

<b>Institution: University of Gloucestershire</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 31 Theology and Religious Studies</b>
<p><b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b></p> <p><b>a) Context and Structure</b></p> <p>The Theology and Religious Studies (TRS) UOA in the University of Gloucestershire is situated in a context of research, scholarship, research-informed teaching and engagement with partner communities. Having achieved university status in 2001, the UOA was submitted in the RAEs in 2001 (with 9 FTEs) and 2008 (with 4 FTEs). In the 2014 REF, we were able to enter six researchers, three in biblical studies, our traditional focus, and one in Jewish theology, while expanding into new areas, with one colleague in philosophy and one in Islam. This expansion was the direct result of the successful growth of Religion, Philosophy and Ethics as a taught course, as it continues to be, together with a university-wide commitment to research-based teaching. This mixture of colleagues, which we retain, means we are strongly interdisciplinary and encourage the cross-fertilisation of ideas that feed back into the UOA and ensure its vibrancy.</p> <p>In REF 2014 33.3% of the outputs entered were 4* or 3*. For 2021 we have expanded somewhat and are entering seven researchers, but with the same broad representation of our subject areas. The staff members for REF 2021 are <b>Philip Esler, Crispin Fletcher-Louis, Roy Jackson, Will Large, Gordon McConville, Pekka Pitkanen</b> and <b>Melissa Raphael</b>. The core research area is biblical studies (<b>Esler, Fletcher-Louis, McConville</b> and <b>Pitkanen</b>), but the UOA extends to theology (<b>Esler, Fletcher-Louis, McConville</b> and <b>Raphael</b>) and also includes the study of major world religions, especially Judaism (<b>Raphael</b>) and Islam (<b>Jackson</b>), and continental philosophy (<b>Large</b>).</p> <p>The colleagues in the TRS UOA combine rigorous critical research and an engagement with issues in the world beyond academe: social, political and religious. Our biblical research has developed an emphasis on the relationship between critical biblical study and ways in which the Bible is used theologically and received artistically. Our research in Judaism and Islam is socially, culturally and artistically engaged, while our philosophy is concerned with philosophical thinking in relation to personal and social as well as theological issues. TRS staff include high-profile researchers who are active internationally both in research and in the development of their disciplines.</p> <p>The UOA benefits from a strong position within the University, deriving from an institutional foundation that set the subject at its heart and its hosting the only endowed chair in the University (the Portland Chair in Portland Studies, held by <b>Esler</b> in succession to Professor Andrew Lincoln). This has been undergirded by specific investment. The Unit has three Professors, two Readers, a Senior Lecturer and a Senior Research Fellow (who lives in Cheltenham and has been a highly active Visiting Fellow since June 2018). Another research-active biblical researcher (Matthew Lynch in Old Testament) lived locally and was active in the unit as a Visiting Fellow through much of the REF period.</p> <p>In addition to producing major research outputs, members of the unit are engaged more broadly with the work of scholarship and research-informed teaching, evidenced for example in the</p>

production of widely used textbooks (see details below), all of which contribute to the intellectual excitement in this area. There is also a lively postgraduate research programme, training, and participation in research seminars along with staff and external speakers, and weekly Hebrew and Greek Reading Classes (Hebrew and Greek in alternate weeks, run by **McConville** and **Esler** then **Fletcher-Louis** respectively) and a weekly Latin learning class (run by **Esler**) involving staff, postgraduates and local researchers. During the Covid 19 lock-down, all of these were continued on a well-frequented online basis.

Organizationally, the UOA sits within the School of Education and Humanities, at Francis Close Hall in Cheltenham, the attractive sandstone buildings of which form the historical core of the university. Overall research strategy in the University is monitored by the Research Committee, chaired by the Vice-Chancellor. Under that framework the University has established a number of cross-disciplinary Research Priority Areas (“RPAs”) and the UOA falls within one of these, *Being Human*, chaired by Nigel McLoughlin, Professor of Creativity and Poetics and (since 2020) the University’s Dean of Academic Development. Significant amounts of research funding are distributed through the *Being Human* RPA at regular meetings (see Section 3). *Being Human* embraces a number of UOAs and at its meetings each UOA is represented by its institutional lead. The School of Arts is also part of *Being Human* and since the last UOA a significant collaboration (‘Painting the Bible as a Force for Artistic, Cultural and Theological Transformations’) inspired by the (US-based) Ahmanson collection of contemporary British biblical art and 1 Enoch and Ethiopian art and tradition involving **Esler** and Angus Pryor (an artist and Head of the School of Arts) has developed between this School and the TRS UOA. This collaboration embraces research, impact and shared doctoral supervision. The TRS share of the *Being Human* budget funds activities such as semester sabbaticals to complete monographs, conference attendance, impact projects, and activities aimed at improving the research environment. All members of staff are allocated at least one research day per week, within the University’s Work Allocation Model, with higher allocations for Professors and Readers.

