

# Biennial Conference in Philosophy, Religion and Culture 'Faith and the Political' Abstracts 2014

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## **A Cosmic Dimension: C.S.Lewis's Engagement with the Politics of Power and the Challenge of Jesus.**

Religion and politics make a potentially potent mix, more often associated with heat than light, but they are important topics for believers who are serious about being 'salt and light' in the community. This paper focusses on some literary expressions of the role of faith in our engagement with things political from the pen of C.S. Lewis, whose writings are distinguished by a combination of intellectual force and imaginative flair. In an increasingly secular climate, he sought to bring God back into the equation, and it is not surprising to find some current issues addressed within his imaginative representations of a vibrant spiritual reality. His ideas and ideology are inextricably linked to his Christian faith. Several critical essays reflect his interest in both theology and political issues including: the ethical use of technology, civil liberties, ecology, pacifism, and animal rights. This material forms the layers of his science-fiction trilogy which includes themes of spiritual warfare, factions, faith, and a fairy tale ending. His theology was not confined to the disciplines of a particular school of thought and his approach to things political follows no party line. His critical essays and stories are concerned with the practicalities of life, but are never reduced to a merely social gospel; they always have a cosmic dimension.

**Robert Anderson**

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## **Molinism, Manipulation and Heresthetic Control**

Is it possible to control and direct other individuals without affecting their libertarian freedom? There is a remarkable similarity between the views of the political scientist William Riker, and the Molinist model of divine providence. Riker coined the term "heresthetic" to refer to 'the art of strategically setting up, to one's advantage, the alternatives among which others get to choose'. This sounds like Molinism, where God uses His middle knowledge along with His will to set up actual situations so that the free creature gets to choose. In this paper, I discuss some critiques of Molinism as a form of objectionable manipulation and compare these criticisms to Riker's concept of control in political thought.

**Matthew Andrew**

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## **Violence and delight: Hart, Jenson and the question of impassibility**

Christian life flourishes where the vision of God is marked by delight. The very possibility of this vision is called into question by the debate over impassibility, with both sides claiming that the other seriously undermines the intelligibility of the Christian understanding of God's relationship to a violent world. I will explore this debate with the aid of two interlocutors: Robert Jenson and David Bentley Hart. I will critically evaluate the work of each before building on this evaluation to sketch the criteria an evangelical articulation of impassibility must fulfil.

In doing so I will suggest that Robert Jenson's theological system is at risk of internal incoherence. His Christology, integration of death in the divine identity, and underlying reliance on an ontology that prioritises the future, are all problematic. David Bentley Hart's system, whilst relatively internally coherent, suffers some ambiguities regarding universalism, the physicality of the resurrection, the possibility of language of divine decision, and rhetorical violence. His theology of atonement ignores important Biblical currents. I will then offer a brief outline of the points that an articulation of impassibility will have to satisfy, having learnt from Hart and Jenson's systems. In so doing I will point

to the articulation by some of the early Fathers of impassibility as an apophatic guard as offering the most promising starting point for further reflection.

**Chris Baghos**

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**Faith and Politics within Old and New Rome, as Reflected in the Martyrologies of Sts Justin the Philosopher and Maximus the Confessor**

This paper will compare the martyrologies of Sts Justin the Philosopher and Maximus the Confessor, contending that both cases are illustrative of the Christian ethos in relation to political persecution. In both instances, indeed, the pagan and 'Christian' persecutors unjustly convicted those who were faithful to Christ, out of a desire to establish imperial unity. This paper will point out how St Maximus was perceived by his disciples as no less a martyr than St Justin, despite his having lived within an ostensibly Christian, as opposed to pagan, context. It will also evaluate the ways in which these texts encourage the faithful to prioritise their loyalty to God's heavenly kingdom and safeguard the Church's identity – no matter the personal or public interests at stake.

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**The Gospel and the City in the Constantinian period: Insights from the History of Religions**

Abstract: According to Mircea Eliade, founder of the History of Religions, in the ancient world the city was often interpreted as both imaging and intersecting the celestial, terrestrial, and subterranean dimensions of the cosmos. This was especially the case with Rome, which from the Augustan period onward was considered to be the head of the world (*Roma caput mundi*) and, like the pagan conception of the universe, eternal (*Roma aeterna*). The early Church, which emerged within the Augustan period, depicted Jesus Christ – the alpha and omega of all that is (Rev 1:8, 22:13) – as alternatively imaging and intersecting the cosmos (Col 1:15-17) that he created (Jn 1:3), which can be interpreted as more or less borrowing from, but also uniquely transforming, the prevailing beliefs about the *imagines et axes mundi* in the ancient world. This aspect may or may not have been overlooked by the emperor Constantine, whose building projects in ancient Rome, along with his construction of the New Rome, Constantinople, involved a 'Christianisation' of the myth of the eternal city as an image and centre of the cosmos. This paper will firstly apply the notions of *imago mundi* and *axis mundi* to the early Church, addressing the manner in which it transferred these notions from Judean culture to the person of Christ, before assessing the consequences of such a transfer for the Church in the Roman context. It will then analyse to what extent Constantine's Christianisation of the old Rome, and his construction of the New Rome, was consistent with the Church's disposition towards Christ as an *imago et axis mundi*, and the implications this had both on the ancient Church, as well as for Christians today.

