

N E X U S

the ACT Research & Scholarship Magazine



The Bookshelf

Recent Books on Hope

Honoring the Wise

Exclusive Extract
from Robin Payne

Mindful of the Future

Leisa Aitkin

Hermeneutics of Hope

Trevor Clark

Meet the Deputy Dean

Interview with Edwina Murphy

and the usuals

events, ACT people online,
conferrals, publications and
news

JUNE 2022



June 2022

from the editor

Hope. We need this word in our Mid-Covid times. I do not call it Post Covid, as while we have returned to a somewhat usual existence, infection remains present and claims lives. There are other reasons we need it as well, as there always are in a world of sin. I write this as we mourn more school pupils massacred by gun.

In this mid-year edition of NEXUS, I have gathered together some tidings of hope.

In the Bookshelf, recent books come at hope from various lenses, including Easter, the Eschaton and ecclesiology.

One way to engender hope is to grasp the Bible more fully. Two articles this issue just that. One is an extract from ACT Monograph Series book *Honoring the Wise*. Extracted from Robin Payne's chapter, in it she discusses learning the Bible in a different cultural context. We also have an article by a far flung NEXUS subscriber, Trevor Clark, who suggests via Romans having hermeneutics of hope.

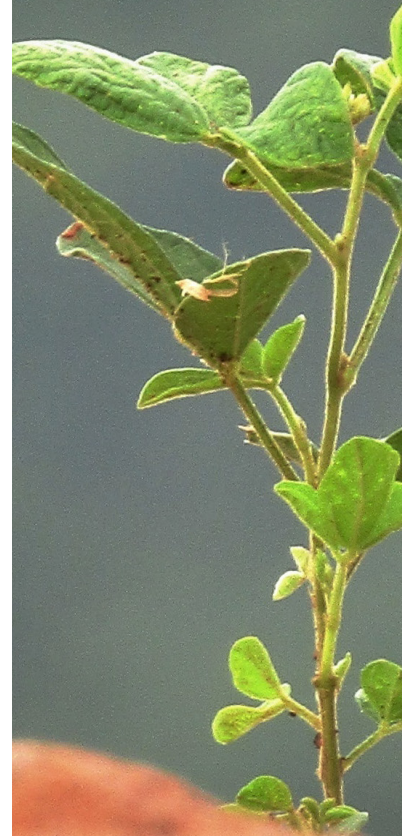
From a different perspective, clinical psychologist Leisa Aitken introduces us to the psychology of hope, and how this may connect with our theology.

As well, this issue, an interview with new ACT Deputy Dean and Director of Research Edwina Murphy. Plus all the regular sections.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Rom 15:13.

Megan Powell du Toit

Editor, NEXUS
ACT Publishing Manager
Editor, *Colloquium* journal





The Nexus BOOKSHELF

This issue we look at recent books about hope

FROM 2021

Tim Keller, *Hope in Times of Fear: The Resurrection and the Meaning of Easter*, Hodder & Stoughton, 2021.

The resurrection of Jesus is at the heart of the Christian faith, bringing God's power - which will some day heal and renew the world - into our lives now. That power is here only partially, but substantially; and this gives Christians a realistic, but irrepressible, hope. But it is only together with the cross that we see the particular way resurrection hope shapes us. We are delivered by a Saviour who triumphed through weakness and loss; who came to riches through becoming poor; and to exalted life through the experience of death. And having coming to new life by admitting our own weakness and inability to save ourselves, we live the rest of our lives according to this pattern: the way up is to go down; the way to true power and influence is to serve; the way to be truly rich is to give all we have; the way to real happiness is to work for the happiness of others.

Susan J. Dunlap, *Shelter Theology: The Religious Lives of People without Homes*, Fortress, 2022.

Susan J. Dunlap offers the theological fruits of time spent working as a chaplain with people without homes. After depicting the local history of her small southern city, she describes the prayer service she co-leads in a homeless shelter. Clients offer words of faith and encouragement that take the form of prayer, sayings, testimony, song, and short sermons. Dunlap describes both these forms of expression and their theological content. She asserts that these forms and beliefs are a means of survival and resistance in a hostile world. The ways they serve these purposes are further demonstrated in life stories told as testimonies, incorporating scripture, sayings, oral tradition, and popular culture. Dunlap concludes that white

supremacy and neoliberalism have produced the problem of homelessness in America and are forms of idolatry. The faith and practices shared at the shelter are spiritual and theological resources for people in the grip of and seeking freedom from this idolatry. Claiming that only God can free us from bondage to idolatry and that to draw close to the poor is to draw close to God, Dunlap calls for proximity to people living without homes who are practicing their faith amid poverty.

January 2022

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen *The End of All Things Is at Hand: A Christian Eschatology in Conversation with Science and Islam*, Cascade, 2022.

This book proposes a bold vision of the "end" of human life and the cosmos based on the hopeful vision of Christian faith. In a dialogue with the best of Christian tradition, the natural sciences' conjectures of the "end," as well as Islam's rich teaching on the doctrine of the Last Things, a fresh constructive eschatology is recommended. While based on wide and deep academic learning, the conversational style of the book makes it suitable for various kinds of audiences, from pastors, to students, to scholars, and to interested lay folks.

Veronice Miles, *Embodied Hope: A Homiletical Theology Reflection*, Cascade, 2022.

Embodied Hope explores implications of an embodied theology of hope for preachers' ability to nurture imaginative abundance and purposeful hope-filled action in the most chaotic of times. Embodied hope is grounded in a theological anthropology that foregrounds humanity's inherent identity as imago Dei and capacity to live as a nondistorting nondestructive reflection of God's presence in the



earth. Humans possess the capacity to imagine and live toward a qualitatively better state of existence for all creation, but overwhelmed by the despairing realities of life, we often feel despondent and drained of imaginative potential. Preaching amplifies the voice of Hope, bearing witness and inviting us to imagine the possibility and efficacy of a new reality grounded in Jesus's gospel proclamation.

February 2022

• Michael Horton, *Recovering Our Sanity: How the Fear of God Conquers the Fears that Divide Us*, Zondervan, 2022.

Recovering Our Sanity is not another self-help book about how to beat your daily fears for a better life. It's a book that will show you the gravity and glory of a God who's worthy of our fear. It's a book that will

reveal how these two biblical phrases—Fear God and Do Not Be Afraid—are not contradictory but actually one coherent message. Michael Horton shows us that we cannot fight our fears by seeking the absence of fear altogether, but by living with a fear of God that drives out the fear of everything else. Humbling, thought-provoking, and hope-igniting, *Recovering Our Sanity* delivers a timely message that will help you shift your focus from a human-centered obsession with self-preservation to a fixation on Christ and his salvation.

Joshua Wise, *Dread and Hope: Christian Eschatology and Pop Culture*, Fortress, 2022.

