

Lincoln Theological Institute Newsletter

From the Director

Peter M. Scott

Welcome to the Summer 2008 issue of the Institute's newsletter, with its reports on LTI's activities during this springtime.

Elsewhere in this newsletter, you will find a report on our May conference "Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism", which was a great success, and was widely reported in the church media. Plans to take this work forward are emerging, and already a decision has been taken to stage a further conference, in partnership with the United Theological College, Bangalore, in January 2010.

Furthermore, the first in LTI's series of workshops, *Future Ethics*, was held in June. There is a report on the project in this newsletter and there is much more information on the Institute's website. Suffice it to say that this was an extraordinary event, bringing together people who do not usually engage in a common conversation. You can access video clips from the day and much more besides from the Institute's website, too.

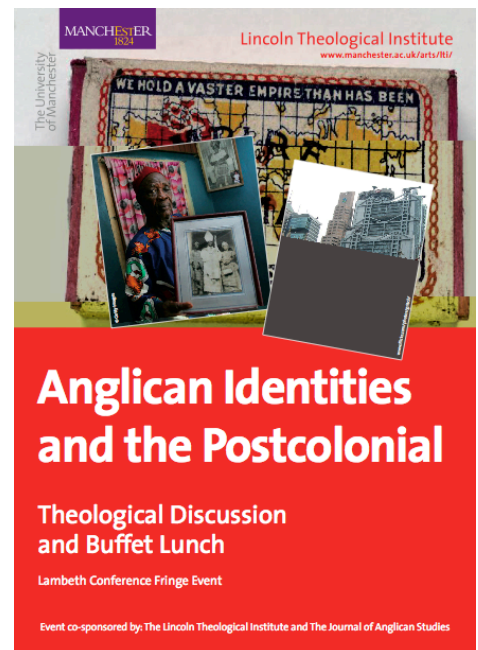
Finally, I would be glad to hear from Alumni regarding suggestions for future meetings. As you will recall, Newsletter no. 4 reported on the Alumni Study Day, held in December 2007. If you have any suggestions about future events for Alumni, please contact me.

The very latest news on the Institute's activities and events, plus plenty of resources and links, can of course be found on our website. Indeed, I am planning that the newsletter and the website should be more interactive in future, and that the website should be the first place to look for information about the Institute's work. In that there are fresh possibilities given by the Internet for communicating the Institute's work, we shall be moving towards a greater emphasis on electronic communication in the future. LTI can be found online at www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/lti.

With my best wishes,

Peter M. Scott

Lambeth Fringe Event

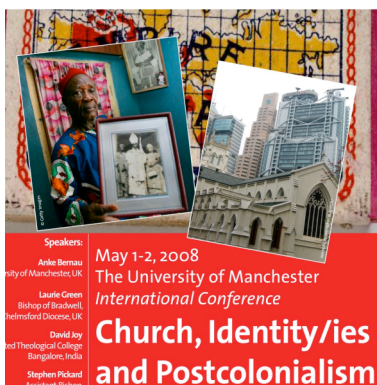


The Lincoln Theological Institute and The Journal of Anglican Studies co-sponsor "Anglican Identities and the Postcolonial", a Lambeth Fringe Event to be held on July 21 from 12:30–3:00pm at the University of Kent at Canterbury, venue of the 2008 Lambeth Conference.

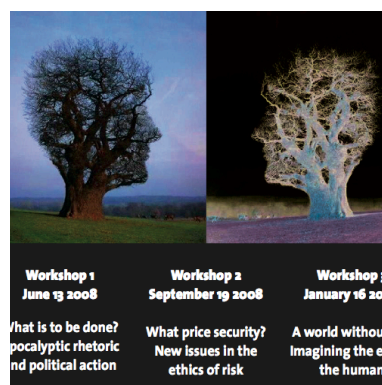
The Bishop of Wakefield, the Rt Revd Stephen Platten, who is chair of the trustees of the Lincoln Theological Institute, will host the event. Designed as a follow-on event from the international conference, "Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism", hosted by the Lincoln Theological Institute at the University of Manchester in May 2008, we have been fortunate to book noted scholar on postcolonialism, Robert Young. There will also be a bishops' panel. Director Peter Scott commented: "There are more than 60 people booked for this event, and we at LTI are delighted by this interest in the postcolonial. We hope that this will be the start of a strong development in postcolonial theology". ■

