

The Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics

Newsletter

Summer 2009

In memory of
Sir Kirby Laing

1916-2009

Lively
conferences
in Cambridge
and Oxford

April and May

Talking God –
in the
House of
Commons

June launch

New faces at
KLICE

New staff and
Council members

We hope you enjoy this issue of the KLICE Newsletter. Please feel free to forward it to others who may wish to see it. To unsubscribe, send an email to that effect to ethics@tyndale.cam.ac.uk.

1. In Memory of Sir Kirby Laing

We give thanks to God for the life of Sir Kirby Laing who passed away peacefully on April 12 2009 at the age of 92. KLICE is proud to have been named after such a distinguished Christian businessman and public servant. Sir Kirby played a leading role at home and abroad in the Laing Group, one of the largest construction and engineering companies in post-war Britain, and later in Laing Properties. The Group was known for its generous treatment of staff and for its excellent craftsmanship, as seen for example in the building of Coventry Cathedral. Sir Kirby was knighted in 1968 for services to the industry. He also achieved prominence in the field of industrial relations as Chair of the National Joint Council for the Building Industry from 1968-74, and as President of the National Federation of Building Trades Employers in 1965 and of the Institute of Civil Engineers in 1973 and 1974. He served in the Royal Engineers from 1943-5, and was Deputy-Lieutenant Governor for Greater London from 1978-1991. He established the Kirby Laing Foundation in 1972 which has since supported numerous Christian, medical, educational and artistic charities. His reputation as a Christian of integrity and commitment was widely known and appreciated. The generous support of the Kirby Laing Foundation was indispensable to the establishment of KLICE in 2006. Our hope is that the work of KLICE in the field of public ethics will stand as a fitting tribute to Sir Kirby's exemplary Christian public witness. We extend our condolences to his family.

2. 130 attend KLICE co-sponsored conferences

- 65 participants attended the April conference 'Responding to Secularism' co-sponsored by KLICE and the Gospel and Our Culture Network. Four excellent speakers offered illuminating and diverse analyses of the origins and influence of secularism in contemporary British society, generating a high level of animated discussion throughout the day – spilling out into the Tyndale House garden thanks to fine weather. The lectures by Andrew Kirk and Dominic Erdozain are available in text form on the KLICE website and John Stackhouse's lecture is available in audio.
- In May, 65 people attended 'Justice: Rights and Wrongs: A Colloquium in Oxford', co-sponsored with the McDonald Centre for Theology, Ethics and Public Life. The event was hosted by Nigel Biggar, Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology and Director of the Centre. Six first-rate speakers (including former KLICE Advisory Council Chair Julian Rivers) responded to Nicholas Wolterstorff's wide-ranging and provocative book. KLICE grantee Joshua Hordern wrote an extended and widely-appreciated summary of the book in advance for participants. The conference papers are set to appear in *Studies in Christian Ethics* in 2010. A generous private donation of £2000 allowed us to offer travel and accommodation bursaries for many postgraduate attendees.

3. Director's publication launched in House of Commons

Talking God: The Legitimacy of Religious Public Reasoning, written by Director Jonathan Chaplin and published by the public theology think tank Theos, will be officially launched in Parliament at an invited breakfast seminar for MPs, Peers and journalists on 23 June. The Director will address the seminar. The print version of Talking God can be ordered from the KLICE office at £10 (£5 students/KLICE Associates) inc. p&p, or from the Theos website, where it can also be downloaded for free:

<http://www.theosthinktank.org> ('Reports').

4. KLICE Research Associate appointed

In September 2009 we welcome Joshua Hordern as the first 'KLICE Research Associate'. Joshua was a KLICE grantee from 2007-9. He is currently completing a PhD in political theology at the University of Edinburgh, under the supervision of Prof. Oliver O'Donovan. He moves to Cambridge this summer, where he will be taking up a Junior Research Fellowship at Wolfson College (conveniently located next door to Tyndale House). He will also be getting married in June. We congratulate him on all these achievements! Joshua will be working half a day per week on KLICE activities and will be based at Tyndale House.

5. Thanks to Tania Raiola

After three years of sterling service, Tania Raiola is stepping down as KLICE Administrator to assume expanded duties within Tyndale House. We are extremely grateful to Tania for steering the KLICE office so cheerfully and effectively from its inception through its first years. She leaves a solid organisational base for her successor to inherit, who will be appointed during the summer. Fortunately we will not be bidding farewell to Tania: she will be keeping a friendly eye on KLICE in her new role managing accounts at Tyndale House. See below for interim administrative arrangements.