**Jeremy Bell**

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**Can collateral damage be justified?**

Just war theory forbids the intentional killing of the innocent as a means or as an end, while permitting attacks on major military targets that will accidentally but foreseeably cause the deaths of innocents, provided that the good expected from such attacks outweighs the evil. This is one of the best-known and most important applications of the so-called 'principle of double effect'. Although it involves weighing expected good and evil consequences, just war theorists insist that this does not make it 'consequentialist' or 'proportionalist,' since proportionalists do not rule out the intentional killing of the innocent as a means. Just war theorists, unlike proportionalists, profess to agree with St. Paul that we may not do evil, however small, in order that good, however great, might come. Yet there is a *prima facie* difficulty in reconciling St. Paul's interdict on doing evil that good might come with the just war theorist's claim that, when waging a just war, one may sometimes knowingly cause the death of innocents.

In this paper I explore this difficulty, with particular reference to the work of Elizabeth Anscombe and Tom Cavanaugh. I compare the application of double-effect reasoning to 'collateral damage' with its

other classic applications (private self-defence, terminal sedation, therapeutic hysterectomy, salpingectomy) and argue that the former is uniquely problematic. I conclude that it is at least unclear whether double-effect reasoning can justify collateral damage.

### **Angus Brook**

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#### **Faith: the basis of justice**

Thomas Aquinas argues, on various occasions, that faith is the basis, the origin, or cause of justice.<sup>[1]</sup> However, in almost every instance of the argument Thomas means something different by faith and by justice; at times he uses faith in an ordinary sense, at times with reference to the infused theological virtue; at times he uses justice in a human or natural sense, and at others the way a human acquires an internal justice (or justification) through God's grace. These various different instances of the argument that faith is the basis of justice are nonetheless intrinsically interconnected (and even cross-referenced) in Thomas' discussions. It seems, therefore, that there is some kind of analogous relationship between the ordinary philosophical sense in which faith is the basis of justice and the theological. In what follows, I will attempt to tease out from Thomas' various arguments precisely what he means by the claim that 'faith is the basis of justice' and the implications, therein, for the role of faith in the political.

### **Sally Cloke**

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#### **Morrison's *μάρτυρες*: prayer and protest in politics as prophecy or apocalypse?**

The political dimension of public prayer has recently come to the foreground in Australia. A loose coalition of Christians utilising the hashtag #LoveMakesAWay, who oppose the government's asylum seeker policies, have held prayer meetings in a number of politicians' offices. Prominent among those targeted is Immigration Minister Scott Morrison, who identifies as a Christian. The participants have explicitly located their actions in the "long Christian tradition of non-violent civil disobedience" (Jarrod McKenna, 8/4/14), implicitly linking it to such figures as Martin Luther King, Jr and thence to the rhetorical tradition of Hebrew prophecy.

This paper seeks to explore the implications of situating these public-political prayer-acts within the tradition of New Testament apocalyptic rather than Old Testament prophetic. In particular, it seeks to elucidate the particular visions of the relationship between church and state – body of Christ and body politic – implicit in positing the #LoveMakesAWay participants as *μάρτυρες* (martyrs/witnesses) rather than prophets.

To be broadly schematic: Prophecy imagines a rhetorical politics of kingdom, calling for national corporate repentance, with the catch cry of "back to". Apocalyptic imagines a rhetorical politics of empire, calling for radical Christian differentiation, with the catch cry of "come out". This paper argues that these two different rhetorical situations call forth two radically contrasting conceptions of the place of Christianity in Australian public life.

### **Antoinette Collins**

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#### **Jesus' Cleansing of the Temple: For Passover or for Politics?**

Jesus' Cleansing of the Temple: For Passover or for Politics?

Jesus' cleansing of the Temple is a familiar New Testament text. Much has been written concerning this event. Was it symbolic as many suggest? If so what did it symbolise? Some have argued that it was symbolic of the destruction of the Temple. To be destroyed by whom? God? Jesus? The Romans? An unknown force? When will it be destroyed? Was Jesus anti-Temple? The answers to these questions are of necessity speculative. Thus the symbolism becomes ambiguous and confusing. Interpretation of the event by the gospel writers themselves, which is evident even in a cursory comparison of all four accounts, has clouded the issues by variation in chronology, details and meaning imparted. Can we know what really happened? In fact the whole event may be simpler than we imagine. Jesus' action has the hallmark of being impulsive and even uncharacteristic. He may have acted with little forethought. His motivation may have been inherently linked to the festival of

Passover and Passover preparations. While this article discusses the action of Jesus in the Temple, these discussions will also consider the practice and history of ritual and ordinary traditional Temple Cleansings. Can these ordinary cleansings be connected to Passover or any other major Jewish festival? Thereby considering the plausibility of the assumption that Jesus' Cleansing was in part motivated by these normal, regular cleansings and was not an anti-Temple stance on Jesus' part.

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**Justice, Politics, Poems and the People's Otherworld: Les Murray's Political, Social and Religious Faith**

The challenge presented by the theme of this conference is neatly expressed in the remarks of Peter Forrest preliminary to his Keynote Paper: 'How can you continue to believe in the face of scandals?' History offers more than enough 'scandals' to provoke that question, of course. Scandals, major and minor, familial, local and international would seem to constitute a significant aspect of human social interaction, perhaps indeed of the human condition. Belief based on Faith faces a potential devaluation or even cancellation in the face of constantly recurring undermining scandal, whether catastrophic or petty.

