

**Canadian Theological Society Annual Meeting  
Congress 2019  
University of British Columbia  
June 3 – June 5, 2019**

<b>Monday, June 3</b>		
	<b>SPPH B-151</b>	<b>SPPH B-108</b>
8:50 am	Welcome (Catherine MacLean)	
9:00 – 9:40 am	Chris Hrynkow “‘Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters’: Biblical Images of Water and Socio- Ecological Liberation”	Amy Kaler, John R. Parkins “Religious World-Making in the Stories of International Christian Humanitarian Workers”
9:40 – 10:20 am	Abigail Lofté “From Call to Action: Ecological Discipleship for a Green Future”	Graham Brown “Political Theology and Indigenous Rights”
10:20 – 10:40 am	<b>Break</b>	
10:40 – 12:00 pm	Panel: “Don Schweitzer, Robert C. Fennell and Michael Bourgeois, eds., <i>The Theology of the United Church of Canada</i> (Wilfrid Laurier U. Press, 2019)” <b>SPPH B-151</b>	
12:00 – 1:30 pm	Canadian Corporation for the Study of Religion (CCSR) AGM-Special Meeting Chairs/Directors Religious Studies/Theology Lunch provided, complimentary student profile photoshoot <b>BUTO 323</b>	
1:30 – 2:10 pm	Doris Kieser “Speaking of Blood: Purity and Covenant in Jewish and Christian History”	Hanbyul Park “Hospitality Standing Between a Gift and a Debt: Re-moralizing a Debt to Reformulate a Gift as Relational in the Context of Migration”
2:10 – 2:50 pm	Jane Barter “Sex and the Subject: Strange Bedfellows and Discursive Regimes in Twentieth-Century Theology”	Ryan Scruggs “Obligated to Give? Irenaeus among Theologians of the Gift”
2:50 – 3:10 pm	<b>Break</b>	
3:10 – 3:50 pm	Don Schweitzer “Gregory Baum’s Contribution to <i>The Ecumenist</i> ”	Jake Griesel “Setting the Contours for a Body of Divinity: The Reformed Scholastic Prolegomena of Johannes à Marck (1656- 1731)”
3:50 – 4:30 pm	Jean-Pierre Fortin “Salvation outside the Church? Following James Baldwin’s Invitation to Deconstruct White Christianity”	Jude Claude “The Knights of Infinity and the Angel of History: A Reading of Kierkegaard and Benjamin”

5:00 – 7:00 pm	President’s Reception <b>Robert H. Lee Alumni Centre</b>
7:00 – 8:30 pm	Joint Panel (CSSPE – CTS – CPA): <b>“Sovereignty and Hypocrisy Impeding Reconciliation on Campuses in Canada”</b>  Presenters: Lee Maracle, Centre for Indigenous Studies, University of Toronto Lorraine Mayer, Native Studies, Brandon University Chaw-win-is Ogilvie, University of Victoria  Location: <b>NEST 2309</b>

<b>Tuesday, June 4</b>		
	<b>SPPH B-151</b>	<b>SPPH B-108</b>
9:00 – 9:40 am	Catherine Caufield “Our Canada: Jewish-Christian Women Writers”	Sheryl Johnson “Circles of Conversation: Church Stewardship, Fundraising, and Finance”
9:40 – 10:20 am	Fiona Li “Reflecting on Particularities: A Preliminary Outlining of a Chinese Canadian Catholic Feminist Theology”	Gordon Rixon “Pope Francis and Ignatius Loyola on Graying Matters Black and White: Rediscovering the Rules for Thinking with the Church”
10:20 – 10:40 am	<b>Break</b>	
10:40 – 12:00 pm	Panel: “Whose Populism? Which People? Examining Populism and Its Implications in Contemporary Christian Contexts” <b>SPPH-B151</b>	
12:00 – 1:30 pm	<b>Networking Lunch</b>	
1:30 – 3:00 pm	Jay Newman Lecture Jennifer Weed “Maimonides and Aquinas on the Relations between Creatures and God” <b>SPPH B-151</b>	
3:00 – 4:00 pm	Presidential Address Catherine MacLean “Reasoning God: Gravitas and Gratitude” <b>SPPH B-151</b>	
4:00 – 4:15 pm	<b>Break</b>	
4:15 – 5:30 pm	Annual General Meeting <b>SPPH B-151</b>	
6:30 pm	CTS Banquet Location: TBD	

Wednesday, June 5		
	SPPH B-151	SPPH B-108
9:00 – 9:40 am	Reid Locklin “From Controversy to Conversation: Advaita Theologies of Mission as a Resource for Christian Reflection”	Becca Whitla “Intersecting Circles: The Theological Challenge of Territorial Acknowledgements in Liturgy”
9:40 – 10:20 am	Monica Marcelli-Chu “Fleshing out “Gut Feelings”: A Conversation with Charles Taylor and Thomas Aquinas”	Simon Watson “God in Creation: The Challenge and Possibility of Discerning Human Purpose from an Evolving Nature”
10:20 – 11:00 am	Robert Walker “What Hath San Francisco to Do with Azusa Street? A Yongian Call for Queer and Pentecostal Discernment”	
11:00 am	<b>Closing</b>	

## Papers and Panels

### Papers

#### 1. Chris Hrynkow, St. Thomas More College

#### **“Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters”: Biblical Images of Water and Socio-Ecological Liberation**

Waters soaks through our lives and the biblical text. We need it in a fresh, unpolluted form to survive and flourish on this planet. Yet as Catholic ecofeminist liberation theologians like Ivone Gebera have helped bring to the fore, the benefits and burdens of water, its gathering, distribution, and consumption, are not shared equally across gender, class, racial, and cultural lines. Taking its cue from such cogent insights, this chapter critically maps and assesses how select Catholic theologians and activists inspired by that faith tradition employ biblical images of water in their work seeking to foster liberation that closely couples social justice and ecological health. The conclusion delineates flows and channels to connect socio-ecological liberation and swells of justice wherein the bible acts as a life-giving source for theological reflection. In process and organically, this presentation will explicitly address the congress theme of circles of conversation and their relationship to ecotheological praxis and socio-ecological liberation.