Christianity was born in the midst of great expectation and fear about the world's future. The existing Jewish paradigm of the coming Messiah, his antithesis, and the initiation of the coming age set the

stage for Christian beliefs about the end of the current age. *Dread and Hope* explores the ways in which those old paradigms were challenged by Jesus's death and resurrection, how the resulting eschatological landscape was understood within Christianity, and how modern popular culture has consumed and modified various components of Christian Hope. Joshua Wise examines how the central Christian eschatological themes such as the Antichrist, the Great Persecution, Heaven, and Hell have both been transformed and preserved in novels, television, films, and video games.

March 2022

Uche Anizor, *Overcoming Apathy: Gospel Hope for Those Who Struggle to Care*, Crossway, 2022.

In *Overcoming Apathy*, theology professor Uche Anizor explains what apathy is and gives practical, biblical advice to break the cycle. Inspired by his conversations with young Christians as well as his own experiences with apathy, Anizor takes a fresh look at this widespread problem and its effect on spiritual maturity. First, he highlights the prevalence of apathy in our culture, using examples from TV, movies, and social media. Next, he turns to theologians, philosophers, and psychologists to further define apathy. Finally, Anizor explores causes, cures, and healthy practices to boldly overcome apathy in daily life, taking believers from spiritual lethargy to Christian zeal. This short ebook is an excellent resource for those struggling with apathy as well as parents, mentors, and friends who want to support someone in need.

Andrew Root, *Churches and the Crisis of Decline: A Hopeful, Practical Ecclesiology for a Secular Age*, Baker Academic, 2022.

Congregations often seek to combat the crisis of decline by using innovation to produce new resources. But Andrew Root shows that the church's crisis is not in the loss of resources; it's in the loss of life—and that life can only return when we remain open to God's encountering presence. Root uses two stories to frame the book: one about a church whose building becomes a pub and the other about Karl Barth. Root argues that Barth should be understood as a pastor with a deep practical theology that can help church leaders today. This book pushes the church to be a waiting community that recognizes that the only way for it to find life is to stop seeing the church as the star of its own story. Instead of resisting decline,

congregations must remain open to divine action. Root offers a rich vision for the church's future that moves away from an obsession with relevance and resources and toward the living God.

May 2022

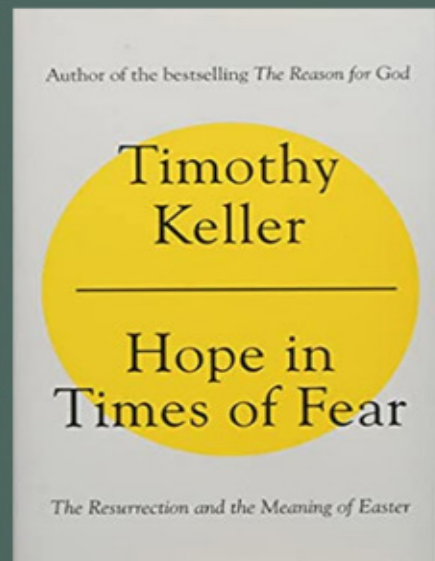
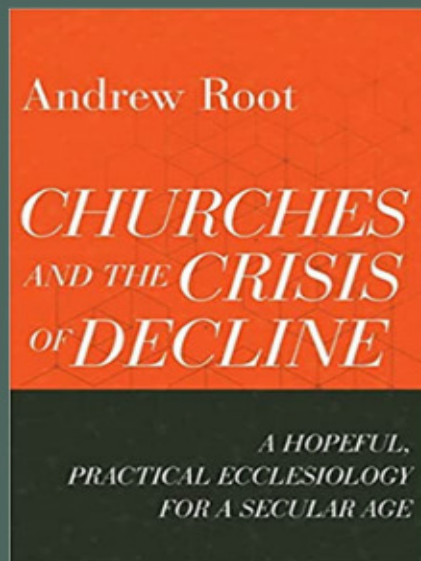
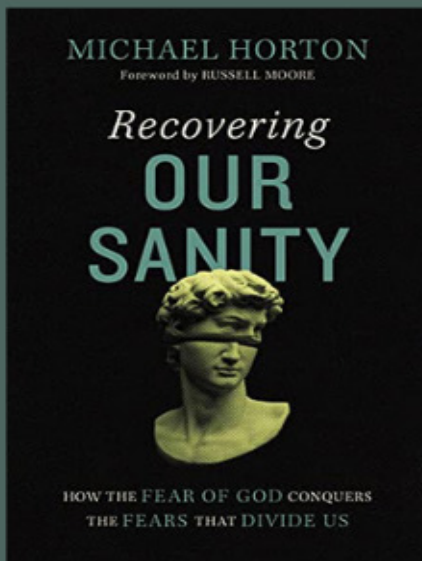
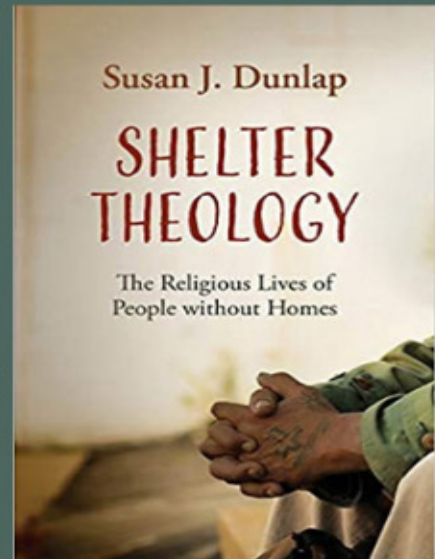
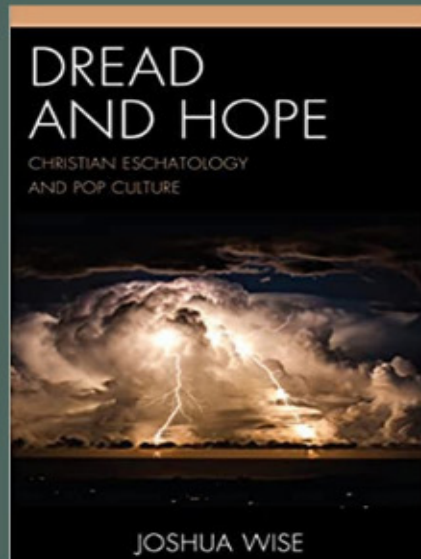
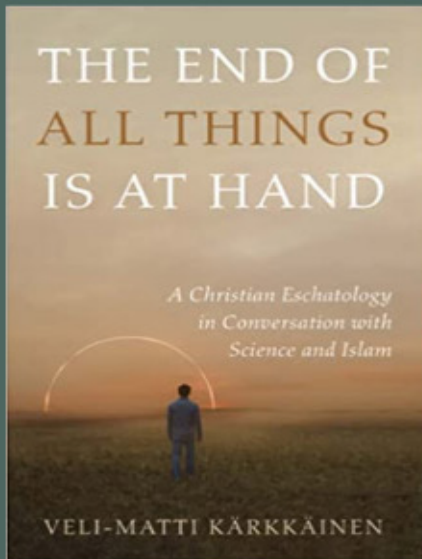
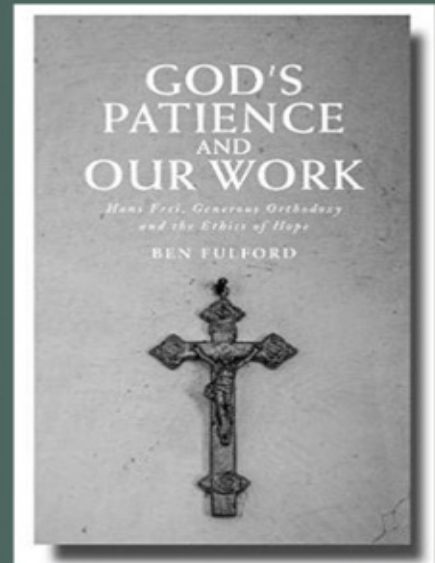
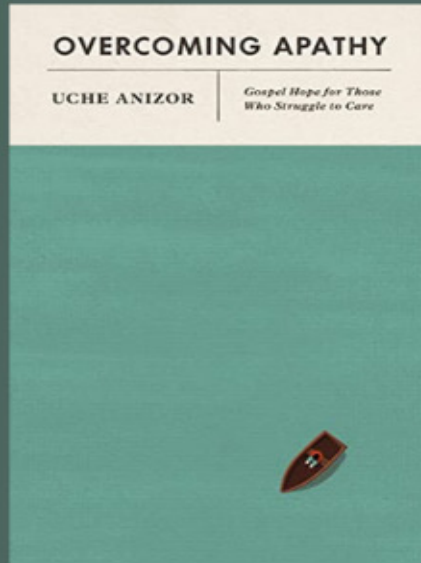
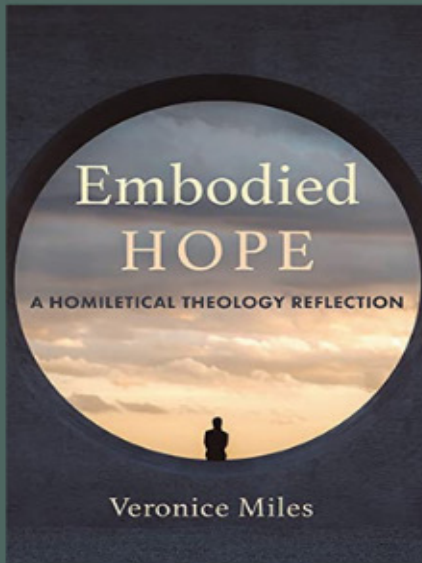
Ben Fulford, *God's Patience and Our Work: Hans Frei, Generous Orthodoxy and the Ethics of Hope*, SCM, 2022.

