

Regulating the financial abuse of religious and spiritual capital.

Research Workshop, School of Law, 14 February 2019.

Religion is powerful, with the power of religion being a type of religious capital. Such power can be abused. Religious and spiritual fraud is a significant social problem, with one estimate of Christian fraud alone amounting to \$34bn per year globally. It also raises profound theoretical questions around the appropriate relationship between the state, religious and spiritual organisations and the community; and in particular the difficult question of the authority of the religiously pluralist state to determine facts in a religious context. The regulation of religious and spiritual power that results in financial gain to a religious leader or organisation needs to thread a difficult course through under-regulation (with the exposure of those whom regulation seeks to protect, and damage to the interests which underpin an area of regulation) and over-regulation (with the risk of excessive restriction of the religious or spiritual interests of individuals and organizations, and damage to the interests which religious rights seek to advance).

The workshop will be chaired by **Professor Peter Edge** (Professor of Law, Oxford Brookes University). **Professor Pauline Ridge** (Professor of Law, ANU; Visiting Fellow, Oxford Brookes University) will focus on the application of general rules around undue influence in the particular context of religious and spiritual financing. **Craig Allen** (Research student, Oxford Brookes University) will focus on the application of general criminal rules, particularly the Fraud Act 2006, in religious contexts.

The workshop will take place on the Headington Campus of Oxford Brookes University between 2 and 4pm on Thursday 14th of February 2019. Attendance is free, but places are limited. Please contact Craig Allen (17020595@brookes.ac.uk) to reserve a place.