

ANZATS 2021 *Theological Ethics*

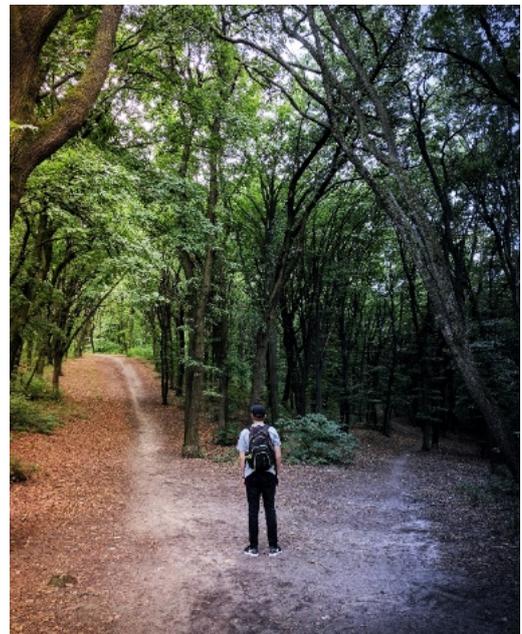
Elective Session Proposals – World Christianity and Diaspora Theology

	Presenter 1	Presenter 2	Presenter 3
Session 1	Graham Joseph Hill	Terry Pouono	Hanna Hyun
Session 2	Siu Fung Wu	Grace Lung	Steve Taylor
Session 3	Xiaoli Yang	Natalie Swann	Suzanne Rowe
Session 4	Phuc Dai Nguyen	Lesley Houston	

- Presenter** Graham Joseph Hill
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Asian Australian Women in Ministry and Mission: Contributions, Experiences, Inequalities, and Futures

Australian church and society are becoming ethnically and culturally diverse. Asian migration into Australia has increased in recent decades. This migration has led to the growth of ethnically Asian churches in Australia and their roles in Australian church life and overseas mission. However, research into the involvement of Asian Australian women in ministry and mission is almost non-existent. This paper provides an overview and introduction to the experiences and contributions of Asian Australian women in local church ministry and overseas missions. Its purpose is to examine these women's accounts of their ministries and experiences, including their experiences of inequality, racism, sexism, vulnerability, and stereotypes. We then make proposals for dealing with these issues and honouring and amplifying Asian Australian Christian women's gifts and contributions.



- Presenter** Terry Pouono
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***Ua sopo le va*: Moving Beyond Boundaries of the Pacific Diaspora Church Towards Multicultural Churches**

The focus of my research looks at the gradual exodus of members from Pacific Island churches to faith communities of a multicultural context. By critically evaluating the concept of the 'va' signifying intra-cultural relationships within Pacific communities, I will delve deeper into understanding how transplanted diaspora churches serve the purpose of preserving a Christian identity that underpin beliefs, values and worldviews of ancestral Pacific traditions, ecclesiological spaces, and families. What are the effects of leaving the family church for affected members?

In an increasingly multicultural context such as Auckland New Zealand, the boundaries of difference that distinguish different ethnic and cultural groups are increasingly becoming indistinct and uncertain. To restructure boundaries is to restructure identity. With reference to the Samoan saying, "Ua sopo le va" translated as 'transgressing cultural and relational spaces', I will investigate how the departure from culturally aligned churches allow for displaced members to restructure boundaries and reaffirm a new sense of identity in a new church.

My contention is that the rich cultural understandings of the 'va' are redefined and practised in multicultural churches creating transformative and meaningful experiences for relocated members.

3. **Presenter** Hanna Hyun
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Exceptio Beyond Diaspora: How to Reduce the Crisis of Ecclesiastical Identity in Diaspora Mission from a Korean Theologian's Perspective

The Seoul Declaration on diaspora Missiology shows a new direction of the missiological framework for God's kingdom work for the future. In the days of missions to the diaspora, it was recognized that God's mission through diaspora churches beyond the same diaspora to other ethnic groups would be a key task in mission today. Many scholars insist that a global migration accelerates the necessities of diaspora ministries in this global era, however, this paper is designed to describe barriers of multi-cultural ministries in reality and re-examine the ecclesiological limitations in practicing the Diaspora theology. This Diaspora Mission is possible not by pursuing the great intention and vision of the pastor or leadership, but through awakening consciousness of the saints and the whole church; because the Diaspora ministry requires a transformation of a church identity holistically which brings about the identity crisis in local churches' tradition and cultures. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to suggest ways to launch this ministry gradually in practicing a theology of Beyond Diaspora with local churches while reducing the fear of financial loss in this Diaspora mission and minimizing conflicts with other cultures.