Hans Frei is most famed as the father of 'generous orthodoxy', a minimalist approach to Christian faith which refused to hold tightly to matters of doctrine beyond the core Christian beliefs. Beyond this, though, on the basis of his Christology, ecclesiology and his account of providence Frei sketched a hopeful realistic ethics of reconciliation that offers a distinctive and significant contribution to Christian social ethics and political theology. Ben Fulford shines a spotlight on Frei's ethics and political thought. Bringing Frei's thinking into conversation with other key contemporary theologians such as Reinhold Niebuhr, James Cone, Juan Luis Segundo, Beverly Harrison and Stanley Hauerwas, Fulford demonstrates that Frei's thinking remains deeply pertinent to the challenges facing Christian theologians today.

Forthcoming

Guy Prentiss Waters, *The Sabbath as Rest and Hope for the People of God*, Crossway, forthcoming.

When it comes to the Sabbath, Christians have different ideas on what it means and how to observe it. For many people, it is a day to go to church and have fellowship with other believers. What they often miss, though, is that the Sabbath is intricately tied to rest and worship—both of which ultimately point to the Lord as our creator and redeemer. Guy Prentiss Waters offers an introductory study of the Sabbath from the creation of the world to the consummation of all things when Jesus returns. He shows how the Sabbath is observed through the major themes and genres of the Bible—creation, law, prophets, Jesus, and the apostles—and how that applies to our lives today. Waters teaches us about the Sabbath's full restoration in the new heavens and the new earth and its continual reminder of the covenant that God has made with his people.



“I do and understand”

Robin Payne

Exclusive extract from Honoring the Wise book in the ACT Monograph Series,

Central Asians¹ belong to a largely oral, storytelling culture where rote learning is dominant and critical thinking has not been part of their experience.² Learning in an asian context tends to take place not in the abstract but through stories, parables, and songs.³ People learn better with concrete rather than theoretical ideas. They also like to work together and help each other, being more social than individual in their learning.

Active learning, by including such things as stories, role play, dramatic presentations, drawing, reading in chorus, has proved to be helpful in encouraging a deeper understanding of the bible and especially of the old testament. The truth of the saying “i hear and forget, i see and remember, i do and understand” has been important in helping adults in central asia to understand, teach, and preach from the old testament. These are in fact important principles of adult learning and have been effective in working with students, teachers, and preachers in Central Asia.

Some Principles of Adult Learning⁴

Adult learning theory reminds us that adults learn best by experience. Learning is more effective when it is an active rather than a passive process. Adults learn through doing, so theoretical learning needs to be accompanied by practice. Acceptance of new ideas (head), attitudes (heart), and behaviours (hands) is a whole person process. Learners must believe that

what they are learning has practical relevance to them. They must be confident that they are capable of doing certain things and must believe they are appropriate to their situation before they will engage in them.

Although information often creates interest in a subject, it takes more than information to change ideas, attitudes, and behavioral patterns. Real-life situations, accomplishing tasks, and solving real life problems encourage learning. Motivation flows from a belief that what we learn will benefit us personally. Without relevance, apathy follows. The connection between desire for growth and potential results must be clear, personal, and realistic.

The more supportive, accepting, and caring the social environment, the freer a person is to experiment with new behaviours, attitudes, and ideas. It is easier for a person to change ideas, attitudes, and behavioural patterns when he or she feels part of a group. Learning done in the group helps people to be committed and encouraged to change more than when learning alone. A strong “motivational climate” in a group is a powerful influence for learning, change, and action. A “demotivational climate” is a strong force for disinterest, apathy, and resistance to change.

