

Lincoln Theological Institute

Issue 3—Summer 2007

Newsletter

Re-moralising Britain?17th - 18th May 2007 The University of Manchester

There was a touch of the prophetic in the timing of this conference, *Re-moralising Britain? 10 years of New Labour: faith, morals and governance*. Exactly one week before, Tony Blair announced his imminent departure, closing a chapter on one era of government and opening the doors of frantic speculation on the next. Was Blair and the New Labour project in general guided by a moral agenda? Was Brown? Even the BBC arrived early to glean some sound bites on the 'Brown question'.

The conference was, nevertheless, set up to cast a retrospective glance at the past ten years of New Labour. In spite of the intended emphasis on the question mark in the title, many speakers (including Anthony Giddens and Will Hutton) opted for a positive take on Blair's legacy. Much was made of the personality politics that characterised Blair's style, the

(Continued on page 2)



Anthony Giddens and Elaine Graham take questions in the opening session of *Re-Moralising Britain?*

From the Director

Welcome to the Summer 07 issue of the Institute's newsletter. By the time you receive this, a political transition will have taken place in the UK: goodbye, Tony Blair; hello, Gordon Brown. The Lincoln Theological Institute has already been involved in offering commentary on this change (see above). Plans are well advanced to publish a volume of *Re-moralising Britain?* conference proceedings; there will be more information on this in a later newsletter.

Next, an innovation: the first Alumni Study day will be held in December this year. There are full details in this Newsletter, and a separate booking form. Do please consider coming to this. The last gathering of Alumni was, to the best of my knowledge, in June 2005. So I'm hoping that this event is timely and I look forward to welcoming many of you to the Institute at The University of Manchester. Please note that the deadline for booking is October 19th 2007.

Last, as you will see, the Institute is gearing up for another major project as part of its ambitious goal to create a national and international centre of expertise in the theological study of religion

(Continued on page 2)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE for conference footage, past newsletters and latest news:
<http://www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/subjectareas/religionstheology/research/crpc/liti/>

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 'The End of the Anglican Communion?', Joe Duggan, *page 2*
- Lincoln Seminar in Theology, *page 3*
- LTC Alumni Study Day, *page 3*
- News of recent research by LTI's staff *page 3*
- Report from Samson Hailegiorgis, *page 4*
- New Research Project, *page 4*

and society. This time the theme is the issues of Risk and Security as presented by Climate Change and Nuclear Power. Do have a read of the report presented in this Newsletter giving more details on this topical project.

With my best wishes,
Peter M. Scott
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Peter Scott directing proceedings

The End of the Anglican Communion?

By Joe Duggan, LTI doctoral student

Some say that the end of the Anglican Communion is in sight: primates go against other primates, bishops break jurisdictional boundaries, the Episcopal Church (TEC) dioceses initiate civil litigation against some of their own parishes and people of faith are poached by new prophetic leaders. And yet, in their midst, the sacramental and justice ministries of the thirty-eight Anglican provinces around the world go on. Most Anglicans got on with their lives after Lambeth 1998, TEC 2003 General Convention and the January 2007 Primates' meeting in Tanzania. Worship continues, and Anglicans continue to live and practice their faith in these uncertain times.



Joe Duggan

Nonetheless, some Anglicans have raised questions about what shape their identity and that of the Anglican Communion will have in the future. These Anglicans, young and old, liberal and conservative, gay and straight are asking identity questions about what it means to be an Anglican. Theirs are not new questions, as Stephen Sykes initiated a global Anglican conversation about what it means to be an Anglican with his late 1970s book *Integrity of Anglicanism*.

While there have been many changes in identity theory, most people talk about identity today much in the same way as they did thirty years ago. The presumption then and now is that identity is about unity and temporary difference. Is difference only temporary, however? A twofold research task emerges: rehabilitating an identity grammar to reflect the latest identitarian theoretical advances and then demonstrating how Anglicans might hold an authentic postcolonial identity.

Re-moralising Britain? (cont from page 1)

'moral passion' and ethical 'conviction' at the heart of his policy decisions. Critiques of the *substance* of those policy decisions were provided in some insightful talks and papers given by conference participants. To give but a few highlights: Inderjeet Parmar, head of Politics at Manchester, explored some of the historical roots of Britain's alliance with the US; Jess Steele from the Development Trusts Association underlined both the successes and short-comings of local regeneration projects; and Paul Vallely from *The Independent* gave his views on Blair's leadership in the Commission for Africa. Short papers covered

a multitude of sins, from the imperial ambitions of the Iraq invasion



Delegates engage in debate

and occupation (Wilf Wilde) to the "punitive politics" of the Respect Agenda (Phil Edwards) and the politics of the US Christian Right (Angelia Wilson).

Some stimulating discussions were provided as a range of feeling emerged over the morality of Blair and New Labour. And despite some obvious omissions (climate change took a surprising back seat here), the debate was able to move in some interesting directions for those wishing to track at some depth the moral mis/adventures of New Labour.



Will Hutton taking questions

Re-moralising Britain? was hosted by The University of Manchester and organised by the LTI and our partners at the Manchester Research Institute

for Religion and Civil Society. We are indebted to the British Academy and the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures for their financial support.

Stefan Skrimshire

Research and Publications by LTI Staff

DR PETER SCOTT LTI DIRECTOR

In addition to working as principal organiser for the conference *Re-moralising Britain?*, Peter was on the organising committee for the conference *Nature, Space and the Sacred*, held at the University of Bamberg in May. He is now involved as a co-editor for proceedings from both conferences. He has spoken at the research seminar in Divinity at the University of Edinburgh and given a paper at the Grace Jantzen Memorial Symposium.

