

e-newsletter - july 2010

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ANZATS / ANZSTS Conference 2010

Stimulating plenaries - *and much more besides!*

Paul Fiddes gave four first-rate addresses during the MCD / ANZATS / ANZATS conferences 5-9th July.

Dr Fiddes, Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Oxford, Director of Research at Regents' Park College and a leading English Baptist theologian, offered two pairs of papers.

The first pair - delivered on Tuesday and Wednesday - took up 'Theology and Literature'. One analysed the work of Patrick White, while the second (ANZATS' Public Lecture) considered 'ambiguity' as a theological motif in Shakespeare, William Blake (illustrated by dramatic slides) and T.S. Eliot. These addresses were very warmly received, not least in helping Australian listeners reflect on important voices from their own heritage and the wider Western cultural heritage.

Professor Fiddes' two Thursday plenary addresses took up the theme of the ANZATS conference: 'the Future of God: escatology in global perspective'. In both these papers - and indirectly in the two earlier ones - Paul challenged the notion of 'simultaneity' of time in eternity, arguing for a more dynamic understanding of God's interaction with the 'temporal' in relation the 'new creation' which already impinges on us through the Spirit.

Dr Fiddes was able to join in the ANZATS dinner before leaving to return to England so as to be able to be at the Church of England General Synod, since he co-chairs the Baptist-Anglican dialogue.



Friday - science, pedagogy, research and AGMs

The Friday morning plenary address was given by Dr Nicola Hoggard Creegan (Laidlaw College, New Zealand). Her focus was on the way scientific learning impinges on Christian theological reflection on reality. The motif running through the address, 'The wheat and the tares,' took up the notion that, as with the people of God, the paradox of suffering alongside good is best interpreted from the viewpoint of the new creation, rather than evil being only predicated upon human sin. As one might expect, there was some lively discussion!

Professor Andrew Wells, Executive Director (Humanities and the Creative Arts) Australian Research Council, was the focal person for a mid-morning panel on theology and research funding. The session was led by Professor Paul Oslington (ACU), with the Directors of Research from theological consortia engaged in research.

The afternoon continued the focus on theological schools through a lively presentation from Professor Brian Edgar (Asbury Seminary) on assessment and learning - including an exercise for all participants, and engagement with issues arising from the rapid emergence of online delivery.

AGM can be stultifying, but ANZATS now uses them to consider wider issues in theological education. So - after just 19 minutes for the formal ANZATS and ANZSTS AGMs - Dr Les Ball introduced the *Transforming Theology* project, after which Dr Robert McIver led 100 minutes of discussion on the draft Threshold Learning Outcomes for a graduate with a first degree in theology. Representatives from all 19 Australian theological Higher Education Providers were present for this session, together with Mr Adam Morgan (*Australian Learning and Teaching Council*).

And in and around all this activity were two dozen members' papers, chapel and the dinner - a good week!

Your secretary writes ...

Welcome to another ANZATS Newsletter, especially to the two latest ANZATS members, the Theology Programme at the University of Newcastle, and Sydney Missionary and Bible College (SMBC).

Major projects

Two events have dominated the past few months:

- the annual Conference, written up elsewhere; and
- the Threshold Learning Outcomes project, in which ANZATS is assisting the *Council of Deans of Theology*: a paper I wrote after the AUQA Forum in July explaining the background to this, and TEQSA, is attached to this Newsletter.

In addition, I am glad to have been able to assist some member colleges in reviewing AUQA and re-accreditation submissions, to engage in ongoing dialogue with AUQA (including being a member of the Joint Steering Group for its 2010 Forum), and correspond and consult with a wide variety of people and places regarding theological education in New Zealand and Australia.

ABC Encounter on theological education

One particularly interesting experience was being recorded by Margaret Coffey for the ABC's *Encounter* programme about the history of theological education in Australia, and its place and nature today. This contact arose from the *Uncovering Theology* project, and was occasioned by the MCD Centenary conference. It went to air on 11 and 14 July, and I was pleased to hear from most of the traditions and 'types' of institutions involved - a transcript is available on the ABC Radio National website.

Encounter on 1 and 3 August also broadcast the first of Paul Fiddes' ANZATS plenaries. David Busch (ABC Religion) was present throughout the week, and recorded all plenaries: he has provided me with a full set, and it is planned to send copies to all ANZATS members' libraries.

Incorporation

Meanwhile, in the background, I have been working steadily away at the processes of having ANZATS register as a 'public company limited by guarantee' - and this has now occurred, as of 23rd July 2010. Each of the Directors has graciously agreed to be up for a maximum of \$10 if anything goes really wrong!

Finances - audited at last!