Issues of this kind form a major theme of Les Murray's poetry of that poet's 'middle' *oeuvre* (i.e. poems published during the nineteen-eighties and -nineties). There the reader finds expression of ideological and political convictions, which originate from select spheres of the poet's personal experience. These poems may be viewed as an aesthetic pronouncement, a fusion of Murray's life, beliefs and art. To whom are these poems addressed? Who reads them? To what purpose are they written? Is the revelation of possibly otherwise unnoticed conditions of social disadvantage or injustice directed towards the attention of more materially or spiritually favoured groups?

This paper addresses those issues in relation to Murray's adaptation of vernacular linguistic forms, with reference to the poems 'The Misery Cord', 'The Holy Show', 'Dog Fox Field', 'Burning Want', 'The Last Hellos', 'Letters To The Winner' and the 'mother' series 'Three Poems in Memory of My Mother, Miriam Murray' ('Weights', 'Midsummer Ice', 'The Steel') among others. Its conclusion will question Murray's underlying reasoning in his development of the notion of 'The People's Otherworld', which involves the state of his faith in a consequent dispensation of justice to the underprivileged of his and our world.

**Michael Cullen**

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**Australia first! Shirkers! Traitors! : Mannix, Hughes, faith, politics and the 1916-1917 conscription referenda**

The 1916 and 1917 Australian conscription debates raged during the Great War, highlighting ecclesial, social and political divisions through diverse public expressions of passionate values and beliefs. These divisions and conflicts both reflected and defied denominational, social and political traditions, emerging from complex, sometimes inter-related forces. What became known as the First World War had finally erupted in August 1914 after escalating tensions between rival European empires. Australia was soon immersed within the British response. Matters of faith and politics preceded the two Australian conscription referenda within a volatile wartime climate, juxtaposed with Christian denominational faith expressions, government interventions, media campaigns, social and labour inputs. Emotional appeals for patriotism, the Australian national interest, British imperial loyalty and equality of sacrifice jostled alongside cries for the sanctity of human life, individual liberty, freedom of expression and economic survival.

During the war years Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix and Prime Minister William 'Billy' Hughes emerged as conscription adversaries. They epitomized divergent religious and social affiliations and personalities, each attracting major public notoriety and admiration. Mannix expressed the belief that peace was possible without conscription, which he described as 'a hateful thing...almost certain to bring evil in its train.' Hughes depicted war as 'a stern and bloody business...thrust upon us. We cannot turn aside.' The fledgling Australian Commonwealth, its political dynamics, lingering British Dominion status, Christian churches, interplay between business, industry and labour and the relative socioeconomic *bona fides* of its Irish Catholic and Anglo-Protestant citizens were prominent factors

during those years. Although both conscription referenda were eventually defeated, the accompanying turmoil was profound.

**Christopher John Dalton**

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**Mining Coal Seam Gas in the Divine Art Gallery**

What credible input can Christians make to the rapidly polarising debate surrounding the CSG industry that adds value to the expert and professional inputs already provided by lawyers, scientists, landowners, environmentalists, economists, politicians and the business community?

This paper explores how an Australian theology of land opens up an authentic and original way to explore alternative perspectives to the anthropocentric utilitarianism that has colonised public policy processes in Australia. It draws on Elaine Graham's advocacy of the adoption of "Imaginative Apologetics" as an appropriate public theology response to the emergence of a post-secular society, and Tim Gorrings's view of great art as "secular parables".

In doing so the paper makes use of the metaphor "**divine art gallery**" as a way of describing an open-ended, interrogative role for public theology in the CSG debate. Art facilitates an exploration of mystery, paradox, ambiguity and uncertainty, and complements rationalist, scientific and empirical thinking. It may also unmask impossible pretensions to neutrality and universality that can underlie policy rhetoric.

The paper concludes with a brief case study on the application of this approach to the CSG industry, by reflecting on how Australian landscape art has captured changing Australian attitudes to the land.

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**Pussy Riot at the Crossroads of Faith and Politics Today**

The main performers of Moscow-based feminist punk rock protest group Pussy Riot took on the link between Putin and the Orthodox Church with a Guerrilla performance of "Punk Prayer – Mother of God Chase Putin Away" at Moscow's holiest shrine, the central cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. Three performers were caught, arrested and tried and two sent to Siberia for 2 years, a sentence commuted after Putin came under international pressure around the time of the Winter Olympics in Sochi the next year. While in Siberia, Nadya, one of the lead members of Pussy Riot conducted a correspondence with philosopher Slavoj Žižek, published in the Guardian, UK. In this presentation the issues that effect the intersection of politics and faith in our time, of which Pussy Riot is a symbol, will be delineated for general discussion.

**Bernard Doherty**

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**Hic Sunt Dracones: Exploring the Boundaries of the Australian Catholic Right.**

Abstract: Since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) the Roman Catholic Church has experienced a period of change and renewal perhaps unprecedented in its two thousand year history. As in all periods of transition this has resulted in mixed reactions both among religious and the laity. This paper will seek to explore some of the more radical conservative reactions to conciliar reforms and renewal, sometimes referred to as a "Catholic fundamentalism," as these have manifested in a post-conciliar Australian milieu. An area often neglected or shunned in mainstream Catholic theological research, this paper will offer a phenomenological and sociological portrait of a number of different groups and loose constituencies currently operating within Australia, ranging from disenchanted conservatives questioning reform from within the Church, through various kinds of Traditionalists (both canonically approved and schismatic), to more radical sedevacantist and apocalyptic groups with only tenuous links to the mainstream Church.