In working with first generation believers from a culture where stories are the main method of learning from youth upwards, methods based on such principles have been effective in helping them to see the big picture of the Old Testament. We have found that active, participatory learning in a supportive social environment has been effective in helping people not only to learn but to change in their understanding and practical use of the Bible. As learners need to appreciate the relevance of a subject to them, it is important for them to see the big picture before they engage in more detailed study. So we have tried to help them see that the Bible as a whole is a coherent story.

¹ See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_Asia for further information and an extensive bibliography.

² See Kinnally, “Oral Culture” for a detailed discussion of the way artistic and cultural practices, including songs, poetry, oral history, storytelling, and performance are ways to remember and pass on knowledge, ideas, and values across generations.

³ Gener, “Divine Revelation,” 32 quotes Chan, “Evangelical Theology,” 228.

⁴ These are based on the work of Kurt Lewin, Malcolm Knowles and others, including Knowles, *Informal Adult Education and Adult Learner*.



The Bible's Big Story⁵

New believers know many of the stories in the Bible, but most of them do not understand the Bible's big picture. People need to see the big picture before they can begin to understand the details, including how the stories that they have heard fit together. Understanding the Bible as a single, unified story has helped people to see where its parts fit in. Symbols showing the story of the Bible as a drama in six acts help people to visualise the story.⁶ We have developed a lecture with a PowerPoint presentation with pictures for students to identify which illustrate each of the acts of the drama.⁷

By the end of this presentation students can draw the diagram and explain each of the acts including where these are found in the Bible. This helps them to see the importance of the Old Testament in the whole Bible story. It is dominated by God's promise to bless the world, spoiled by human rebellion, through the family of Abraham and Sarah. This promise is fulfilled in the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus the Messiah. Through this presentation students also begin to understand that we too are part of that

⁵ The idea of the Bible as a drama in several acts has been developed variously by Chris Wright, *Sweeter than Honey*, Bartholomew and Goheen, *Drama of Scripture*, N. T. Wright, *People of God*, and others.

⁶ Chris Wright, *Sweeter than Honey*, 17–20. This was translated into Russian in 2017 and a translation into the Central Asian language is in progress. Chris, speaking at the IFES World conference in 2019, has now extended the acts in the drama to seven to include final judgment before the new creation. See "Hope." See also *Old Testament*, 5–6.

⁷ Chris Wright, *Sweeter than Honey*, 18.

story, involved in God's mission, as we wait for its fulfillment in the new creation.

Other helpful material which presents the big picture not only of the Bible but of individual books of the Bible is found online at the Bible Project.⁸ We are now able to use many of these excellent videos which are available in Russian.⁹ We are hoping we might be able to see them in the Central Asian language and local colleagues are trying to work on this. The producers hope that through their videos on the Bible, "By the end of this series, you will be familiar with every part of the Bible and how it uses language to communicate who God is, who we are, and the big, redemptive story that we are all living."¹⁰

Rev Dr Robin Payne taught *Old Testament & Hebrew* at Ridley, from 1984 to 1998. Having taught in schools, parish, and colleges for over 50 years, she has spent the last 15 years teaching in Central Asia.



⁸ <https://bibleproject.com/>.

⁹ <https://bibleproject.com/Russian/>.

¹⁰ <https://bibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible/>.

Romans and the Hermeneutics of Hope

Trevor Clark

“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” (ESV) With these words, Paul articulates in Romans 15:4 a vision of Scripture as an agent of hope in the life of the Roman church. How exactly does Paul imagine the relationship between Scripture and hope? Might this vision of Scripture be helpful today?

The Enigma of Romans 15:4

This verse has an interesting place in scholarship on Paul’s use of the Old Testament. Consider the contrasting views of C. D. Stanley and Richard B. Hays, two giants in the interpretation of Paul’s use of Scripture. According to Stanley, “Only in... such isolated verses... does Paul offer any hint as to the principles that guided his ‘Christian’ reading of the Jewish Scriptures, and even these statements illuminate only a fraction of his explicit appeals to Scripture.”¹ On the other hand, for Hays, verses such as Rom 15:4 convey,

“a poignant pedagogical maxim... that Scripture is rightly read as a word of address to the eschatological community of God’s people. The mode of reading that they prescribe is in fact practiced by Paul in all his dealings with the scriptural text.”²

What lies behind the minimalism of the one scholar and the maximalism of the other is something they hold in common. Although both Stanley and Hays devote whole chapters to Romans in their respective works, neither addresses Rom 15:4 within those

chapters. Instead, both save their comments on this verse for the concluding chapters. Furthermore, both interpreters group 15:4 together with other verses, such as 1 Cor 10:11, in the category of general hermeneutical maxims. Treating Rom 15:4 as a hermeneutical universal yields widely disparate results, depending on the perspective of the scholar. Might there be a middle ground between two such divergent positions? What if this verse was indeed seen as programmatic, but only within the letter in which it occurs? Perhaps this would explain why, in the words of Robert Jewett, “only here do we find Scripture explicitly linked to a congregation’s ‘steadfastness,’ ‘encouragement,’ and ‘hope.’”³

Romans 15:4 as the Place to Begin

There are several reasons to take Romans 15:4 as a general framework for Paul’s use of Scripture in Romans. First, there is a lexical link between this verse and 1:2, where Paul writes that the gospel was “promised beforehand” (προεπαγγέλλω, *proepangellō*), corresponding to the Scripture’s being “written beforehand” (προγράφω *prographō*) in 15:4.⁴ Structurally, these two verses stand at the head and tail of Paul’s argument, in what we might call summary positions. From the first sentence of the letter, Paul anticipates the vision of Scripture he will articulate in 15:4. Second, it is significant that in this verse Paul does not allude to a specific scripture (though he does in 15:3), but rather keeps the whole sweep of the scriptures in view through the plural of γραφή (*graphē*). In his book, *Hermeneutics as Apprenticeship*, David Starling has shown

¹ Christopher D. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 359.

² Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 166.

³ Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary*, (Hermeneia series, Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 880.

⁴ This connection noticed by Mark A. Seifrid, in “Romans,” *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, edited by D. A. Carson and G. K. Beale (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 687.



the hermeneutical payoff of attending to such general references. For example, though it is helpful to note intertextual quotations, echoes, and allusions, it is also advantageous to consider references to God's Word or the Law in the Psalms.⁵ Such global references reveal an author's hermeneutical posture, displaying the relationship an author imagines (not fictitiously) between their own work and another biblical text. It is this sort of reference we find in Rom 15:4. Finally, we note that God is called "the God of Hope" in Romans 15:13. Inasmuch as Scripture is God's word, it is a word of hope.