#### **a. Research and Impact Strategy**

The research strategy of the TRS UOA aims to build on and develop past successes. This research strategy is based on the University of Gloucester’s *Strategic Plan 2017-2022 (‘the Strategic Plan’)*, in particular the First Goal: ‘To undertake excellent research and innovative professional practice which enrich students’ learning and create impact and benefit for others.’ The main way in which the University has decided to implement that goal is by giving specific support (in terms of budget and time allocation) to areas of perceived strength, especially via major investment in the RPAs (above), for the purpose of raising the University’s profile and developing income streams by encouraging cross-disciplinary and thematic research units and projects. As noted above, the TRS UOA falls within the University’s *Being Human* RPA. In line with the First Goal of *the Strategic Plan* and our membership of the *Being Human* RPA, the research strategy of the UoA is to promote research (individual and collaborative) and impact at the highest level in the areas of its greatest strengths, based on exacting yet innovative critical enquiry and aiming to benefit both our undergraduate and postgraduate teaching programmes and our partners and constituencies beyond the academic environment and to generate income streams related thereto. All seven staff members of the UOA are aligned with and committed to this strategy.

Research collaboration that embraces biblical criticism, theology and the visual arts with colleagues in the University and in other HEIs in the UK and abroad is, as noted above, a central part of our strategy, with the *Biblical Spirituality* project funded by the Bible Society, especially involving **McConville**, important in our research efforts in the last RAE, and that approach continues in this REF period. In addition, in this REF period we have had a £10,000 British Academy/Leverhulme Trust funded project, on *1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology* involving collaboration between researchers from Ethiopia, the UK, Germany, the US and South Africa. The three researchers who submitted the application were **Esler** (the PI), Professor Loren Stuckenbruck of the University of Munich and Professor Grant Macaskill of the University of Aberdeen. The project culminated in the publication of *The Blessing of Enoch: 1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Press, 2017), edited by **Esler**, and contains essays by **Esler**, **McConville** and Pryor, together with essays by contributors from Ethiopia, the UK, Germany and the USA. This project (together with their work on the still small voice exhibition of the Ahmanson collection of contemporary British biblical art at the Wilson Gallery in Cheltenham in early 2015) also led to the collaboration between **Esler** and Pryor on a project involving the latter's painting of twelve 2 x 2 meter paintings and creation of a large-scale model of an Ethiopian church, both featuring themes from 1 Enoch and Ethiopian pictorial tradition (works that are now the core of one of our two impact projects), with their joint illuminated article on the project appearing in the *Biblical Theology Bulletin* in August 2020. In addition, involvement in the *1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology* project led to **Esler's** being invited to write a monograph on Ethiopian Christianity and his resulting volume *Ethiopian Christianity: History, Theology, Practice* (benefiting from significant input from Ethiopian scholars) was published in 2019 by Baylor University Press and has begun to attract favourable reviews. Other aspects of international collaboration include **Esler's** role on the steering committee of the 'Social Identity Commentaries on the New Testament' section at the annual Society of Biblical Literature ('SBL') meeting (and membership of the editorial board of the related T & T Clark Social Identity Commentaries on the New Testament Series) and Pitkanen's being a co-chair of the 'Ritual in the Biblical World' Section at the International SBL meetings.

Our research strategy, both in REF 2014 and in this REF, includes providing funded opportunities for postgraduate research to students from outside of the UK and Europe (in the REF period aided by £90,000 over four years from the Kirby Laing Foundation). Our research strategy builds on and organically develops from previous successes.

Our impact strategy in the last REF period embraced activities by two researchers (Professor Andrew Lincoln and **Raphael**) to generate public awareness of and interest and knowledge in biblical issues and Jewish theology and art. This continues in the current REF period in **Esler's** more thematic and focused work with four churches from three parishes (in England and Scotland) integrating biblical research to generate public benefit in the form of increased moral and cultural capital in the UK. In addition, our impact strategy has developed in an entirely new direction with the work of **Esler** and Angus Pryor on the *still small life* exhibition of contemporary British biblical art at the Wilson Art Gallery and Museum in February 2015 and a major online exhibition of artistic works on 1 Enoch by Pryor (aided by **Esler**) in 2020 that builds directly on their involvement in the *1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology* research project (see below) and collaboration in *still small voice*.

The UOA's current activities and future plans align with the way in which University's research strategy has been articulated to achieve the First Goal of the *Strategic Plan 2017-2022* (quoted

above), which is (in terms of budget and time allocation) to concentrate on areas of perceived strength, especially via major investment in the Research Priority Areas, for the purpose of promoting research to give specific support to the University's profile and developing income streams by encouraging cross-disciplinary and thematic research units and projects. In the UOA, this is reflected in several ways. The UOA's historic and continuing strength in biblical studies is attested by the fact, noted above, that the subject has the University's only endowed chair. The Portland Chair in New Testament Studies, endowed by the Sir Kirby Laing Trust, was held, since its inception in 1999 and up to 2013, by Prof Andrew Lincoln. This Trust has also endowed Biblical Chairs at Oxford, Cambridge and Aberdeen. The endowment totals £1,750,000. The holder of the Kirby Laing Chair in succession to Professor Lincoln, **Esler**, also directs the International Centre for Biblical Interpretation (ICBI), the University's first Research Centre, which was inaugurated with Professor Lincoln's appointment in 1999.