**Tom Drake-Brockman**

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**A Political Interpretation of the New Covenant.**

Christ's New Covenant as depicted in the gospels, is at odds with the version presented by St Paul which emphasises the atoning power of the Cross. Christ in the gospels- and especially Matthew- is intent on upholding the Judaic covenant of *hesed* whereby the path to redemption is found not in Christ's death but his teachings- the need to express compassion for suffering and demand basic justice in the world. Christ's focus was on the most extreme cases of human suffering- 'the least of these my brothers'- the poorest of the poor, conveyed in the gospels by the Greek word *potchos*. In imparting this teaching, Christ met fierce political opposition from the corrupt religious elites whose power base was the Temple of Jerusalem. The self-serving ideology of this Temple was a purity system that stigmatized the *potchos* as sinful and fostered a culture of guilt that facilitated their oppression. Jesus posed a lethal threat to these elites because he exposed their treachery and empowered the *potchos* by healing them, thereby eradicating their presumed sin altogether. This was real forgiveness, not the symbolic kind offered by the priests, and its challenge to their credibility and integrity had the potential to put Temple Inc out of business.

Thus his mission was intensely political and culminated in the religious leaders instigating his crucifixion- but not before Jesus had exposed their callous brutality and proclaimed a world order based on the polar opposite- compassion and justice, enshrined in the Jewish covenantal obligation of *hesed*. With reference to the Old Testament verse of Hosea 6:6, Jesus elevated *hesed* as the cornerstone of the New Covenant, one that embraced not just Israel but the entire human race. Thus the Christian theology that evolved from Paul's hermeneutic, focused on the saving power of the Cross, is a complete distortion of Christ's covenantal mission. It needs to be radically overhauled if Christianity- and perhaps humanity itself- is to survive another 2000 years.

**Peter Drum**

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**J. S. Mill, the University, and the Place of Faith-based Studies**

In his "Inaugural Address Delivered to the University of St Andrews [February 1<sup>st</sup> 1867]" – John Stuart Mill provides us with an account of what a university education should be. So – given that he is probably the greatest nineteenth century British philosopher, possessing "an authority in the English Universities ... comparable to that wielded forty years earlier by Hegel in Germany and in the Middle Ages by Aristotle" – what is it, and is there anything we might learn from it today, particularly in regard to the place of faith-based studies?

**Peter Forrest**

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**Keynote Lecture: The Epistemology of Scandal**

'How can you continue to believe in the face of scandals?' This question is widely asked, but I shall concentrate on the case of Roman Catholicism, leaving to others the application to their faith, religious or secular. The sexual abuse of children by clergy is shocking in the extreme, but as an intellectual challenge it may be rebutted by noting that the reality of sin is a central Christian doctrine: the Church never claimed that its clergy were holy. The scandal that defeats faith in the Church is not this initial abuse, horrific though that is, but its cover-up and the resulting further wrong to victims.

Although the way scandal defeats faith seems obvious to some, to others it looks like the *ad hominem* fallacy of criticizing the advocate rather than what is advocated – 'playing the man not the ball'. I shall argue that scandal undermines faith in the Catholic Church, by rebutting the Church's claim to holiness. That is no fallacy. We should all distinguish, however, between faith in the Catholic Church and a Catholic faith. The latter, informed by centuries of tradition, may reasonably be maintained or converted to in spite of a heart felt recognition of the gravity of the scandals, which, to the Church's shame, are also centuries old.

**Robert Gascoigne**

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**The Sources of Justice in Love and Mercy**

Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) argued that 'the earthly city is promoted not merely by relationships of rights and duties, but to an even greater and more fundamental extent by relationships of gratuitousness, mercy and communion' (CV 6). Cardinal Walter Kasper's *Mercy: The Essence of the Gospel and the Key to Christian Life* (German original Verlag Herder 2012) has emphasized the foundational importance of the virtue of mercy for the Christian life, and includes a discussion of a socio-political culture of mercy (Ch. 8). This theme is also prominent in the writings and speeches of Pope Francis. An emphasis on the virtues and emotions that inform justice is also central to Martha Nussbaum's recent book, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice* (Belknap Press, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., 2013) in which she argues that liberal political theory (specifically Rawls' theory of political justice) needs to be complemented by a theory of political emotions, which, she believes, has been largely neglected in the tradition of liberal political philosophy. For Nussbaum, this 'political cultivation of emotion' is needed to engender strong commitment to projects of effort and sacrifice, as well as to keep destructive forces at bay (p. 2). This paper will reflect on the emphasis on the sources of justice in love and mercy which is central to these recent ecclesial, theological and philosophical texts.

**David Gawthorne**

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**Pretending that Faith Doesn't Matter for Political Justice**

Pettit recently highlighted that, however fervently they hold to their view, contemporary theorists of social and political justice generally shrink from advocating for it to be imposed by state coercion. They thereby demonstrate a level of commitment to their view below that of the protagonists in the European wars of religion. He argues that this contemporary tendency to mutual forbearance is an implicit commitment to a fundamental theory of political justice and from there Pettit develops a certain conception of democracy. Yet, the disposition of forbearance may alternatively form part of a fictional discourse engaged in by theorists as they project a professional persona. If so and we accept some of Pettit's thoughts on the disposition's democratic implications then it suggests that members of faith communities might participate in a fictional discourse of democracy without contradicting their opposing, theologically derived theories of social and political justice. Further, current reliance on fictional commitments to cope with chronic failure to achieve consensus on the foundations of legitimate government and policy in modern Western democracies makes the strategy of advocating engagement in a fictional, democratic theory of political justice credible as a means to bring and keep faith communities within the democratic fold.

