

N E X U S

the ACT Research & Scholarship Magazine



The Bookshelf

Recent Books on Story

Fireside

Asking ACT people a friendly question.

What's The Story

Extract by Graham Stanton

The Power of Story

Article by Tim McBride

And the usuals

Events, ACT People Online, Conferrals, Publications, and News

NOVEMBER 2023





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*from
the
editor*

This comes to you as my last edition of NEXUS. This month I start a new role as Senior Pastor of Rouse Hill Baptist Church in Sydney.

Started by former Associate Dean Graeme Chatfield as a newsletter, NEXUS expanded during my tenure to a magazine. Out of all the communication I have done in my time here at the ACT, I have valued NEXUS as a place to connect as a community.

It is here we celebrate each other's achievements and share news. Where we learn about the different ways we are serving God in our different contexts. Where we can explore together the thoughts and interests that don't always make their way into our more tightly focussed academic publishing.

Thanks to all those people who have generously contributed over the years to this modest publication, despite many other important calls on their time.

This issue is on Story. I leave you to discover it for yourselves, and I hope to connect again with you at other points within this Big Story.

Rev Dr Megan Powell du Toit

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



THE NEXUS BOOKSHELF

This issue we look at recent and upcoming books about Story. Blurbs adapted from publisher descriptions.

2022

Miroslav Volf & Ryan McAnnally-Linz, [*The Home of God - A Brief Story of Everything*](#), Brazos Press.

We live in the midst of a crisis of home. It is evident in the massive uprooting and migration of millions across the globe, in the anxious nationalism awaiting immigrants in their destinations, in the unhoused populations in wealthy cities, in the fractured households of families, and in the worldwide destruction of habitats and international struggles for dominance. It is evident, perhaps more quietly but just as truly, in the aching sense that there is nowhere we truly belong.

In this moment, the Christian faith has been disappointingly inept in its response. We need a better witness to the God who created, loves, and reconciles this world, who comes to dwell among us.

This book tells the “story of everything” in which God creates the world as the home for humans and for God in communion with God’s creatures. The authors render the story of creation, redemption, and consummation through the lens of God’s home-making work and show the theological fruit of telling the story this way. The result is a vision that can inspire creative Christian living in our various homes today in faithfulness to God’s ongoing work.

2023

Hans Burger, [*Life in Christ: The Significance of Jesus’ Story*](#), trans. Dick Moe, Cascade.

Jesus rose from the dead, and that makes a difference in our lives here and now. The Christian faith is not just about the past or about the future. We are a new creation in Christ. The gospel is about reconciliation, union with Christ, and participation in Christ.

In *Life in Christ*, all aspects of the life of Christians, in the church and world, are addressed from the perspective that we are in Christ. In doing so, Burger builds bridges between different Christian traditions.

Timothy K. Snyder, [*Lived Vocation: Stories of Faith at Work*](#), Fortress Press.

Lived Vocation is a collection of short reflective essays based on stories of contemporary work. Together these reflections offer a window into the struggle to find meaning at work today. These stories explore how we come to our work and jobs, the hardship and “toil” of our working lives, and the surprisingly small but powerful ways in which God may nonetheless be at work in these stories.

Author Tim Snyder asks: What if vocation were less about being certain that you’re following God’s master plan for your life and more about noticing the presence of God as we tell our stories from everyday life? The book challenges congregational leaders to listen to the stories of actual Christians putting their faith into action. It offers ordinary Christians the assurance that they are not alone in their struggle to make sense of faith in everyday life.

The book provides congregational leaders with an accessible window into the lives of ordinary Christians trying to put their faith into action at work. It helps such leaders empathize with the difficulties of integrating faith in everyday life today and inspires them to listen to and tell more stories of their own.

Philip Plymington, [*Being Real: The Apostle Paul’s Hardship Narratives and The Stories We Tell Today*](#), SCM Press.

Paul’s stories of hardship in his letters to the Corinthians are often ignored but are crucial to understanding how the apostle thought about the Chris-



tian life. In an age of carefully managed public profiles presented via Instagram or Twitter and BeReal, or even the public presentation of our churches, Paul draws us to a different relationship with ourselves and our communities – one which enables us to tell authentic stories about ourselves, warts and all. In his deep and careful study of the epistles to the Corinthians, Philip Plymington demonstrates how Paul calls the Corinthian Christians to a way of living which stands in stark contrast from the prevailing culture of Corinth, and argues that there are profound lessons to be learnt for faithful Christians and churches today.

