

THEOLOGICON

EVENT PROGRAM 2017

SATURDAY,
NOVEMBER 11
2017.

Good. Evil.

Love. Loss. Hope. Mercy. Justice.

Explore how the Gospel and Christian-thought offer powerful perspectives on these timeless topics.

Theologicon: A Christian pop-culture conference.

TABOR

181 GOODWOOD ROAD, MILLSWOOD SA 5034

TIMETABLE

8:45	REGISTRATION				
9:15	WELCOME				
9.30	KEYNOTE 1	AARON CHALMERS			
9:30	<p>“On that day the LORD...will punish Leviathan the fleeing serpent...and he will kill the dragon that is in the sea” (Isa 27:1): the Bible and cultural engagement</p>	<p>We have often been led to think that our role as Christians is to apply the Bible to our modern cultural context. But what if the Bible itself is, at least in part, a product of cultural engagement? In this lecture we will explore how the Bible emerged through a process of interaction with ancient Near Eastern and Greco-Roman cultures, and how the experience of the biblical authors themselves may provide guidance for how we navigate this process of cultural engagement in the modern world.</p>			
10:10	KEYNOTE 2				
10:50	MORNING TEA				
11:10	KEYNOTE 3	DAVE BENSON			
	<p>Epic story: a methodology for cultural engagement</p>	<p>We’re surrounded by pop culture, but what does it mean? How do we locate these sweeping superhero sagas within the epic story of God’s mission to redeem the world? Learn how to make sense of cultural themes in a gospel frame, pointing people to Jesus as the true and better hero animating all our tales.</p>			
11:50	KEYNOTE 4	PAUL ARMISHAW			
	<p>The Man of Steel and the Son of Man: apologetics, popular culture and the distinctiveness of Christ</p>	<p>What is the connection between Christ and Superman? Christians who approach this question frequently highlight the layers of Christian symbolic imagery found in Superman films since the late 1970s. Fans of the comics often resist the Christianisation of their favourite hero, highlighting the unnecessary nature of such a comparison. This talk explores the way in which such conversations can be structured both to preserve the integrity of the popular culture icon and the distinctiveness of Christ, resulting in a culture-to-apologetic dialogue that is theologically sound and culturally sensitive.</p>			
12:30	LUNCH				
1:30	ARTEFACT SESSION 1	WOLVERINE / OLD MAN LOGAN	THE HUNGER GAMES	FIGHT CLUB AND TRAINSPOTTING	NICK CAVE
2:05	ARTEFACT SESSION 2	WONDER WOMAN	LORD OF THE RINGS	THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS	THE DC UNIVERSE
2:40	AFTERNOON TEA				
3:00	ARTEFACT SESSION 3	THE DC UNIVERSE	RIVERDALE	VARIOUS MARVEL AND DC	U2
3:35	ARTEFACT SESSION 4	VARIOUS MARVEL AND DC	VICAR OF DIBLEY AND REV	WOLVERINE / OLD MAN LOGAN	TBC
4:10	FINISH				

ARTEFACT SESSION 1

POP CULTURE ARTEFACT

SPEAKER

WOLVERINE / OLD MAN LOGAN

David Benson

Nihilism, antiheroes, and the quest for the authentic. Anchoring the *X-Men* franchise, Wolverine stands atop the growing assortment of anti-heroes. What makes *Logan* so enigmatic and appealing to postmoderns? And what does this mean for a sullied church in its quest to connect with a messy world?



Dave Benson is Director of Traverse (<http://traverse.org.au/>), Malyon College's Centre for Bridging Church and Culture, based in Brisbane. As a public theologian, Dave's passion is fostering a genuine dialogue in our post-Christendom context that draws diverse communities to work together for the flourishing of all. With his wife, Nikki, they lead Christ's Pieces (<https://christspieces.org/>), an organic Christian community.

THE HUNGER GAMES

James Cooper

Hope and *The Hunger Games*: how dystopian futures invite spiritual reflection. In popular film and literature, dystopian futures abound. Why do bleak portrayals of things to come arrest the imagination? What function do such stories serve? In sketching some answers to these basic questions, Dr James Cooper considers how Susanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* speaks keenly to our contemporary search for some ultimate cause for hope.