**Gerald Gleeson**

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**On Showing Mercy in Public**

This paper examines the tensions between the public and the private in the practice of religion, with special reference to the approach of Pope Francis. While it is commonly said that in liberal democracies religious faith has been removed from the public square, in other respects the Churches have been forced to become publicly accountable in ways unknown in the past (most notably in relation to the sex abuse crisis). Pope Francis has spoken often of the priority of mercy in the Christian life. This paper will consider the possibilities for showing of mercy in public ways, e.g. in relation to those who are re-married after divorce.

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**A Subaltern Public Theology: Constructing it from the Indian Context**

Religion has come to acquire a multi-dimensional public-ness in India. One of the salient dimensions of this public-ness is an attempt by the political right to present a doctrine known as *Sanatana Dharma*, called popularly also as *Hindu Dharma*, to be the religio-cultural and ethical common ground for all Indians, regardless of their particular religions or ethical systems or communitarian identities. Accordingly it is being spoken of as *Hindu Christianity*, *Hindu Islam*, and so on. This effort has been prevalent for a long time, but gets reinvigorated in the contemporary political process. The contemporary political right, the vanguard political agency, spearheading this Dharma-based political practice, works strategically to construct this Dharma-centric political ontology to undergird its political practice, and to promote a cultural nationalism in the country.

This revival of the doctrine of Dharma has deep implications for the cultural, religious, and social life of the people of India, especially its different others. It has great consequences for the kind of democracy that is going to evolve through this revival. In this context, this proposed paper attempts to explore the 'faith and political' interfacing as it occurs in this doctrine of Dharma – its philosophy, religious vision, political ontology, practical implications, etc from the perspective of subaltern public theology. It goes into the history of the doctrine, its semantics, and its workings in different contexts by way of doing a subaltern public theology.

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**Provincial Galatia and Augustus' *Res Gestae*: Paul's Response to the Caesar Cult in the Epistle to the Galatians**

The most important inscription in the city of Ankara, the provincial capital of Galatia, was the Latin and Greek copy of Augustus' self-eulogy, the *Res Gestae*. This bilingual copy of the original inscription at Rome — inscribed in bronze at Augustus' mausoleum in 14 AD — was strategically placed in the Temple of Rome and Augustus in Ankara. The Ankara copy, erected c. AD 19-20, is the most complete text of the three copies of the *Res Gestae* extant in Roman Galatia. Another fragmentary Greek copy was found at Apollonia (c. AD 14-19). An extensive Latin copy was also discovered at Pisidian Antioch (its erection usually not being precisely dated by scholars), along with the 'visual *Res Gestae*' represented on the iconography of the triple arch of Augustus, which served as the city propylon (gate) leading up to the Sebasteion itself. Justin Harden has speculated that the concentration of *Res Gestae* inscriptions in Roman Galatia is explained by the decision of the Galatian *koinon* to publish Greek and Latin copies of the text in the imperial sanctuaries across the province in AD 19-20, replicating the original text at Rome, with the addition of a Greek and Latin Appendix for provincial readers. If Hardin is correct, we have to ask what event precipitated this decision in Roman Galatia.

A likely answer is the excitement generated by the mission to the East (AD 18-19) of the charismatic general Germanicus (Tacitus, *Ann.* 73; Dio 57.18.6), the Roman conqueror of the Germanic tribes (AD 14-16) and possessor of an impeccable Julio-Claudian pedigree. Germanicus visited Galatia in AD 19 as part of a wider tour of subduing feuding and unsettled regions in the East (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.54, 59), receiving a rapturous response from the Galatian governor Sotidius in preparation for his visit, and stirring up intense excitement among the Egyptian populace upon his arrival. An inscription from Apollonia (*MAMA* 4.142), site of the fragmentary Greek copy of the *Res Gestae*, recounts the diplomatic mission of Apollonius, an imperial priest of the goddess Roma, to meet Germanicus. Presumably Apollonius was either reporting to Germanicus the construction of the Greek monument of the *Res Gestae* during AD 14-19, or, alternatively, announcing its imminent erection. Thus the elites of the Galatian cities, with a view to securing Julian patronage (AD 19), pressed the *koinon* to publish the *Res Gestae* throughout the province upon Germanicus' triumphal tour. The Galatian cities would have vied among themselves for his recognition.

Paul would have undoubtedly seen the Latin version of the *Res Gestae* at Pisidian Antioch during his visit there (Acts 13:13-32: c. AD 50), as well as its visual rendering on the propylon of the city. The paper asks a series of questions:

(a) Would Paul have been familiar with the contents of the *Res Gestae* in provincial Galatia? Could Paul have read the Latin copy at Pisidian Antioch? Could there have been a Greek version, now entirely lost to us, also present in the city?

(b) What aspects of the *Res Gestae* might have grabbed the apostle's attention and why? What new light does this throw on Paul's collision with the Galatian opponents to his gospel in the province (cf. Winter, Lopez, Hardin, Kahl)?

(c) How does Paul's letter to the Galatians engage the 'prosperity' gospel of Augustus? Was this intentional on Paul's part or not?

(d) What intersections are there between *fides* ('faithfulness'; *pistis* ['faith']) and *iustitia* ('justice': *dikaïosunê* ['justice']) in the *Res Gestae* and Galatians?