#### 2. Abigail Lofte, University of St. Michael’s College

#### **From Call to Action: Ecological Discipleship for a Green Future**

In this period of ecological chaos and uncertainty, the Church in North America must choose how to treat the planet. While some parishes, such as St. Gabriel’s in Toronto, have made decisions to divest financially from fossil fuels and reduce their waste while improving energy efficiency through construction of a “green church,” the Church in Canada must also consider how, other than abstaining from certain practices, it will intentionally intervene on behalf of Earth. Christian baptismal identity summons the Church to an ethic of ongoing, life-giving relationship that furthers the mission of Jesus Christ, imbuing the Church with the responsibility of working for justice, especially for Indigenous communities and other persons of colour, who are most vulnerable.

The challenge of such relationship, however, is that sacrifice of the privileged is required in order to promote the full flourishing of the subjugated and, in an Earth context, this demands that the human species act in an intentional way to halt climate change and its effects. Therefore this paper considers the ways in which the Church advocates for a green future while simultaneously participating in and benefiting from the very same structures it seeks to dismantle. In dialogue with the communities it serves, the Church ought to be a leader in the conversation for critically engaging diverse voices and perspectives, devising a way forward that advocates, not only for the rights of peoples, but for those of natural resources as well. The 2018 joint declaration by the Roman Catholic and United Church of Canada, “The Hope Within Us,” is a step in this direction and acknowledges the integral relationships of humans with Earth while offering churches a call to action to support ecological discipleship. This paper critiques the declaration’s four calls to action and challenges notions of the Church as locus of this awareness and action, as the sacredness of Church has been divorced from the sacredness of land for so long. Using Pope Francis’ insights on ecological conversion in *Laudato Si’*, a new sense of discipleship and community can be fostered to create the kind of Church needed to move from call to action.

### **3. Amy Kaler, John R. Parkins, University of Alberta Religious World-Making in the Stories of International Christian Humanitarian Workers**

In this paper, we draw on recent developments in sociological theory to illuminate the process of “doing theology from the ground up”, through attention to the personal stories of people who identify as Christian humanitarian workers, employed by international faith-based NGOs to engage in emergency relief and poverty alleviation. We show how our participants’ interpretations of Christianity provide both a body of knowledge and a set of skills for making sense of and negotiating the philosophical and practical dilemmas of international humanitarian work. This paper is based on more than 50 extended interviews with Christian humanitarians from Canada, the United States and Europe who work or have recently worked in the global south since 2012, primarily in east Africa, as part of a broader project on faith-based humanitarianism funded by SSHRC. We focus on how participants tell stories about their work, rather than on explicit creeds or doctrines. Although the interpretations of Christianity embraced by our participants in our study are the products of collective and institutional histories, embedded in specific circumstances, they are not reducible to simple dicta. Our participants manifest creativity and skill in assembling and interpreting the elements of their faith to adapt to challenging and unpredictable circumstances, while still aligning with shared Christian narratives. Using ideas of ontography and world-making/world-sustaining, we show how this form of dynamic practical theology enables participants to adopt certain ways of being, feeling and acting in the face of challenges such as personal danger, organizational failure, and culture shock, while foreclosing other ways. This paper engages with the Canadian Theological Society’s 2019 themes of conversation and sharing of ideas across academic disciplines, as we hope to further a productive fusion of theology and sociology. Our work moves away from the tendency within sociology to treat religion as a category or residual explanatory variable, and towards a more emic perspective in which faith signifies a range of skills and capacities for creating and sustaining social worlds.

### **4. Graham Brown, University of Waterloo Political Theology and Indigenous Rights**

Much current political thought holds that Indigenous peoples deserve unique rights. But there is no consensus on why. Three justifications dominate: 1) Because Indigenous peoples “were here first” (McLachlin, Macklem); 2) Because human beings have an indispensable need to form a self-

identity which is constituted by one's group's way of life (Taylor, Kymlicka); and 3) Because the state once explicitly or implicitly agreed (treaties). There are significant difficulties with these views: 1) Merely being first to occupy a territory is insufficient to establish a group's moral right to freely continue its way of life, and cannot simply trump the interests of migrants arriving later. Moreover, when first and second comers' interests converge to form a new community, denying equality of rights invites conflict. 2) It is unreasonable to claim a right to self-identity independently of whether that identity is worthwhile or realistically possible under prevailing circumstances. 3) Expecting treaty commitments to be honored when circumstances have radically changed is unreasonable and unrealistic. I argue that we are unjust to Indigenous peoples if we do not recognize their deserved contribution to the founding of the nation. State recognition of actions that help it achieve its function is a rational duty because such deeds are deserving just as punishing deeds that undermine the state's function is a rational duty. People accept unequal treatment if based on desert. Taking ancient Israel's political experience as normative (O'Donovan) teaches that desert is indispensable to justice: Canaanite groups that repented their way of life deserved and received inclusion in Israelite society (Wazana; Judges 1:29). Later Israelite rejection of the covenant deserved the punishment of exile (Deut. 28:64-68). Christianity teaches that we don't deserve our salvation (Eph. 2: 8-9) though our conduct must still be deserving. The deservedness of Indigenous peoples fits the criterion of benefiting the state's function: They played an integral role in the founding of a new political community in North America in which both they and Europeans could see their sometimes conflicting interests reflected (Taylor, Borrows). Clearly, full recognition of all interests is not yet achieved. But so long as Indigenous peoples continue their deserving efforts, the state has a duty to respect them.

