



Parkville Plus Seminar

hosted by
Australian Lutheran College



Friday 21 April 2023 1:30 pm (ACST)

Program

Tea/coffee

1:30 pm Paper 1 (full paper) **Dr Samuel Deressa**
'Luther and Bonhoeffer on The Church's Mission in the World'

2:30 pm *Break*

2:45 pm Paper 2 (short paper) **Dr Michael Mawson**
'The Stumbling Block and the Lynching Tree: Reading Bonhoeffer's
"Lectures on Christology" with James Cone'

3:15 pm *Break*

3:30 pm Paper 3 (full paper) **Maria-Anna Schuessel**
'There Is Neither Slave Nor Free: A Brief Overview of Racism, Slavery
and Jewish-Christian Thought from Antiquity to Nazi-Germany'

4:30 pm Wine and Cheese for on-campus attendees

All welcome

RSVP: Wednesday 19 April 2023

Email research@alc.edu.au

ALC campus: Corner Ward & Jeffcott Streets, North Adelaide, South Australia

Zoom link: <https://divinity.zoom.us/j/7390868790> Meeting ID: 739 086 8790

Luther and Bonhoeffer on The Church's Mission in the World

Dr Samuel Deressa | 1:30–2:30 pm

Abstract: Some scholars have argued that Lutherans are indifferent to mission because the reformers have had a bad missionary legacy. Gustav Warneck, one of the early missiologists, was in fact the first to note that reformers didn't have a legacy of missionary work. He argued that they didn't "even [have] the sense of mission, in the sense in which we understand them today" (Missionsmann in unserm Sinne). He also argued that Martin Luther had never preached about mission and had never encouraged Christians of his day to be involved in evangelism. According to him, Luther also never discussed the idea of foreign missions (Gustav Warneck, 1902). Some scholars also questioned if Dietrich Bonhoeffer had a theology of mission (Richard Bliss, 2016).

A closer look at Luther's and Bonhoeffer's writing, however, reveals that mission and evangelism are at the heart of their theology. In fact, Luther's mission in 16th-century Germany was to teach the true Gospel of Jesus Christ. Bonhoeffer also articulated what it means to be a missional church in the 20th century. This presentation will explore how Luther and Bonhoeffer offer a broader perspective on the theology of mission and how their understanding of mission helps the Christian church today understand its mission for the world.

Samuel is Assistant Professor of Theology and the Global South and Fiechtner Chair for Christian Outreach at Concordia University, St. Paul. His published works include *Forming Leaders for the Public Church: Vocation in Twenty-First Century Societies* (London: Fortress Academic Press, 2023), which he co-edited with Mary Sue Dreier; *Leadership Formation in the African Context: Missional Leadership Revisited* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock, 2022); *A Church for the World: A Church's Role in Fostering Democracy and Sustainable Development* (London: Fortress Academic Press, 2020), which he co-edited with Josh de Keijzer; *The Life, Works, and Witness of Tsehay Tolessa and Gudina Tumsa, the Ethiopian Bonhoeffer* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2017), which he co-edited with Sarah Wilson; and edited *Christian Theology in African Context: Essential Writings of Esthetu Abate* (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2015).

The Stumbling Block and the Lynching Tree: Reading Bonhoeffer's 'Lectures on Christology' with James Cone

Dr Michael Mawson | 2:45–3:15 pm

Abstract/Short Intro: Despite their very different contexts and styles, there are striking resonances between Bonhoeffer's and Cone's reflections on Christology. In this paper, I explore their shared diagnosis of and resistance to docetic, abstract Christological thinking; their shared emphasis on Christ's human suffering and humiliation; and their insistence that encountering Christ as the crucified one locates us in the world in a new way. As well as exploring these resonances, I suggest ways in which Cone's Black theology can repair limitations with Bonhoeffer's Christology as it stands.

Michael is the Maclaurin Goodfellow Associate Professor in Theological and Religious Studies at the University of Auckland. He has published widely in theology and ethics, especially on Dietrich Bonhoeffer. His current research focuses on receptions of Bonhoeffer's theology, theology and ageing, and theologies after colonisation. He is a co-organiser of the IVX International Bonhoeffer Congress, to take place in Sydney in January 2024.

There Is Neither Slave Nor Free: A Brief Overview of Racism, Slavery and Jewish-Christian Thought from Antiquity to Nazi-Germany

Maria Anna Schuessel | 3:30–4:30 pm

Abstract: Racism has been a fact of human existence almost from its very beginning. Indeed some studies suggest that it is part of a fundamental mechanism—the ability to distinguish between different subjects or objects—without which our rationality would not be able to function. Our very awareness of our own existence, our own self, depends on our being able to distinguish between ourselves and other persons and objects around us. From antiquity to the Second World War all nations agreed on war as the only "objective" way to prove one's cultural superiority, which is why many early enslaved peoples were originally prisoners of war. The Judeo-Christian tradition is a fascinating example in this wider context because it is both unique in countering that kind of cultural-racist logic and has a long history of itself being the worldview of culturally racist, authoritarian regimes, including slave-holding ones. Eventually, biological racism was actualised in one of the most brutal regimes of human history, the National Socialism, which was also, in many ways, negative high-point of cultural racism, nationalism and colonialism. This presentation is going to trace the origins and connections between different forms of racism and the Judeo-Christian tradition from antiquity to the National Socialist regime.

Maria-Anna is a PhD candidate from Tübingen University currently writing her thesis on the relationship between the Judeo-Christian tradition and political authority, especially totalitarian, political authority with a focus on Bonhoeffer and the National Socialists. She graduated with a diploma from Tübingen University in 2018 and also spend a year studying abroad at the brilliant University of Exeter, England. Her areas of research include feminist theology, post-colonialism, Incarnation theology, Asian and African theologies, the relationship between Christianity and racism, Befreiungstheologie, Trinitarian theology and the inter-religious dialogue between Christianity and Buddhism.