Which also reminds me to say that the Accounts for 2008 and 2009 have finally received their official audit tick: this matter had become somewhat confused in the 2008 handover but has now been resolved, and at the AGM on 9th July 9 audited accounts were able to be tabled. These show that the Association made a small loss in 2008 (in part due to timing factors), and a more substantial one in 2009, of nearly \$5,000. This loss was wholly due to the legal costs associated with drafting and adopting a new Constitution, such that incorporation could follow. In 2010 the budget looks to be balanced, though indemnity and public liability insurance is not cheap.

Partly as a result of these costs, but more because subscriptions had not been raised for at least three years, membership fees were increased for 2010, and the membership status of all colleges reviewed. The reserves of the ANZATS remain healthy, however, with some \$20,000 on term deposit and the cheque book still in the black after the Conference.



Relations with ANZSTS

The *Australian and New Zealand Association for Theological Studies* (ANZSTS) was established as a twin body to ANZATS, for individual scholars rather than schools. Its main activities are co-sponsoring the annual conferences which ANZATS organises, and publishing *Colloquium: the Australian & New Zealand Theological Review*.

The editorial base for *Colloquium* moves each few years, and has been located in Auckland recently. The ANZSTS Executive has approached ANZATS with suggesting that the two bodies now merge, not least since ANZATS's 2009 Constitution provides for individual members.

The ANZATS Council responded warmly to the idea, and the 2010 AGMs agreed to appoint a four-member group to bring a recommendation to the 2011 AGMs. If any ANZATS-related people wish to comment, please do not hesitate to be in contact with myself, or Tim Meadowcroft (tmeadowcroft@laidlaw.ac.nz), for ANZSTS.

Looking forward, looking back

Looking back to when I began to take up the Executive Officer role, I note that

- ANZATS had just taken on new leaders, but whose roles did not match the existing Constitution;
- the *Uncovering Theology* project had not started; and
- the Council of Deans of Theology was still an informal committee, a good way short of its now comprehensive membership and structured existence.

In the couple of years since then, progress has been made internally, in fostering the working together of theological institutions in Australia and New Zealand, and externally through deeper engagement with public higher education and government agencies (notably DEEWR and AUQA, where theological education is viewed with growing respect). One plenary speaker noted at the recent AUQA Forum (reported elsewhere) that we live today in a 'culture of change'. The speaker argued that in this context, Higher Education should not aim at stability, so much as integrity and coherence, as it continues to adapt, learn from, and offer vision in such contexts.

I believe ANZATS has been able to play a significant catalytic role in the rapid changes of the past half-dozen years (can anyone recall what life was like pre-FEE-HELP?). I trust that, by the good grace of God, we are able to continue to do so - for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, not just for its own well-being, or even that of theological education.

Charles Sherlock, Executive Officer / Secretary and Treasurer

What's been happening in theology down under?

Regional reports for 2009-2010

Each year a major feature of the ANZATS Council is hearing reports from each regional member on what is happening in their state / nation. What follows is a precis of these reports and discussion.

Western Australia (Brian Harris)

1) The 'Theological Passions' Colloquium

The major theological colleges in Perth again cooperated to host a 'Theological Passions' Colloquium, held at Perth Bible College in November 2009.

A co-operative venture between Murdoch, Notre Dame, Vose, Trinity, Perth Bible College, Tabor and Harvest West, it is designed to allow scholars from each institution to share the fruit of their research. The Colloquium was well supported by both staff and students of these colleges. Papers presented were of a high standard, with much discussion. Another such Colloquium will be held in November 2010.

2) Update of ANZATS members in WA

Not all members were in a position to report, but the following summarises those which have done so (in alphabetical order).

Harvest West

Enrolments: Degree - 45; Diploma - 95; Cert IV - 46

EFSTL: 130

Enrolments: up significantly in first semester 2010, particularly in our Vocational programs: we believe that the availability of FEE HELP and VET FEE HELP is a significant factor, making study affordable for students.

Significant milestones: Re-registration of our Higher Education program as a Primary Provider, as well as accreditation of our Graduate Diploma in Theology with The office of Higher Education in Western Australia.

Notre Dame

Enrolments: BPhil - 13; Diploma - 15; BTh - 52; Masters - 31

EFSTL: 51.5 (excluding 'core' units for other awards)

Enrolments: the trend in Theology EFTSL appears to be upward, but the overall numbers as a continuation rate from one year to the next is downwards (though the figures include students taking a Leave of Absence).

Significant milestones: A new Dean commenced in July 2009 and a new course, Graduate Certificate in Liberal Arts, is being offered to students as of Semester 2 2010.

Staff achievements: one Philosophy and one Theology staff member were awarded their PhDs; one staff member became a Trustee of the University; and one Philosophy staff member was a judge for the WA School's *Philosothon*.

Perth Bible College

PBC is exploring a relationship with the SCD.

Tabor WA

Enrolments: VET - 14; Higher Ed - 50

EFSTL: 20

Enrolments: the total is down 14% from 2009. Higher Education enrolments have increased by 8% from 2009. VET enrolments have decreased by 38% from 2009.