Gary Edward Schnittjer, [*Old Testament Narrative Books: The Israel Story*](#), B&H Publishing Group.

Old Testament Narrative Books focuses on two larger narratives of the Old Testament: the Narratives of the Rise and Fall of the Hebrew Kingdoms (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings) and the Narratives of Exile and Restoration (Ruth, Daniel, Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah, Chronicles). Overall, this work introduces the narratives of Israel's scriptures with an emphasis on ancient connections, biblical connections, gospel connections, and life connections.

Katherine Thompson (MST), [*The Discipline of Suffering: Redeeming Our Stories of Pain*](#), Acorn Press.

From the author of the bestseller *Christ-Centred Mindfulness*, a transformative book that tackles the faulty stories we tell ourselves during times of pain and suffering.

Katherine Thompson shows how suffering can be a spiritual discipline, fostering growth, healing and a deeper faith in God. Her book provides a safe space to explore the difficult questions raised by suffering while encouraging us to confront personal challenges rather than avoid them. *The Discipline of Suffering* offers practical strategies, real-life stories and useful skills to help reconstruct broken lives, equipping readers to navigate through difficult times.

Whether you seek healing, resilience or a renewed sense of purpose, *The Discipline of Suffering* is your guide to redeeming your story and finding meaning amidst adversity.

Douglas Estes, ed., [*Theology and Tolkien: Practical Theology*](#), Lexington.

Contributions by Miguel Benitez, Jr.; Mark Brians; Chris Bruno; Christine Falk Dalessio; Fábio Augusto Darius; Douglas Estes; Rodrigo Follis; Anthony Glaise; J. Collin Huber; Trygve D. Johnson; Keith A. Mathison; Federico Maria Rossi; Philip Ryken; Ismael Silva; Alex Sosler; Jerome Van Kuiken and Trevor B. Williams

The works of J.R.R. Tolkien have not only redefined a genre of literature but also had a far-reaching impact on culture in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Tolkien's name has joined the ranks of authors such as Shakespeare, Milton, Dostoevsky, Donne, and Dickens who make us think differently about the world. In *Theology and Tolkien: Practical Theology*, an international group of scholars consider what Tolkien's works (and Jackson's film interpretations) can teach us about living out our theology in the world. From essays on Tolkien's insights into community, what we can learn about our spiritual senses from encounters with the Nazgûl, the pastoral wisdom of Treebeard, to the theological value of food—including second breakfasts—we invite you to journey with us through Middle-earth as we engage the applicability of Tolkien's works for theology and our world.

Meghan Larissa Good, [*Divine Gravity: Sparking a Movement to Recover a Better Christian Story*](#), Herald Press.

Over five hundred years ago, the Western church underwent a period of massive recalibration that exposed abuses and theological blind spots and revived the historical foundations of Christianity. Today, signs suggest that we have entered another such religious reformation as new technologies, ecclesial scandals, and a crisis of biblical authority leave many Christians adrift or deconstructing the faith they once took for granted. The Christian

