideas of how people of faith belong in the world, and what the particularities of geography have to do with redemption. In such a light, belonging is about mutual entanglements of necessity and freedom that are negotiated by people in place.

Meanwhile, research by landscape ecologists has shown how difficult it is for current planning processes in the UK to incorporate multifunctional notions of place that integrate social and economic concerns with wider understandings of environment and culture. In particular, interpretations of place and belonging in the regeneration of post-industrial landscapes are very material and shallow. “Securing the Future” (as the UK government calls sustainability) takes little account of the often-

contested histories of places, and the price people have paid to live their lives there.

Similar concerns about the principles and realities of regeneration and sustainability have been raised in Germany where the term which expresses belonging is *Heimat*. The original meaning of this word is “home ground” but over a millennium it has acquired a rich variety of resonances and, after its suborning by National Socialist ideology, is now attracting a new and wide interest, not only in the environmental realm but also in arts like film, theatre and literature.

*Heimat* is fundamentally about whom you are and where you belong, and is a place where you know who you are and that you belong there. There is often a measure of reciprocal gift and acceptance between person and place and more recent German interpretations favour a more dynamic perspective, such that *Heimat* can be permanently appropriated in a way that articulates social change. This circle of thinking has recently been completed by theological reflection on *Beheimatung* as an essential process in social construction, the planning process and the salvation of built environments.”

To explore these issues, two colloquia have been held to provide an interdisciplinary, Anglo-German forum for the discussion of these issues. Essays written by the project’s research group will be published in 2014 under the title *At Home in the Future*, edited by Rodwell and Scott.<sup>1</sup>

John Rodwell

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<sup>1</sup> The research group comprises: Stefan Körner (Kassel University, Germany), Ian Thompson (Newcastle University, UK), Sigurd Bergmann (Trondheim University, Norway), Bron Szerszynski (Lancaster University, UK), John Eidson (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany), Ruth McElroy (University of Glamorgan, UK), Paul Gough (University of the West of England, UK), John Rodwell (University of Manchester, UK), Peter Scott (University of Manchester, UK), Philip Sheldrake (Cambridge Theological Federation, UK), Paul Selman (Sheffield University, UK), Vera Vicenzotti (Technical University of Munich, Germany), Alistair McFadyen (Leeds University, UK).

# Divinity After Empire

Lead researcher: Joseph Duggan [www.postcolonialnetworks.org](http://www.postcolonialnetworks.org)

It is with gratitude that Postcolonial Networks celebrates the tenth anniversary of the Lincoln Theological Institute (LTI) at the University of Manchester. On behalf of the board of Postcolonial Networks, I write to share our pride to be an LTI partner.

I came to the University of Manchester in 2006 to begin doctoral studies in ecclesiology at LTI. My work soon moved into the area of postcolonial theory and its fruitfulness for ecclesiology. With LTI's encouragement, I organized the first international conference in Britain in this area, entitled "Church, Identity/ies, and Postcolonialism", held at the University of Manchester in May 2008. Papers from this conference were published in the *Journal of Anglican Studies* in 2009 under my guest editorship. Additionally, and with support from the chair of LTI's trustees, I organized the "Anglican Identities and the Postcolonial" meeting at Lambeth 2008.

This first conference is now part of a series. The second conference was held at United Theological College, Bangalore, and was organized by myself and David Joy. The papers from this meeting are now published as *Decolonizing the Body of Christ: Theology and Theory After Empire?*. A third conference was held in Melbourne, Australia in January 2012, organised by Mark Brett, under the title "Story Weaving: Colonial Contexts and Postcolonial Theology". We are now preparing for our fourth conference, organised by Esther Mombo, called "The Postcolonial Church: Theology, Identity and Mission" to be held at St Paul's University, Limuru, Kenya. This series will conclude in 2016 with a conference at the University of Manchester.

Emerging out of this work, Postcolonial Networks is a global justice organization. We are knowledge activists who accomplish our work through networking, scholarship, and public education. In five years we have grown from an inconsequential Facebook

group of two people to close to 5000 members with university relationships on every continent. The Facebook group was the launching pad for Postcolonial Networks as an international not-for-profit organization. As Peter Scott encouraged my work, some major religion editors in London and New York discounted the impact of Facebook networking on the future of postcolonial scholarship. In our first published volume with Palgrave, a noted postcolonial scholar stated that postcoloniality would never be taught in the same way because of Postcolonial Networks' contributions.

Like LTI, we have initiated projects with a diverse array of partners. We brought together the next generation of queer, indecent theologians who met last July in Buenos Aires in honor of the legacy of Marcella Althaus-Reid. Postcolonial evangelical theologians around the world worked for two years to publish *Evangelical Postcolonial Conversations: Great Awakenings in Theology and Praxis* with the major American evangelical press, InterVarsity Press. In less than two years with Palgrave Macmillan we have also built a flourishing series, *Postcolonialism and Religions*. The Palgrave series has over two-dozen manuscripts in process toward publication. Consistent with our mission and vision the majority of these volumes will be written by indigenous, transnational, and multi-religious authors. Collectively, these texts will alter the predominantly privileged discipline of postcolonial studies whose history has involved writing about subalterns without listening to them.