Significant milestones: the College was going to close in June 2009, but then was given a new injection of finances and support and a rent-free venue. The campus moved to a less central location which lowered student numbers.

Staff achievements: one graduated with a Master in Ministry; one with a Masters in Forensic Sexology (and invited into a PhD program); one with BTh honours (and accepted into a PhD program); one presented a paper at the 'Theological Passions' Colloquium.

Trinity Theological College

Enrolments: BTh - 23; Grad Dip - 26; MDiv - 29

EFSTL: 46

Enrolments: are moving up out of the 'down' section of a 4 year cycle: increasing numbers in the full-time MDiv, but decreasing in full-time Grad Dip and BTh.

Significant milestones: the accreditation (with Vose Seminary) to provide the ACTh MTh and ThD research degrees, and the appointment of two new lecturers.

Vose Seminary (Baptist)

Enrolments: VET - 45; Higher Education (BMin, BTh, MDiv, MA, MTh, ThD) - 105

EFSTL: 90

Enrolments: these have increased steadily for several years, with an increasing number of younger students, this year including students straight from school, unusual for us.

Significant milestones: accreditation (with Trinity) to provide the ACT MTh and ThD research degrees; forming a partnership with the Mauritian Bible Institute to assist in the provision of some VET courses; Telford Work (Westmont, USA) was a guest lecturer at Vose during May

Vose hosted a 'Beyond 400' conference to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the founding of the first Baptist Church, with speakers Nigel Wright (UK) and Martin Sutherland (NZ).

Staff achievements: David Cohen and Michael Parsons edited *In Praise of Worship: An Exploration of Text and Practice* (Pickwick, 2010) to which most Vose staff contributed, supplemented by several international scholars - the third of our interdisciplinary texts (*Text and Task; On Eagles' Wings*). Michael Parsons returned to the UK where he has taken up a position with Paternoster Press, while Dr Michael O'Neil commenced as Director of Vose Research.

What's been happening in theology down under?

Regional reports for 2009-2010 - continued

Queensland / Northern Territory (David Pascoe)

The state chapter will again come together for a day later in 2010, inviting research students as well as faculty to participate.

Brisbane College of Theology

The most significant factor during 2009 in Queensland as regards theological education was the closure of the *Brisbane College of Theology*. Its former members (St Francis', St Paul's, Trinity) are now operating as follows:

- St Francis' (Anglican) has entered an affiliation agreement with St Mark's Canberra, a Theology campus of Charles Sturt University, and is now teaching towards its awards. A new Principal, Dr Steven Ogden, commenced in 2009
- St Paul's (Roman Catholic) is in its second year with ACU, and the transition has gone relatively smoothly - not a large increase in numbers, but ACU (Brisbane) numbers in Theology are now the its largest camps for theology. The formation of the Faculty saw a thorough review of the 'core' requirements for theological degrees.
- Trinity (UCA) has also affiliated with ACU, with a dozen former BCT units being taken over in the transition, and this is working well. Dr Geoff Thompson has become the Principal, with David Rankin going to the UK.

Trinity Theological College (Geoff Thomson, Principal)

The last 18 months have been a period of significant transition. We have been through the decision to close BCT, the successful negotiation of affiliation with ACU, and the first semester of its implementation. The closure of BCT has been a significant loss to the theological and ecumenical scenes in Queensland. Nevertheless, Trinity's relationship with ACU has enjoyed a very promising beginning during this first semester and holds much promise for the future.

Also contributing to the transitions has been the departure of the Principal, David Rankin, on June 30th to take up congregational ministry with the UK Methodist Church. David had been on the faculty of Trinity as Director of Studies in Church History since 1992, and served as Principal since 2004. He will be greatly missed.

Current staff include the Revd Dr Neil Sims (Ministry and Mission), the Revd Dr Malcolm Coombes (New Testament) and myself (Systematic Theology). Earlier we advertised for a Director of Studies in Old Testament: the appointment is still subject to UCA processes, but it is anticipated that the position will be filled by the beginning of 2011.

Trinity has 25 formation students, and many other UCA students at ACU whom we were able to track through BCT structures, but are working at a way of identifying them and incorporating them into the wider college programme .

Bible College of Queensland

BCQ has seen growth in buildings and students, with a new Principal now in place, Dr John Ferreira.

Citipointe / Christian Heritage (Sam Hey)

Citipointe Ministry College, a school within Christian Heritage College, has appreciated its participation in ANZATS over the last year, providing beneficial interaction and feedback. The college is transitioning well into new roles as notions of ministry training change and broaden.

Enrolments: increased by 50% in Semester 1 2010 on the previous year, reaching a head count of 130 students across the undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

Significant milestones: reaccreditation is taking place in 2010 through the Queensland OHE, and is being sought for the GradDip and Grad Cert in Ministry Studies, BMin and DipMin, plus the accreditation of two new courses. Over the summer, three new lecture rooms were built, with full multimedia and air-conditioning facilities, and six new faculty offices.

