

EDITORIAL

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Editor

This editorial must begin with an acknowledgment of the difficult times we have been facing in 2020. COVID-19 has had a profound impact on our world in many ways, and this includes our region and sector. In terms of Colloquium itself, most directly it has delayed this issue. This has been due to understandable delays at every point of the process. This issue is down one article as well, also due to the exigencies of COVID-19, and hopefully offset by previous issues in which the page count has been higher than usual.

It is with gratitude therefore, that I write this editorial. Gratitude for the many people involved in producing Colloquium, who have been able to contribute despite their own COVID-19 affected situations. My thanks to each of the authors, to the book reviewers, to the copyeditor Greta Morris and typesetter Sheree Chambers and Associate Editor John McDowell. My thanks also to all the peer reviewers who obviously cannot be named but give of their time and expertise among their many other pressing demands.

It is an eclectic issue this time, demonstrating the breadth of research interests within theology in our region. It is also worth noting the interdisciplinary nature of many of the articles. Such articles in my experience often take longer to come to fruition, requiring more work and patience at every part of the process. And yet, the result is often rich, as new insights and connections are formed.

This issue opens with an article outlining the findings of a project on the economic benefits of theological education in Australia. The project was given core funding by the Australian Research Theology Foundation. It was also provided with additional support by the Council of Deans of Theology, ANZATS, Alphacrucis College, Australian Catholic University, University of Divinity, Christian Heritage College, and BBI-TAITE. Colloquium is the ANZATS journal. This cooperative

approach shows the depth of the perceived need for data on the economic benefits of theological education. As author Paul Oslington says in the article,

Economics is the language of public policy in Australia, and theological educators increasingly need fluency in this language in their dealings with governments (for example, over accreditation, student funding, research funding, grant applications) and their dealings with other potential funders of theological education.

This article is a follow-up to the 2019 Colloquium article, “Enhancing the Evidence Base for Australian Theological Research,” authored by Paul Oslington, Nick Jensen, and Ingrid Ryan.¹ As with that article, this one will be made available online along with supporting documents, on the ANZATS website. I commend it to you as significant research for those in our sector. Of course, it raises the question of the other benefits arising from theological education, and the purposes which should drive it, which may be a fruitful discussion to pursue further in the pages of Colloquium in the future.

The other articles enter into conversation with a diverse cast. Three of them, Deborah Guess, Matthew Jacoby, and Cameron Coombe, engage with scholars from different eras.

Deborah Guess brings us an ecotheological reading of John Damascene. She utilises his *Three Treatises on the Divine Images* as an example of a theological trajectory within the Christian tradition which affirms the goodness of the material world, as a resource for ecotheology today.

Moving to conversation partners closer to us in time, Matthew Jacoby discusses Kierkegaard’s “rule of faith” for reading Scripture, by enlarging his conversational circle to include Timothy Houston Polk, John Searle, and Augustine. As he examines each, he adopts a counterposition to Polk and instead aligns with Augustine’s “rule of love.”

Cameron Coombe also gathers a few different voices together in his article, “Qoheleth and the Cross: Back-And-Forth with Jürgen Moltmann and Peter Enns.”

1 Paul Oslington, Nick Jensen, and Ingrid Ryan, “Enhancing the Evidence Base for Australian Theological Research,” *Colloquium* 51, no. 1 (2019):5–24.

In so doing, he argues that “Moltmann’s perennial rejection of Qoheleth’s resignation requires reconsideration in light of his Christology.”

Angela Sawyer’s conversation partners are less frequent ones in the pages of this journal. Her view is that the satire and parody of comedians such as Stephen Colbert and Tina Fey can speak to our understanding of the anti-idol polemics of Deutero-Isaiah. She suggests, moreover, that this gives us a model for countering the idolatries of our own time.

Following the articles, we have several reviews which complete this issue, and this section has as usual been edited by the Associate Editor John McDowell. The books reviewed address a diverse range of topics: the spirituality of ageing, the role of the Spirit at the cross, mimesis in the Johannine literature, as well as three recent books on Barth.

Usually, this issue is available for the annual ANZATS conference, held in July each year. This was cancelled as travel and event restrictions came into force in Australia and elsewhere. However, the opportunity still exists for those who prepared papers for that or other similarly cancelled conferences to submit them for publication in Colloquium. In the meantime, may we continue in prayerful support of each other and reliance on God.