4. **Presenter** Siu Fung Wu
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Reading Romans and Theologising with East-Asian-Australians

Romans has shaped Christian theology for two millennia. In addition to the traditional Protestant view, three representative interpretations of Romans have emerged among Protestants in recent years, namely, New Perspective, apocalyptic reading, and participationist interpretation. Also, two significant new books on Romans were published in 2019: Reading Romans Backwards (Scot McKnight) and Romans Disarmed (Sylvia Keesmaat and Brian Walsh). McKnight proposes that Rom 12–16 is critical for understanding Romans. Keesmaat and Walsh argue that Romans disarms the cultural, political and economic powers of Paul's world and our world. Meanwhile, in his new book Reading Romans through Eastern Eyes (2019), Jackson Wu (a pseudonym) claims that traditional East Asian cultural values are closer to those of Paul than the values of the West today, and hence one must read Romans through Eastern eyes. But Wu is a Westerner himself. Therefore, the dominant studies on Romans available in Australia are authored by Westerners.

I will critique the above readings of Romans from the perspective of an East-Asian-Australian, with special references to the family values and the honour-shame worldview in my own cultural heritage and of East Asians in general. I will examine how the different interpretations may be

relevant to East Asians as they navigate their lives in Australia. With my findings I will propose that diaspora East Asians are valuable dialogue partners in interpreting Romans and hence shaping global Christian theology.

5. **Presenter** Grace Lung
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Internalized Oppression in Chinese Australian Christians and its Mission Impact

Increasingly, Christians with heritage from the Majority World are joining the missionary force. Within many of these countries, Christianity and colonisation were deeply entwined. Also, much of the diaspora reside in Western countries as racial minorities.

This paper argues that unaddressed wounds of internalized racism and colonial mentality in Chinese Australian Christians adversely impacts their evangelism and mission work by elevating Eurocentric Christianity, while accepting an subordinated ethno-racial status.

Drawing on empirical and theoretical analysis, first, the sources of internalized racism and colonial mentality in Chinese Australians are outlined, arising from colonialism, the racial minority status, intergeneration transmission and through media. Second, it explains how Euro-centric Christianity impacts Chinese Australians; in the academy and on missions: creating prejudice towards one's own ethnic group, complicity in racialized systems, as well as elevating Western Christian thought as biblically normative. Consequently, internalized racism and colonial mentality negatively affects the mission endeavours of Chinese Australians, particularly to new Chinese migrants, other people of colour, especially against the backdrop of the rise of Asia in world Christianity. Third, proposed solutions will be offered.

Practically, if left unaddressed, Chinese Australian Christians and other Westernized Christians from the Majority World are likely to continue perpetuating systems of racial injustice in the name of Christ both locally and overseas through mission.

6. **Presenter** Steve Taylor
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Innovation Ecclesiologies and the Expanding of World Christianity

Global Christianity assumes a gospel that expands throughout the world, from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. Yet notions of expansion have trajectories, ethics and hoped for eschatologies that require missiological examination.

Ecclesiological expansion is probed through dialogue with research into fresh expressions in the UK (Taylor, 2019), which found that half of fresh expressions had died within ten years of birth. Longitudinal analysis of other new forms of church literature - by Riddell (1998), Frost and Hirsch (2003) - reveal similar percentages. Yet Together Towards Life (2012) affirmed the value of fresh expressions as new forms of contextual mission in the global North.

A pragmatic ecclesiology values numbers. If fresh expressions die, are they of value in theorising the expanding of world Christianity? A pastoral ecclesiology values people. What are the pastoral implications if half of newly planted diaspora churches die in new cultural contexts?

This paper responds to these challenges by developing an innovation ecclesiology. An initial globalizing trajectory is followed as Christianity first expands into Europe. The innovative role of Lydia as a church planter in Philippi is read in relation to Mary as a first apostle, commissioned amid the eschatology of death and the trajectory of resurrection. This resonates with Epaphroditus, who despite nearly dying for the gospel, is regarded as valuable (Philippians 2:29). Such an innovation ecclesiology, in which dying is woven into rising, values expansion while providing ethical resources for the pastoral care of those who innovate in world Christianity.