Student Progression: the ratio for 2009 was 88.4%; 67% of graduates progressed or continued in employment (either ministry or seeing their profession as ministry) and 13% pursued postgraduate education. Thus 80% of graduates are hus in full-time employment of further education, with 20% involved in voluntary ministry positions.

Nungalinya College (Rob Haynes and Maria Power)

In 2009, the College had to manage the Registered Training Organisation audit process. To manage this within the resources available, the delivery of Diploma subjects was suspended: priority was given to overhauling systems and policies as well as retraining some staff who, though equipped with Higher Education qualifications, had no qualifications or experience in the VET sector. This process, together with heavy demands on staff leading to an RTO audit in August 2009, saw the loss of teaching staff.

There are two full-time staff in the Theology Department, with others involved part-time. There is a new Cross-Cultural Awareness Department, and a full-time Student Services Officer has been appointed to assist students: this supplements the time given by staff who assume Dean duties for students of the different Christian traditions in the College.

It is anticipated that, with the development of a new Diploma of Theology by Wontulp-Bi-Buya and sufficient staff, Diploma subjects will also be offered through Nungalinya in 2011.

Amid the changes and evolution required in 2009, Nungalinya celebrated many milestones with students including:

- completion of Diploma by Russell Bryant, Yalata SA, and his ordination to ministry in the Lutheran Church;
- the ordination of Lois Nadjamerrek, Oenpelli NT, an Anglican member of the Governing Board, as deacon;
- Ordination of Anglican Theology students: Michael Millar (priest, Minyerri), Yulki Nunggumajbarr (Numbulwar), Andrew and Carol Robertson (deacons, Ngukurr);

What's been happening in theology down under?

Regional reports for 2009-2010 - continued

- launch of the Bible Dictionary produced for use among Indigenous Christians, written by Joy Sandefur and Sr Gabrielle Kelly OP and produced through the assistance of the *Australian Theological Research Foundation Inc*, and ATPress in Adelaide.

Over the years, a significant number of Indigenous people have been requesting that Nungalinga College specifically teach reading and writing in English to facilitate further study in theology. To meet this need in 2010, Nungalinga delivers blocks of modules from the Introduction to Vocational Education Certificate I (IVEC). There are now three IVEC pathways for students to choose from:

- IVEC Family and Community Services for Indigenous adults who want more skills to prepare for work
- IVEC Creating Indigenous Futures for Indigenous Darwin youth preparing for work and apprenticeships
- IVEC BIBLE for Christians of Indigenous descent who desire to grow in their Christian life and build confidence in reading, writing and speaking in English through particular focus on the study of the Bible.

The numbers of students being attracted to Bible Literacy training means there is sufficient funding to employ two more part-time trainers in Semester 2 within the Theology Department, which will free other Theology staff to focus more on the delivery of Certificate III in Theology and Ministry. Another focus will be the production of a Certificate II for delivery in 2011.

Certificate III in Theology and Ministry is being positively engaged by students. To date in 2010, students have come to Darwin from urban NSW, urban and remote WA and both urban and remote NT to attend two-week block delivery of subjects. In Semester 1 these were based on Exodus, the Person and Work of Jesus, Prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures, Acts, Understanding Public Worship and Mark's Gospel.

Nungalinga College continues to look towards the creation of future pathways for Indigenous Australians through: provision of high quality training and assessment; a skilled, flexible and valued workforce and a supportive, culturally appropriate educational environment.

Victoria (John Capper)

1910 is a major anniversary year in Victoria. **Ridley Mission & Ministry College**, having gone through a significant restructure in 2009, marked its centenary in 1910, as did the *Melbourne College of Divinity*. (Ridley's first Principal was the organising secretary for the MCD planning committee.) The MCD, being established by Act of Parliament, marked the anniversary with a reception at Government House, and a Centenary Conference held in conjunction with the ANZATS annual conference.

Tabor Victoria is moving, to 'co-locate' from 2011 with the Churches of Christ Theological College on the latter's Mulgrave campus - an exciting co-operative development

between the colleges, which will retain their own identities and programmes. Tabor has also been through its AUQA audit, and Kingsley College is integrated into it: the Wesleyan Church is tending to use the Nazarene College (Qld) or Booth College NSW to train its ordination candidates.

Harvest Bible College, the Bible College of Victoria and Tabor Tasmania have seen some drop in numbers - Harvest is undergoing its first AUQA audit in 2010, and is having some issues with VET FEE-HELP. BCV is also moving, and a name change is on the books.

South Australia (Peter Lockwood)

The state chapter continues to run seminars bringing faculty and research students together across theological colleges. The wider news is the changes in college relationships.

St Barnabas' (Anglican) has a new Principal, the Revd Dr Matthew Anstey, and is planning to move from the Adelaide College of Divinity site to another location. It is in the process of affiliating with St Mark's (Canberra), so is teaching for Charles Sturt University awards.

