

Political Theologies of a Democratic Common Life

24-26 March 2025

Monday 24 March

8.45-9.10 Registration with coffee

9.15-10.00 Keynote Luke Bretherton

Chair: Marietta van der Tol

BREAK

10.30 -12.00 Democratic visions and political practices of a common life

Chair: Zoran Grozdanov

- 1) Joseph Rodriguez – The political practice of listening (to others and the non-human world)
- 2) Luke Li – Toward a Confucian vision of social democracy: the case of Mou Zongsan
- 3) Colin Bossen – The political theologies of populism: pan-Africanism, pluralism, and White Supremacy
- 4) Mary Nickel – Bearing with one another: the Protestant tradition's conversation demandingness and the abortion debate

LUNCH BREAK

13.00-14.30 Western Christian democratic and antidemocratic political theologies

Chair: Carlos Manrique

- 1) Jonathan Chaplin – Integrating democracy as 'common life' and as 'statecraft': a critical conversation with Luke Bretherton
- 2) Andrew Swann – Jacques Maritain on Marxism and the Question of Common Life
- 3) Steven Mailloux – Theorhetorics of the common good and the future of democracy
- 4) Martin Mendelski – Conservative Revolution vs. Liberal Restoration: Two Incommensurable Political Theologies of the Rule of Law in Poland?

BREAK

15.00-16.15 African political theologies

Chair: Mika Vähäkangas

- 1) Katherine Ajibade – Le Sel à la Mer (The Salt to the sea): Religion as a Resource for Democratic Resilience in Senegal
- 2) Adam Olowo – Deconstructing Pentecostal-Islamic power relations in Nigerian politics
- 3) Chammah Kaunda – Zambia is a Christian Nation. Pentecostal political theology, covenant imagination and symbolic violence

5pm Public lecture at the University Church: Mojtaba Mahdavi

Roundtable panel with Ramazan Kilinc, Sophia Johnson, chaired by Hossein Dabbagh

Tuesday 25 March

9.15-10.30 Islamic democratic and antidemocratic political theologies

Chair: Sharmin Sadequee

- 1) Abdul Rauf – Democracy as 'shirk' (polytheism) and 'kufr' (infidelity): religious politicking in the Pak-Afghan borderland
- 2) Magid Shihade – Religion and politics, religion and state and society: Ibn Khaldun's input (online)
- 3) Abla Hasan – Divine violence: A modern relevance of an old story

BREAK

11.00-12.30 Religion and space in the Russo-Ukrainian war

Chair: Marietta van der Tol

- 1) Volbrecht van Leenen – Politicization and weaponization of the religious space in Eastern Europe
- 2) Silviu Chivu – Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Populism: the relevance of Pantelis Kalaitzidis and Davor Dzalto's political theologies

- 3) Valerii Sekisov – Hijacking the peacebuilding: is peace even possible in the context of liberal democracies? The Ukrainian case
- 4) Cyril Hovorun – Affinity between Trumpism and Putinism

LUNCH BREAK

13.30-14.45 Crisis and resilience

Chair: **Sophia Johnson**

- 1) Roxana-Maria Aras – Heaven starts from earth: theology and crisis as everyday praxis in Lebanon
- 2) Mika Vähäkangas – Religious Realignments and Democratic Resilience: A Comparative Study of Religious Responses to (Geo)Political Crises (RELIDEM)
- 3) Clementine Nishimwe – Sacred Harmonies or just Humming Along? How Religious Rituals Might Be South Africa's Reconciliation Toolkit

BREAK

15.15-16.45 New masculinities, gender, and religious illiberalism

Chair: **Clementine Nishimwe**

- 1) Hanna Peterson – 'Christian Influence? I just don't see it': selective blindness and other tools for growing illiberal-religious alliance
- 2) Lauren Morry – Turning East in the West? Towards an Understanding of Conversion to Orthodox Christianity in the UK
- 3) Fatma Murat – Civilisationalist Discourse Against Gender Equality in Turkey: The Case of Istanbul Convention
- 4) Felli do Vale – Decline and the politics of aggrieved masculinity: the necessary ambiguity of a theological politics of gender

7.30pm Formal Dinner at Founders' Library

Dress code: smart

Wednesday 26 March

9.15-10.00 Keynote Melissa Snarr

Chair: Chammah Kaunda

BREAK

10.30-11.45 Contesting religion in the public space

Chair: Waithanji Mutiti

- 1) Rakoem Maertens – The psychology of misinformation, polarisation, and radicalisation: the role of group identity and religion
- 2) Anna Floerke Scheid – Defusing American Christian Nationalism: resilience, resistance, and the common good
- 3) Shilpi Singh - Memory and belonging: religious speeches and the politics of Hindu nationalism in India

LUNCH BREAK

12.45-14.00 Local sources for civic trust I

Chair: Sara Silvestri

- 1) Waithanji Mutiti – The role of Sikh religion in fostering just peace and social empathy in Kenya
- 2) Wemimo Jaiyesimi – Prayer, Solidarity, and Common Life: a case study from Nigeria's EndSars movement
- 3) Carlos Manrique – Insubordinate Black Catholicism and the beyond of liberal democracy in Colombia's pacific littoral

SHORT BREAK

14.15-15.30 Local sources for civic trust II

Chair: Colin Bossen

- 1) Zoran Grozdanov – Interruption as the model of the political theology of common life
- 2) Sara Silvestri – The role of the Christian churches in challenging anti-immigration and anti-refugee policies in Europe: towards a new political theology of European integration?

3) Sharmin Sadequee – Battlegrounds of Belonging: Political Theologies of the Islamic Cemetery and Religious Land Use in the Age of Populism

15.30-16.00 Final Plenary: Living the Democratic Common Life

Organising Committee

Marietta van der Tol, Sophia Johnson, Rakoen Maertens, Luke Bretherton, Mika Vähäkangas, Cyril Hovorun, Hossein Dabbagh, Anna Wera Wilms, Eckhart Chan

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