A Million Threads Woven Together

I would like to suggest that the hermeneutics of hope bring together a number of other themes integral to Romans. Though far too cursory, we can venture the following summary in rapid-fire fashion: the hermeneutics of hope are also the hermeneutics of *faith*. Faith and hope are nearly synonymous in Romans (cf. 4:18), and it is within the realm of faith that hope for eschatological life is found (1:16–17). The hermeneutics of hope are also the hermeneutics of *promise*, for it is in response to God's promise that human faith arises (1:2). They are also the hermeneutics of *righteousness*, for it is righteousness—justification—that God promises to his people, and in righteousness that

⁵ See in its entirety, David I. Starling, *Hermeneutics as Apprenticeship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2016).

he keeps that promise. The hermeneutics of hope are also the hermeneutics of *resurrection*. It is the resurrection that stands as God's vindication of his own (cf. 1:4; 4:25), and there is a solid link between the resurrection and hope in early Christianity.⁶ It is not for nothing that Romans begins how 1 Corinthians ends, with a focus on the resurrection.⁷ The hermeneutics of hope are also the hermeneutics of *the Spirit*, for it is the Spirit who raises from the dead (8:11), and the Spirit who articulates Christian hope (8:26). It is the Spirit who gives hope (15:13). Finally, the hermeneutics of hope are also the hermeneutics of *weakness*. In the context of finitude and fragility, fallenness, and fear, faith must be construed as hope. It is within the darkness of death and condemnation that the promise of life and justification shines so attractively. These are the hermeneutics of hope, and this hope will not put us to shame (cf. 1:16; 5:3).

Abraham—the Ideal Reader of Scripture

I have suggested that these themes—faith, promise, righteousness, resurrection, the Spirit, and weakness—flow naturally into each other and collectively

⁶ For the significance of resurrection throughout Romans, see especially Kirk, J. R. Daniel, *Unlocking Romans: Resurrection and the Justification of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2008).

⁷ The Corinthians, who were proud, needed to begin with the theology of the cross, with humility. The Romans, especially those weak in faith, needed hope, the theology of the resurrection.

into the theme of hope. It is the concept of hope that unites them. Nowhere are these interconnections more readily grasped than in Paul's presentation of Abraham in Romans 4. The Apostle presents the Patriarch not only as a practitioner of Scripture, but as an interpreter of Scripture, as one who hears the promise of justification and believes it, even when circumstances (he and Sarah's bodies being as good as dead) seem to put that promise in jeopardy. In this way, Abraham becomes a model for the Roman church's reading of Scripture, for the promise "was not written for Abraham alone, but also for us" (4:23–24).

Some of the Romans were weak in faith (14:1), hence Paul's desire to strengthen them (1:10–11). They stood in need of the hermeneutics of hope, a hermeneutical kinship with Abraham who, "hoping against hope... did not waver in unbelief at God's promise but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God" (4:18, 20). Paul uses Abraham's reading of Scripture (if we can call it that) to engender a worshipful, not boastful, reading of Scripture normative for both Jews and Gentiles in the Roman church.

The Hermeneutics of Hope Then and Now

In this concluding section, I would like to do two things: (a) I want to show that this general vision of Scripture as an agent of hope dovetails with Paul's actual use of Scripture in Romans, and (b) I want to draw some helpful principles for our own reading of Scripture. I think we can accomplish both goals through a brief overview of how the hermeneutics of hope operate within Paul's argument:

- (1) In Romans 1–4, Paul steers people away from false hope, using the Scriptures (think particularly of the catena in Ch. 3) to show that Jewish boasting is not very Jewish after all.
- (2) In Romans 5–8, Paul celebrates the fact that, in Christ, believers have the ultimate answer to the problems of sin and suffering—an answer that not even the Torah could provide. But even in the midst of such legitimate boasting, Paul uses Scripture to express the current experience of pain in the life of a believer.⁸ The

⁸ See David I. Starling, "For Your Sake We Are Being Killed All Day Long": Romans 8:36 and the Hermeneutics of Unexplained Suffering," *Themelios* 42.1 (2017): 112–21. Also Channing Crisler, *Reading Romans as Lament: Paul's Use of the Old Testament in His Most Famous Letter* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2016), 119–150.

hermeneutics of hope encompass both triumph and tragedy.

- (3) In Romans 9–11, Paul shows that the perils of Gentile boasting match those of the Jewish boasting he evaluated earlier. He uses Scripture to encourage hope not only for oneself (or one's group) but also for those presently far from God. Paul thus disparages the type of confidence that rests in God's rejection of another. The hermeneutics of hope highlight the danger of imposing one's own narrative on the Scriptures, rather than allowing the narrative of the Bible to surprise and humble us.
- (4) In Romans 12–16, Paul encourages believers to love one another and worship together. His use of Scripture, and his own paradigmatic boasting, are instructive for Jewish and Gentile believers, who ought to welcome one another.

How do we know if we are reading with the hermeneutics of hope today? We could ask ourselves the following: does our reading of scripture lead us to repentance, the dismantling of false hopes? Does our reading of scripture lead us to endure the world's hardships by holding on to true hope? Does our reading of scripture lead us to have hope for others? Are we reading Scripture with others, and in a way that embodies the hope we have for them, enabling them to worship the God of hope for themselves?

Trevor Clark is a pastor at Eastern Hills Baptist Church, Albuquerque, New Mexico, and is completing a PhD in New Testament at Gateway Seminary. He is also an example of the reach of NEXUS!



Publications

Consortium

Recent book publications by faculty in our affiliated colleges.

Department of Bible and Languages

Jill Firth & Paul A. Barker (Ridley), eds., *Honoring the Wise: Wisdom in Scripture, Ministry, and Life: Celebrating Lindsay Wilson's Thirty Years at Ridley*, ACT Monograph Series, Wipf & Stock, 2022.

Geoff Harper (SMBC), *Teaching Leviticus: From Text to Message*, Christian Focus, 2022.

Alan Thompson (SMBC), *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale, IVP Academic, 2022.

David Wright (BCSA), *Integration: A Conversation between Theological Education and the Letters to Timothy and Titus*, Langham, 2022.

Department of Christian Thought and History

Victoria Lorrimar (TCQ), *Human Technological Enhancement and Theological Anthropology*, CUP, 2022.

Brian Rosner (Ridley), *How to Find Yourself: Why Looking Inward Is Not the Answer*, Crossway, 2022.

Department of Ministry and Practice

Michael Bird (Ridley), *Religious Freedom in a Secular Age: A Christian Case for Liberty, Equality, and Secular Government*, Zondervan, 2022.

Perry Shaw (Morling), *Transforming Theological Education: A Practical Handbook for Integrated Learning*, 2nd ed., Langham, 2022.

Beyond

Nixon de Vera (Trinity VIC), *Constructing Eschatology: Rethinking the Prophecy in Isaiah*, Wipf & Stock, 2022.