ACD Dean Janet Buchan reports that it continues as a HEP, offering Ministry degrees through the **Uniting College of Theology and Leadership**, and as an RTO using **Tabor Adelaide** programmes. Flinders University will continue to teach theology through **Catholic Theological College**.

The **Australian Lutheran College** will undergo its first AUQA audit in October, which is also being used as a 'visitation' process for admission to the MCD.

New South Wales (Dianne Speed)

The **Australian College of Theology**, after an extensive process of submission, was given Self-Accrediting Institution as of August 1, 2010, for a initial period of three years - the first HEP to be accorded such recognition.

The **Wesley Institute** has a new Principal, Greg Rough. It went through its Cycle 1 AUQA audit in 2009, and will have a follow-up audit in 2011. Tabor NSW, having had an AUQA Cycle 1 audit in 2009, has decided not to seek registration beyond 2010.

Moore Theological College is facing challenges in the wake of the capital losses by the Anglican Diocese of Sydney, but is using the opportunity to rethink priorities.

Mary Andrews College has relocated to St Andrew's House in the city, while continuing to teach at other Sydney centres.

The **Sydney College of Divinity** has had an interesting year, with a Diploma in Christian Studies now nested within the BTh, and master's degrees in Education and Christian Studies. The **Broken Bay Institute** has joined the emerging Theology programme at the University of Newcastle; while **Alphacrucis** has left the SCD to become a stand-alone HEP.

Avondale's Theology programme is combining with its Faculty of Arts and Theology, with a greater focus on developing a research culture.

What's been happening in theology down under?

Regional reports for 2009-2010 - continued

New Zealand (Kevin Ward)

NZATS rethinks its function and future

The Annual Meeting of NZATS was held in Dunedin at the new *Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership* facilities on June 26 / 27. There was a different focus this year with a full half day being given to reports from colleges, and a chance for them to raise major issues they were facing.

This led into a discussion raised last year - what is the function and future of NZATS? This became clearer, with a major focus to be on sharing mutual concerns and challenges, and more of a networking and cooperating ethos. Government student places are now capped, so that co-operation is being encouraged. It was decided to put money into upgrading the website so it became more of an information site, and to extend the length of the annual gathering, with less input from invited speakers and more discussion and input from members around a chosen theme.

For 2011, the NZATS meeting will be in Auckland and focus on enabling access and providing relevant learning methods and support for students from minority cultures.

College updates

Carey Baptist College has appointed Charles Hewlett as Principal, and is developing a Masters in Applied Theology.

The Catholic Institute of Theology has continued with a reduced staff, with Neil Darragh and Alice Sinnott retiring.

The **Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Otago** has had an increase in student numbers. Ivor Davidson left to take up a position at St Andrews in Scotland, and has been replaced by Christopher Holmes. With the focus on Asian Religions, Chaisit Suwanvarangkul has been appointed to a three-year term teaching Sanskrit and Buddhism. The Chair of Public Theology with Andrew Bradstock has become well established, and work continues in developing the *New Zealand Centre for the Study of Islam and Muslim Cultures* in conjunction with Victoria University of Wellington.

Good Shepherd College has continued with good numbers enrolled, and an increasing focus on online learning.

Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership has moved into its newly refitted facilities. Student numbers are the highest since the ending of the Theological Hall in 1996, and a further increase indicated next year. The average age of students has been lowered from the mid 40s to late 30s and all those accepted for 2011 are under 40. The Centre continues to work with Otago in a variety of ways and the location of an Auckland Dean has increased significantly the relationship its theological partners there.

Laidlaw College has just announced the appointment of Dr Rod Thompson as Principal following the completion of Mark Strohm's term. There have also been a number of other staff changes. A new Bachelor of Counselling

Aotearoa - New Zealand Association for Biblical Studies (A-NZABS)

CALL FOR PAPERS 2010

The 2010 annual meeting of A-NZABS will take place at Good Shepherd College, Ponsonby, Auckland, from 9am Monday 6 December to 5pm Tuesday 7 December.

Papers are sought for 30, 40 or 60 minute slots - 10 or so minutes should be allowed for discussion in shorter papers, while a 60 minute slot should plan for 15 minutes.

In submitting a proposed paper, indicate the time slot applied for, and include a 100 word abstract. Send to

Peter Carrell, director@theologyhouse.ac.nz, or
Theology House, 30 Church Lane,
Merivale, Christchurch 8014.

Due date: 10 September, 2010.

degree has been commenced. Laidlaw continues with three learning centres, the Auckland and Christchurch campuses and the Centre for Distance Learning.