## **5. Doris Kieser, St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta**

### **Speaking of Blood: Purity and Covenant in Jewish and Christian History**

In *Blood and Belief*, David Biale's sweeping exploration of blood in relation to Jewish and Christian belief, he notes that blood is a multivalent symbol. In the Jewish tradition, the ambiguous nature of blood regarding perceptions of purity informs the ways in which the shedding of blood, whether through violence, sacrifice, menstruation, or parturition, complicates its religious interpretation. At once an aspect of purification following ritual impurities, an aspect of impurity in relation to the Temple, and an indicator of kinship and lineage, its complexity renders its particular situational meanings all the more significant. Blood also signifies covenant with God. This is true in both Jewish and Christian history: the blood of circumcision, the blood of the lamb, and the blood of Christ. Each defining moment of covenant includes some shedding of blood as a sign of either individual or communal relationship with God. With regard to the Christian tradition, covenantal blood is more specifically focused on redemption through and communion with Christ. Less literal in its ritual manifestation for Christian communities, even as a symbol, the blood of Christ is the focal point of Christian sacramental life. Thus the blood of Christ, as covenant, follows closely with the blood of Hebrew covenants; it indicates both covenant with and purity of standing before God.

While blood itself features heavily in both the Jewish and Christian traditions, menstrual blood carries a very specific weight with regard to Jewish ritual purity both prior to and following the destruction of the Second Temple; women's bodies and blood became monitored sites of inclusion and exclusion. Although not a moral impurity, menstruation did bear the burden of ambiguity. As Biale and others suggest, regulations of the body with regard to menstruation were likely aimed both at maintaining ritual and family purity, and controlling the awe-inspiring life force most obviously apparent in female bleeding. How then does the impurity of menstrual blood compare with the purity of sacrificial blood, or the impurity of blood wrought from violence? And how have

the various purities and impurities made their way into post-modern perceptions of female bodies? In this short paper, I engage discussions of blood, particularly spilled blood, in relation to female bodies and purity in Jewish and Christian history. Ultimately, I aim to counter historical interpretations of menstrual blood as repugnant and unclean with a feminist reading of the general Levitical understanding of blood as life.

## **6. Jane Barter, University of Winnipeg**

### **Sex and the Subject: Strange Bedfellows and Discursive Regimes in Twentieth-Century Theology**

This paper critically examines a commonly held set of assumptions about sexuality among groups that would ordinarily be opposed in twentieth-century theology. Examining Protestant, Catholic and feminist theological writings of the latter part of the twentieth century, one finds a common theme. Ingredient within sexuality's purpose or ends is a form of subjectification, or the disclosure of the true nature of the subject. This lofty attribution to sex appears in as varied a set of theological texts as Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, the papal encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, and Carter Heyward's *Touching our Strength*. Related to sexuality's new gravitas is the manner in which the body in general and gender in particular are seen to be revelatory and even to carry ontological weight. This too departs from previous conceptions of gender. I therefore will examine the way in which the significance attributed to sexuality for self-actualization also has the effect of reifying certain expressions of sexuality and ontologizing the sexed body in such a way that even when gender is deconstructed, sex nevertheless remains a fundamentally rigid and prescriptive form of putative self-knowledge that is fraught with theological significance. Implicit in this argument is that the troubling of both sex and gender is necessary for theology to rehabilitate its sexual ethics and to move beyond the interminable impasse of theological debates on Christian marriage and sexuality.

## **7. Hanbyul Park, Emmanuel College**

### **Hospitality Standing Between a Gift and a Debt: Re-moralizing a Debt to Reformulate a Gift as Relational in the Context of Migration**

This paper problematizes the paradigm of hospitality conceptualized by unilateral practices of welcoming of a host. In this essay, a religious concept of gift is presented as gratuitous or freely-given by God. Accordingly, descriptions of how the gift paradigm of hospitality has been formed and what has helped it become a host-oriented, focusing primarily on the Reformation tradition of Christianity in which a voluntary act of welcoming to a stranger is elicited by one's religious experience of redemptive hospitality by God, will be provided. However, situating the gift paradigm of hospitality within the context of neo-liberalism debunks that it is no longer relevant to the immigrant. As an independent and autonomous self is idealized in the neo-liberal context, the immigrant indebted to the citizen for its existence or survival is necessarily seen as the failure of achieving a goal of selfhood. This situation shows that the moral practice of hospitality ironically de-moralizes the immigrant to do nothing for its own welcoming. More seriously, neo-liberal gaze on the immigrant is supported by a neutralized or demoralized concept of a debt or one's indebtedness that mystifies two ethical options for the immigrant, a universal option for justice as fairness and a preferential option for liberating the immigrant as the oppressed. In the context of migration, hospitality has been understood and practiced at the expense of the immigrant in a guise of social justice. Nevertheless, in the essay, these two options for the immigrant will be criticized as these still rely on a liberal understanding of the self. By re-moralizing a debt as an indispensable resource for building sticky relationships between the citizen and the immigrant, I would like to argue that the concept of debt or indebtedness can reformulate the meaning of gift to be much more

relational as an indebted person by salvation has much closer relationship with God. In the end, this essay argues that dealing with a tension between gift and debt embedded in hospitality can contribute to ask for right relationships in the context of migration.

## **8. Ryan Scruggs, McGill University** **Obligated to Give? Irenaeus among Theologians of the Gift**

The contemporary academic discourse on the Gift is a broad interdisciplinary discussion that considers, among other problems, the reciprocity of the gift. Is a free gift possible or does a gift oblige a gift-in-return that annuls the gratuity of the gift? Theology, of course, has something to contribute to this discourse, given centuries of reflection on grace as gift, and has done so increasingly in recent decades. This paper is an attempt to situate Irenaeus among contemporary theologians of the Gift (1) by presenting an overview of contemporary theological responses to the problem of reciprocity (e.g. Webb, Milbank, Tanner, Volf, Billings, and López); and (2) by delineating that which distinguishes Irenaeus from these responses. For Irenaeus, humans are indeed obliged to respond to God's gifts by offering gifts-in-return, for one should not appear before God empty-handed (AH 4.18.1). At the same time, it is axiomatic for Irenaeus that "God needs nothing," which means that human gifts-in-return are not, ultimately, for God (AH 4.14.1). The obligation to offer gifts in return, therefore, is entirely grounded in the human condition: that by giving "he who offers is himself glorified in what he does offer" (AH 4.18.1).