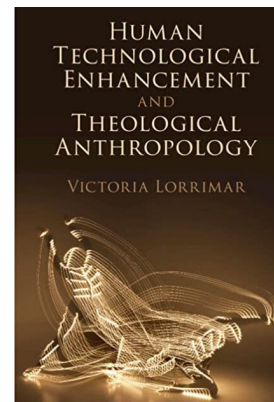
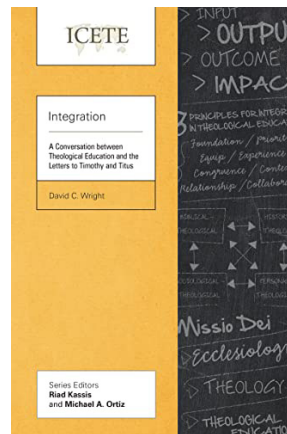
Graham Joseph Hill (BWA) & Desiree Geldenhuys (Stirling), *The Soul Online: Bereavement, Social Media, and Competent Care*, Wipf & Stock, 2021.

Graham Joseph Hill (BWA), *Sunburnt Country, Sweeping Pains: The Experiences of Asian Australian Women in Ministry and Mission*, Wipf & Stock, 2022.

Fergus King (Trinity VIC), *A Missional Introduction to the New Testament*, Missional University Press, 2021.

Chris Porter (Trinity VIC), *Johannine Social Identity Formation after the Fall of the Jerusalem Temple: Negotiating Identity in Crisis*, Brill, 2022.

Dean Smith & Rob Fringer (Nazarene), *Wesleyan Perspectives on Human Flourishing*, Pickwick, 2021.



Meet our new Deputy Dean

Interview with Dr Edwina Murphy



Tell us about your background?

I've just realised I'm a very local person. I live in Oatley, in the same postcode as my sister and brother. I go to the same Baptist church (Blakehurst) that I first started attending the year I turned ten, where my brother is now the pastor. My sister teaches at the same primary school we went to. My daughter goes to the same high school that I did. My son is doing an economics degree at Sydney, just as I did. After graduation, I worked in my parents' business, something I continued to do, on and off, for twenty years – I'm pretty proud of my forklift licence. I've also spent a lot of time at Macquarie Park, studying at Morling College, serving as an associate pastor at Macquarie Baptist, doing my PhD at Macquarie University and lecturing at Morling in Christianity in History and Baptist Distinctives, finishing up (briefly) as Director of Research.

What is your own research on?

My research centres around Cyprian, who was the bishop of Carthage in the mid-third century, and how the early church interpreted Scripture. I'm also involved in a couple of collaborative projects on deacons and elders (respectively) in the early church. For all my local emphasis, I enjoy connecting with others in my field, co-chairing the Contextualizing North African Christianity section at the Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting and being a member of the Council of the International Association of Patristic Studies, as well as the National Correspondent for Australia.

What has been your previous experience with the ACT?

Well, the ACT and I go back to 1993 when, as newlyweds, Peter and I first started studying part-time at Morling. After finishing my BMin, I started an MTh, and had various adjunct roles before becoming a faculty member in 2008. So, it's been almost 30 years of being part of the ACT, one way or another.

In your new role what are you planning to:

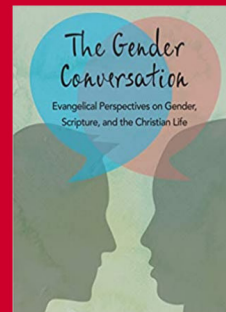
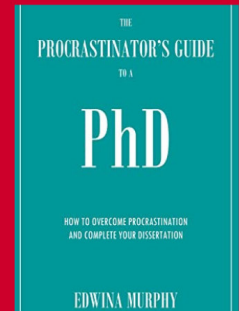
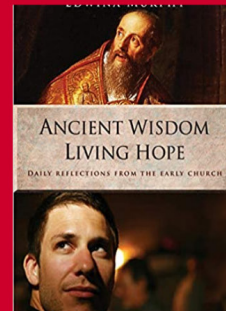
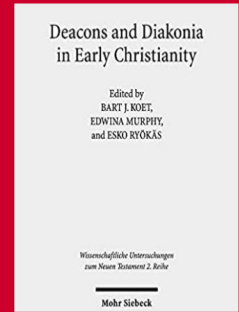
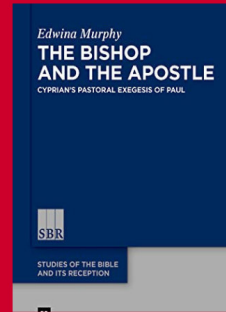
consolidate?

The ACT has been awarding doctorates, based on examination by international experts, for over fifty years so we're well established in that respect. Our recently revamped DMin program holds exciting possibilities for the Australian church. We also have a great research culture across the consortium, which has only been strengthened by greater access to research seminars for our HDR students and the Research & Scholarship networks for faculty. I want to continue to encourage the development and contribution of female scholars as well.

grow?

I'd like to grow the confidence of our HDR students and our faculty in the quality of their work, grow our engagement with the international scholarly community and grow the impact of our collective work on the church and society.

Edwina Murphy: authored and co-edited books



and more to come...

Our Team

Dean & CEO

Prof James Dalziel

Research, Teaching and Learning Division

Deputy Dean, Director of Research

Dr Edwina Murphy

Research

(Dr Edwina Murphy)

Executive Officer (Research Quality)

Prof Neil Ormerod

Publishing Manager & Colloquium Editor

Rev Megan Powell du Toit

Executive Officer: Academic Board, R&RSC, HREC, Coursework Committee

Cathy Harris

Teaching & Learning

Director of Teaching & Learning

Rev Dr Ian O'Harae

Moderation & Inclusion Manager

Erin Sessions

(Cathy Harris)

Registry, Quality & Finance Division

Chief Operating Officer & Registrar

Simon Davies

Registry

(Simon Davies)

Student Reporting Officer (2022)

Diana Tadjudin

Acting Deputy Registrar (2022)

Asanka Gunerathne

Academic Administrative Officer

Rebekah Wall

Academic Services Support Officer

Jayne Tan

Academic Administration Officer

Lissa Philip

IT Officer

Witali Klein

Quality

Director of Quality

Nathain Secker

Academic Quality Officer

Stephen Sarkoezy

(Lissa Philip)

Finance

Director of Finance

Vicki Chen

Financial Accountant

Mary Ann Navidad

Office News

Restructure

The ACT has been restructured into two divisions, Research, Teaching and Learning (headed by Edwina Murphy) and Registry, Quality & Finance (headed by Simon Davies).

Staff Changes

The first half of 2022 has seen a considerable amount of staff change. Dr Edwina Murphy has come on as Deputy Dean. Lissa Philip has also joined the team as Quality and Academic Administrative Officer.

Dr Paul Yeates has left to become Registrar at Moore College. His role has been taken on by Nathain Secker. Erin Sessions has moved under the Teaching & Learning department with the new title of Moderation & Inclusion Manager.