#### **Gerard Kelly**

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#### **The Justice and Mercy of God: A Challenge for Contemporary Society**

The citizens of our society increasingly find it difficult to show mercy to those who commit heinous crimes. Their focus is on justice. However, justice is often nothing more than retribution. On the other hand, the Biblical witness of both Old and New Testaments points to a God of mercy and justice, who calls on his followers to act similarly. Does the present emphasis on retribution point not just to the secularisation of society, but also to a crisis of faith among believers? This paper will explore how Christian theology is being challenged to find a new way to speak about God that is intellectually robust, while at the same time able to communicate to a people who are no longer convinced by a classical metaphysic. Might a different way of speaking about God change the way contemporary society understands and practises justice?

#### **Danaë Killian**

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#### **The Dove's Annihilation: Sylvia Plath and the Kingdom, the Power, the Glory**

*The Dove's Annihilation: Sylvia Plath and the Kingdom, the Power, the Glory* is a performance in music, poetry and movement, which I conceived in response to Canberra's 100-year anniversary celebrations in 2013 and developed in the ensuing resonance of the World War I centenary. In this paper I will explore and trace the praxis-rooted research processes and epistemologies involved in the artistic creation and performance of *The Dove's Annihilation* for the 2014 Melbourne Fringe Festival. *The Dove's Annihilation* takes up Sylvia Plath's fiercely personal engagement with world politics, religion and history. Over the course of her literary career, which began in her youth during World War II and climaxed at the height of the Cold War, Plath developed a unique, many-layered, ethically complex Christology—at once scathing and celebratory, tender and nihilistic, confessional and ironic, outward-looking and mystical—through which to confront the apocalyptic events enacted on the political world stage. *The Dove's Annihilation: Sylvia Plath and the Kingdom, the Power, the Glory* bears witness to Plath's conscience-awakening vision of the contemporary world order—the kingdom—as a crucible in which intertwined spiritual-political ideals of peace, compassion, freedom—the dove—undergo an alchemical *nigredo* process; while the heavens fill with the power and glory of false gods raised up in an atomic cloud.

#### **Renée Köhler-Ryan**

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#### **Trees in the Garden: Thomas Aquinas, Catherine of Siena, and the Order of Justice**

This presentation is an adaptation of a paper published in *The Australian Feminist Law Journal*. It compares and contrasts two images of the garden of justice. Thomas Aquinas considers the Garden of Eden as a paradigm for justice. He theorizes that had humankind never left the garden, justice would have prevailed through the acceptance of a political authority; and that justice would have relied upon basic inequalities between humans. Two of these inequalities are explored in particular – those of sex and virtue, by examining Catherine of Siena's image of the garden. Thomas's postulation that the sexes are unequal results in the idea that women cannot attain virtue to the same extent as men; nor, Thomas thinks, should they enter into the public realm of politics. For Catherine of Siena, not only can women achieve virtue, but they should do so in public when this is feasible and necessary. This is because Catherine thinks that virtues cannot develop unless they take place in a space with others. Like Thomas, Catherine develops an organic understanding of the way that citizens need each other,

so that a community where all virtues are present is possible. Unlike him, she develops in a very practical way a space for women to be political.

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**Secularism & Morality, Guilt & Shame: Why the moral complacency of New Atheism is a mistake**

The New Atheists appear to think their rejection of religion changes nothing— except for the removal of fundamentalist distortions – when it comes to morality. We think this is because they have not thought things through. Secularism might not be a threat to morality altogether, but it is certainly a threat to guilt morality. And there is little reason to think modernity can do without guilt morality. Or rather, if it must do without it, then things (as perhaps we can already glimpse) will not be pretty.

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**Dialogue or Conflict? Approaches to Cultural and Religious Diversity**

Multiculturalism was adopted as a national policy in Australia in 1972. While there have been various refinements and challenges to the policy since then, its fundamental principles have survived intact. In this respect, Australia offers a model where cultural diversity is regarded as enriching society rather than as a threat to social unity and harmony. This model is especially valuable in the post-9/11 world, in which diversity all too often leads to suspicion and conflict. A particular factor in cultural diversity is the place of religious belief, and consequently religious differences are often seen as increasing the potential for mistrust and conflict. In this context, a recent Vatican document presents a remarkably constructive approach to religious diversity and the role of the Catholic Church in relation to this. (Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educating in Intercultural Dialogue in the Catholic School: Living Together for a Civilisation of Love*, December 2013.) This paper will analyse the approach taken by this document to cultural diversity in general and religious diversity in particular, identifying and examining the principles it proposes, and considering their relevance to wider questions of the relation between faith and the political.

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**Religious and Secular Discourses in the *Family Law Act (1975)* Senate Parliamentary Debates**

The paper explores three secular discourses found in the parliamentary debates on the *Family Law Act (1975)* in contrast to the religious discourses. These three discourses are progressivism, the idea of modernity, and utilitarianism. The Act which allowed for the first time 'no fault' divorce in Australia was often advocated by appeals to it being a progressive measure as opposed to the punitive criteria that needed to be met under the *Matrimonial Causes Act 1959-1966*. Closely linked to this argument was the argument from modernity which often relied on *ad populum* appeals that it was what a majority of Australians wanted and it was a part of a national and to some extent Western zeitgeist. The final secular argument relied upon utilitarian causes such as updating divorce so that children (along with the parents) were less adversely affected. These secular discourses overshadowed the religious discourses, which were often marginal considerations for some senators. The paper will focus on the Senate, where the bill was first introduced by Senator Lionel Murphy in 1973 and 1974. The paper forms part of a case study for a PhD which examines religious and secular discourses in parliamentary debates regarding legislative changes to significant social practices. The paper argues that claims of religion playing a role in Australian politics was at least not always uniform, as the case studies show it being at best a secondary influence to secular influences.