6. Changes to Advisory Council

We welcome three new members to the KLICE Advisory Council:

- Andrew Hartropp is an Anglican minister, Research Tutor at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies and visiting lecturer in ethics at Wycliffe Hall. He has doctorates in both economics and Christian ethics. Formerly he taught economics at Brunel University and has also worked for the Jubilee Centre. His most recent publication is *What is Economic Justice? Biblical and Secular Perspectives Contrasted* (Paternoster 2007). He is a former grantee of the Whitefield Institute, KLICE's predecessor organisation.
- David Muir is Public Policy Executive Director for the Evangelical Alliance. Trained as a political scientist, he has a PhD in the political theology of James Cone. He has lectured in history, political science and theology at several institutions, including the Centre for Black and White Christian Partnership in Birmingham, London University and University of East London. He is currently a Visiting Fellow at London Metropolitan University. He has served as an advisor and committee chair for the Home Office and as deputy chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority.
- Jenny Taylor is Executive Director of Lapidomedia, a charity dedicated to religious literacy in world affairs. She trained as a professional journalist on Yorkshire Post Newspapers. She has a PhD in Islam and secularisation and is co-author of *Faith and Power: Christianity and Islam in 'Secular' Britain* (SPCK 1998). Her most recent publication is *A Wild Constraint: The Case for Chastity* (Continuum 2008). She is a former Whitefield Institute grantee.

Last year, Julian Rivers, the first Chair of KLICE Council, completed his term of office. KLICE owes an enormous debt of gratitude to Julian both for his visionary leadership in working to bring KLICE into existence three years ago and for his expert administrative skill in steering Council and advising staff during these early years. He is succeeded by Jonathan Burnside, Reader in Law at Bristol University

The Advisory Council, which meets three times per year, plays an indispensable role in KLICE's planning and decision-making. Further information about all eleven Advisory Council members can be found on the KLICE website at the 'People' page.

7. Ethics in Brief

One of the latest issues of Ethics in Brief is a summary of the argument of Talking God, and is available on the KLICE website. The other, entitled, 'Ethics of Information Technology', explore a novel Christian philosophical perspective on the theme. It has been written by Andrew Basden, Professor of Human Factors and Philosophy in Information Systems at Salford University.

All issues of Ethics in Brief are available on our website at no cost, as are most issues of the former Whitefield Briefings. Details of how to subscribe to the print version of Ethics in Brief (£15 per year for six issues) are available on the 'Publications' page of our website or through the KLICE office.

8. KLICE grantee programme update

The Winter 2009 issue of the Newsletter reported on the encouraging achievements of the first seven KLICE doctoral and postdoctoral grantees. In 2009-2010 we are continuing to support four KLICE grantees. Katherine Hogg, based at Leeds University, is working on the theology of reconciliation. Anthony Kaniaru is pursuing research in medical ethics at Durham University. Postdoctoral researchers Hilary Marlow and Jonathan Moo are continuing to work on a joint KLICE-Faraday Institute project on environmental theology and ethics, under the direction of KLICE Advisory Council member Prof. Bob White. For more information on the project see the description on the Faraday Institute website: <http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/faraday/Research.php> (Project 6).

Regrettably, due to funding limits we have been unable to offer any new grants this year. Our termly Research Seminars will continue, but we are seeking new sources of support to allow this flagship programme to continue and flourish in future years. The programme provides crucial practical, intellectual and spiritual support for young scholars set to make a real impact in church and society in various areas of Christian ethics. In addition to grantees, another fifteen or so doctoral students benefit from the intellectual stimulation and fellowship offered by our Seminars.

9. Tyndale Fellowship Ethics & Social Theology Study Group

The 2009 meeting of the Ethics & Social Theology Study Group (EST) of the Tyndale Fellowship takes place from 6-9 July at Tyndale House. 2009 is a 'Triennial' when all Groups meet simultaneously. This year the EST Group, of which the KLICE Director is secretary, joins forces with the New Testament Group with Ethics as its theme. For further information, visit the website: www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk ('Events and Institutes').

Jonathan Moo, KLICE grantee and Faraday Institute project researcher, will deliver this year's EST Tyndale Lecture, entitled: 'Continuity, discontinuity and hope: the contribution of New Testament eschatology to a distinctively Christian environmental ethos'. Tyndale Lectures are open to the public.

10. Recommended MA Programme

KLICE supporters will be interested in an innovative MA programme in Theology, Politics and Faith Based Organisation offered by King's College London (KCL), and taught by Dr. Luke Bretherton, Senior Lecturer in Theology and Politics and Convenor of the Faith and Public Policy Forum (and a former Whitefield Institute grantee). The course explores the theology and practice of church affiliated programmes, charities, social welfare services, Christian political initiatives and social movements. It is the only MA of its kind in the UK that combines the study of theology and the practice of Christian social, political and economic engagement in a contemporary context. It is an option within KCL's MA Programmes in Theology and Ministry, which are directed by Dr. Dominic Erdozain, recent speaker at the KLICE conference on 'Responding to Secularism'. For further information, visit the course website: <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/schools/sspp/education/courses/masters/theomod.html>