Conferrals

Dec 2021 - May 2022

Doctor of Philosophy

Christine Redwood (Morling) for a thesis titled 'Hear Her Voice in the Book of Judges'

Morgan Renew (SMBC) for a thesis titled 'Imputation and Obedience: The Theological Relationship Between Imputation of Christ's Righteousness and Christian Obedience'.

Donald Smith (Malyon) for a thesis titled 'A Theory of What Factors Contribute to the Apparent Success of a Leadership Development Course for Young Men'.

Ruth Sutcliffe (Christ College) for a thesis titled 'Theology of Persecution in the Alexandrian and Carthaginian Fathers 195-260CE'.



On Being Mindful of the Future

Leisa Aitkin



I spent much more time than usual with my dog during the pandemic. He is a 50kg Rhodesian Ridgeback named Archibald. I have noticed his constant glorious capacity to enjoy the moment. Ears flying out the window on a car trip bring a grin to his face. Someone returns home, and his tail wags, and his hindquarters sway so much that it looks like he is dancing. We humans have also recently been encouraged to live ‘in the moment’ more. Wellbeing articles, doctors, and psychologists encourage us to practice mindfulness; the Buddhist-inspired, psychologically validated notion of being in the present. It has echoes across time, from Parmenides (5th century BCE), who claimed that the ‘unity that is being’ exists only in the “eternal present,”¹ to the 21st century yoga clothing brand Lululemon which recently had splashed on its shop windows that “living in the moment could be the

meaning of life.”²

In psychological practice, mindfulness involves stepping outside of the chaos of our own minds and simply observing our thoughts and feelings. It certainly has an evidence-based place in the toolkit to help manage the stresses of life.

Mindfulness is often used to balance a particular type of future thinking, catastrophising, which happens more when we are stressed. As our thoughtful frontal lobe goes off-line in deference to the more survival-centred part of our brain, we can end up assuming the worst about the future. This, of course, exacerbates our anxiety. Focusing on the moment can be a calm retreat. However, is it possible to

1 Parmenides, *On Nature*.

2 2012 Lululemon Manifesto <https://sites.google.com/site/mngt255tina/organization-planning/vision-mission-and-goals/lululemon-manifesto>

focus too much on being in the present?

Future thought does not have to be catastrophising - it can also engage with our most meaningful hopes. If we spend too much time living minute by minute with no plan for the future, we can end up rudderless. Floating in Nietzsche's "open sea" simply seeking, as he suggested, the "eternal Yea" of existence but without a sense of our destination or end.³

The time perspective we have inside our heads matters. Social psychologists have found that while those who focus most on the present report themselves to be happier than others, this comes at a price. They do not experience their lives as being as meaningful as those who balance thinking about the past, present, and future. Of course, we all like to be happy, but when we go through a difficult time, making sense of it is an important form of coping. Remembering our past, acting in the present, and anticipating the future create a narrative arc, a storyline for our lives. It turns out this is important for a life that has a sense of purpose. As philosopher Alisdair MacIntyre contends, we can't know how to act now until we know the story of which we are a part.⁴

My own PhD research on the psychology of hope has found that hope also involves a story across time. And not just for Christians. To hope, we must have at least some sense of what would constitute possible good endings to our life stories. Meaningful endings. As Czech philosopher, playwright, former president (and serious overachiever) Václav Havel has said, "hope is not the conviction that something turns out well, but the certainty that something makes sense."⁵

This has been borne out in my research in Sydney during the shifting ground of the COVID-19 pandemic. I asked people (the majority of whom had no particular spiritual belief) what they put their trust in for the future of humanity. They

were given options: science, governments, artificial intelligence, social media campaigns, the younger generation, and many more. While science was the most popular answer, it was not the answer of those respondents who were most hopeful. The only three items in which people trusted that correlated with hope were i) God / spiritual agents, ii) the belief that "everything happens for a reason," and iii) the belief that "good will conquer evil." These latter two are, in essence, 'endings' of a story.

It seems, at least in the West, those who are hopeful are yearning for and so create their own, satisfying, if vague, eschatology. This resonates with my experience with clients. Those who coped well in the pandemic often expressed an overarching sense of 'good triumphing' or 'meaning' being found in suffering. They mostly could not articulate any particular grounds to assert these but had their own conviction that, in Julian of Norwich's words, "All shall be well."⁶

Climate anxiety, especially in young people, is the flip side of this sense of hope. I am counselling many Gen Z clients who are terrified that this planet has no future. However, their fear and despair are still markers of their desire for the good ending; as Aquinas stated, "Hence despair, like hope, presupposes desire; because we neither hope for nor despair of that which we do not desire to have."⁷ They still long for the good ending, and it is crushing that they can see no way opening up to its fulfillment. I asked in my research, "what is your best realistic hope for the future of humanity?" Those over 45 were confident of flourishing for many generations. However, the vast majority of those younger than 25 said that their best hope was that "things won't get worse." Jürgen Moltmann argues that the worst of all utopias is that of the status quo.⁸ When despair kicks in, people lose a tangible vision of the future to seep back into the present, to shape and direct action to bring it about. But despair itself still points to an aching for a meaningful, hoped-for ending.

³ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, for example V, 343; IV, 276.

⁴ Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, Ind: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

⁵ Vaclav Havel, *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Hvizdala*, ed. Karel Hvizdala (New York: 1990), 181-82.

⁶ Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*.
⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, Q 40, A4

⁸ Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology / Jürgen Moltmann; Translated by James W. Leitch from the German* (London: SCM Press, 1967), 23.

It seems to me that many in our world are poised, ready to hear about the promise of a good ending to humanity's story. This 'sense of an ending' template may be part of the knowledge of eternity that God has placed in every human heart. It may be a springboard for conversation. We who know God place our hope in his powerful promise and vision of an end of restoration and renewal of our whole planet. We know that good will triumph over evil because in Jesus it already has. We have a hope-filled 'future end' of the human story to tell our anxious world.

It turns out that being mindful of our future is just as important as being mindful of our present.