What's Inside

Issue 5 Summer 2008



Postcolonial conference: 2-3



Climate workshop: 3

Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism: Conference Report

Joseph F. Duggan

“I was pleased to find a space for my voice”, exclaimed David Joy at the end of the May 1–2, 2008 “Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism” conference, hosted by the Lincoln Theological Institute at the University of Manchester. Joy, an Anglican priest and Associate Professor of New Testament at the United Theological College in Bangalore, India was one of four main scholars who came to the University of Manchester to explore the challenging postcolonial relationship between multiple faith identities within denominations. The other scholars giving papers were Bishop Stephen Pickard, Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Adelaide, Steven Shakespeare at Liverpool Hope University and Anke Bernau from the University of Manchester.



Peter Scott addresses the conference

The availability of space to speak is not just about Christian hospitality but also about power. The analysis of power is central to a postcolonial theology, theory and biblical studies. Colonialism led to monolithic identity construction that left little space for divergent identities. Peter Scott, Director of the Lincoln Theological Institute, captured the spirit of postcolonial theology, “Love should have the first and not the last word in speaking about power”. Scott’s counsel acknowledges the contentiousness of such space. Many Anglicans are searching for a way to live their faith with integrity while remaining in communion with people whose identities are radically different. Yet without a postcolonial theological critique, colonial remnants impede these faithful desires and demand compliance with one identity.

Theologians, bishops, colonial scholars and Christians came together suggesting that the postcolonial is the responsibility of all. The conference, the first of its kind to take place in England, was the beginning of the Lincoln Theological Institute’s exploration of Divinity after empire and its influence on the shape of theology and ecclesiology. Matt Davies’ opening line for his May 5 top story on Episcopal Life Online stated, “Conversations about postcolonialism and cultural religious identities that have been shaped by the colonial past have seldom found their way onto the agendas of the Anglican Communion’s main councils and Instruments of Communion”. Pat Ashworth’s lead story line to her May 23 Comment piece in *Church Times* reported, “Cultural and religious identities in the Anglican Churches have been shaped by the colonial past, and discussions are long overdue on this issue, which has a huge bearing on the current divisions in the Communion, say scholars of colonial theory and Anglican history.”

Methodists, Evangelical Christians, Roman Catholics with perspectives from Africa, Australia, Sri Lanka, China, England and the United States reflected the breadth and urgency of postcolonial questions. There are a handful of postcolonial theologians responding to this urgency. As a means of expanding the available postcolonial theological literature, several papers from the conference pending successful peer review will be included in a special edition of *The Journal of Anglican Studies* in December 2009 focused on Postcolonial Theology. The special edition will be published one month prior to the next postcolonial conference in Bangalore, India, January 21–23, 2010 where postcolonial theory, biblical studies and theology will be bridged to continue to pursue these urgent questions in spaces of mutual provocation. ■

Editor’s note

Joe Duggan was the principal organizer of the conference, “Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism”, and is also organizing the Lambeth Fringe event, reported on page one. LTI is deeply grateful for all his hard work in staging this highly successful conference, and all his efforts in preparing for the Lambeth event.

Website

Visit the conference’s website at:

www.manchester.ac.uk/arts/lti/events/conference

Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism: Comment by Keynote Speaker

Dr. David Joy, Associate Professor of New Testament, United Theological College, Bangalore

Any conference which opens up new horizons of understanding will be cherished for a long time by its participants. Such was the experience of the participants of the conference on “Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism”. Rev. Joseph Duggan and Dr. Peter Scott made everything possible for a meaningful interaction on the topic.