**Greg Melleuish**

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**Why there is no such thing as secular politics**

The idea of secular politics is a bit of a puzzle. It assumes that there is a secular realm which exists without any real connection with what we shall term the 'religious'. But how can that be the case? Even in those cases which are assumed to be purely secular, such as Hobbes' model of human nature and utilitarianism, one can detect religious elements as in Hobbes' Calvinism and Paley's view of God wishing human happiness. In fact, when one examines modern forms of political thought it becomes obvious that they retain residual theological elements, from the obvious cases such as Marxism to the less obvious ones of contemporary liberalism. In fact it is very difficult to know what a purely secular politics would look like, which is not surprising because it is clear that human beings can never be purely secular entities.

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**Faith, politics and social change**

This paper will explore the relationship between faith, politics and social change. It will focus on the nature, meaning and types of faith involved in political activity, and particularly in relation to the hope of changing oppressive or unjust social structures or situations. The paper will caution against setting faith against reason, and argue that faith needs a rational basis if social situations are to be correctly understood, and those understandings translated into effective political action to change them.

**Andrew Murray**

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**How might the Church Change in Response to Pressure from the State?**

At the present time there are a number of completed or on-going inquiries in Australia into the Catholic Church and other organisations and the way in which it has dealt with child sexual abuse: The Royal Commission in Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, The Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into the Handling of Child Abuse by Religious and Other Organisations, and the Special Commission of Inquiry into Matters Relating to the Police Investigation of certain Child Abuse Allegations in the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle. Internationally, the Holy See has had to reply to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and there have been reports and studies in other countries, particularly the United States and Ireland. This paper will attempt to grapple with some of the outcomes of these inquiries in relation to the Catholic Church only with a view to how the Church might change in response to them. It can only be an on-going study and will focus around four questions. What do the victims want? How have they been failed? What has allowed this to happen? How might change be assured? My perspective will be that of a political philosopher.

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**Freedom of Religion as Freedom of Faith**

The Australian Constitution protects the freedom of religion. But why does religion deserve special protection in a secular age? This paper argues that the best way to account for the freedom of religion is to conceive of it as the freedom of faith. Faith is not limited to the sacred, and it is definitely not limited to the traditional theistic religions. Faith can be both secular and sacred. Faith is omnipresent in our daily lives. Without faith, no commitment is possible. At the edges of rationality, one needs to make a leap of faith. A society, even a secular one, needs faith in various forms. We will apply this argument to explain the judicial reasoning in the landmark case of *Church of the New Faith v Commissioner of Taxation*. We will also suggest ways by which this renewed understanding of the freedom of religion has implications for the interpretation of the freedom of religion clause in section 116 of the Australian Constitution.

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**Richard Rorty On Religion and Democracy**

Richard Rorty thinks that traditional religious approaches sit uncomfortably with the processes of contemporary democracy. A main reason for this is that of their nature, they claim to appeal beyond the actual conversations of a society to a standard that is held to judge the society as a whole. In Rorty's view, this goes against a fundamental procedural characteristic of contemporary democratic society, namely that the actual conversations of the society always have the last word. The paper will examine Rorty's attempts to clarify the place of religion in relation to democracy, and will try to isolate the fundamental issue that underlies the discussion.

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**Berggrav and Bonhoeffer: A Comparison of Two Lutheran Models of Resistance Theology During WWII**

Eivind Berggrav was Bishop of Oslo and head of the Norwegian Lutheran State Church when Norway was invaded by Nazi Germany in April 1940. Through non-violent means, he constantly worked for justice and peace, while resisting the nazification of the Church and society. He eventually initiated an ecclesiastical resistance which resulted in his house arrest.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German theologian and Confessing Church pastor. He saw the anti-Christian tactics of the Nazis early on and used his role as a counterespionage agent to make contacts inside and outside of Germany in hopes of leading to a takeover of the government. He was executed for his role in an attempted assassination of Hitler.

Berggrav and Bonhoeffer had much in common besides being devoted Lutheran theologians and pastors during a tumultuous time of history. My paper will briefly compare the lives and ministries of the two men but will also explore why Bonhoeffer's model of resistance allowed for the use of violence while apparently Berggrav's model of resistance did not.

Finally, we must ask ourselves: what is the responsible Christian response to State-sponsored tyranny? Whether we find ourselves within the midst of the struggle or find ourselves as seemingly helpless spectators from without, seeking insight and solutions, Christians today cannot escape this question!

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**High Tides and High Stakes: Religious History Wars in Southern India**

Kerala, the most educated state in India has been and continues to be a shining example of peaceful coexistence of Hindus, Christians and Muslims. The continued project of Indian Nationalism has inspired some religious communities to attempt to ground their claims to an indigenous identity in historical terms. This process has produced a plethora of contested narratives, which serve to legitimate one community and delegitimize others. This brief paper will survey some of the strategies used by invested historians of religion local to South India. It will also argue that such attempts at grounding communities in history are not only arbitrary but may damage the social harmony if left unchecked.