## **9. Don Schweitzer, St. Andrew's College** **Gregory Baum's Contribution to *The Ecumenist***

Gregory Baum edited the Canadian theological journal *The Ecumenist*, with two hiatuses of two to three years each, from October 1962 up until his death in October 2017. He was its founder. He determined its orientation and set its editorial tone. He was its most frequent contributor. This presentation will examine the contribution he made to it and through it, to theology, church and society. It will examine his understanding of the transformative potential of dialogue, and how as *The Ecumenist's* editor he fostered two-way relationships within it between Roman Catholic and Protestant theologians, between Christian, Jewish, Palestinian, and later Islamic thinkers, between theologians, educators and activists, and within the Roman Catholic Church, between theologians, the magisterium and bishops. It will note how under his editorship, *The Ecumenist* was a forum for constructive dissent and critical dialogue for various minority and oppressed groups. It will show how this fostering of dialogue was in keeping with the theological approach that he championed and practiced, which he called critical theology. This approach was guided by a preferential option for the poor and enriched through dialogue with sociology, the Frankfurt School, and the thought of Karl Polanyi. This presentation will examine his understanding of the preferential option as a transcendent principle, and the Christology and pneumatology underlying his theological approach. It will briefly note his treatment of Francophone and Indigenous issues over the years. It will conclude with assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of his contribution to Christian theology and to Canadian society.

## **10. Jean-Pierre Fortin, Loyola University Chicago** **Salvation outside the Church? Following James Baldwin's Invitation to Deconstruct White Christianity**

In February 2017, Scott Timberg wrote in the Los Angeles Times that "James Baldwin is not just a writer for the ages, but a scribe whose work speaks directly to ours." Witness the critically acclaimed movie *I Am Not Your Negro*, which narrates African American history from the Civil

Rights to the Black Lives Matter movement, using Baldwin's voice and witness as guide. Retrieving Baldwin's analysis of American Christianity, as articulated in his address "White Racism or World Community?" published in October 1968 and a number of subsequent essays, I will set again and anew the Baldwin challenge before the Church. Baldwin accuses North American Christianity of no less than siding with white privilege and power and, thereby, of condoning the systematic oppression of African Americans, in complete disrespect of Jesus and the Gospel, which both univocally assert the absolute dignity of all human beings. The Church failed to act as a prophet denouncing the mistreatment of millions of North American citizens. Distanced from their conscience, North American Christians have lost sight of the humanity of their African American neighbors and their own. Confirming Baldwin's assessment, the work of scholars such as Willie Jennings, M. Shawn Copeland and Matthew Cressler shows that Christianity has for centuries been part of the cause, not of the solution to the problem of endemic racism. Going further, Baldwin challenges Christianity to cease defining itself implicitly or explicitly as "white," and encounter, at long last, the humanity of its neighbors whose skin is dark colored. Baldwin invites Christians to believe in and give themselves over to the kind of love – embodied in Christ – that opposes and overcomes all forms of division. The painful duty of confession, the duty of mature responsibility, comes first. The Church must find the courage to assume its humanity in full and ask for forgiveness. Christianity has everything to learn from listening to what African Americans have to say about what being human means and entails today. It is time for the Church to reach out and follow Christ as he stands and suffers with African Americans seeking true liberation and recognition. James Baldwin's prophetic voice and witness must be heard at last; the Church is to learn again and anew that it does not own or stand for Christ, but rather finds, follows and is formed by him wherever humans in faith suffer and struggle for justice.

## **11. Jake Griesel, University of Cambridge**

### **Setting the Contours for a Body of Divinity: The Reformed Scholastic Prolegomena of Johannes à Marck (1656-1731)**

Johannes à Marck (1656-1731) was one of the preeminent Dutch Reformed theologians of the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Starting at the young age of only 20, Marck spent 55 years of his life as professor of theology at the universities of Franeker, Groningen, and Leiden. He was particularly known for his magnum opus titled *Compendium Theologiae Christianae Didactico-Elencticum* (first edition 1686) and its condensed version titled *Christianae Theologiae Medulla Didactico-Elenctica*, which remained the dominant dogmatic textbooks in the Netherlands well into later eighteenth century. As such, these two books are reflective of what a great many Dutch theological students of the period would have been taught during their university studies. Despite Marck's importance, however, hardly any scholarship on him exists other than a few entries in biographical dictionaries and sporadic mentions in a few recent publications. This paper, which arises from early ruminations on a postdoctoral project straddling the fields of historical and systematic theology, will focus on the scholastic prolegomena of Marck's *Compendium*. As Richard Muller comments, Reformed prolegomena "offer in miniature the scope and argumentative structure of the entire theological system" and "provide a crucial index to the character and intention of a theological system."<sup>1</sup> Few better examples of this can be given than Marck's *Compendium*, of which particular attention will be given to his discussion of the definition and nature of theology, which demarcates the scope of theology and lays down the framework for the rest of his system. Indeed, this paper will uncover the genius of Marck's prolegomena by demonstrating how his entire *Compendium* is essentially an exposition of the individual elements of his definition of theology.