As we look toward the future, our vision is to expand our work in the Global South. Postcolonial Networks is fully aware that the majority of Global South scholarship on postcolonialism is never read because it is never published. Publication is not based solely on quality but also on lack of privileged access to relationships of production and distribution.

As we continue our work we look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with LTI and its Director, Peter Scott!

Joseph Duggan

# Political Theology: Futures

Extracted from the entry, under 'Projekte und Institute', for the Lincoln Theological Institute, The University of Manchester, UK [*Jahrbuch Politische Theologie* vols. 6 and 7 (Münster: LiT Verlag, 2013)]

The Lincoln Theological Institute for the Study of Religion and Society contributes advanced theological research of international quality in the academy and seeks to inform policy in the churches and wider society. It aims to be a national and international centre of expertise in the theological study of religion and society and promotes theological research and study into a variety of ethical, pastoral, social and ecclesial issues. As such, the Lincoln Theological Institute undertakes, promotes and supports theological enquiry into contemporary society and supports the practice of theology in the fullest sense.

For the Institute, only if theology can give a persuasive account of the future of human social life in its many environments and dimensions will Christianity be able to speak authoritatively. Theology is faced by a plural, often conflictive, society and seeks to rework Christian meanings for this new situation. Moreover, given the complexity of our society, there is no single 'social question'. Instead, there is a proliferation of social questions that must be approached from a variety of perspectives. Freely acknowledging that both the churches and society are divided, the Institute is thereby committed to multi-disciplinary work and does not privilege one theological approach over others. One theological approach will not therefore be adequate to the task.

LTI's understanding of political theology is broad. From a theological perspective, political theology is distinguished by the effort to relate, in an explicit fashion, discourse about God to the organization of bodies in time and space. Operating across and between Christian traditions and denominations, various

approaches may be identified: the autonomy of theology from politics; liberation, feminist, queer and postcolonial approaches; a concern for the ‘politics’ embedded in doctrines, narratives and practices. This political theology is often concerned to strengthen the moral values underpinning the liberal, democratic culture of contemporary society and transforming these values towards a more inclusive justice.

Recently, there have been significant developments within political theology. The critical assessment of liberal society has been conducted from the perspective of the ‘politics’ embedded within Christianity. The particularism of the nation state has been criticised from the perspective of Christianity’s universalism. The bodies with which Political Theology engages have been extended to include non-human bodies. Moreover, a comparative Political Theology is just beginning to emerge in which the religious plurality of European societies, and its consequences for public discourse and spaces, is being evaluated. The Lincoln Theological Institute intends to contribute to the development of the older meanings and the consolidation of newer trajectories. To provide a sense of this contribution, two of LTI’s current projects are presented below.

### **Climate change**

LTI has had a research interest in religion, theology and climate change since 2007. The first stage of the project culminated in the publication of *Future Ethics: Climate Change and Apocalyptic Imagination* (2010), edited by Stefan Skrimshire. The second stage, now underway, intends to provide a multi-authored systematic theology that takes as its primary interlocutor a changing climate. Undertaken in conjunction with the University of Edinburgh, a group of theologians convened by LTI Director, Peter Scott, and Michael Northcott has begun its work<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> The research group comprises Timothy Gorrige (University of Exeter, UK); Niels Henrik Gregersen (University of Copenhagen, Denmark); Michael Northcott (University of Edinburgh, UK); Celia Deane-Drummond (University of Notre Dame, USA); Rachel Muers (University of Leeds, UK); Peter Scott (University of Manchester, UK); Neil Messer (University of Winchester, UK); Tamara Grdzeldze (World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland); Stefan Skrimshire (University of Leeds, UK).

This project works from the premise that the issue of a warming climate will be a central concern within and without the academy for the next 20 – 30 years. There is some work already being undertaken within theology and the study of religions to explore the complexity of anthropogenic climate change yet the task remains barely begun and is daunting in its scope and complexity.

This project proposes that a useful theological response would be to produce a theology that systematically explores and engages the complexity of climate change. It brings together an international group of theologians to compose a multi-authored systematic theology, to be published in 2014 by Routledge.

### **Civil Society**

The promotion of the theme of the “Big Society” in the UK by Prime Minister David Cameron has provoked much comment, including contributions from theologians. The “Big Society” opposes the “big state” and stresses voluntarism and localism. It is the big idea that supports self-help, mutuality and local accountability. It takes heart from the voluntary activities already being undertaken by a range of faith groups. Although there has been some appreciation of this promotion of civil society, much of the comment has been negative.