The ICBI co-ordinates research activities for staff and students in biblical studies, including research seminars; it convenes international symposia, and hosts an annual lecture in biblical studies. Past lecturers attracted by its growing status to give the lecture in the years before the previous REF were Paul Fiddes (Oxford, 2008), Markus Bockmuehl (Oxford, 2009), Robert Gordon (Cambridge, 2010), David Ford (Cambridge, 2011), John Barclay (Durham, 2012) and John Rogerson (Sheffield, 2013). The lecturers and topics alternate between the Old and New Testaments and in some cases (such as Prof Fiddes in Christian Theology) are given by scholars who bring a perspective on the Bible from their own subject areas. In 2014 the lecturer was Prof Valentine Cunningham, Professor of English Language and Literature in Oxford University. More recently the lecturers have been Larry Hurtado (Edinburgh, 2015), John Barton (Oxford, 2016), Janet Soskice (Cambridge, 2017), Chris Keith (St Mary's, 2018), Craig Bartholomew (Cambridge, 2019), while the presentation of Ben Quash (Kings) due in 2020 was postponed due to Covid. This cross-disciplinary ICBI comprises staff from Biblical Studies and Theology, as well as Art and Design, various members of whom have contributed to its regular series of research seminars, and a postgraduate student representative. The ICBI has been at the forefront of developments in the relatively new academic discipline of Biblical Spirituality which received significant funding in the last REF period and reached its conclusion with the successful completion of the doctorate by Sheona Beaumont, a professional artist, on modern photography in relation to biblical spirituality and hermeneutics. Beside the ICBI, there is a series of research seminars in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics, with external and internal speakers.

During this REF period Kirby Laing Foundation has now added to its investment in the ICBI by adding £500,000 to the endowment supporting the Portland Chair in New Testament Studies (bringing the total grant to £1,750,000) and by allocating £30,000 per annum for five years for doctoral studentships in the biblical/theology area (with £90,000 of that paid in the REF period).

We have achieved our research strategy in the current research period, both in the production of high quality monographs, edited works, journal articles and essays and in the major collaboration on *1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology*, in the continuation of our tradition of collaborative research in an area straddling biblical criticism and theology, and in the maintenance of an exciting research culture for staff and students.

As to research outputs, our principal achievements are listed elsewhere in our submission. But colleagues produced a significant number of articles and essays that were rated 3\* by our external assessor (Professor Grant Macaskill) but which we could not include by reason of the

restraints on the number of outputs. On the collaborative research side, as noted above, the research project *1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology* was granted £10,000 by the British Academy that funded conference in Addis Ababa and Cheltenham. Selected papers presented at those conferences were published in Esler (ed), *The Blessing of Enoch: 1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology*, and of the twelve essays appearing therein, four were by Ethiopian researchers.

Over the REF period we have had twenty-three postgraduate research students complete their degrees, fifteen with doctorates and eight with research master degrees.

Our future research strategy represents a development of our existing approach with some new elements added to the mix. **Esler's** research is focused on 2 Corinthians (with a 175,000 word social identity commentary on 2 Corinthians in the T & T Clark Social Identity Commentaries on the New Testament series submitted to the publishers in October 2020), further work on the Babatha archive (building on his 2017 OUP book *Babatha's Orchard*) in the form of a life of Babatha, and a substantial monograph on Matthew building on several recent articles and essays. **Jackson** will continue research on transhumanism, more generally than in his *Muslim and Supermuslim* to embrace the philosophy of religion. **McConville** is working on a 350,000 word commentary on Isaiah. **Pitkanen** will be focusing on the formation and reception history of the Pentateuch with the book of Joshua, including the reception of these texts in Judaism, Christianity and Islam and will also undertake research in comparative ritual studies that relate to ancient Israel, the wider ancient Near East and beyond. **Raphael's** research and publication will be focused on the visual expressions of theology in contemporary Jewish feminist art and on the re-imagining of the Shekhinah, the female figure of divine presence in contemporary Jewish feminist theology and spirituality.

## 2. People

### a) Staffing strategy and staff development

The TRS UOA consists of seven staff, four of them full-time: **Esler** (Professor), **Jackson** (Reader), **Large** (Reader) and **Pitkanen** (Senior Lecturer) and three on 0.2 fractional contracts: **Fletcher-Louis (Senior Research Fellow)** and **McConville** and **Raphael** (Professors). All members of the UOA are research-active, and also have postgraduate and/or undergraduate teaching responsibilities on courses in Theology, and in Religion, Philosophy and Ethics. We have a research-active Visiting Fellow, Dr Matthew Lynch (Old Testament). Our strategy will continue to be to maintain a spread of subjects embracing biblical studies (with theological interests), Jewish studies, Islamic Studies and Philosophy (of a Continental character).