## **12. Jude Claude, University of Winnipeg**

### **The Knights of Infinity and the Angel of History: A Reading of Kierkegaard and Benjamin**

The paper is a brief comparative reading of Walter Benjamin and Søren Kierkegaard's theologies of God's hiddenness, and the nature of divine revelation in corrupt contexts, as well as how their differing theologies are both formed by and inform their separate ethical/social inhabitations. The images of Benjamin's "Angel of History" and Kierkegaard's "knight(s) of infinity" will be used as rich material for understanding and envisioning their differing stances. The essay will explore both philosophers' understanding of the world, a hidden God, and the now-time or the instant of revelation. With an eye for these shared dynamics the essay will also interpret the significant difference in form their discourses take. Benjamin understands the world's corruption as primarily political and social in nature, whereas Kierkegaard is primarily concerned with the state of the individual's soul. God's hiddenness in Benjamin looks more like the "God of the Sabbath" as found in the Jewish mystical tradition whereas Kierkegaard shares more with the "deus absconditus" of the Protestant-Reformed tradition. And while for Benjamin revelation is horizontally, historically and materially situated, Kierkegaard's vertical instant of faith represents an intensely individual passion, only secondarily ethical/political (and with limited scope), whereas Benjamin is interested in immanently, inextricably political-theological inhabitations of life. The essay will not, however, be a simple discourse of compare and contrast, and the dialogue will slip in and out of the binaries I have just named, at times complicating them. I will take up how Kierkegaard maintains some fruitful space for the "God of the Sabbath," and the ways in which Benjamin's horizontal thought also involves an apocalyptic rupturing of time, while maintaining that their theological differences are significant, ultimately embodied, immanently material, and ethically crucial. The contribution I hope to provide is an exploration of the unlikely resonance of creative thought between Benjamin and Kierkegaard. I hope to think about how God's hiddenness in Jewish mysticism as it appears in Benjamin is significantly different from the Negative theology of the "deus absconditus" that makes an appearance in Kierkegaard, while simultaneously complicating any all-too-simple Jewish/Christian binary. Finally the chief concern is the ethical/political/social implications of either theology and I hope to present a reading of these thinker's theologies as differently embodied within the broad complex of life.

## **13. Catherine Caufield, Concordia University, Edmonton**

### **Our Canada: Jewish-Christian Women Writers**

Foregrounding the work of Jewish women writers in Canada serves to enhance our understanding of the sociocultural complexity that has developed in the context of the unfolding history of Canada. In our infinitely diverse, plural, and highly conflicted world, exploring the contributions of Jews and Jewish women in negotiating ways of co-existing, including with oneself, increases not only our knowledge of Canadian Jewish life but also of how our country is experienced by those who live in it. It is timely work in terms of current reflection, examination, and questioning of the multicultural paradigm that has shaped Canadian identity for at least the past forty years. The power and influence of religiocultural affiliation (which may be externally assigned) carries widespread import in both popular culture and in institutional contexts. A challenge inherent to this power and influence are social and political implications of how particular individuals within particular communities have understood themselves and their place in the Canadian mosaic at particular moments in time, deeply informed by personal and familial histories located within what are often seemingly nonsensical twists and turns in world history. Any progress made in elucidating connections between what are sometimes disparate elements in the Canadian Jewish experience, from the perspective of women authors, has far-reaching implications for processes of integration,

but not necessarily assimilation, into Canadian society. This twenty-minute presentation glosses major periods of Jewish immigration to Canada and related Jewish communal organizations, notes associated centres of literary foment, and highlights some of the key Jewish women writers in each period. This gloss of background lays the groundwork for comment on ways in which, as ostensibly incongruous components are pulled together and expressed through the various selected fictional texts, the diversity elucidated in the works of these authors reflects and contributes to understanding the humanity intrinsic to the continuing unfolding cultural pluralism within the nation of Canada.

#### **14. Fiona Li, Regis College**

##### **Reflecting on Particularities: A Preliminary Outlining of a Chinese Canadian Catholic Feminist Theology**

In this paper, I will be answering the question: “what is Chinese Canadian Catholic feminist theology?” I propose that this question can be answered by outlining the different aspects of this methodology. Thus, each aspect of this feminist theology methodology (Chinese-Canadian; Catholic; feminist theology) uniquely inform the types of sources which will be used and the types of issues that it will tackle. In this paper I will elucidate how that would look like. While the (Asian) feminist theological foremothers have carved a way for future feminist theologians to embark on, a specifically Chinese-Canadian Catholic feminist theology, to my knowledge, has not been explored in great detail, which causes these particular women’s needs to be get lost in the midst of all the other forgotten voices. As such, I would argue that this particular methodology/path needs to be discussed in order for their voices to be heard. The reason for having such a particular methodology is because of the magisterial Catholic Church’s need to listen to women’s experiences, especially Chinese Canadian women’s experiences. It is through the implementation of such a methodology that the Church can best dialogue with and serve Chinese Canadian Catholic women. One need not look any further than the current roster for the Women’s Consultation Group (which is part of the Pontifical Council for Culture) to see the minimal, and at times lack of, representation for coloured, non-European women. Because of their particular contexts, these women represent a particular Catholicism and present a different set of issues and perspectives than Chinese Canadian Catholic woman; they remain under-represented and unheard by the magisterial Church.