11. Strategic planning under way

The KLICE Advisory Council is undertaking a process of strategic planning to guide KLICE's work over the next five years. In the light of the encouragements and challenges of our first three years, the plan will set out KLICE's vision, mission, and priorities in detail. It will define a series of core goals to be approached via our central activities: supporting advanced research; holding events for academic and wider audiences; forming cooperative partnerships; developing publications; communicating to a range of publics. We will be exploring key questions about KLICE's identity and goals:

- 'What are KLICE's key strengths and opportunities?' Our emerging track record in academic research and publication in political theology will remain central, but we will identify other key areas of Christian ethics for priority attention. While other agencies are better placed to offer resources directly to local churches, we will also explore what our most useful contribution can be to churches or faith-based organisations, and reflect on how KLICE can better contribute to public debate.
- 'How can we best partner with kindred organisations without duplicating what they already do?' KLICE is not, for example, a campaigning organisation but does seek to support Christian groups engaged in this vital task in ways consonant with KLICE's own vision. Equally, excellent and effective Christian research and educational organisations already exist in areas such as environmental ethics, medical ethics and business ethics. So KLICE will consider how we might optimally contribute in these and other areas on the basis of our distinctive strengths.

- ‘How we can we expand our resource base to meet our strategic aspirations?’ In the first instance resources are, of course, people and networks: we shall consider how to further widen the community of people able to contribute their expertise and networks to KLICE in various ways. Resources are also financial: we will be examining how we can identify those visionary individuals and groups ready to fund a niche research-based organisation aiming to help ‘change the conversation’ about public ethics in the UK from a Christian perspective.

The Director would welcome your thoughts on how KLICE might develop over the next few years.

12. Director’s activities

- Participant at an inter-departmental ‘Politics and Divinity Workshop’ at Edinburgh University, 20 March, sponsored by Trinity Forum Europe.
- Opening speaker at the Postgraduate Forum of the Society for the Study of Christian Ethics, Edinburgh University, 21 March. The Forum is convened by KLICE grantee Joshua Hordern.
- Participant at a meeting of a public theology group initiated by the McDonald Centre, Oxford University, 26-27 March. Talking God was one of the featured publications under discussion.
- Opening speaker at the European regional conference of the International Association for the Promotion of Christian Higher Education (www.iapche.org), Netherlands, 20-23 April.
- Participant at Jubilee Centre’s ‘Cambridge Papers Open Day’, Cambridge, 4 May.
- Participant at annual conference of the ‘Law and Religion Scholars Network’, held on 5 May at Cardiff University Law School.
- Participant at Religion and Ethics in War and Peacemaking Programme, Cambridge, 13 May.
- MA class lecture on Talking God at London School of Theology, 15 May.
- Speaker at annual National Christian Postgraduate Conference, Dovedale, 19-21 June.
- Published chapter on ‘Globalization and Grace: An Exercise in Public Theology’, in M Goheen and E Glanville, eds., *Globalization and the Gospel: Probing the Religious Foundations of Globalization* (Paternoster, forthcoming July 2009).
- Completed editing of *and Conclusion for God and Government*, co-edited with Nick Spencer (SPCK, forthcoming). Aimed at political practitioners and activists as well as the general reader, this is an integrated collection of essays on what political theology has to say about the role of government in Britain today. Contributors include Bishop Tom Wright, Clifford Longley, Nigel Wright, Julian Rivers, Philip Booth, David McIlroy, Nicholas Townsend and Andrew Bradstock.
- Edited papers from the 2008 KLICE Book Colloquium which focused on Advisory Council member Brian Brock’s book, *Singing the Ethos of God* (Eerdmans 2007). The papers, written by Simon Woodman, Gordon Wenham, Bernd Wannewetsch, Hans Ulrich, Donald Wood and Brian Brock, form a special issue of *European Journal of Theology*, due October 2009.

13. Become a KLICE Associate

One of the most distinguished Christian ethicists in the world, Professor Oliver O’Donovan (Edinburgh), has written warmly about our work:

“The initiative which produced the Kirby Laing Institute for Christian Ethics was certainly the most encouraging development for scholars in the field in Britain since the foundation of the Society for the Study of Christian Ethics in the early eighties. An independent Institute that promotes teaching and research in the area throughout the country will be of very great importance to those working in the field.”

An excellent way to support the work of KLICE is to become a ‘KLICE Associate’. Associates pay a minimum of £60 per year and receive a subscription to the paper version of *Ethics in Brief*, invitations to public events, discounted conference fees, discounts on KLICE publications, access to the Tyndale House Library, and the Newsletter. For more information, visit our [‘Support’ page](#).

Currently we have 50 Associates: to secure our ongoing administrative needs, we seek 200. Please join the club!

Visit the KLICE website at www.klice.co.uk (new website under development)

14. Interim administrative arrangements for summer 2009

- Contact our office at: ethics@tyndale.cam.ac.uk
- Contact the Director, Jonathan Chaplin, at: klice@tyndale.cam.ac.uk 01223 566625

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