

e-newsletter - february 2010

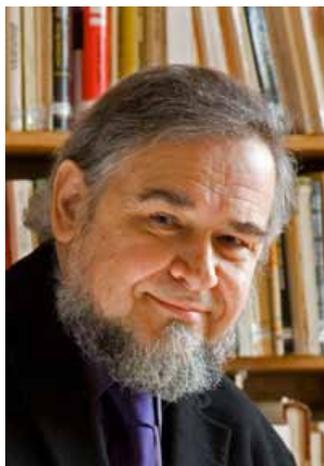
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ANZATS / ANZSTS Conference 2010

'The Future of God': Paul Fiddes to be main speaker

The Revd Professor Paul Fiddes has accepted the invitation of the organising committee to be the main speaker at the 2010 ANZATS / ANZSTS Conference.



Dr Fiddes is Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Oxford, and Director of Research at Regents' Park College. He took undergraduate degrees in both English Literature and Theology at Oxford, and continues to have a particular interest in the interface between theology and literature. Following his DPhil in Theology from Oxford, he spent a year of post-doctoral study in the University of Tübingen, Germany. In 2005 he gained the degree of Doctor of Divinity (DD) of the University of Oxford for his published work.

Professor Fiddes taught as a Fellow of Regent's Park College from 1972 to 1989, and was then Principal for 18 years. He is currently its Director of Research, in which position he is mainly occupied with supervising postgraduate students and coordinating research projects of the College.

Dr Fiddes is an ordained minister of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, and serves as the chair of the Doctrine Commission of the *Baptist World Alliance*. He is very active in ecumenical conversations, and is at present the co-chair of the international conversations

between the Roman Catholic Church and the *Baptist World Alliance*, as well as an ecumenical representative on the Synod of the Church of England.

This mixture of academic and church life has been focused on a double concern: to connect Christian faith with the culture of the modern world, and to connect the local church with the riches of faith and tradition in the Church Universal.

His research and teaching interests include modern systematic theology, in particular the doctrines of the Trinity and Atonement; theology and literature; postmodernism; the impact of modern continental philosophy on literary theory and theology; theology of culture; ecclesiology. Professor Fiddes is the author of about 80 articles, and of more than a dozen books, including *The Promised End. Eschatology in Theology and Literature* (Blackwell, 2000), *Participating in God. A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity* (Darton, Longman and Todd, 2000) and *Tracks and Traces. Baptist Identity in Church and Theology* (Paternoster Press, 2003).

Paul Fiddes will address the theme of the ANZATS conference, 'The Future of God' in two plenary sessions and a public lecture, and also contribute to the MCD Centenary conference from his expertise in literature and theology. □

Call for Papers - page 4

**Register online from
www.anzats.edu.au**

Your secretary writes ...

Welcome to another ANZATS Newsletter! As always, please share it round with your faculty and students (especially those undertaking research degrees).

2010 Conference: 'The Future of God'

The next ANZATS / ANZSTS Conference takes place at Trinity College, Parkville Victoria from **July 7 - 9th 2010**, and the **Call for Papers** is included in this Newsletter.

The *Melbourne College of Divinity* celebrates its centenary in 2010: in recognition of this milestone, some years ago ANZATS decided to locate its conference in Melbourne. The MCD has arranged its Centenary conference on the theme, 'The Future of Religion in Australia', from July 5-7: while this and the ANZATS conference are separate events, the Wednesday will be an 'overlap' day, and registration for both conferences is encouraged.

As usual, **two student scholarships** are available, covering registration plus \$500 towards travel and accommodation - application forms are included with this Newsletter and are available on the ANZATS website, 'Conferences'.

One 'tradition' at ANZATS / ANZSTS Conferences is **book launches**. If you know of a book which it would be appropriate to have sent on its way at the 2010 Conference, please let me know.

A **Conference Dinner** is planned for the Thursday evening, and the **Annual General Meetings** of ANZATS and ANZSTS will take place on the Friday afternoon, immediately following the conference final session.