#### **15. Sheryl Johnson, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley**

##### **Circles of Conversation: Church Stewardship, Fundraising, and Finance**

In this 20/20 presentation, I will argue that Christian stewardship is an aspect of Christian life and ecclesial practice that has very much been impacted by “secular” thought, specifically mainstream neoliberal and capitalist economics. Further, I will argue that these impacts have significant ethical ramifications and should be examined and addressed carefully. To make this case, I will draw on data from formal interviews that I have conducted with clergy serving in several mainline North American denominations, including The United Church of Canada. I will also draw on examples from a literature review that I undertook of popular, congregationally-oriented literature addressing stewardship practices. To highlight the significance of these impacts, I will draw on Christian economic ethical thought and mainline church statements on the economy, which, I believe, demonstrate a different understanding of theologically-grounded orientations toward finance and stewardship. I believe that there are gendered, racial, ethnic, and ability-related implications embedded within the ways that Christian stewardship is understood and practiced. Power and privilege are very much connected to economics. While money can be used to rectify various forms of injustice, it can also serve to further entrench inequality and social exclusion. This certainly extends to Indigenous/settler relations and the ways that reconciliation might be lived out by the

church. Such considerations must also extend not only to how money is spent but how it has been acquired and is invested. The contribution I plan to make to this issue is to propose ways that Christian stewardship might better embody Christian values related to economic justice, solidarity, and ecological sustainability. I will draw upon “circles of conversation” particularly from radical organizing and alternative feminist economic praxis to consider what lessons might be gleaned. I will also detail constructive examples of alternative economic praxis within churches including debt relief, co-housing, and social enterprise.

## **16. Gordon Rixon, Regis College**

### **Pope Francis and Ignatius Loyola on Graying Matters Black and White: Rediscovering the Rules for Thinking with the Church**

Fruitful, liberating, transformative conversations typically turn on exchange over contentious matters of great import and complexity. Highly debated matters marking the intersection of personal identity, global economic justice, the scope of social protections, equitable access to cultural production and the protection of the now threatened natural environmental. Seldom focussed only on practical arrangements aimed at the limited achievement of a *modus vivendi*, significant conversations extend further to address the overt values shaping political agendas and the hidden meanings reinforcing the power relations implicit in the exchanges. Addressing political agendas without challenging covert power suppositions fuels cynicism, enables social polarization and subverts the possibility of substantive change. In advancing progressive social and ecclesial reforms, Pope Francis invites Christians and other people of faith and good will to enter deeply the social, political and cultural confluences of a rapidly changing world, engage significant contemporary issues, and identify and address the dynamics of power relations. Claiming not to depart from traditional Catholic social and moral doctrine, Francis challenges those who reference the Roman Catholic Church to affirm cultural diversity, welcome and safeguard economic migrants and refugees, protect gender minorities from discrimination and marginalization, integrate those living in “irregular relationships and non-traditional families” into worshipping communities, acknowledge and respond to the evils of sexual exploitation and clericalism, promote and embrace a low carbon emission economy and lifestyle, and acknowledge and appreciate the Gospel witness and inspiration of popular piety movements.

Pope Francis has encountered strong, even strident resistance from numerous, varied quarters, within and outside the Catholic community. People from diverse backgrounds and vantages puzzle about the substance, direction and consistency of the papal reforms. How can the one holding the Office of Peter, responsible for the ministry of unity within the Church, appear to advance such a plethora of diverse, often divisive, apparently conflicting, seemingly worldly initiatives? My paper will contribute to the work of other commentators who are responding to pleas for clarification by locating Francis within his intellectual formation and spiritual sources, emphasizing in particular the dialectical thinking of authors such as the Uruguayan intellectual historian and essayist Alberto Methol Ferré (1929-2009), the French Jesuit commentator on Ignatian Spirituality Gaston Fessard (1897-1978) and the Italian-born German philosopher and social commentator Romano Guardini (1885-1968). In a recent intellectual biography, *The Mind of Pope Francis*, Massimo Borghese observes these post-Hegelian thinkers influence Francis’ unique approach to a discerned navigation of social and cultural polarities guided by a Gospel vision. My contribution employs a rhetorical reading of the *Ignatian Rules for Thinking with the Church* to elucidate the insights into Francis’ dialectical approach to discernment offered by these four authors. I proceed by recalling the work of Marjorie O’Rourke-Boyle in her 1983 article “Angels Black and White: Loyola’s Spiritual Discernment in Historical Perspective”, which I relate to the parsing of the polarity of unity and diversity in Francis’ thought into the contraries of fullness and limit, idea and reality, and

globalization and localization. By further relating Francis approach to the Ignatian tradition and its roots in the medieval monastic practices of mental prayer, I will draw into greater relief the continuity of his approach with previous appropriations of Gospel messages in times of cultural transition; a continuity which I argue will serve to facilitate the application of discernment to the challenges of our day.

**17. Reid Locklin, University of St. Michael's College**  
**From Controversy to Conversation: Advaita Theologies of Mission as a Resource for Christian Reflection**

On 11 December 2014, the parliamentary affairs minister of the reigning Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India raised a storm of criticism when he proposed a ban on all religious conversions throughout the country. This event represents merely one recent moment in an ongoing “conversion controversy” which has hung over Hindu-Christian relations for the better part of four centuries—a public dispute about the real or imagined threat posed by aggressive Christian missions, intent on converting Hindus to a foreign tradition and, thus, severing them from their intrinsic cultural and religious identities. For the past several years, I have been attempting to reframe this controversy by shifting attention from the South Asian context and the history of this particular debate to a comparative study of the categories of “conversion” and “mission” themselves. Specifically, my research traces the emergence of the non-dualist Hindu tradition of Advaita Vedānta as a missionary movement, with roots in the eighth century and diverse contemporary social and institutional forms. In my presentation, I will borrow from the work of the Christian missiologists David Bosch, Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder I will provide an overview of this movement by means of three significant “paradigms” of Advaita mission that emerge at particular points in its history and four distinctive missionary “styles” one can discern in the lives and public advocacy of modern and contemporary Advaita teachers. Following this exposition, I will suggest several trajectories of interreligious enquiry raised by Advaita mission for Christian reflection. Most importantly, I argue, such interreligious engagement on the question of mission upsets many of the categories that too often govern arguments about conversion in Hindu-Christian relations and thus offers a way past the controversy to a deeper, more constructive conversation.

