

report

ferent kinds of movements. The second panel titled “The State of Play Today,” was moderated by Rhys Williams (Loyola University Chicago), and included Ruth Braunstein (University of Connecticut), Jack Delehanty (Clark University), Evan Stewart (University of Massachusetts Boston), and Aaron Weinstein (Fairfield University). The second panel focused on predicting how various Christian Nationalist movements would influence the 2024 elections. Their predictions proved to be cannily on the mark.

The Boisi Center partnered with Dan Joslyn-Siemiatkoski (director of BC’s Center for Christian-Jewish Learning) to host Robert P. Jones on October 8th. Jones is the founder and director of the Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI), an important online resource for scholars and students interested in how religion interacts with political culture in the United States. Jones is widely considered the “go to” expert on the numbers and size of religious groups and movements in the United States. His presentation entitled, “Christian Nationalism, Religious Pluralism, and the 2024 Election,” offered detailed insights on

arguing that Jewish “middle brow” literature in the 1940s and 50s helped to shape post-Holocaust American Jewish identity. R. Ward Holder of St. Anselm College in New Hampshire and longtime friend of the Center, led a gripping conversation on the current political debates from the perspective of a “passion” responses from the standing-room-only crowd gathered for what one of the participants described as “lunch food for the brain.” Bernadette McCauley drew a broad mix of students, faculty, and university neighbors on October 22nd for her talk, “Our Stories Need to be Told: Memoirs of Former Nuns.” McCauley has spent most of her career at Hunter Col-

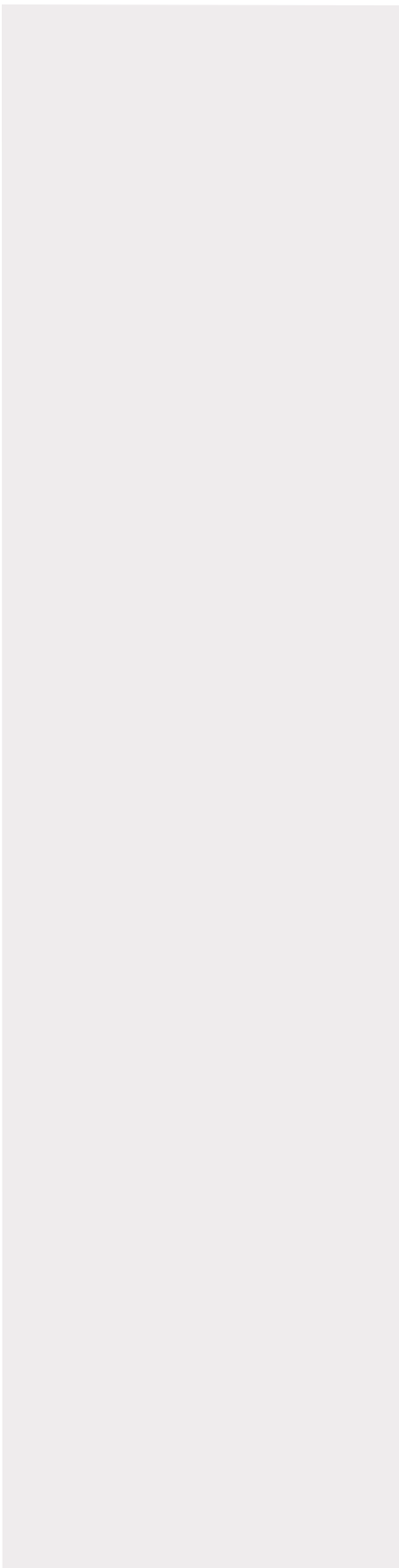


Boisi had a busy fall, with a lively spring peaking over the horizon.

On October 17th, Diane Winston (professor at the University of Southern California)

gave the 6th Annual Wolfe Lecture on Religion and American Politics. Her lively presentation, “From Reagan’s Revolution to Trump’s Insurrection: The Role of the Religious Imaginary in American Politics,” was a condensed version of her well-received monograph, *Righting the American Dream*, published earlier last year. Starting at the current divisions in American society led inexorably to the rise of MAGA and the events of January 6th, 2021.

On October 29th, Boisi sponsored two panel presentations on “Christian Nationalism and the 2024 Election.” After a morning seminar for discussion among the presenters, the afternoon’s public panels were divided into two parts. The first, “Christian Nationalist Trarnioniaifthr(d i)-14 fbl(i)9.5-14.3 (n)10b.8 (t)-3Mostiorl (o)9.8 (s)4.97 (O)12.1(r)s-1.4 ((t)1.9 (9 (ost)i2 (i)9.5 (O -1.3) thnostb((i)-4h R.4 (te)-8 (a)-16.4i)-46.1 (n s)0.9 (o)20.5 ln)10.dl(v)-bnliost (s)-5.4 o.85.7 (s)-5.4 e aforsoUniversity), who each offered riveting glimpses into the different parts of a dense forest that is Christian Nationalism – a fragile coalition of often very-dif-



On October 29th, 2024, the Boisi Center hosted a panel series entitled, “Christian Nationalism and the 2024 Election.” The event was comprised of two panels. Mark Silk, an emeritus professor of religion and public life at Trinity College Hartford, moderated the first panel on “Christian Nationalist Traditions.” The panel members included Nancy Ammerman, a professor emerita at Boston University’s School of Theology; Cheryl Townsend Gilkes, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Professor Emerita in

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Dr. Bernadette McCauley offered a thought-provoking presentation about the lives of former nuns. The Hunter College professor emerita shared that her project began because she read a book review about the memoir of an ex-nun. After

Christian Nationalism, Religious Pluralism, and the 2024 Election

Robert P. J. ... a ... a ... ab ... C ... Na ... a ... S a .