The College of St John the Evangelist consists of three Anglican tikanga-oriented colleges, the College of the Southern Cross (Pakeha), Te Rau Kahikatea (Maori) and the College of the Diocese of Polynesia (Pacifika). The College has renewed its memorandum of understanding with the University of Auckland, and also been granted Provider status by NZQA, offering three Diplomas in Anglican studies. A review of the governance structure of the College has led to the appointment of a Commissioner for two years as structural changes are made. Student numbers have increased.

The **School of Theology, University of Auckland** no longer stands alone within the eight faculty structure of the University, but is a School within the Faculty of Arts. Nicholas Thompson joined the faculty in 2009 and a New Testament lecturer is in the process of being appointed. A Memorandum of Agreement has been renegotiated with St John's College, Trinity College and the Catholic Institute of Theology. Enrolments for the year have kept up well.

Trinity Methodist College has developed an NZQA-approved Diploma programme which concentrates on ministry formation and development.

Bishopdale Theological College in Nelson is continuing to develop its programmes, offering courses toward a Diploma of Biblical Studies, BTh and BMin in conjunction with Laidlaw College.

The **Ecumenical Institute for Distance Theological Studies** has over 100 students enrolled, mainly part time adult learners.

Theology House in Christchurch has appointed Peter Carrell as Director, and negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Otago.

The MCD / ANZATS conferences - *student scholars respond*

For each ANZATS Conference, two students scholarships are awarded, to cover the costs of registration, accommodation and assist with transport. In 2010 the successful students were **Michael Healey** (BTheol Honours, United Faculty of Theology (MCD), based at NNN Russian Orthodox Seminary, NNN), and **Fiona Hill** (recent doctoral graduate, Whitley College (MCD)). These are their reflections.

I would like to thank all involved in putting on the week-long series of speakers which made up the ANZATS/MCD conferences at Trinity College. This has provided the first occasion I have had to experience the intensive and collegial atmosphere of a well organized theological conference.

I must first of all comment on both the breadth and quality of speakers across all the theological disciplines. One could not go any further without acknowledging the keynote speakers, which surprised and delighted often in their ability to shed a fresh light upon the Australian cultural context that only an outsider can, as Professor Paul Fiddes' meditation on Patrick White so well proved.

And I think I could speak for all in attendance of the powerful impression that Professor Sandra Schneiders made on the Tuesday afternoon: a woman who in my opinion personifies the very best of that broadly grounded but progressive spirit which informed the Second Vatican Council.

Yet personally, it is often small personal exchanges with a plethora of scholars and enthusiasts that have left their mark. As a student of a confidently ecumenical faculty (UFT), and as an expatriate Kiwi in Melbourne, I must admit I've had a fair degree exposure to the wide palate of denominational particularities that were present. Yet I am happy to report the sort of surprise encounters and conversations which have contributed greatly to illuminating my understanding of what has often seemed to me the vague and unfamiliar contours of the Australasian religious landscape.

As an Orthodox Christian, somewhat of a rarity at UFT, I naturally gravitate towards the unfamiliar. My meetings with various Lutheran representatives - also somewhat of a rarity at UFT, if not in South Australia - were both fruitful and engaging and did much to bridge the gap in my mind between our respective confessional understandings.

But it should also be said that such conferences also provide one with plenty of good opportunities to explore one's particular personal interests. It is in this sense that I am very grateful and a little surprised to hear Hugh Bowron's lecture on the American theologian Robert Jenson, and furthermore to read his follow-up essay about the aforementioned scholar's relationship to Byzantine theology that has been of growing interest for myself of late.

I might also state my appreciation for Stephen Ames' nuanced and light-footed strivings in the area of the Theology / Science debate, which again reminded me that passion and erudition are not mutually exclusive categories.

Finally I would like to mention how much I gained (albeit a little painfully) from attending the final Friday afternoon sessions of the ANZATS conference, which focused primarily on the running and administration of the respective theological faculties, and the more general

goals to be identified in delivering a tertiary program in theological education. This debate was pointed, and has given me - coming to the end of my degree - reason to pause and reflect on what I can claim to have taken from my experience over the last four years.

Thanking all involved,

Michael Healey

I am very grateful to ANZATS for the generous scholarship which enabled me to attend the MCD Centenary and the 2010 ANZATS Conferences. I am continuing at Whitley College, following my PhD research, to complete requirements for Baptist ordination.

Prior to entering ministry, I was a journalist and ABC Radio producer. I am now the Community Minister at Chadstone Baptist Church, Melbourne, where I am using narrative approaches to Bible Study as part of community development projects to facilitate personal and social transformation.

The community where I work has been identified by the State Government as economically and socially disadvantaged. In my commitment to this task, I am inspired by the transforming power of education as articulated by writers such as Paulo Freire, bell hooks, Gustavo Gutiérrez and Gerald West.

The opportunity to attend the conferences came at a time when I was looking to integrate my research and pastoral interests, in the hope of making a contribution to the theological training of community ministry workers, particularly those who have cultivated trusting networks within disadvantaged communities but might still be struggling with issues that make formal education difficult.