**18. Monica Marcelli-Chu, Regis College**  
**Fleshing out “Gut Feelings”: A Conversation with Charles Taylor and Thomas Aquinas**

Charles Taylor states that “a big part of the intellectual agenda of *A Secular Age* is trying to explain the whole phenomenon of modern secularity and the nova of ever more varied positions in a way in which we could go on having a conversation about it that bridges these differences.” Taylor seeks to display and work towards overcoming a deeply rooted flaw in the modern West: namely, an incapacity to disagree well. In this project, I engage Taylor’s largely descriptive text as a constructive effort towards intellectual therapy, and critically evaluate Taylor’s approach from a moral-theological perspective. More specifically, I investigate Taylor’s depiction of the common experience of “gut feelings” as a way of encouraging the modern individual to get out of her head, so to speak, and be open to these feelings that, Taylor suggests, carry the weight of agape in the modern world. In light of Taylor’s gradual building towards the language of conversion, which becomes particularly apparent towards the end of his lengthy study, I consider the role of this explicitly theological understanding for the implicit theological claims it makes on the agape/gut feeling dynamic of his thought. I then turn to the thought of Thomas Aquinas on the gifts of the Holy Spirit in order to further consider an explicitly theological reading of Taylor. In Aquinas, I

focus on the ways in which the gifts of wisdom and fear, which Thomas counts among the gifts of the Holy Spirit associated with Isaiah 11:2, especially rely upon an understanding of the embodied and spiritual nature of the human person. More particularly, the motion involved in these gifts relies upon a non-competitive understanding of the relationship between the human person and God, reflected in nature and in grace. By way of conclusion, I suggest that Taylor's agape-formed imaginary, which seeks to move from a competitive disposition towards an "open" disposition which encounters the other as neighbour, provides a contemporary framework for accessing this worldview at work in Aquinas, while Aquinas in turn provides an embodied and spiritual apparatus that fleshes out the gut feelings that Taylor senses.

### **19. Robert Walker, Trinity College**

#### **What Hath San Francisco to Do with Azusa Street? A Yongian Call for Queer and Pentecostal Discernment**

Amos Yong is an Asian-American pentecostal scholar who teaches at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He has written extensively on the science-religion conversation, disability, and interfaith relations and discernment, particularly between Christianity and Buddhism. In *Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions*, he suggests a framework for Christian discernment of interfaith realities that can, with only minor adaptations, extend fruitfully to intrafaith or ecumenical dialogues with lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer/questioning, and two-spirit (LGBTQ2S+/queer) peoples about our lives, sexual relationships, and ongoing social realities—how do they reflect (or not) “the Gospel of the Kingdom” and robust Christian formation? Wise pentecostal “discernment of spirits,” for Yong, is not only a charismatic gift but a life-long practice of wisdom, which is only possible in a formational community. Yong suggests, in conversation with philosophers Charles Pierce and Phillip Clayton, that Pentecostals must connect discernment not only to the Holy Spirit and the Bible, but also to assumptions about reality that will allow the natural and social sciences to be key discourses in any discernment process—perhaps especially if we are to conclude that a given “thing” is demonic (which is often the go-to assumption about queerness for many Pentecostals). In discerning a given ‘thing’ such as queerness or equal marriage, Pentecostals must discern the Spirit/spirits well by attending to a “thing” in its materiality and “inner life”—including deep, and methodologically pluralistic, description. In substantial agreement with Yong, I propose that such wise ‘thick description’ must also centre the Christian testimonies of queer pentecostals. Though dialogue with queer Christians and supportive publishing among Evangelicals has increased markedly in the last decade, dialogue that centres queer people within pentecostal traditions is not yet in evidence, which perpetuates deep misunderstanding of and harm to queer Christians. By engaging Yong's model of discernment, I will be suggesting that pentecostal traditions and spiritualities can use tools that are appropriate to their life-ways in service of supportive dialogue with queer pentecostals (rather than univocal and unilateral condemnatory pronouncements from pentecostal scholars and institutions).

### **20. Becca Whitla, Emmanuel College**

#### **Intersecting Circles: The Theological Challenge of Territorial Acknowledgements in Liturgy**

In the Wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, many communities in Canada are struggling to discern ways to live into the 94 Calls to Action. In this context, it has become commonplace for institutions and communities to begin events by acknowledging the traditional Indigenous territory. This rite range from standardized acknowledgements that children in schools have memorized to heartfelt poetic recitations. Debates swirl about whether this rite has become an empty gesture, an obligation, or a genuine action. In some churches, people are incorporating a

territorial acknowledgement into regular worship. Practices vary. Some begin services with a simple scripted statement. Others include a written statement of acknowledgement. Still others work at more robust statements and articulations of their struggles for Indigenous justice, out loud or in writing. As a settler Canadian from the dominant Anglo-European culture, I struggle to discern how to appropriately integrate this Indigenous practice within Christian worship. Circles of conversation remain fragile and tentative. My research for this paper examines several territorial acknowledgements from different Christian contexts. I will engage key Indigenous conversation partners about these practices through interviews, including Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo, Monica MacKay, and Susan Beaver, among others. Through these interviews and other research, I hope to tease out some ways of thinking theologically about territorial acknowledgements. For instance, how might notions of embodiment help us come to a deeper intertwining of these religious traditions? As members of the body of Christ, can we reconfigure our own theological and liturgical approaches, opening space for new understandings that take this embodied action as a starting point to reveal a different theological orientation? Could kenosis offer settler Canadians a stance of self-emptying as a way of opening out to an-other, despite the fact that kenosis is fraught for many women who have been forced to adopt self-sacrificial stances in the name of Christianity and it could be an entirely inappropriate category for Indigenous communities who were divested of (or emptied of) lands, languages, identities, customs, and cultures by force. Finally, how could engaging the Indigenous spirituality inherent in territorial acknowledgements deepen understandings of spirituality or what it means to be connected to the divine? My intention is to test these theological categories out in these ongoing conversations. In that spirit, I remain open to see whether or not they actually reflect helpful theological lenses.