In essence, the strategy of the University, School and TRS itself is to encourage and promote the flourishing of its staff as researchers, scholars and teachers and its students as partners in the production of knowledge and understanding. Their shared commitment to all these aspects of the work issues in a range of scholarly activity beyond outputs that are strictly research.

This is evident in the kinds of scholarly activity that are carried on here apart from that which is represented in REF 2, but which form an essential part of the lively academic environment of TRS.

**b) Research students**

The training and supervision of PGR students is the responsibility of the University Research Degrees Committee ('URDC'), whose powers are delegated to it by the University Research Committee (chaired by the Vice-Chancellor). The URDC oversees the admissions process, normally arranging for applicants to be interviewed, the appointment of first and second supervisors, a system of online recording of supervision sessions and a Joint Annual Progress Report (JAPR). The URDC maps PGR research at the University against the QAA Researcher Development Framework. Students' research projects are submitted, following a careful process of scrutiny of their viability to the URDC. This happens normally within six months to a year from registration, and is a pre-requisite of proceeding to submission of the thesis. The monitoring and training process addresses the broad range of skills and development that a student needs in preparation for employment and effective further academic work. The JAPR identifies specific training needs, and the means for meeting them.

The University is also one of the sponsors of the Annual PGR TRS Conference held at Bristol University, at which many of our students have given papers during the present REF period.

Students are encouraged to participate and network nationally in their subject area. Some attend conferences, such as the annual meetings of the British New Testament Society and the Society for Old Testament Study. Full-time students are allowed £300 p.a. for the purpose, and part-time students £200. Every Thursday evening there are reading classes (alternately in Hebrew and Greek led by **McConville** and **Esler** (initially) and (during 2020) **Fletcher-Louis** respectively) that mainly cover biblical texts but sometimes ancient inscriptions and papyri in Greek. Some postgraduate students attended or attend a Latin learning class introduced by **Esler** in the academic year 2018/2019 and continuing. Occasional day visits for staff and postgraduates are arranged, such as to the Roman sites at Caerwent and Caerleon. The postgraduate students meet and interact with one another in all of these activities and at the social gatherings frequently convened after the Greek and Hebrew reading classes in a local restaurant.

Five of the postgraduate students/recent doctoral graduates are ministers of religion (in the UK or in their home countries in Asia and Africa) and most of them are actively involved with their denominations (or denominations closely related thereto) in and around Cheltenham or in the University Chaplaincy. Two have received substantial grants from Anglican charities in the UK with our support.

PGR students are encouraged to engage fully with the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

In the present REF period there have been fifteen PhD and eight research masters completions in TRS. Of the fifteen students graduating with PhDs the following now have academic positions:

- \*Andy Dvoracek (Gateway Seminary, Portland, Oregon);
- \*Peter Ho (Singapore Bible College);
- \*Meredith Nyberg (Bethel University, Minneapolis);
- \*Matt O'Reilly (Wesley Biblical Seminary, Mississippi); and
- \*Carl Sweatman (Johnson University, Tennessee);

Ben Trubody (PhD, 2014) has published eleven articles and essays generally in the area of the philosophy of science.

### c) Equality and Diversity

The UOA has always promoted Equality and Diversity both as an intrinsic value and also as part of its culture of the UOA, within the wider framework of the policy and practice of the University which oversees and monitors it, through a carefully thought out, wide-ranging and proactive Equality and Diversity policy. This advocates and promotes the well-being of all students and documents proscribed kinds of direct and indirect discrimination in accordance with the 2010 Equality Act. County statistics show that Gloucester (10.9 %) and Cheltenham (5.7%) have higher proportions of BAME residents than other areas of the county, though these are considerably lower than the national figure of 14.6%. Within our UOA our postgraduate recruitment is higher than these proportions (being over 30%), with several of our students coming from Asia and Africa, with most of them in receipt of doctoral studentships covering 60% of the international fee. As a matter of routine also, staff work very closely with the Senior Tutor and the University's disability, dyslexia and learning support service to offer confidential, one-to-one support to prospective and current students with with disabilities, learning difficulties and medical conditions. Assistance available includes advisory visits, help with diagnosing specific learning difficulties, assistance with applying for disabled students' allowance, and training, consultation, and advice on a range of matters including disability access, awareness training and students' specific needs. The University's Helpzone provides a portal for these and other students, supporting students with their mental health and wellbeing, directing students for instance, to student services, or to free counselling, as well as to advice or assistance with childcare, or academic writing skills. The Helpzone also provides information on other University services, such as sport, music, faith and the Student Union.