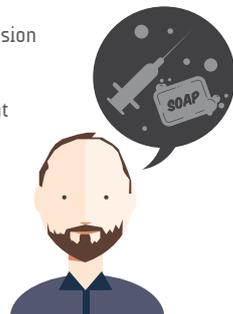


James Cooper is Senior Lecturer in Humanities and Coordinator of the Creative Writing program at Tabor. With over 16 years experience in both secondary and tertiary education, he currently lectures in ethics, logic, prose fiction and creative nonfiction. In 2016 his novel *Never Let Go* was shortlisted for the Text Prize. He is currently working on several books for younger readers.

FIGHT CLUB AND TRAINSPOTTING

Scott Berry

Choose life: movies that deconstruct our broken society. This session will explore the ways the movies *Trainspotting* and *Fight Club* examine modern life and reject the empty and vacuous ideals that are often sold as "the good life".



Scott Berry is senior pastor at Trinity Baptist Church in Colonel Light Gardens. Scott is an avid indie music fan who appreciates classic movies and especially loves when the collaboration of cinema and soundtrack powerfully comes together as seen in movies like *Trainspotting*.

NICK CAVE

Tim Hein

Do you love me? The presence of God in the lyrics of Nick Cave. This session will explore the enduring and evolving place of God in the work of Nick Cave, and what that may indicate about his unique place in rock music.



Tim Hein is Vice Principal / Director of Discipleship at Uniting College for Leadership & Theology. He speaks and preaches regularly on the Christian faith, blogs at timhein.com.au, and tweets @tim_hein

ARTEFACT SESSION 2

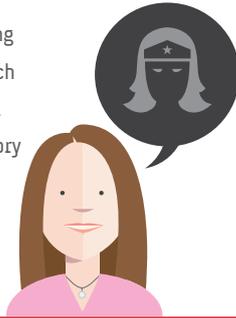
POP CULTURE ARTEFACT

SPEAKER

WONDER WOMAN

Melinda Cousins

It's **not about deserve**. Wonder Woman has been called both strong and naïve, a warrior and an idealist, a feminist and feminine. Much has been written about her gender and how her recent portrayal challenges many cultural views of women. But in the end, her story touches most profoundly on the question of what it means to be human. She pushes us to explore what we need but cannot deserve: grace.



Melinda Cousins lectures in biblical studies at Tabor and serves as Director of Ministry Accreditation for Baptist Churches SA. She loves to travel and think about how Jesus is at work and worshiped in different cultures. She 'thinks out loud' and loves a good discussion about the Bible, theology, culture, and life. Twitter: [@melindacousins](#); Blog: [melindacousins.com](#)

LORD OF THE RINGS

Mark Worthing

Messianic figures in JRR Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. This session will look at the dilemma faced by JRR Tolkien who wanted to create a world that reflected Christian monotheism, but did not want to include an obvious Christ figure such as his friend CS Lewis's Aslan in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. In seeking to avoid a Christ figure, Tolkien actually ended up producing some of the most striking messianic imagery in modern literature.



Mark Worthing is pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, North Adelaide and has a long-standing interest in Christianity and culture. He holds two doctorates and is the author of *The Matrix Revealed: The Theology of the Matrix Trilogy* (Pantaenus Press, 2004) and *Narnia, Middle-Earth and the Kingdom of God: A History of Fantasy Literature and the Christian Tradition* (Stone Table Books, 2016).

THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS

Mike Wardrop

Living life a quarter-mile at a time. *The Fast & the Furious* is one of the most successful movie franchises in history. Join us to explore issues of grace, redemption and eschatology that they raise, as well as why Vin Diesel doesn't know how to drink a beer.



Mike Wardrop is the Intergenerational Discipleship Developer with the Uniting Church in SA. He co-pastors Encounter Church in Prospect with his better half, Jenny, and has three extremely vocal children who fill his life with joy and volume. Social: [@mikewardrop](#) (Insta/Twitter)

THE DC UNIVERSE

Paul Armishaw

The internal theology of the DC extended universe: where is God in the midst of monsters, myth and mayhem? Steppenwolf, the villain from *Justice League*, is one of the 'New Gods' that make up Darkseid's inner circle. In this lecture we will explore how the concept of 'god' is used for both heroes and villains in the DC universe with reference to *Batman v Superman*, *Wonder Woman* and *Justice League*.