A Conversation with Coach Bill O'Brien about Faith, Football, and Boston College

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On November 1, 2024, the Boisi Center for Religion and American Public Life hosted Boston College head football coach Bill O'Brien for a conversation about faith, football, and BC with the center's director,

Mark Massa, S.J. For the first half of the event, Massa interviewed O'Brien, then he opened up the conversation for question and answer with an engaged audience for the second half of the event.

The conversation centered around both football and what it means for O'Brien to work at a Jesuit school. The Jesuit values of the BC community was a central theme for O'Brien. He mentioned the power of having a Catholic mass before games, and that he wants to instill in his players the value of being "men for others." He noted that much of the team is active in serving the community.

Other dimensions of Boston College's culture were also discussed. O'Brien recognizes that BC has a culture of hard-working students, which he also expects from his players and uses as a selling point in recruiting. He emphasized that he is not looking for student-athletes who are concerned with making the most money, but rather those who want to work hard and succeed on multiple levels, including academically. He told the audience that he talks with his players often about the value of a Boston College education. Given that, statistically, most college athletes will not go on to be professionals, having an excellent education is important for their future success. Regarding football recruitment, O'Brien noted that he intends to bring in recruits primarily from high school programs and have them play for their entire collegiate career.

“Faith, Football, and Boston College,” included thirty minutes of conversation about how the new head coach saw BC’s Catholic and Jesuit identity fitting in with the football program, followed by thirty minutes of questions from the long queue of students who lined up behind the standing mic in the front of the amphitheater. The new head coach received long (and thunderous) applause at the end of the event.

The Boisi Center’s interdisciplinary faculty seminar – meeting monthly for dinner and lively conversation – drew faculty from many departments in the Morrissey College (history, sociology, political science, communications, international studies, theology) as well as from the Clough School of Theology and Ministry

and the Connell School of Nursing. And even by that group’s high standards, we had raucous, but always interesting, debates on a spectrum of readings and podcasts: Stanford University’s May 2024 “It’s in the Air’: Antisemitism and Anti-Israeli Bias at Stanford, and How to Address It”; The Atlantic’s podcast Autocracy in America, hosted by Anne Applebaum and Peter Pomerantsev; and Mara Einstein’s provocative essay, “Hoodwinked: How Marketers Use the Same Tactics as Cults.” Our two-hour conversations flew by, and a number of seminar participants lingered on long after the 8pm end of the meetings to continue the discussion and debate. BC is blessed with talented and committed faculty, and Boisi draws

some of the best to its faculty seminar.

Suzie Richard, Boisi’s wonderful administrator, makes all the trains run on time (not a trivial task, given all the stuff that goes on here in the course of a week). And Maddie Jarrett, our graduate research assistant in charge of a daunting array of tasks (publicity, event coordination, podcast production, etc.) makes her many duties look easy (they’re not) and even fun (sometimes they are!). Our two Undergraduate Research Fellows – seniors Joey Monti and Liam Adamczyk – are full of great ideas (like the Coach O’Brien event) and more than willing to take on the tasks that send them all over campus. I’m privileged to be part of a great team.

~ Mark Massa, S.J.

coming up this spring at the boisi center

january 28, 2025 | 6:00 - 7:15pm, [rsvp recommended](#)

“Russia’s War Against the West,” Ambassador John Sullivan

february 6, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00pm, [rsvp required](#)

“‘Under my Skin:’ Tattoos and Religion,” Gustavo Morello

february 18, 2025 | 6:30 - 7:30pm, [rsvp recommended](#)

A Conversation with Coach Greg Brown on Faith, Jesuit Culture, and the BC Hockey Team

february 20, 2025 | 5:00 - 6:30pm, [rsvp recommended](#)

22nd Annual Prophetic Voices Lecture, “Christian Antifascism in Charlottesville,” Eric Martin

february 25, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00pm, [rsvp required](#)

“American Religious Darwinism: Teaching Islam in American Protestant Seminaries during the Gilded Age,” David Grafton

february 27, 2025 | 5:00 - 6:30pm, [rsvp recommended](#)

The Alfred and Melissa Di Leonardo Lecture Series, “Catholicism Represented: Democracy, Religion and Global History, 1789-2025,” with John McGreevy

march 25, 2025 | 5:30 - 7:00pm, [rsvp recommended](#)

Inaugural Nancy Marzella Lecture on Women and American Catholicism, “Enslaved to the Jesuits: What Women of the First U.S. Diocese can tell us about Women in the Church,” Jeannine Hill Fletcher

march 26, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00pm, [rsvp required](#)

“Take Me to the Water: Black Madonnas and the Initiation of Possibility,” Amey Victoria Adkins-Jones

april 2, 2025 | 5:30 - 7:00pm, [rsvp recommended](#)

“Catholic Fundamentalism in America,” a panel event on Fr. Mark Massa’s latest book

april 5, 2025 | 9:00 - 3:00 pm, [rsvp required](#)

5th Annual Graduate Student Conference, “Accessing the Divine: Religious Sources of Resilience in an Age of Political Turmoil”

april 10, 2025 | 12:00 - 1:00 pm, [rsvp required](#)

“Muslim and Catholic Experiences of National Belonging in France,” Carol Ferrara

for more information about these and all our events, visit: bc.edu/boisi