### 3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Total external research income for the UOA during the REF period was very significant and totalled £675,000.

The UOA benefits greatly from the Kirby Laing Trust endowment (valued at £1.95 million and increasing with investment) that funds the salary of the Portland Chair in New Testament Studies, held by **Esler**, his research expenses and various expenses of the International Centre for Biblical Interpretation. The original grant was £1.25 million made in 1999. The Kirby Laing Trust then added a further £500K endowment in September 2013, making £1.75 million and by July 2020 this had increased by investment to £1.95 million. We are one of only five universities in the UK to receive Kirby Laing Support for such a position in the biblical/theological area (the others being Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Cambridge and Oxford).

As noted above, in 2016 the Kirby Laing Trusts also increased their support by providing new funds to fund doctoral studentships by making available £30,000 per annum for five years. In June 2020 we received the third tranche of £30,000 under this provision, making a total of £90,000 received in the REF period. The university added £10,000 per annum to this provision and the total sum allowed us to fund six 'Kirby Laing Doctoral Studentships', most non UK/EU, by providing them with a 60% discount on the fee.

The UOA received £10,000 from the British Academy under its Small Grant Programme for the project *1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology*.

The Bible Society award of £45,000 for Biblical Spirituality (2011-14) covered part of the period (2013-14) and we received £7,000 of this grant in current REF period. The project came to a successful finish with the completion of Sheona Beaumont's PhD in 2017.

These sources of research funding comprised the total sum of £675,000 mentioned above.

The UOA also received significant internal designated funding for research and impact activities. The *Being Human* RPA manages an annual budget and makes awards to staff for the purposes of conference attendance, the support of projects by granting relief from teaching, and the production of research and impact outputs (see above). Large amounts of research funding are distributed through the *Being Human* RPA at regular meetings (see Section 3). In 2017/2018 the TRS UOA's share of the *Being Human* budget was £22,000, in 2018/2019 £19,500 and in 2019/2020 £17,500. Some of this money helped fund the Kirby Laing Doctoral Studentships mentioned above.

The UOA is located in the Francis Close Hall Campus, the historic 19<sup>th</sup> century heart of the building in neo-Gothic sandstone. Staff are located on the top floor of the Quad West section of the campus, with the Library conveniently located on the ground floor. There is an office for postgraduate researchers, with networked desks for their use, in the same building and adjacent to the Library. The Library has a significant collection of books and printed journals on biblical studies, theology and philosophy that reflects the decades long interest in these areas in the institution. There is a very significant availability of online journals in these subject areas. UOA colleagues, among whom interdisciplinarity is a major feature of their work, also benefit from an extensive range of books (located in the same Library) and online journals in the social sciences. Staff and postgraduates have an annual allowance for Inter-Library loans for works unavailable physically or digitally. Postgraduate researchers are also encouraged to register with the Bodleian Library in Oxford, only one hour away by car, for access to resources beyond what we can provide. During the Covid 19 lock-down significant extra digital resources were made available through the Library.

#### **4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society**

The UOA's central research collaboration in the REF period has been one on *1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology* with Professor Loren Stuckenbruck of the University of Munich, Professor Grant Macaskill of the University of Aberdeen, Dr Daniel Assefa of the Capuchin Franciscan Research and Retreat Centre in Addis Ababa and, in the University of Gloucestershire, **Esler** and Angus Pryor. The £10,000 funding for this project by the British Academy under its Small Grants Scheme allowed conferences to be held in Addis Ababa (with a large number of Ethiopian colleagues present) in February 2015 and in Cheltenham in October 2015. A selection of the papers delivered at these two conferences, and two added later to cover our evolving thinking, were published as *The Blessing of Enoch: 1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology* (Eugene, OR; Cascade Books, 2017), edited by **Esler**. UOA personnel **Esler**, **Fletcher-Louis** and **McConville** contributed essays to that volume, as did Angus Pryor.



The unit's second area of collaboration involved **Esler** and Pryor. In 2014 and 2015 **Esler** and Pryor had collaborated on the *still small voice* exhibition of the internationally significant Ahmanson collection of contemporary British biblical art at the Wilson Art Gallery and Museum in Cheltenham (February 2015). Pryor had created a work of art for that exhibition, a transcription of Stanley Spencer's painting *The Angels of the Apocalypse*, which was one of the Ahmanson Collection works being exhibited. This exhibition attracted over 10,000 visitors, engaged with a considerable number of school pupils and had significant impact. Later in 2015 **Esler** and Pryor, having visited Addis Ababa in March of that year, decided that the 1 Enoch and Contemporary Theology project provided the possibility for the continuation not only of practice-based research and but also of the impact arising from the way in which painting the Bible can be a force for artistic, cultural and theological transformation. Accordingly, after a subsequent research visit by **Esler** and Pryor to Ethiopia in March 2017, especially the Christian sites in the north, Pryor, in close consultation with **Esler**, then initiated and completed a series of twelve 2 x 2 meter paintings on themes from 1 Enoch 1-36 and a large scale model of an Ethiopian church illuminated with Enochic imagery and motifs from the unique Ethiopian ecclesiastical painting tradition. These works formed part of one of the unit's two impact projects for this REF, initially planned as an exhibition in the South Transept and Ambulatory of Gloucester Cathedral in April – May 2020 but then, because of the Covid 19 pandemic, converted to a virtual exhibition in July 2020. Post Covid 19, we hope to exhibit these works in Munich and Aberdeen, so that the collaboration with Stuckenbruck and Macaskill, who will make arrangements in those locations, will continue. In addition, in consequence of word getting out on his involvement in this project **Esler** was invited by a US publisher to write an introduction to Ethiopian Christianity. This book appeared in 2019 as *Ethiopian Christianity: History, Theology, Practice* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press).