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**Taming Thailand's Untamed Democracy**

Thailand's current political turmoil may have shaken our taken-for-granted understanding of democracy based on elections organised either within a defined period or in accordance with our constitution. After an election, we could either rest content with an elected government's performance or tolerate its drift until another election takes place. To interfere politically or militarily with the electoral cycle is to risk being condemned as 'undemocratic', regardless of the actual circumstance prompting the removal of an elected government from power. However, the study of the intertwining

relations between democracy, religion and politics through the work of Tocqueville may help us recognise an inadequate and superficial perception on democracy and its vulnerability viewed simply as one person, one vote and majority rule (Ostrom, 1997, p. 3).

The paper uses a Tocquevillian analytic approach to examine the nature of democracy and contributions to its viability. It discusses Tocqueville's view on the role of religion (Catholicism) embedded in democratic values which help direct and shape the political, through statecraft and institutional revitalization in secular, modern and liberal democracies. It explores the potential for other religious philosophies (e.g. Buddhism) to assist with building the 'habits of the heart' of individual peoples while renewing and strengthening democratic institutions. The paper calls for concerned scholars to overcome the 'blind instincts' of democracy (Tocqueville, 2010, p. 16), have serious public conversation about democratic vulnerability and democratic potential, and renew their engagement by applying both law and mores to revitalise democratic beliefs and institutions.

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**Caring for this frail flesh: theological reflections on the nature and goals of medicine**

Medicine seems to have been suffering a long and painful identity crisis since the mid-twentieth century. Pressure on resources, imbalances and inequities in the provision of health care nationally and internationally, debates about care of dying people and recent high profile ethical failures in the US and UK contribute to the sense that medicine has lost its way or is in serious danger of losing it. In this paper I aim to bring Christian philosophy and theology to bear on the nature and goals of medicine in an attempt to better understand what medicine is and what it should be. I will argue (somewhat counter-intuitively) that 'health and healing' provide us with neither the goal of medicine nor an understanding of its nature, as too little of medicine is 'captured' by those (inherently fuzzy) concepts and medicine contributes too little to the health of individuals and populations for that to be its goal. Medicine is better understood as an expression of care for frail human flesh. Disruptions of physical or psychological integrity resulting from disease, trauma or disability expose the inherent vulnerability and finitude of human beings as embodied creatures. Medicine exists to care appropriately for people in that vulnerability, whether or not that care is 'curative'. Having presented worked examples of this theological reconfiguration of medicine as discipline and practice, I will end with a brief theological, epistemological and political apologia for this as a project of public theology.

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**The Politics of Divine Usury: The Logic of Divine Reward in the Synoptic Gospels**

When St Paul wrote that we are not saved through our own works the accent, it can be argued, falls on 'our' and not on 'works'. We do not *own* our righteousness in the sense that it is an individual's property, rather is it owned insofar as it works to the blessing of others. So it is that Paul writes that his reward and crown in heaven is the presence of those whom he proved to be a means of saving. Where did this understanding of the economy of righteousness come from? - From Jesus. Thus, in Matthew and Luke salvation is consistently spoken of in terms of reward, but of reward as a hundredfold increase on an initial investment with or loan to God. We lend to God when we give to the poor expecting nothing in return, including the principal. In short, the language of usury is turned on its head such that from being a primary means of social division and disintegration, usury becomes a means of unity and social equity. As St Augustine observed, all earthly usury is condemned but usury in respect of God is blessed. What effect does this understanding of grace have on our reading of Scripture, both theologically and scholarly, and how should it inform Catholic social teaching in its critique of contemporary liberal culture?

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**Playthings, Political Pessimism, and Cosmic Justice: Plato's *Laws* and Plotinus' *On Providence***

Plotinus has famously been described as “Plato by half,” a “Plato without politics.” It is true that despite whatever interest Plotinus may have had in politics before he started writing—and it should be remembered that Plotinus is said to have proposed to Emperor Gallienus to rebuild a city and order it “according to the laws of Plato”—there is precious little discussion of political life and theory in the *Enneads*. When political matters are mentioned, substantial political reform is despaired of, and the reader is encouraged to move beyond “the beauty of ways of life and laws” to the source of that beauty in the intelligible realm, for the goal of the philosopher is not to become like good men, but to become like the gods.

Yet, I will argue that Plotinus' apathy toward politics can best be understood as a living out of certain passages in Plato's works that tell us that the political life and political theory must not be taken too seriously, that one discusses ideal political structures in order to illumine truths about the soul, and that the ideal cities in which the philosopher would be at home will never actually come to be.

Following a brief reconstruction of a Neoplatonic reading of Plato's political works, I will show that Plotinus' lack of interest in political theory does not translate into a lack of interest in Plato's political writings. I will demonstrate in detail the influence of Plato's *Laws* on Plotinus' essay *On Providence*, (Ennead III.2–3). In this essay, Plotinus develops the theodicy from *Laws* X and in doing so greatly expands ideas briefly mentioned by Plato in the *Laws*, such as divine justice being meted out through incarnations, humans as playthings or puppets of the gods, and the immortal soul as the real self.

Third, I will argue that even though Plotinus' abandonment of political theory and political engagement is based on a selective exegesis of Plato's works, this abandonment is in fact inconsistent with Plotinus' own understanding of the human soul as an icon of the Good and that a certain kind of political engagement modelled after the character of Socrates should follow from Plotinus' metaphysical commitments.