

From the Director

Peter M. Scott

Welcome to the Summer 2009 issue of the Institute's newsletter, with its reports on LTI's activities over the last year. It has been another frenetic year at the Institute, with some projects coming to a conclusion and new projects beginning.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will find reports on the three LTI projects that are currently underway: the first phase of the *Future Ethics* has been completed and the second phase is now beginning. A new project, *Belonging & Heimat*, led by the Institute's new honorary research fellow John Rodwell, has begun. And the head of steam in the third project, *Divinity after Empire*, continues to build as the project attracts additional partners. A number of publications by members of the Institute have also appeared; please see inside for more details.

The Institute is lucky in that it has attracted the interest of eminent scholars who have accepted appointment as honorary research fellows and are thereby extending its work. Recently, Prof Rodwell was honoured with a national award; see more inside. Additionally, I'm delighted to announce the appointment of the latest Lincoln honorary research fellow, Dr Anne Marie Sowerbutts, who will develop the Institute's interests in technology and the common good; further details in the next newsletter.

Finally, the Institute has invested heavily in its website. Even I have received training in the updating of LTI's website—there have been choirs singing in cyberspace! So I am more keenly aware of the ease and speed with which web based resources can be developed and updated. It remains true that the very latest news of the Institute's activities and events are to be found on our website. This newsletter, as you read it, will alas have fallen behind the website. So, as announced in the previous newsletter, we shall be moving towards a greater emphasis on electronic communication in the future. I hope that we shall be able to notify you of new developments by e mail, and direct you towards the website. Our web address remains unchanged: LTI can be found online at www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/lti.

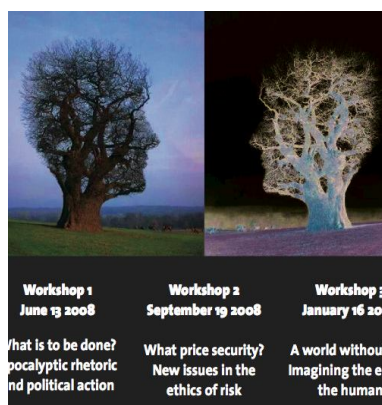
With my best wishes,

Peter M. Scott

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Future Ethics: series ends; future plans unveiled



Plenary discussion at the third workshop

Climate Change, Political Action and the Future of the Human, Manchester 2008-2009

By Stefan Skrimshire

This January saw the last of our three workshops, *The world without us? Imagining the end of the human*. The aim of *Future Ethics* was to bring together thinkers and practitioners engaged in the broad topic of "political responses to climate change". The motivation might have been (crudely) summarised as the suspicion that whilst academics are typically too disengaged from real life to get their hands dirty, activists and practitioners typically give too little time to testing, critiquing, communicating and exchanging the ideas, theories, and beliefs that underlie their actions.

Did we succeed? To the extent that we wished to facilitate a dialogue between folk normally hindered by the ghettoisation of the academy and the professions, the answer is definitely yes. Though often difficult, exchanges were made possible on complex issues surrounding the politics, ethics, and cultures of climate change. The outcomes were both exciting, and, at least from our point of view, unique. It was possible for a professor of philosophy to engage with a ecovillage designer; a DEFRA employee with a member of Plane Stupid activist; or an Anglican vicar with a permaculture expert.

Confining ourselves to a manageable number for open exchange (20 to 30 people), dialogue was facilitated with a mixture of interactive debate and discussion of pre-written 'starter papers'. Our methodology was intentionally risky: we recognised the necessity to break out of a traditional lecture-response format for discussion. With the help of a professional and innovative facilitator, we were able to play with formats, utilising practices from conflict resolution, consensus decision-making, and 'open space' discussion forms. Whilst not always delivering what we had expected, the risk paid off in the long-run: feedback from all the workshops was overwhelmingly of an engaging and creative experience; a sense of being able to participate and share in knowledge and experiences, from a range of levels and inputs, from the morning introductions right through to our evening social gathering.

Reporting, recording, and communicating the findings of the workshops has been central to the aims of the project. All of these can be seen on our website: www.manchester.ac.uk/futureethics; film footage of select interviews; photo archives; notes from discussions; and 'brainstorming' flipchart notes reproduced. These reports have already attracted a huge interest. The website provides not only information and reports from the workshops, but also regular bibliographical updates, links to organisations, upcoming events both domestic and international, published reports, and a page dedicated to further resources connected to each workshop, from documentaries to chapters from books.