The third major area of collaboration has involved **Esler's** long term membership (since 1990) of the Context Group: Project on the Study of the Bible in Its Cultural Environment. This led to meeting of the Group in Cheltenham in June 2015 that involved researchers from the UK, the USA, Norway, Canada and South Africa.

The fourth area of collaboration has been the Co-Chairship by **Pitkanen** of the 'Ritual in the Biblical World' Section at the International Meeting of SBL.

Fifthly, **Fletcher-Louis** is the owner and director of a research and training company (Whymanity: Research and Training Ltd). Inter alia, the purpose of Whymanity is to explore biblical and theological resources for an understanding of what it is to be human and to bring those to the collaborative work of leadership training and strategy development in the church and business environments.

### Learned Societies

**Esler** is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature and was a member of its Council of the Society of Biblical Literature for six years until 2016 and a member of the Society of New Testament Studies. **Large** is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and President of the British Society of Phenomenology (to the present). **Pitkanen** is a Co-Chair of the Ritual in the Biblical World Program Unit for the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, a member of the Society of Biblical Literature and of the Society for Old Testament Study. **Jackson** is a

Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Authority. He is also a Council Member for BRAIS (British Association of Islamic Studies) and is on its Planning Committee for the Annual Conference. **Large** and **Jackson** contribute frequently to the work of the Gloucestershire Philosophical Society at whose meetings scholars of international standard from around Britain present their work to other scholars and to interested members of the public. **McConville** is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, the Society for Old Testament

Study, and the Tyndale Fellowship. **Raphael** is a member of the London Society for the Study of Religion. **Fletcher-Louis** is co-chair of the British New Testament Conference “New Testament and Second Temple Judaism” Seminar and is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature, Society of Old Testament Studies, British Association of Jewish Studies, and the Society of New Testament Studies.

### Editing, Editorial Boards and Reviewing for Learned Journals

**Esler** served on the Editorial Boards of *New Testament Studies*, the *Biblical Theology Bulletin* (continuing) and *Biblical Reception* and reviewed article manuscripts for each of them. He is on the editorial board of the Bloomsbury T & T Clark Social Identity Commentaries on the New Testament series. He is also on the Editorial Board of ‘Tesi y Mongrafías’ of the Spanish Biblical Association. **McConville** served on the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Theological Interpretation* (Eisenbrauns, USA, 2007-11), and is General Editor of the *Two Horizons Old Testament Commentary* series (Eerdmans), and of the *Baker Commentary on the Old Testament (Prophets)* (Baker Academic). **Pitkanen** is a member of the Editorial Board of *Canon & Culture* (a journal published in Korea). He has reviewed several articles for *Cogent Humanities*, *Cogent Social Sciences*, *Old Testament Essays* and *Ancient West & East*. **Raphael** is on the international editorial boards of *The Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, *The Journal of the European Society of Women in Theological Research*, *Religion and Gender* and *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*. She has also reviewed articles for the *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* (Queen Mary University, London), *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, *Religion and Gender*, and *European Judaism*. She is also an editor for *The Oxford Encyclopedia for Religion and the Arts 1600-The Present*, New York: Oxford University Press, forthcoming.

### Book and Project Refereeing

**Esler** was a panellist for the Icelandic Research Fund for six years till 2016 (when he rotated off). He has also refereed for OUP, Yale University Press, Bloomsbury and Routledge. He has also reviewed for the Hong Kong Research Agency, the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies and the Research Council of Israel. He was an external advisor to the relevant Spanish Government body in the application by the University of Deusto to establish a Máster en Estudios Bíblicos: Historia e Influencia de la Biblia (2016). **Large** has refereed for the OUP, Edinburgh University Press, and Bloomsbury. **McConville** is a regular reader for the *Tyndale Bulletin*. **Pitkänen** has reviewed book proposals and a book manuscript for Routledge. **Raphael** has frequently reviewed manuscript submissions to Routledge. **Fletcher-Louis** has reviewed a book proposal and a manuscript for CUP and a book for the *Journal of Theological Studies*.