Undoubtedly, this conference created a new atmosphere of open discussion among the postcolonial scholars who are part and parcel of the church. A new cluster of scholars and their contributions will enrich the postcolonial stream of studies within the Anglican communion. A major attraction of this conference was that there was space for all kinds of views and voices to be expressed clearly and the participants were very keen and open in listening to “the other”. At the end of the day we felt a sense of solidarity and fellowship beyond our ethnicity and culture.

After serious deliberations on the topic, it was decided to explore the possibility of a follow up conference in India in 2010. Now it is clear that there will be conference in Bangalore jointly organized by UTC and LTI in January 2010. ■

Editor’s note

At the conference, Dr. Joy addressed a joint meeting of the conference and the Ehrhardt seminar in Biblical Studies, speaking to the title “A Postcolonial Reconstruction of Anglican Identities in India”.

Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism: Appreciation by Keynote Speaker

Stephen Pickard, Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Adelaide, Australia

The Manchester conference sponsored by the Lincoln Theological Institute on “Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism” opened up a major area of debate within contemporary religious studies. In my own Anglican tradition this area is critical as the world wide Anglican Communion comes to terms with its colonial past and begins a new and radical phase of engagement in the world. We have only begun to touch the tip of an iceberg. Further collaborations, such as between the Lincoln Theological Institute and United Theological College in Bangalore, will continue a much needed conversation of the future shape of Christianity in a postcolonial world. ■

Future Ethics Workshop 1: What is to be Done? Apocalyptic Rhetoric and Political Action – June 13, 2008

Stefan Skrimshire

The workshop series “Future Ethics” has now begun, with the first, held in June, looking at the relationship between apocalyptic rhetoric and political action in relation to climate change.



The Future Ethics workshop in action

Precisely what *was* understood as political action – the different forms of action, how effective they were, which people and what powers they engaged – became both a challenge and a creative investigation. So too did the different understandings of “apocalyptic”, in both its religious and secular incarnations, though it became clear that this was an area that would need much further investigation and expertise. Nevertheless, the day fulfilled its aim to bring together diversity and breadth of experience and knowledge. Perhaps for the first time in this format, it became possible for a climate scientist and a member of the direct action group Plane Stupid; or a Theology professor and a permaculture practitioner, to sit down together to discuss a range of ethical challenges on the subject of climate change.

These challenges were expertly thrown up by the fascinating “starter papers” that had been circulated prior to the

meeting. In the morning there was the question of the scientization of the environmental action movement; the competing “myths” of the cultural perception of climate change, borrowed from biblical metaphors of Eden, Babel, and Apocalypse; and the historical legacy of prophetic dissent. Taking these forward into practical “solutions”, the afternoon provided opportunity to discuss the possibilities of civil disobedience; reclaiming land for sustainable agriculture; and learning lessons from governmental approaches to cultivating green attitudes in the public.

The workshop was held at the home of Manchester Environmental Resource Centre Initiative in Ancoats. Bridge 5 Mill is a hub for local environmental and social enterprises, a community resource in one of Manchester’s most deprived areas, and a working model of sustainable building and energy use.

A fuller report can be found on the Future Ethics website at www.manchester.ac.uk/futureethics, including video footage, interviews, photos, and written reports from the day.

The next workshop will be held on September 19, on the topic: “What Price Security? New Issues in the Ethics of Risk”. See the website for how to participate. ■

Editor’s note

Stefan Skrimshire is the lead researcher on the LTI research project, Religion and Climate Change, of which the workshop series, “Future Ethics”, is a part.

PhD Research: Profiles

Anglican Ecclesiology: A Postcolonial Investigation

Joseph Duggan



During my orientation programme last year I met many postgraduate colleagues who came to the University of Manchester to study with their faculties due to the ratings for their subject area. While I am obviously pleased to reap the benefits of the outstanding research ratings enjoyed by Religions and Theology at the University of Manchester, that is not why I invested the time to come from the United States at age fifty to begin a PhD.

The only reason I came to do research at the Lincoln Theological Institute (LTI) is to participate in its long interdisciplinary history of wrestling with questions of divinity and power. LTI’s current context reflects the culture of greater Manchester’s history of the Industrial Revolution’s victims whose struggles have shaped the church, state and university. The cultural context invites and encourages ultimate questions about God and power. At a British secular university I have the privilege of being proximate to Anglicanism with the distance to ask unsettling questions about power.