## **21. Simon Watson, Emmanuel College**

### **God in Creation: The Challenge and Possibility of Discerning Human Purpose from an Evolving Nature**

If the Christian God is creator of all things but is also revealed in Christ to be costly love, then how can divine agency in creation be understood in light of scientific discoveries revealing that biological warfare undergirds the creative process of natural selection? The implications are significant for understanding Christian vocation if indeed the human is made in God's image with the capacity for creative or destructive "dominion" over earthly life (Gen. 1:26). To approach this challenge, I begin with an exploration of Philip Hefner's theory of the human as created co-creator, and conclude that his teleonomic axiom focusing on the survival of creation, although necessary and fruitful, is contradicted by his use of the male-gendered *logos* with the teleological metaphor of sacrifice and John Hick's Irenaean Theodicy to understand divine agency in creation. I then turn to the work of Denis Edwards and Elizabeth Johnson, who consider the female figure of divine Wisdom, or *sophia*, incarnate in Christ, as a more liberative representation of God, inclusive of women and the diversity of creaturely life. However, their use of John Polkinghorne's "free process defence" neglects the depths of natural evil suffered at the level of the individual and runs the risk of justifying suffering and death as the inevitable cost of the realization of a greater good. A consideration of William Paley and his work in *Natural Theology* highlights the risky dynamic set up by teleological representations of God, which can serve the interests of a powerful elite. With reference to the historical context of Paley's work, I consider the role of theory as a larger framework of meaning, contextualizing observations to serve as evidence. Finally, I look to Charles Darwin and his impact on the thinking of Asa Gray and Aubrey Moore to argue that divine agency in creation can only be discerned from a faith perspective. That said, although divine providence is not empirically demonstrable, Christian theology can offer a larger framework of meaning to interpret the facts of nature as revelatory of God when considered in light of the suffering Christ and an existentially fallen creation.

## **Panels**

### **1. Don Schweitzer, Robert C. Fennell, and Michael Bourgeois, eds., *The Theology of the United Church of Canada* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2019)**

**Chair: Michael Bourgeois, Emmanuel College**

The United Church of Canada has a rich and complex history of theological development. *The Theology of The United Church of Canada*, written for the general reader as well as students and scholars, provides a comprehensive overview of that development, together with an analysis of this unique denomination's core statements of faith and its contemporary theological landscape. When the Canadian Methodist, Congregational, and Local Union Churches in Canada, as well as most of the Presbyterians, came together as The United Church of Canada, the theological commonalities between them were significant. Over the succeeding decades, this made-in-Canada denomination has continued to define its convictions through consensus-building and large-scale studies. With contributions from fourteen scholars, this volume outlines key faith perspectives in areas such as creation, the Trinity, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, sin, mission, and sacraments. Panelists will provide a brief overview of the book's broad aims and conclusions, along with key findings from their respective chapters on the doctrine of God (MacLean) and eschatology (Bourgeois) as examples of the book's approaches and contributions to scholarship on theology in Canadian churches. Respondents will reply to panelist's comments and offer broader assessments of the book's contributions. Panelists and respondents will engage in conversation with each other, and with questions and comments from those attending the panel. (We request that CTS provide a moderator for the panel and discussion.)

#### **Panelists:**

Michael Bourgeois (Emmanuel College)

Catherine MacLean (St. Paul's United Church, Edmonton)

#### **Respondents:**

Gordon Rixon (Regis College)

Brian Thorpe (Vancouver School of Theology)

### **2. Whose Populism? Which People? Examining Populism and Its Implications in Contemporary Christian Contexts**

**Chair: Brian Bajzek, Christ the King Seminary (East Aurora)**

This panel explores the recent rise of populism through the lenses of political theology, theological ethics, and ecclesiology. Through our presentations and conversation, we hope to foster nuanced reflection upon the problematics of populism and its impact upon religious reflection and praxis.

#### **Nick Olkovich, St. Mark's College**

According to Chantal Mouffe, the current 'populist moment' in western democracies is, in large part, the function of contemporary liberalism's efforts to construct a politics 'beyond hegemony.' This appeal to consensus, present in similar ways in the work of deliberative democrats such as John Rawls and the neoliberal policies of the centre-right and left, have generated a 'post-political' situation that breeds right-wing populist contempt. Unlike many liberals who equate populism with xenophobic forms of nationalism, Mouffe calls for the development of a 'left' populism that constructs 'the people' in inclusive rather than exclusive ways. This paper explores the viability of

Mouffe's proposal and its relationship to religion in general and Catholic social thought in particular.

**Chanelle Robinson, Niagara University**

Populism often masquerades as a political ideology that represents 'the people' and their interests. This paper compares the rise of populism in the United States and Canada by interrogating underlying themes of race. The rise of Trump has initiated an outcry and backlash from many working-class and Christian white people who perceive themselves as disadvantaged. While Ontario's new premier, who appealed to many with populist rhetoric, was elected by many minority groups and people of colour. By analyzing the implications of this 'new' narrative of American whiteness and examining the tacit ways in which certain bodies are 'Othered' in Ontario, this second paper seeks to place discourses around theological anthropology, especially the scholarship of M. Shawn Copeland, in conversation with the realities of widespread populism.

**Brian Bajzek, Christ the King Seminary**

Building upon the arguments of the previous presenters, this paper suggests that populism's impact extends beyond the boundaries of the political, directly compromising conceptions of "the church" and the role of religion in contemporary cultures. Resourcing the writings of Emmanuel Levinas, Bernard Lonergan, and Joseph Komonchak, the paper argues that populism is predicated upon an impoverished approach to the complex interplay of alterity and similarity. It then identifies how this oversimplification often insinuates itself into ecclesiological praxis. The paper offers an alternative approach, reframing and reintegrating church, world, other, similar, "we", and "them" through the Law of the Cross, the self-giving love that returns good in the face of evil.