**Invited papers/lectures**

**Esler** delivered the Kennedy Wright Opening Lecture at the University of Edinburgh on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2014 (on the heavenly abode in 1 Enoch 1-36). At a conference in Berlin from 20-21 May 2016 organised by the Wissenschaftliche Gesellschaft für Theologie, Fachgruppe Neues Testament to discuss Ulrich Luz' *Theologische Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments* he was the first respondent. On 16<sup>th</sup> February 2017 he delivered an Ehrhardt Seminar lecture at the University of Manchester on 'New Light on Babatha and Her Final Days.'

**Fletcher-Louis** has given invited lectures (about his forthcoming book on Philipians, Temple Theology, Ben Sira, and angels in the Dead Sea Scrolls) at seminars and conferences in Zurich (Jan. 2015), St Andrews (Feb. 2016, Feb. and June 2018), Cambridge (Nov. 2017, Nov. 2018), Oxford (June 2017), Durham (Feb. 2019), King's College London (Nov. 2014), Birmingham (May, 2017).

**Jackson** gave a paper at an invitation-only conference on Islamic Philosophy (funded by the Templeton Institute) at the University of Edinburgh in December 2017.

**Large** presented 'Remembering the Impossible Future: Kierkegaard and Human Capital, *Royal Institute of Philosophy, University of the West of England*, March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014; 'Problems from Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*, *University of Staffordshire*, April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014: 'The impossible possibility: Politics and subjectivity, a Kierkegaardian response to Autonomia', Politics of Consumption Workshop, Affiliated with the European Consumer Culture Theory Doctoral School, Bloomsbury, London, August 21-25<sup>th</sup>, 2014; and 'Singing is not Seeing: Will Oldham and the Authenticity of the Voice', *Royal Institute of Philosophy, University of the West of England*, Bristol, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2017.

**McConville** delivered invited papers at Wheaton College, Illinois (2015), Institute for Biblical Research, San Antonio, 2016; King's College, London (March 2017); Oak Hill College, London (2017). He was a guest lecturer at the Sydney Mission and Bible College, March 2018.

**Pitkänen**, on invitation in each case, presented the papers 'Detecting migration in the late second millennium Levant', at SOAS/London Centre for the Ancient Near East, London, UK ( 20 March 2017); "Reconstructing the Social Contexts of the Priestly and Deuteronomic Materials in a Non-Wellhausenian Setting" at a conference on the Pentateuch (Paradigm Change in Pentateuchal Research) in Basel, Switzerland, March 2017; "Settler colonialism and the vomiting out of the inhabitants of the land in Lev 18:25-28", at the SBL annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, in the Warfare in Ancient Israel section, November 2016; , "The Structures of Numbers", at the British Society of Old Testament Studies biannual meeting, July 2016, Manchester, UK; and "P/H and D in Joshua 22:9-34", at the EABS conference, Biblical Law section, Cordoba, Spain, July 2015. **Raphael** has given several invited Lectures, including being keynote speaker on feminist religious and philosophical thought at the Sherman Conversation 2017 - an international colloquium on Judaism and Gender, University of Manchester; a keynote on the theology of the messianic in Rosenzweig and Arendt, at an international conference on modern European philosophy funded by the Thyssen Foundation at the Institut für die Wissenschaften des Menschen in Vienna (10-12.10. 2018); and a keynote on the impact of Rudolf Otto's phenomenology of the sacred on modern Jewish thought at the international conference of the Existential Philosophy & Literature (the Franco-Scottish Connection: Past & Present) funded by the Royal Society, Edinburgh, which took place in France, at the Fondation des Treilles, in February 2019, examining the evolution of religious existential thought during the modern period.

**Contributions to the Research Base**

One of our major contributions to the research base has been in the area of postgraduate training, especially in the supervision of students to the successful completion of fifteen PhDs and eight research masters' degrees:

**Esler** supervised to completion one doctoral (Nedkha 2020) and two research masters students (Bruce Goodwin and Robert Walker, 2018).

**Jackson** supervised Masako Ueda to a successful doctorate (2020) and Andrew Thompson to a research masters (2020).

**Large** supervised Ben Trubody to a successful doctorate (2014) and Andrew Bates to a successful research masters (2018).

**McConville** supervised to completion doctoral theses by Timothy Davy (2015), Cynthia Parker (2015), Peter Ho (2017), Andrew Dvoracek (2017), Sheona Beaumont (2017), Mark Arnold (2018) and Meredith Nyberg (2018) and research masters by Peter Myers (2015).

**Pitkänen** supervised to completion a doctoral thesis by Patricia Jelbert (2018) and two students for a research masters (Zach Thomas 2014 and Andrew Wickham 2019).

**Raphael** supervised C. L. Nash to a successful doctorate (2015) and Corrie Agnolutto (2016) to a research masters.

Other PhD graduates were Matthew O'Reilly, Carl Sweatman and Elizabeth Talbot.