My research is on the coexistence of different faith identities within the postcolonial Anglican Communion. LTI and the University are immersed in the differences of Manchester. Even more so my faculty has empowered me with the space to pursue my questions with integrity. I am energized by the way faculty work with students on dramatically different

arguments to similar questions. The faculty embodies in their supervisory pedagogy the theological vision I have that creates postcolonial spaces for multiple identities to flourish in church and state for their mutual benefit. ■

Editor's note

Joe Duggan is undertaking research towards a doctorate at LTI, and plans to submit his thesis in 2009. He was the principal organizer of the conference, "Church, Identity/ies and Postcolonialism", May 2008.

Ethiopian Evangelicals: The Quest for Unity

Samson Hailegiorgis



Up until the end of 2007, 344 evangelical denominations and 312 evangelical par-churches are legally operating in Ethiopia. The groupings have already tested a number of unity models: being structured under the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (by then the national church); establishing one Ethiopian

Evangelical Church through organic unity; operating within a Confederation of Evangelical Churches; founding an Ethiopian churches cooperation council; and working beneath an Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia. Despite half a century of trying, however, it does not seem that these churches have attained the level of unity they strive for.

A majority of church leaders consider the current situation to be predominantly conflictual and driven by vested interests, and marked by a growth in the number of evangelical associations without a proportional growth in the number of adherents. The lack of co-ordination is held by some to be a scandal, while others argue that there are understandable and/or justifiable reasons for the many splits within evangelical groupings, such as being given a divine vision to start a new church.

Some of the underpinning factors for disunity appear to include: diverse theologies of unity; competing outlooks towards church planting and structuring; a lack of understanding on the basics of unity and conflict resolution skills; too few opportunities for a free discussion, and a lack of an empowered and/or respected coordinating body.

Finally, church leaders suggest a range of models that might be supported: mission-centred approaches; a focus on essential doctrines and historical confessions; separate but interrelated fellowships based on a reworked theology of unity; a bi-directional model that cultivates grass-root initiatives; a denominationalism and territorialism model that demands dividing the country among different denominations; a locality based model through merging and restructuring based on locality; and, finally, a confederation model. It is the aim of my research to present these findings in detail and, given various historical, cultural and ecclesiastical pressures, to evaluate their chances of success. ■

Editor's note

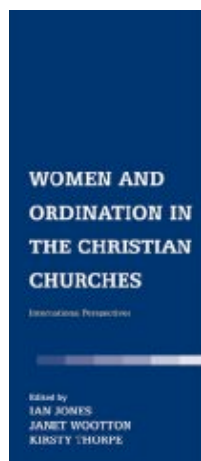
Samson Hailegiorgis is undertaking research towards a doctorate at LTI, and plans to submit his thesis in 2008. He is the current holder of the Lincoln International Doctoral Studentship.

In Brief

New Research Fellow Appointed

LTI is delighted to announce that John Rodwell has been appointed by the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures as an Honorary Research Fellow with LTI. An Anglican priest, and formerly a professor of Plant Biology at the University of Lancaster, John is currently working on a project on sustainability and belonging, sponsored by the M. B. Reckitt Trust. Prof Rodwell and LTI are in the process of developing a new project on the theme of belonging that will engage theologians and environmental scientists across cultural contexts. ■

Lincoln Publications



The extended LTI project on women and ordination, begun over five years ago, is brought to a fitting conclusion through the publication of the proceedings of the May 2006 conference staged by LTI at the University of Manchester: *Women and Ordination in the Christian Churches: International Perspectives*, edited by Ian Jones, Janet Wootton and Kirsty Thorpe (Continuum, 2008).

Also published recently:

- Stephen Platten, *Vocation: singing the Lord's song* (SPCK, 2007); and *Rebuilding Jerusalem: the Church's hold on hearts and minds* (SPCK, 2007).
- 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.), *Re-moralising Britain? Essays on New Labour 1997-2007* (Continuum, 2008). ■

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