ESOS Submission and Report

ANZATS made a submission in 2009 to the Enquiry into the operation of the *Education Scheme for Overseas Students* (ESOS) Act, and in January received a copy of the interim ESOS Review report (the final one is due in March).

I have marked sections of the Report that are of direct relevance to theological institutions in red, and circulated it to members, and it is also available on the ANZATS website. ANZATS's submission is listed on the DEEWR website (www.aei.gov.au/esosreview, along with hundreds of others!) and I am glad to say that the concerns expressed in it seem have been largely addressed.

AUQA review of NSAI Audits

AUQA is now responsible for all audits of universities and *Higher Education Providers*, of which some 80 *Non-Self-Accrediting Institutions* (NSAIs) include theological colleges and Christian tertiary institutions as a significant sub-set. (At the Principals' Conference, Karen Treloar, AUQA NSAI Audit Director, spoke of her auditing experience.)

Some twenty NSAI audits have now been completed. AUQA asked Prof Hilary Winchester (University of SA) to review the first ten, which included four theological institutions. The report is available from myself, or www.auqa.edu.au/qualityenhancement/publications/other/.

One pleasing outcome is that commendations relating to the student learning experience 'pertained particularly to the Theological Colleges and Christian foundations'.

The 'summary of issues' might be a brief read, but raises significant issues. In particular, 'gaps in institutional governance, academic governance and moderation' are noted. So, if your HEP's governing body does not meet the National Protocols, or you don't have an effective and independent Academic Board - get cracking!



The need for more benchmarking is marked generally an 'area of improvement' - active participation in ANZATS and its networks is of course one way to respond to this!

A further review of the next ten NSAI audits is expected to be issued in the next couple of months.

Principals' Conference 2009

Twenty participants engaged in a full 48 hours' conference at 'Amberley', on the Yarra River in Melbourne, on October 4-5th 2009, addressing the theme 'Managing Theological Education: Finance and Compliance'. A summary was circulated to principals late in 2009, and is included in this Newsletter for wider distribution.

Constitution and money matters

The new Constitution, adopted at the 2009 AGM, is now in operation: in particular, its clarity has assisted me in communicating with membership enquiries.

You will glad to know that ANZATS' expenditure and income for 2009 remained within budget. The July conference made a small profit (largely due to the last-minute withdrawal of the UK speaker), the Principal's conference made a small loss (though much less than budgeted) but legal costs relating to the Constitution review were an additional item. Audit of the 2008 books awaits, but is promised to be done with those for 2009.

The Council has agreed to these fees for 2010:

Associate Member	AUD \$175
Member, < 100 students	AUD \$275
Member, > 100 students	AUD \$450
Consortium	AUD \$500

Expect your invoice in February - I am delighted to report that every member school paid their subscription for 2009 during the calendar year: thank you !

New ANZATS member schools

ANZATS welcomes a new member for 2010: the Theology Programme at the University of Newcastle, established in 2007. The Morpeth Professor Theology, John McDowell, will be speaking at the 'overlap' plenary at the MCD and ANZATS/ANZSTS Conferences on Wednesday July 7.

I am glad to say that enquiries are coming from other theological institutions: ANZATS embraces all degree-level colleges in New Zealand, and the vast majority of them in Australia - all are welcome!

Charles Sherlock

Executive Officer / Secretary and Treasurer, ANZATS

Theological Education in World Christianity: New WCC / WOCATI Report

A 'world study on theological education' took place from November 2008 to August 2009, as part of the Edinburgh 2010 study process (www.edinburgh2010.org). Its outcomes were released in December, and are available as a 97-page book (of which ANZATS has a copy and can send a PDF - it is also available at www.oikoumene.org/?id=4976).

The Report makes the bold claim that 'theological education is the seedbed for the renewal of churches, their ministries and mission and their commitment to church unity in today's world'. It is significant in several ways.