Elaine Wainwright, in her 'The Word in the World' presentation, commented that attempts to incorporate ecological perspectives into theology had unfortunately been at a level of 'add ecology and stir'. Wainwright acknowledged that she had borrowed this image from feminists who despaired that their efforts all too frequently degenerated into 'add women and stir' approaches. The image stuck a chord with me.

I often feel demoralised in attempts to increase marginalised people's access to educational resources. Indeed, the 'add marginalised and stir' approach seems to have gained an upper hand in First World theological education. I am saddened at a tendency for educational providers to accept fees from disadvantaged students and their communities, but offer very little in the way of intentional pedagogical practice to specifically address the contextual needs of those communities.

Throughout the week, the MCD / ANZATS conferences provided a feast of material which I am now using in research on community development and teaching methods. Meryll Blair's paper, 'Different Fruit from Naboth's Vineyard: a Case Study on Cross-Cultural Bible Reading', articulated narrative Bible reading methods similar to those that I am using at Chadstone. Blair highlighted that biblical interpretation in marginalised

The MCD / ANZATS conferences - *student scholars respond*

communities requires scholars to engage with local communities, becoming involved in 'hands on' projects which facilitate transformation. Her illustrations included the building of a university in Zambia, community gardening, the sharing of domestic tasks and conversations about equitable division of resources.

Francis Molony, in his 'The Word in the World' presentation, highlighted that the (spoken) 'word' had power in previous generations. However, younger people in contemporary Australian culture (Gen Y) now respond to teaching and communication methods which give priority to experience. I draw parallels between Molony's assessment of Gen Y and research findings on educational practices for transformation in marginalised communities; and this is particularly relevant for people who struggle with literacy.

Recognition of such cultural and demographic trends opens up opportunities for the incorporation of art, music, drama, liturgy and other forms of creativity into teaching and communication processes. (Creative inspiration was well catered for across the two conferences with celebrations that included concerts and chapel services.)

Papers by Peter Malone and Rachael Kohn particularly reminded me of the wealth of resources that I accumulated as a cinema studies student, journalist and ABC Radio producer, that I am now able to use to promote community transformation.

Techniques which enable us to see 'Christ in Cinema' (Malone) can also be applied to streetscapes and local communities to help us identify the presence of the divine in everyday life (Kohn; and also Lyn McCredden in response to Paul Fiddes.)

I was particularly inspired by Marita Munro's paper 'Victorian Baptists: 1960-2000: A Search for Identity and Direction'. Munro's work overlaps with research that I have recently undertaken on the history of the Chadstone area in Melbourne. Her work reminds me that as a community development worker, I need to be aware of how history has shaped the communities where I work and consult.

Commitment to community transformation through education must therefore be interdisciplinary. We need to use tools from sociology, theology, biblical scholarship, history, art, literature and other disciplines in order to marshal the resources of our communities, cultivate pride and identity and develop strategies for transformation.

I was disappointed that I had to leave the ANZATS conference early due to a death in my family. However, I am deeply grateful for the rich treasure-trove of theological, educational and creative resources that I was so generously given during my stay at Trinity College.

Thank you!

Fiona Hill

Theology and ARC grants: ARC leader addresses ANZATS

On the last day of the ANZATS conference, Dr Andrew Wells, Executive Director (Humanities and Creative Arts) at the *Australian Research Council* gave an exposition of the work of the Council and his role particularly in relation to Discovery Grants and Fellowship schemes. His address introduced a panel discussion of the place of research in theological education, chaired by Paul Oslington (ACU), with Mark Lindsay (Director of Research, MCD), James McLaren (ACU), Graham Chatfield (Associate Dean, ACTh) and Contant Mews (Monash University).

Under the Act establishing the ARC, the Council funds research and to administered institutions, dispersed on a competitive process through an expert review panel process - around \$700 million per annum. There is little Theology reflected in those grants so far. The Council maintains a web site <http://www.arc.gov.au/>, which provides a lot of information about what they do.

As part of its 'Educational Revolution', the Commonwealth Government established an *Excellence in Research scheme* (ERA), which relates closely to the work of the ARC. Amongst the criteria used in assessing research applications is publication in peer-reviewed journals. As regards Theology, this meant that the ARC had to identify appropriate journals in this field, and they looked to the *Council of Deans of Theology* for advice on this matter. (The resulting list was published in *Uncovering Theology*, but remains under review.)

Dr Wells outlined the relatively poor representation of theology in grants made by the ARC, and recognised that

there was considerable debate about the classification codes used in the application process. There is a code review going on in the ARC at the moment, and the Council plans to consult the *Council of Deans of Theology* as the national advisory group for this purpose.

A key question in the assessment of grant applications is the Review Panel. In Religion, there are 33 Australian reviewers and 81 international reviewers - 114 in all. His conclusion about the poor representation of Theology was that there was a low application rate.