Clearly, we would like to build upon the success of Future Ethics, and are extremely happy that the LTI director's have offered us an extended year for precisely this. Plans are therefore afoot for producing a documentary film, focussing on the concept of timescales, tipping points, and political action on climate change. A trip to the UN Climate Change Convention in Copenhagen in December will provide much of the interview material. It is intended that the film will be a free, educational DVD, professionally produced. In addition, Continuum are publishing our edited collection, *Future Ethics: Climate Change and Political Action*, which should be hitting the shelves early 2010. Keep an eye on the website for all of these developments.

A big thanks is due to LTI's director, Peter Scott, for supporting and co-directing the project, both in content and execution, since its beginning. ■

Stefan Skrimshire is LTI Postdoctoral Research Associate in Religion and Politics at The University of Manchester. As well as directing the Religion and Climate Change project, he teaches and researches apocalyptic belief and crisis rhetoric in political cultures.



Stefan Skrimshire, right, ponders the end of the human.

Divinity after Empire:

Manchester 2008 conference proceedings published;
Bangalore 2010 conference announced, registration opened



By Joe Duggan

There are a number of important developments to report in connection with the Divinity after Empire project. Papers from the first international conference to be held in the UK on postcolonial theology are now published in the *Journal of Anglican Studies*. These are available on the Cambridge University Press website: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayIssue?jid=AST&volumeId=7&issueId=01&iid=5550568#>

Hosted by the Lincoln Theological Institute and held at the University of Manchester in May 2008, this conference has now become the first in a series of five conferences. The next conference will be held on 21-23 January 2010 at United Theological College, Bangalore, under the title "Envisioning Postcolonial Theologies to Decolonize the Body of Christ". There are further details via the LTI website or http://www.utcbangalore.in/envisioning_postcolonial_theologies.html

Further conferences are scheduled to take place in Melbourne in 2012 and Limuru, Kenya in 2014 before the final conference in the series is held at the University of Manchester in 2016.

There are two "spin-off" events to report: a Postcolonial Roundtable will take place at Gordon College, near Boston, 20-22nd October 2010. The Postcolonial Roundtable responds to a growing evangelical interest in the postcolonial as manifested by the work of Rev. Dr. Mabiata Kenzo at Ambrose University in Canada. The Postcolonial Roundtable, co-sponsored by Gordon College's Center for Christian Studies and the Postcolonial Theology Network, is intended to be a first step towards fostering scholarship in this literature gap area of theological reflection, research and teaching. Our end goal for this meeting is to articulate an evangelical-specific postcolonial theological direction for future research based on shared questions, definitions and concerns.

Lastly, the Society of Anglican and Lutheran Theologians (SALT) meeting will take place at the American Academy of Religion in

2010 in Atlanta, and will feature speakers from the US, India, Australia and Denmark. The focus is missiology in postcolonial contexts as a means of celebrating 100th anniversary of the first ecumenical meeting at Edinburgh in 1910.

The postcolonial never sleeps! The Postcolonial Theology Network is on Facebook and a Postcolonial blog can be found at <http://postcolonialnetwork.ning.com/> ■

Editor's note

Joe Duggan, research student at the University of Manchester, was the principal organizer of the conference, "Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism", and co-ordinated the submission of papers to the Journal of Anglican Studies. LTI thanks him for his hard work in both matters.

Belonging & Heimat



Inaugural workshop held at University of Manchester; First study visit to Germany in autumn 2009; International colloquium announced for 2010

By John Rodwell

In February this year, an initial informal Workshop at Manchester brought together 19 theologians, philosophers, landscape ecologists and landscape architects for a lively exchange to help shape the research agenda of the Belonging-Heimat project more precisely.

An application to the Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence at Manchester University for support for an international Colloquium to pursue the key research questions was successful and this meeting is scheduled for May 2010. It will enable an academic exchange between UK and German institutions and the development of a shared research project; and beyond that, with subsequent funding, will lead to an international conference in 2011 and the publication of its proceedings as a book.

Meanwhile, with support from the Saint George's Trust and the LTI, I shall make an initial exploratory visit to Bonn, Freiburg, Munich and Halle this autumn to talk with German practitioners in ecology, landscape planning and theology and visit post-industrial sites at the Emscher Landschaftspark in the Ruhr and the lignite mining area of Bitterfeld. Keen interest in the project has already been aroused among a wide range of contacts in Germany and the visit will set the scene for the 2010 Colloquium and my own continuing research in the Institute. An approach to the

Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst aims to support a longer study visit and research exchange beyond the Colloquium.

I am also exploring aspects of belonging and place with staff of the National Trust and members of A Rocha and Natur Cymru and with landscape architects and designers in the 'Spirit of Place' series at the Museum of Garden History in London this autumn. Linked arts projects with a composer and stone-carver are being developed with the National Mining Museum in Wakefield.