Some colleagues have been active in contributing to the research base by providing textbooks at undergraduate level. **Esler's** *The Early Christian World: Second Edition* (London: Routledge), expanded from fifty to sixty chapters, was published in 2017 (the first edition of this now standard text was in 2000). He also published *Ethiopian Christianity: History, Theology, Practice* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2019). **Jackson** published *Nietzsche: A Complete Introduction: Teach Yourself* (Teach Yourself Books, 2014; eBook) and *What is Islamic Philosophy?* (London: Routledge, 2016). **Large** published *Levinas' 'Totality and Infinity': A Reader's Guide* (London: Bloomsbury Academic) in 2015.

Another contribution to the research base has come in the area of external examining and appraisals for academic promotions and research grant applications.

**Esler** has been an external for PhDs at the University Helsinki (the opponents in Philipians, 2015), the University of Manchester (on boasting the Cross in Galatians, 2016), Charles Sturt University (conversion in Philipians, 2017), the Australian College of Theology (social identity theory and John's Gospel, 2018), Macquarie University (on law in the Dead Sea legal papyri, 2019), the University of Divinity, Melbourne (the Holy Spirit as legitimator in Luke-Acts, 2019) and the University of Birmingham (on siege mentality in Deuteronomy). **Jackson** has been an External for two Ph Ds in religious studies at Lampeter in 2017. **Large** has been an external for PhDs at Newcastle University (The genealogy of Nick Land's anti-anthropocentric philosophy, 2016) and Nottingham University (cryptotheologies of judgement, time and nature in the dominant economics and economy, 2017). **McConville** has been an external for PhDs at Oxford University (2016), Bangor (University of Wales) (2016), Edinburgh University (2016) and Trinity St David's (University of Wales) (2017). He has also been an external for the BA/MA at Queen's University, Belfast, 2012-15; BA at Oxford Brookes University, 2014-) and Irish Baptist College (Chester University) (2016-). **Pitkänen** has been an external for PhDs at the University of Nottingham (Genesis 2-3: The Hidden Polemic against Excesses of Royal Ideology, 2016) and the Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada (War Narrative in the Book of Joshua, 2014) and from 2019-2020 External Examiner for the BA in Theology and MA in Christian Thought and Practice for Spurgeon's College (University of Manchester). From 2019 **Raphael** has been the

External Examiner for the MA in Religion, Culture and Death at the University of Winchester and the External Examiner for the BA and MA in Theology, Philosophy and Religion at Liverpool Hope University.

**Esler** has been an external adviser on professorial and tenure-track promotion applications by colleagues at Emory University (2016), the University of Manchester (2018) and the University of California (2018). He is also on the three-person International Academic Advisory Committee of the 8 million Euro project funded by the Academy of Finland: 'Ancient Near Eastern Empires' and attends its annual meetings. During the period November 2011 – 2019 **Raphael** was a member of the international research project on idolatry and representation in the Dept. of Systematic Theology, University of Copenhagen.

### Wider Contributions to Society

The TRS UOA also hosts the Gloucestershire Philosophical Society, which is funded by the Royal Institute of Philosophy. The aim of the society is to promote the public understanding of philosophy. It has over 120 public members. It invites scholars from around the UK to share their research with the public in a twice weekly seminar during term time. Topics range from the importance of Plato today to philosophy in prisons.

In addition to the parish work in Cheltenham and St Andrews presented in the Impact Case Study, **Esler** has spoken twice at the recently established Cheltenham Christian Art Festival, on 'Biblical Women in and out of Trouble' August 2016 and 'Jesus Encountering Women in Paint', in May 2019. In each case his presentation was accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation of approximately thirty images of relevant scenes from the Western painting tradition.

**Raphael** teaches a vocational/pastoral course on Jewish Responses to Evil and Suffering at Leo Baeck College, London. She also works with the Department of Education in the University mentoring British student RE teachers on how to avoid 'othering' non-Christian religionists.

**Fletcher-Louis** has given lectures and seminars at (Anglican and non-conformist) churches in Maidstone (July 2018), Preston (Sept. 2019, Feb. 2020), Reading (Oct. 2018), Southampton (Jan.-Feb. 2015, April 2017), Manchester (May 2018), Cairo, Egypt (Nov. 2016), Amsterdam (Sept. 2017), and in the Cheltenham area (April 2018, June 2018, Oct. 2018, Sept. 2019, Oct. 2019). He has also provided training and consultancy services (on theologically informed business leadership, entrepreneurship and marketing) to Savills Estate Agents (on behalf of Interactive Workshops) (April 2017, March 2018, 2019) and to D2M Design Agency (May 2015).

**Fletcher-Louis** was interviewed about his *Jesus Monotheism* research project for a theological podcast series by The Bible Project (BibleProject.com) in July 2019. As of 31.12.2020 the podcast had been downloaded 220,000 times.