- It is both *current*, using 1990s data, and also gives examples from earlier times, including an important historical overview of theological education in 'Younger Churches' (an Edinburgh 1910 term).
- It is about *theology*, not vague religiosity or bureaucratic ecclesiality, facing theological perspectives both from within and beyond the 'official' ecumenical movement.
- Input comes from 'north' and 'south', 'east' and 'west', though Australia and New Zealand vanish with barely

a trace - one citation from a *Colloquium* article in missionary training is about it!

- Africa - the whole continent - is singled out time and again as desperately needing relevant theological education.

One feature which helps this Report go beyond generalities is the evident willingness to be self-critical about every aspect of theological education - and the Report itself.

The study was undertaken jointly by the World Conference of Associations of Theological Institutions (WOCATI), of which ANZATS is a member, and the WCC's Ecumenical Theological Education desk.

Many issues in the Report will be known to ANZATS members, but it is a significant resource. It is interesting to compare it with *Uncovering Theology*, warmly welcomed by Dr Dietrich Werner, ETE Global Coordinator, last year. □



Principals' Conference: 'Managing theological education: finance and compliance'

The third ANZATS Principals' Conference took place at Amberley, Melbourne from October 5-7th. The theme - nominated by those present at the previous conference - was 'Managing theological education: finance and compliance'. Four speakers made presentations, mingled with active discussion:

Charles Sherlock: 'Australian theological education - contexts', arising from the *Uncovering Theology* project.

Richard Cardew: 'Estimating teaching costs in Australian higher education'. Richard, formerly of the *Centre for Environmental and Urban Studies* at Macquarie University, and a Director of the *Australian College of Theology*, was present for the whole of the conference.

His presentation repeatedly underscored the importance of adequate financial support for the sustaining of good quality, people-enhancing theological education. Two interesting conclusions arose from his spreadsheets:

- a) a class size of 20 is where financial factors become most efficient - less than 10 (except in some PG seminars) is pedagogically and resource wasteful;
- b) distance education / flexible delivery, while it might appear to be cheaper, is as costly as face-to-face mode, and savings from using sessional staff are small. The major costs of higher education are overheads: library, buildings (owned or rented), staff oncosts and administration (essential to support sound learning).

Karen Treloar: 'Managing Theological Education: the contributions of the *Australian Universities Quality Agency*' (AUQA). Karen is the Audit Director, Non Self-Accrediting Institutions at AUQA, and directed several audits of theological institutions.

In discussion, the importance of data gathering to assist planning was stressed. Two Key Performance Indicators

which interest government are enrolments, retention and completions (difficult for theology). Typical issues from a college perspective include teaching practice, student satisfaction (the GCA CEQ could be sued more), research activity, financial viability, staff workload /support / relationships and infrastructure.

In response to questions about benchmarking (a mystery to many!) Karen said that this revolves around genuine relationships, not just data: 'Who is doing this best? What can we learn?' And its topics range from enrolment procedures to formation outcomes.

The impending establishment of the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency* (TEQSA) raises the issue of 'standards'. In general, the formation of a national accreditation body was welcomed, though how will relate to AUQA-style audits is not yet clear.

NB: an excellent paper on 'standards' was given by Prof Chris Brinks (UK) at the July 2009 AUQA Forum: www.auqa.edu.au/files/auqf/paper/brinkauqf.pdf.

Shirley Stokes: 'Accreditation of Theological Schools - the role of the State'. Shirley recently retired as Manager, Quality and Regulation Higher Education Directorate, NSW Department of Education.

Shirley's paper led to lively discussion about what 'faith-based' education meant: is any institution free of such? She stressed the importance of bringing 'outside eyes' to governance and review. Asked about multi-streaming, she noted that this was not banned, but that it is only likely to be allowed with explicit approval.

In addition, time was given for personal interaction, and walking in the delightful grounds of Amberley (on the banks of the Yarra). Overall, this was a positive and engaging opportunity for all participants. □

2010 ANZATS / ANZSTS Conference:

July 7-9, Trinity College, Melbourne

Professor Paul Fiddes: 'The Future of God'

Eschatology and the global challenges of the future

That God 'will be who God will be' is not in question. Yet the future of God's people, of humanity, of the earth, of the whole cosmos – these are very much open questions.