At LTI, we hope that the more permanent legacy of the Belonging & Heimat project will be a deeper mutual respect and understanding of the various interpretations of relationships between people and place and a sense that we might negotiate shared ways of belonging together in a wider European context. ■

The Revd Professor John Rodwell is an Honorary Research Fellow of the Lincoln Theological Institute.

Director speaks on climate change, proposes amnesty



The Director warms to his task at Copenhagen University

Speaking to the title, 'The future as God's amnesty?' in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Copenhagen in May 2009, the Director proposed a public theology of resistance for a changing climate based upon a theological recasting of the notion of amnesty.

Deploying the notion of an amnesty, he argued that amnesty is important for a public theology for a changing climate because such an amnesty is the basis of a new equality. This is germane in that climate change presents us with a new equality of insecurity. That is, the effects of climate change in the promotion of insecurity cannot be mitigated or adapted to nation state by nation state. We need therefore the development of a renewed, international 'humane society', as a response to this equality of insecurity. It is in this sense, he argued, that amnesty—in the sense of the lifting of a penalty, of being set free from insecurity for new responsibilities—is a useful concept.

Developing this theme, the Director argued that the future as God's amnesty reminds the rich and powerful North that we cannot insulate ourselves from climate change. Against a tendency to secure and defend our own interests, the pardon of God reminds that we are placed with other creatures in God's blessing. We can of course use our resources—our wealth and our technologies—to insulate ourselves from some of the effects of climate change. Yet the matter of a pardon releases us from such efforts at isolation; we are freed to be for other creatures, human and non-human. We are released into a new solidarity founded in a common or shared realm of nature, humanity and God. ■

Editor's note

The next UN Climate Change conference (COP15) takes place in Copenhagen, Denmark between December 8th and 15th 2009.

Lincoln Research Fellow Honoured



Anglican Priest Professor John Rodwell will be presented with the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's President's Medal for his services to ecology and conservation this week (25 June). He follows in the footsteps of Sir David Attenborough who won the award for his contribution to the public understanding of ecology in 2006 and Professor Tony Bradshaw, for his lifelong work on land restoration in 2007.

Professor Rodwell said: "I am most honoured to think that I have made such a difference to the quality of environmental work and to the way we treasure the diversity and beauty of the natural world."

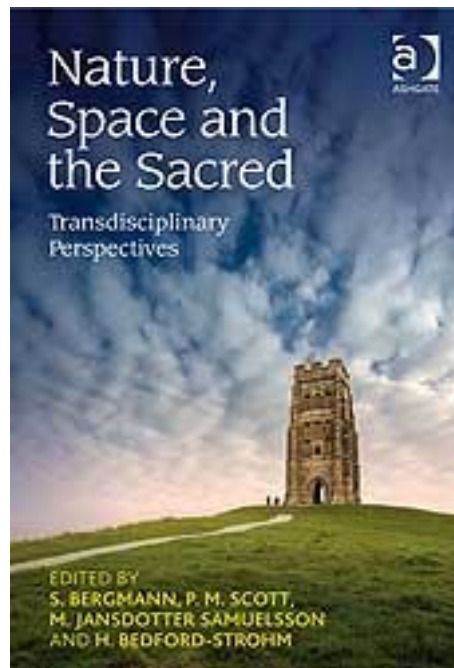
Professor Rodwell coordinated the 16-year National Vegetation Classification programme for the UK Government and edited the five-volume classic *British Plant Communities*, published by Cambridge University Press.

An Anglican Priest for over 30 years - and Honorary Canon of Blackburn Cathedral - he is also known for his research on how religious belief affects our care of nature. He added: "Religious people sometimes have a reputation for not being very interested in the physical world. "But the world and all that lives in it is of great interest to me and is one of the reasons I became a scientist. "Being a priest also prompts me to look at aspects of nature that are not so easily measured and provides another language to describe how much our fellow creatures matter." ■

Editor's note: This is an excerpt from a notice published on the University of Manchester's website in June 2009.

Lincoln Publications

- Stefan Skrimshire, *Politics of Fear, Practices of Hope: Depoliticisation and Resistance in a Time of Terror* (Continuum, 2008).
- P.M. Scott, C.R. Baker and E.L. Graham (eds.), *Remoralising Britain? Political, Ethical and Theological Perspectives on New Labour* (Continuum, 2009).
- S.Bergmann, P.M. Scott, M. Jansdotter-Samuelsson, H. Bedford-Strohm (eds.), *Nature, space and the sacred* (Ashgate, 2009).



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