Paul Armishaw is a PhD candidate at Tabor with a specialisation in apologetics and popular culture narratives. A long-term superhero fan and comic book enthusiast, much of Paul's research explores the development of the superhero genre and its implications for responding to questions of identity and significance within a late-postmodern, Western context. Paul currently serves at Maida Vale Baptist Church and is actively involved in pastoral ministry as a chaplain with BaptistCare WA.

ARTEFACT SESSION 3

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RIVERDALE

Beth Hoy

When everything the same is different. In the Netflix original *Riverdale* series, Archie Andrews, Betty Cooper and Veronica Lodge are not the sweet, friendly and pure characters we once knew. So what can we learn about culture and our times from the way these well-known characters of the *Archie Comics* have been reworked for a modern audience?



Beth Hoy is the Next Gen Ministry Facilitator for the Baptist Churches of South Australia. With a background in youth and young adults ministry, popular media and its impact on youth culture has always been a topic of great interest to her.

VARIOUS MARVEL AND DC

Matthew Gray

Not so super any more: bad heroes and good villains. This talk surveys a variety of characters from Marvel, the DC *Justice League* and DC "Arrowverse" to show the rising ambiguity of the hero and villain tropes, contrary to previous incarnations of superheroes and their antagonists. This move seems to directly reflect the complexity of morality in a globalised culture, and yet is increasingly proving unsatisfying for audiences - why?



Matthew James Gray has been a lecturer at Tabor for nearly 10 years. He is currently finishing his PhD in early-modern history, having completed a Master of Theology, and a Bachelors degree with a major in cinema. Matt has frequently written and presented on the Christian undertones in cinema narratives. You can find him on <https://www.facebook.com/MattGrayTabor>

U2

Adrian Blenkinsop

Me, us & U2. U2 is a band that evokes strong responses. Since their debut album in 1980, they have been despised, embraced, scorned, and loved by millions. What is it about these 4 Irish lads that holds a mirror to the culture around them and evokes such diverse reactions?



Since experiencing his first U2 concert in Adelaide in 1984, Adrian Blenkinsop has been a fan of Bono and Co. When he's not listening to U2 he's working for a US-based Bible agency called One Hope, and as a Youth Ministry Coach with Churches of Christ in SA.

ARTEFACT SESSION 4

POP CULTURE ARTEFACT

SPEAKER

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REV AND THE VICAR OF DIBLEY

Joanna Hubbard

Priestly media(tors). This session will explore at the portrayal of priests in comedies, particularly Father Adam in *Rev* and Geraldine in *The Vicar of Dibley*. In a culture that associates the word 'priest' with paedophile, what might these two very likeable priests communicate about where our culture is open to engaging with faith and the prophetic voice of an interested God?



Joanna Hubbard is an ordained Minister who also has experience and training in community development and not-for-profit management. Currently working with Baptist Care SA as Senior Consultant for Church Community Development, Joanna has consulted with churches and charities in Australia and internationally.

WOLVERINE / OLD MAN LOGAN

David Benson

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TBC

TBC

TBC

TBC



SCREENING & PANEL DISCUSSION

THOR: RAGNAROK

LIFE, DEATH...AND THE END OF THE UNIVERSE

THE PLOT

Four years after the events of *Thor: The Dark World*, and two years after the events of *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, Thor is held captive on the planet Sakaar. Without his hammer, Thor must win a gladiatorial duel against his old friend The Hulk, before returning to Asgard to stop the villainous Hela (goddess of death) and the impending Ragnarok, the doom of the Asgardian civilization.

THE PANEL

Marvel comics and movies are a lot of fun, and they also explore some of life's biggest issues- hope, evil, sacrifice, responsibility, and redemption. Join us for a short panel discussion immediately following the movie to unpack some of its significant themes. The panel will be hosted by Julian Grobler (storyteller, producer and actor at Three Kings Pictures), and include Kari Seeley (media personality), Matthew Gray (lecturer in culture and Christian thought at Tabor College), and special guest Daniel Zachariou (founder of Supanova Comic Con and Gaming).

DETAILS

MONDAY 13TH NOVEMBER

6:30-9:00

WALLIS CINEMAS MITCHAM

RSVP

TICKETS: \$13 (PLUS BOOKING FEE)

BOOK TICKETS ONLINE AT:

[HTTPS://GOO.GL/J7RWAC](https://goo.gl/j7RWAC)

Any queries, contact Michelle Ellis:
mellis@adelaide.tabor.edu.au