Leisa Aitken is a clinical psychologist and Fellow of the Centre for Public Christianity. She is pursuing PhD research on the Psychology of Hope



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ACT online

December 2021-May 2022

Podcast Series:

Allister Lum Mow, Cameron Clausing, & Murray Smith (Christ College), [Down Under Theology](#)

Mike Bird (Ridley), [Seven Things I Wish Christians Knew](#), Eternity Podcast Network

Al James & Tim Beilharz (YthWks), [The Effective Ministry Podcast](#)

John Dickson (Ridley) [Undeceptions](#), Undeceptions Network

Megan Powell du Toit (ACT) & Michael Jensen (BCSA), [With All Due Respect](#), Undeceptions Network

Articles and Interviews:

ABC

27 January, John Dickson (Ridley), [“Revisiting the historicity of Jesus: Does Miles Patten-den fault my argument, or affirm its central claim?”](#)

The Spectator Australia

28 May, Andrew Sloane (Morling), [“Concerning Cosmetic Cowboys”](#)

Centre for Public Christianity

23 March, Erin Sessions (ACT), interviewed on [Poetic License](#), *Life & Faith*

Evangelicals Now UK

1 March, Peter Riddell, (MST) [“Malaysia: Court Battle Reaching Climax”](#)

1 May, Peter Riddell (MST), [“SE Asia Christians Voice Ukraine Support”](#)

The Gospel Coalition Australia

19 January, Gary Millar (QTC), [“How I Made It: Gary Millar’s ‘Read This First’”](#), Interviewed by Jacob York

22 February, John Frederick (TCQ), [“What the Vinyl Resurgence Can Tell Us About Resilient Faith”](#)

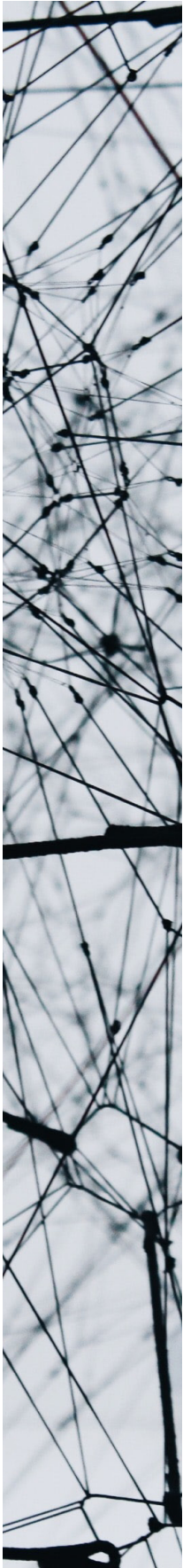
17 March, Peter Adam (BCSA), [“How is Your Ticker?”](#)

22 March, John Frederick (TCQ), [“Is Evangelicalism Enough? – Moving Beyond the Melting Pot of Evangelical Minimalism”](#)

Undeceptions Network

28 February, Megan Powell du Toit (ACT) & Michael Jensen (BCSA), [Transforming Tales](#), *Undeceptions*

21 April, David Starling (Morling), interviewed on [The Leader’s Ego](#), *With All Due Respect*



Events

June 2022

1 Moore, NSW

[P&A: Men and women and church discipline, Kara Hartley & Phil Colgan](#)

2 Village Church Annandale, NSW

[Brian Rosner How to Find Yourself book launch](#)

13 Trinity, VIC

[Socio-Scientific Approaches to Religious Enmity: Conference and Workshop](#)

14 Macquarie, NSW

[SSEC seminar: The Placement of Paul's Composition of 1 Corinthians in Troas: A Fresh Approach, Daryn Graham](#)

16-17 MST, VIC

[Missiology and Practical Theology Conference \(with Malyon and Ridley\)](#)

18 Ridley, VIC

[Children's and Youth Ministry Training Day, Jimmy Young](#)

19 St James Institute, NSW

[Ageing, Mortality and Spiritual Existence Today, Stephen Pickard](#)

27-28 Morling, NSW

[Preaching for Application conference - Abraham Kuruvilla, Malcolm Gill, Megan Best, Megan Powell du Toit, Michael Jensen](#)

July 2022

3-6 Alphacrucis, NSW

[ANZATS: Future Theology, Willie Jennings & Victoria Lorrimar](#)

7-11 Morling, NSW

[IAMS assembly: Powers, Inequalities, and Vulnerabilities: Mission in a Wounded World](#)

20 Moore, NSW

[CGM: the written word in an oral world, Simon Gillham & Malcolm Richards](#)

27 St James Institute, NSW

[Christian Women in Leadership](#)

August 2022

4, 8-12 Moore, NSW

[Annual Lectures: a theology of the Christian Life, Kelly Kapic](#)

7 St James Institute, NSW

[A Muslim's View of Jesus & A Christian's View of Muhammad](#)

[Mehmet Ozalp & Aaron Ghiloni](#)

12 ICETE, online

[FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN DIALOGUE](#)

18 Ridley, VIC

[The Leon Morris Lecture in New Testament Studies](#)

23-25 Ythwks, NSW

[HOUSE conference \(theology of youth & children's ministry\), Andrew Spalding & Tim Escott](#)

24 Moore, NSW

[CCL: Commanding the heart: Deception, Tony Payne](#)

26-28 Ridley, VIC

[Women's Writing Retreat with Wendy Noble](#)

28 St James Institute, NSW

[Poetry is Essential to the Human Spirit, Terry Veling](#)

September 2022

2 Ridley, VIC

[The Anglican Institute Lecture](#)

2-3 St Andrew's, NSW

[Ninth Patristic Symposium 'Saint Maximus the Confessor: 7th Century Christianity: Theology and History'](#)

14 Moore, NSW

[The mothers' union & the ministry of lay women: Donald Robinson Library](#)

16-18 the cooperative, QLD

[uncommon goods: public theology and empire, Anne Pattel-Gray, Monica Jyotsona Melanchton, Jione Havea](#)

October 2022

4 St James Institute, NSW

[Eden Tomorrow: The Creator and the Cancerous Creature \(Webinar\)](#), Aaron T. Smith

4 Ridley, VIC

[The Peter Corney Lecture in Youth Ministry](#)

12 Moore, NSW

[P&A: Proverbs 31](#), Andrew Heard

16 St James Institute, NSW

[Afterlives of Jesus: Global Perspectives on the Future of Jesus](#), Greg Jenks

19 Moore, NSW

[CCL: Commanding the heart: Vengeance](#), Andrew Errington

20 Macquarie, NSW

[SSEC: Peter Fleming A Play: Constantine, The Legacy](#)

November 2022

8 St James Institute, NSW

[Islamophobia and the Christian Response \(Webinar\)](#)

[Jordan Denari Duffner](#)

15 Macquarie, NSW

[SSEC: Michael Theophilus: Ancient Coinage and the First Christmas](#)

16-18 Nunyara, SA

[ANZATFE conference: Developing Leaders, Formation, Supervision and Self-care](#)



Call for Papers

New Christ College journal [Gospel Leadership](#) is open for submissions. It aims to encourage and equip church and parachurch leaders by focusing on Reformed theology as it impacts their gospel ministry.

[Ninth Patristic Symposium 'Saint Maximus the Confessor: 7th Century Christianity: Theology and History'. St Andrew's Greek Orthodox College. 2-3 September 2022, proposals due 18 July 2022.](#)

[Thinking for Ourselves for God's Sake: SCD 2023 Learning and Teaching Theology Conference.](#) To be held 14-15 April 2023. Proposals due 16 November 2022.

The [ISCAST Journal](#) has been relaunched and is looking for submissions.