Christian faith places its trust in the One who raised Jesus from the dead, the great sign of the prophets' vision of a new creation in which all things would be transformed. What does it mean to live in the light of this hope, that the future is God's? How shall we speak of the unknown – and the unknowable?

The 2010 ANZATS/ANZSTS Conference will explore these questions, drawing on the scriptures, the Christian tradition, and the natural and social sciences.

The Conference is being held at Trinity College Theological School, Parkville Victoria, in conjunction with the Centenary Conference of the *Melbourne College of Divinity*, whose theme is 'The Future of Religion in Australian Society', aiming to engage wide public dialogue: its conference runs from Monday July 5 to Wednesday July 7.

The ANZATS / ANZSTS Conference is from Wednesday July 7 to Friday July 9. On the Wednesday, the opening ANZATS/ANZSTS and final MCD plenary will be shared, addressed by Professor John McDowell (Newcastle University Theology Programme).

Members' papers will be offered on each day of the ANZATS / ANZSTS Conference (see 'Call for Papers' below).

The ANZATS and ANZSTS AGMs will take place on Friday afternoon, with the ANZATS Council meeting in the evening and on Saturday July 10.

The *Australian Catholic Biblical Association* and the *Australian Catholic Theological Association* will commence their annual conferences on the Friday.

This conjunction of conferences offers ANZATS and ANZSTS members a unique opportunity to engage in complementary approaches to the question of hope.

Fees:	ANZATS/ANZSTS:	AUD \$275
(to May 31,	Student / unwaged	AUD \$195
then \$295	MCD Conference:	AUD \$275
or \$545)	Both Conferences:	AUD \$495

plus ANZATS/ANZSTS Conference dinner AUD \$75
(Accommodation details will be available on the website.)

Charles Sherlock is coordinating the ANZATS/ANZSTS conference: secretary@anzats.edu.au. The administration will be through CLEMS, in conjunction with the MCD.

For up-to-date details, see the ANZATS website:

www.anzats.edu.au

Call for Papers

The committee for the 2010 ANZATS / ANZSTS conference invites proposals for papers to be presented at the conference, whose theme is 'The Future of God: Eschatology and the global challenges of the future'.

Guidelines for proposals

Papers relating to the conference theme are encouraged, but (as is ANZATS / ANZSTS's custom) other theological topics may be explored. As a rough guide it is suggested that papers fall within or overlap these categories:

- Eschatology in the scriptures and deuterocanonical literature
- Eschatology in particular periods of church history (eg patristics, the Reformation and aftermath, the turn of the first and second millennia)
- Ecumenical theological dimensions of eschatology, especially in responding to contemporary ecclesial / social / economic / ecological issues and disciplines
- 'The future' and the life of the churches, especially in Australian and New Zealand.

Proposals for papers in areas outside the theme are welcome, especially to enable participants to test their findings in current areas of research (including research students).

The time allowed for each paper is 30 minutes, plus 15 minutes for questions and discussion – 45 minutes in all.

Particular guidelines:

- Proposals should be e-mailed to Charles Sherlock by Friday, 26 March 2010 at secretary@anzats.edu.au.
- Proposals should be about 200–250 words long and must include
 - o your full name, title, institution (or location), email, phone / mobile number, and mailing address;
 - o title, aim, and indication of the position being put;
 - o any additional information that may help the committee weigh your submission.
- It is helpful if you can demonstrate how the paper fits into relevant discussion, among scholars, within the churches, and preferably both.
- Please indicate if you have an interest in creating a forum, for example to discuss a significant new book, to focus on a discrete area of specialisation, or to discuss recent trends in theological education.
- Indicate audio-visual equipment your presentation needs.

All proposals will be peer-reviewed, and responses made by Friday, June 4, 2010. Papers presented at the conference can be submitted for consideration of publication to *Colloquium* (the journal of ANZSTS) or *Pacifica* (of which the MCD is the major sponsor). □