A member of the Church of England's working party on the Human Genome (2006–07), he has written the chapter on theological perspectives for the working party's report (to be published by Church House Publishing in 2008); he is also an editor in the 'Christian faith and the earth' project (University of the Western Cape, 2007–2012) for the working group, 'At home on the earth? Christian discourse on the place and vocation of human beings within the world'.

Lincoln Seminar in Theology

On Monday 3rd December 2007 at 4 pm in the Humanities Lime Grove Building at The University of Manchester, Daniel W Hardy will be the speaker at the Lincoln Seminar in Theology, with the title, "What Future for the Anglican Communion? A Theological Conversation in Ecclesiology with Daniel W. Hardy".

Formerly the Director of the Center of Theological Inquiry in Princeton, Daniel W. Hardy is presently Senior Member in the Faculty of Divinity at the University of Cambridge. He is the author of many books, including *Finding the Church: The Dynamic Truth of Anglicanism* (SCM, 2001).

This theological conversation takes place at a critical point for the Anglican Communion and is part of the Lincoln Theological Institute's contribution to the run-up to Lambeth 2008. All alumni are warmly invited to this event. Entrance is free, without ticket.

For details of how to get to The University of Manchester, visit

<http://www.manchester.ac.uk/visitors/travel/>

DR STEFAN SKRIMSHIRE LTI RESEARCH FELLOW

Stefan has received confirmation that Continuum will be publishing his PhD thesis as a book, entitled *Politics of Fear, Practices of Hope: Depoliticisation and Resistance in a Time of Terror* in 2008.



In addition, he has published a chapter in the forthcoming *Globalisation, Citizenship and the War on Terror*, eds. Bankole Cole and Maurice Mullard (Edward Elgar, 2007). He is also contributing a chapter to the forthcoming proceedings from the *Re-moralising Britain?* conference.

LTC Alumni Study Day

The first Study Day for LTC alumni will be held on Monday 3rd December 2007 in the Humanities Lime Grove Building at The University of Manchester. All alumni are warmly invited to this event, and we look forward to welcoming a goodly crowd of you on that day. The cost of the Day is £12.50 per person. There is a booking form with this Newsletter. Bookings will close on October 19th 2007. Thanks to the trustees of the Eric Symes Abbott Trust and the trustees of the Lincoln Theological Institute who are subsidising the cost of the study day. (Eric Abbott was Warden of Lincoln Theological College, 1936–1945.)

Later that same day, at 4 pm, Daniel W. Hardy will be the speaker at the Lincoln Seminar in Theology (see opposite).

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Report from Ethiopia

Samson E. Hailegiorgis, the current holder of the Lincoln International Doctoral Studentship, reports on his field work in Ethiopia.

My research topic is 'Unity among Evangelical Churches in Ethiopia: A Practical Theological Investigation'. As part of my field work, I spent two months at the federal Ministry of Justice (MOJ), reviewing all the 510 files of officially registered evangelical religious organizations. The review disclosed many interesting findings and patterns.

To mention a few: in less than half a century, 510 evangelical organizations (270 churches and 240 para-churches) are registered to deliver spiritual services in and out of the country. 20 were added in the past two months and 35 more are in the queue for licensing. There are five major patterns of establishment: missionary churches, indigenous churches, secondary churches (by split or schism), transplanted churches, and foreigner churches. In 40% of the cases founders are ordained ministers, leaving their mother churches for various reasons such as a vision for change, conflict, and a better working environment. Many new churches are established around a single character, a charismatic and energetic minister, who is usually named as the founder, visionary, chief pastor, or man of God.



Samson in the MOJ archive room, files of one denomination in hand.

Emphatically, I observed a new and growing trend in women's ministry, which was prohibited in almost all mainline churches for a long time. 50 of the para-churches have a similar purpose, structure, and activity with that of the churches and many para-churches evolve into churches and others establish local churches under them. On top of agreement on the evangelicals' essential faith confessions and historical creeds, almost all have parallel objectives/activities, although with different levels of emphasis. Amazingly, some of the churches, which have been considered heretics by the wider evangelical community, have a similar faith confession and purpose as their denouncers. In many cases, due to financial constraint, there is no paid full time minister, other times they pay less than £12 a month; in one case the church forced three of its ministers to live and eat together on a salary of £6 a month salary.

Although unity is a cross-cutting agenda and six ecumenical bodies exist, only a few have actually established functional networking with neighboring organisations. Yet the review has revealed that there is a fertile ground to foster unity and avoid unnecessary duplication and resource wastage.

New research project: Risk and Security

LTI's new research project, "New Issues of Risk and Security: Climate Change and Nuclear Power" will run from September 2007 for two years and employ a full time post-doctoral researcher.



The research question centres on an expected increase in our reliance on nuclear power. What does it mean to counter climate risk (ecological catastrophe) with nuclear risk (arms proliferation; threat of terrorists targeting power stations)? How should we live in a world of perpetual insecurity? What effects emerge from apocalyptic climate predictions? Does it galvanise political environmental action? Or does it encourage a culture of despair? Of course, theology has its own contribution to make from its understandings of apocalyptic belief and political action.

The project will involve collaborations between political activists, theorists, policy makers and theologians engaged in these questions. It is hoped that the findings of the research will provide creative and practical responses to the challenges of climate change and nuclear power.