The current political argument obscures the fact that there are important changes going on within civil society and the relation of civil society with other sectors. Part of the historical argument over civil society has been whether it is a creature of the state or the economy. Behind this is the vital issue of civil society as a source of ‘political’ authority: is political authority to be sourced not to the constitution of a society by its state but rather the self-constitution of a society through its basic practices, communities and associations? Additionally, how does this question relate to the distinctions that we commonly make between Left and Right—or is this distinction losing its salience?

This project takes seriously the decomposition and recomposition of civil society and the resulting implications for the foundations of our present society and its various sectors. Whether we are at an historical juncture beyond which the future must be very different from the past remains unclear. Nonetheless, there are clearly profound tensions or contradictions emerging: the resources required to support an ageing population, and the impinging reality of anthropogenic climate change, suggest by themselves that a bold response will be required.

Not least, the recent developments that have most substantially changed Western societies have been movements or activities in civil society. The labour and women's movements and the globalisation of finance and communication, have been, and have unleashed, powerful forces that shape our present societies. Also, largely unvoiced in the current debate are the pre-political allegiances which locate our responsibilities to society within an awareness of our creatureliness and which question the notion that the environment can be simply volunteered in support of socio-economic well-being. Moreover, it is likely that the pressures of future shocks will be felt by groups and communities in their localities and neighbourhoods where some of the important negotiations will have to be undertaken and compromises made. It is timely, then, to take a critical look at civil society in order to grasp its capacity, resilience and sustainability.

As vigorous actors in civil society, religious communities—including churches—have a stake in the health and vitality of civil society, the relationship between economic interests and non-economic associations, and the relationship between civil society and the state. Seizing this timely moment, therefore, this research project—involving the research centres of the Faith and Public Policy Forum at King's College, London, the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics, Cambridge, and the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics and Public Policy at the University of Oxford—is hosting a series of conferences to explore these issues from a

range of perspectives and disciplines. These include “Patriotism?” and “Churches, Communities and Society”.

This strand of LTI’s work is also being taken forward by the colloquium, “Theology, Plurality and Society” which will consider the diversity of contemporary civil society from theological perspectives. The aim of this colloquium is to reconsider plurality, as theme and concept, in theology and society. How does the theme of plurality emerge for theology? Must a religiously plural society fall apart? How does theology process plurality? These are among the vital questions that this colloquium addresses. The planned outcome is a special issue of *Political Theology*.

### **Conclusion**

These research projects reflect the Lincoln Theological Institute’s commitment to creative and timely responses to issues that are already the object of public scrutiny and to pioneering research on issues that are yet to come to wide theological or public attention. They build on a robust foundation of earlier work done under the auspices of the LTI, including work on place and the city, politics and civil society, and women and the priesthood.

As such, they speak clearly of LTI’s reputation for advanced, cutting-edge theological research that engages with the problematics of contemporary life and presents its findings in innovative and compelling ways. LTI seeks to promote research that is rigorous, relevant, methodologically sound, surprising and impact-ful. LTI’s characteristic combination of robust scholarship, and engaged and interdisciplinary dialogue, is thereby distinctively placed to comment on the ways in which human beings in contemporary society relate to one another, and to broad questions of politics, ontology and culture.

Peter Scott

# MAJOR PROJECTS

Women and Ordination

Hospital Chaplaincy

Divinity After Empire

God, City, Place

Future Ethics: Climate Change, Political Action & Future of the Human

Re-moralizing Britain

Belonging and *Heimat*

Systematic Theology for a Changing Climate

The Common Good

A Shaking of the Foundations? Reconsidering Civil Society

Intersex, Identity, Disability: Issues for Public Policy, Healthcare & Church

Theology, Plurality and Society

Individualism and Public Theology

## MAJOR PUBLICATIONS

*Hospital Chaplaincy: Modern, Dependable?*, Helen Orchard, Sheffield Academic Press, 2000

*Women and Priesthood in the Church of England: Ten Years On*, Ian Jones, Church House Publishing, 2004

*Women and Ordination in the Christian Churches: Int. Perspectives*, Ian Jones, Janet Wootton, Kirsty Thorpe (eds.), T&T Clark, 2008

*Journal of Anglican Studies*, Volume 7 - Issue 01 - May 2009, on postcolonial, J. Duggan (editor)

*Remoralizing Britain*, Peter Scott, Chris Baker and Elaine Graham (eds.), Continuum, 2009

*Future Ethics: Climate Change and Apocalyptic Imagination*, Stefan Skrimshire (ed.), Continuum, 2010

*Beyond the Tipping Point?* (documentary), dir. Stefan Skrimshire, 2010

*Decolonizing the Body of Christ: Theology and Theory After Empire?*, David Joy and Joseph Duggan (eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, 2012

*At Home in the Future: Place and Belonging in a Changing Europe*, J Rodwell and P Scott (eds.), LIT Verlag, 2014

*Systematic Theology and Climate Change*, Peter Scott and Michael Northcott (eds.), Routledge, 2014

*Intersex, Theology and the Bible: Troubling Bodies in Church, Text and Society*, Susannah Cornwall (ed.), Palgrave Macmillan, 2015

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