7. **Presenter** Xiaoli Yang
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Canaan Hymns: Songs from the Fields — A Grassroots Missiology of the Chinese Church Movement

The 21st century is marked by the exponential growth of Christianity in the Global East outside of Christendom. Over the last thirty years, Canaan Hymns (jianan shixuan, 迦南诗选), nearly two thousand indigenous songs composed by a rural woman named Lü Xiaomin (吕小敏, 1970–) have spread and been sung from the underground to the world. They have become the hallmark of the Chinese church and mission movement beyond the borders of the Mainland. Coined as ‘God’s gift to China’, Xiaomin, a junior high school drop-out without any musical training, wrote these songs inspired by the Holy Spirit from the village fields of northern China. Despite ample video clips and documentaries of Xiaomin and Canaan Hymns being made available online, scholarship on their missiology has been underheard and underdeveloped. Drawing from the methodologies of ‘lived theology’, ‘grassroots theology’ and ‘biography as theology’, this paper listens to Xiaomin’s life narrative and embodied practice, followed by the themes of inculturation, Spirit-Christology and community in mission. In conversation with missiologists and theologians of the West and Asia such as Bosch, Moltmann and Chan, a trajectory towards a grassroots missiology that is contextual, pneumological and communal may be discerned. In doing so, not only voices from the margins are heard and brought into global conversations, missio Dei is also given new meanings and significance in the context of the contemporary indigenous mission movement.

8. **Presenter** Natalie Swann
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From Every Tribe and Nation”: Multiculturalism in Christian Churches in Suburban Melbourne

This paper analyses everyday multiculturalism in Christian churches in suburban Melbourne. It focuses on how migrants recreate a sense of home in a new church setting. In particular, it explores how they prioritise the values they bring with them and open themselves up to new values through the migration process.

Social science exhibits a tendency to limit studies to a particular ethnic group as a convenient way of limiting scope, which reinforces the assumption that ethnicity is people’s primary organising principle. This is confounded by denominational commitment among migrants and the ensuing multicultural congregations this commitment can result in. In contrast, my project is a local Australian ethnography, not one oriented to people of a particular ethnic background.

I participated in worship at three churches in Preston, a middle ring suburb in the north of Melbourne; a multicultural Catholic congregation that worshipped in English, a multicultural Seventh-day Adventist congregation that worshipped in English, and an Arabic Baptist church that worshipped in Arabic and was home to people from a range of countries but mostly Iraq and

Egypt. This project describes these multicultural churches and the intertwined lives and loves of people from different cultural backgrounds is uncommon in the literature. I consider the faith-full way in which my participants think about ethnicity and migration. While not always explicitly theologised, this tendency reflects a deeply-embedded 'theological disposition' that results from Christian liturgical formation. The effect of such formation raises tantalising questions about the moral valuation of the migration experience.

9. **Presenter** Suzanne Rowe
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Tibetan Diaspora

Despite coming from varied backgrounds in Tibetan parts of China, places which differ significantly with regard to local languages, cultural expressions, and specifics of religion, Tibetans-in-exile identify as one community.

The presentation would analyse this phenomenon. Relevant factors, including historical, cultural, economic and technological factors, will be touched upon, but most attention will be paid to the roles of religion and politics in shaping the identity of this community.

The presentation will consider opportunities this provides the church and the importance of Western Christians seeking to understand different ways of viewing the world. A sub-theme which will simmer throughout is the way that the Tibetan Buddhism, carried by Tibetans-in-exile, has impacted other parts of the world - especially the West - and continues to do so. This topic would be helpful for the church to analyse further as we seek to impact our societies.

10. **Presenter** Phuc Dai Nguyen
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Existing on the Threshold Between Two Worlds: A Story of the Immigrant Vietnamese Elders in the United States from the Liminal Perspective

The two main purposes of this study are to develop a practical theology of liminal space for the immigrant Vietnamese elders and to strategize actions for applying this theology to their processing grief. Being immigrants, the Vietnamese elders naturally grieve the loss of their Vietnamese heritage and homeland. Subsequently, in their new homeland they search for, idealize, and sentimentalize things related to Vietnamese culture. Ultimately, they cease trying to recover what has been lost but continue to struggle with their newfound self-identity. Their new living situation forces them to re-define their social statuses. This often pushes them into the margins of American society. These Vietnamese elders experience migratory grief characterized by a loss of self-identity, the experience of trauma, and a fear of vulnerability. Although social studies and church missions have responded to the needs of the immigrant Vietnamese elders, those efforts do not address the root of this group's issues. This study suggests the immigrant Vietnamese elders are not only capable of overcoming their migratory grief, but also can be pioneers in exercising their liminal creativity in authentic ways. It can be done through the process of re-defining their position (space) with God by exercising their memory via hope as telling a defining story and their imagination in love as seeking a divine appointment. They should first establish their position with God before doing so with other cultures and society in general.

11. **Presenter** Lesley Houston
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Marginality, Liminality and a Third Space

Using the stories of women who have crossed the West/East geographical boundary, the paper discusses the ways in which these diverse and marginalised voices reflect on God and God's actions in what I have named a Third Space. The paper argues that the Third Space articulates with both first and second cultures, but is a place of marginality and liminality where the theologies of those who cross boundaries is formed and shaped. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of Third Spaces and how these voices from the margins can be heeded in the missions and ministries of the church.