Professor Wells underlined the significance of Linkage grants for Theology, since the church and its various institutional agencies qualified as industry partners for the purpose of these grants.

He also underlined the importance of multidisciplinary approaches to research as favoured by both the Commonwealth government and the ARC.

Bruce Kaye

ANZATS contact details:

Mail: PO Box 2, Bendigo Victoria 3552
Phone: (03) 5443 4711, 0423 020 699
email: secretary@anzats.edu.au
website: www.anzats.edu.au

Unit assessments, learning and graduate outcomes: *the Australian College of Theology reviews their relationship*

This article has been adapted by Graham Chatfield from one originally published in Level 6, the ACTh's internal newsletter, and is highly relevant to the Threshold Learning Outcomes project in which Australian theological HEPs are currently engaged.

For a number of years an increasing number of universities and theological colleges have been investigating the relationship of assessment tasks and unit learning outcomes. People rightly recognise the value to student learning of clearly identifying expected unit learning outcomes in their assessment tasks.

Like many other institutions, the *Australian College of Theology* (ACTh) previously had expressed unit outcomes as teaching outcomes designed to show that the curriculum had been covered. A student's learning related to knowledge of the unit content. The *Australian Qualifications Framework*, (AQF) among other influences, now defines student learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and the application of knowledge and skills in specific situations. Students who successfully complete unit assessments should be able to demonstrate they have achieved the desired learning outcomes. The unit learning outcomes for a whole course should align with the specified graduate outcomes or graduate attributes for the course.

To quote Dr George Cooney, Professor of Education at Macquarie University and a director of ACTh, "It is a circular process. The graduate outcomes determine the overall structure of the program leading to the specification of unit outcomes and the assessment regime."

Mapping graduate outcomes against learning outcomes and assessments; capturing data that verifies the achievement of graduate and learning outcomes; assessing that data to feed back to individual lecturers to improve student learning outcomes for specific units; and then putting all of this up against the AQF learning outcomes - this is a task the *Australian College of Theology* is undertaking not only because government accrediting agencies require it, but also because it is considered to have great potential benefit for students.

USA college benchmark

On a recent visit to a theological college in the USA with which the ACTh has a benchmarking agreement, I was introduced to a working model of just such a mapping exercise. The USA college had invested significant resources over seven years to achieve their model. They had carefully thought through the graduate outcomes for each of their degrees, and aligned graduate outcomes with the respective degree level outcomes as defined by the accrediting body. They then determined which units should be included in a degree; what the student learning-outcomes were for each unit; and how they related to the graduate outcomes. Finally, they determined which specific piece of assessment from each unit would validate the designated student learning outcomes.

This USA college put in place a process for gathering this assessment data and feeding back to lecturers where learning outcomes were not being met. As well as student reviews of each unit, they instituted a review by the unit lecturer of

student progress against a pre-determined list of graduate outcomes. These online review documents are collected in a student portfolio, and used in a mid-course student interview conducted by faculty to determine student progress attaining graduate outcomes. At the end of a course, students complete an exit questionnaire and participate in an exit interview to determine the level of attainment of the desired graduate outcomes. It is a comprehensive model.

The ACTh has begun the process of reviewing the learning-outcomes and assessments of all units for all courses taught by its affiliated colleges. A major undertaking in itself, but only a first step to achieve the much more complex - yet potentially beneficial - programme of developing a model where learning outcomes, assessments and graduate attributes not only align with the AQF requirements, but also lead to feedback for students and lecturers to continually make improvements to the model and the outcomes.

Graeme Chatfield, Associate Dean,
Australian College of Theology Ltd

ANZATS / ANZSTS 2011 Conference

3-6 July, Sydney

Theme: *Found in Translation: Bible, Worship, Mission*

2011 marks the 400th anniversary of the appearance of the King James Bible / Authorised Version, a highly significant event in the history of the English-speaking churches, and a highly influential factor in broader Anglophone culture from 1611 to the present.

It is thus appropriate that the 2011 ANZATS conference should invite papers on research into the overarching subject of translation, as it concerns theological studies and the dissemination of Christianity. Without intending to be restrictive, the theme draws particular attention to three focal areas of translation activity: the Bible itself, Christian worship, and mission.

The Conference will begin with a reception on the evening of Sunday 3rd July and conclude on the evening of Wednesday 6th July. The main venue will be Wesley College in the University of Sydney.

It's never too soon to put an ANZATS / ANZSTS conference into your diaries!

The Call for Papers will be issued by September

2011 Planning Committee:

Convenor: Diane Speed (SCD)

Members (in alphabetical order): Jim Harrison (Wesley Institute), John McClean (ACTh - Presbyterian Theological Centre), Gerard Moore (CSU - United Theological College), Andrew Murray (SCD - Catholic Institute of Sydney), and Brian Rosner (Moore Theological College).

Enquiries to Dianne Speed - dspeed@scd.edu.au.