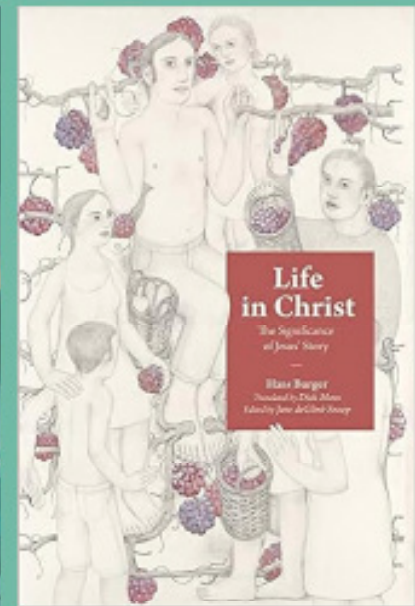
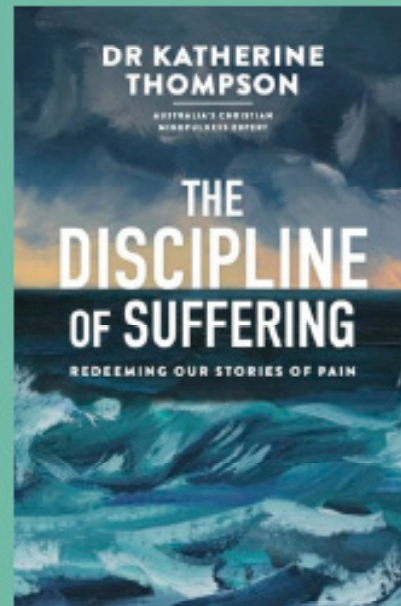
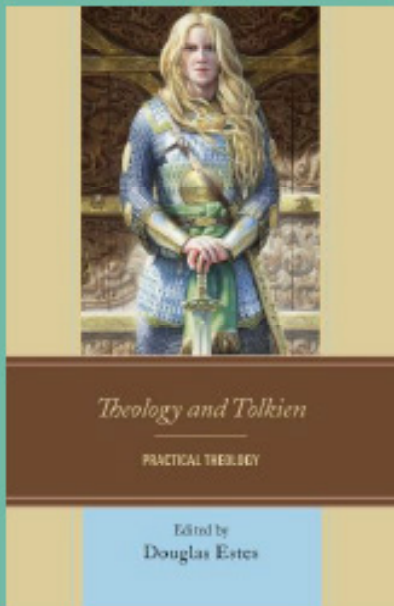
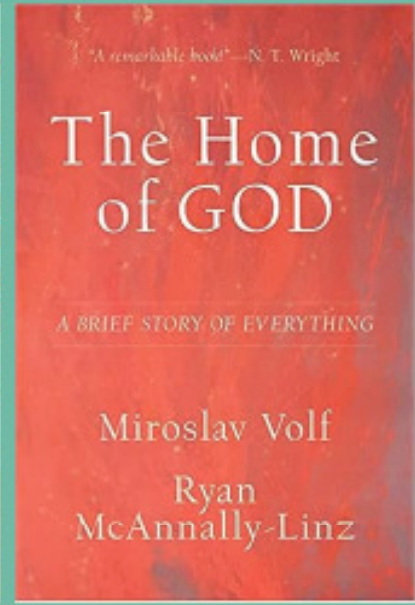
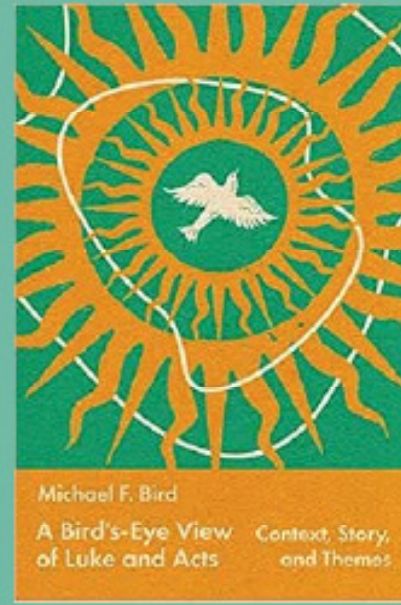
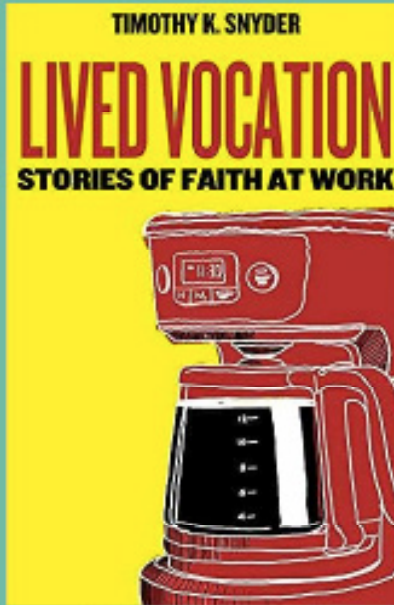
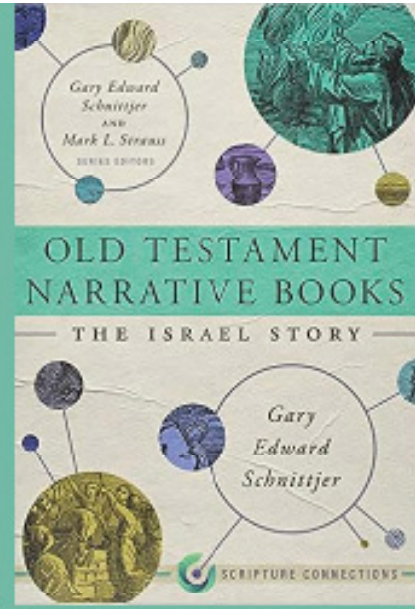
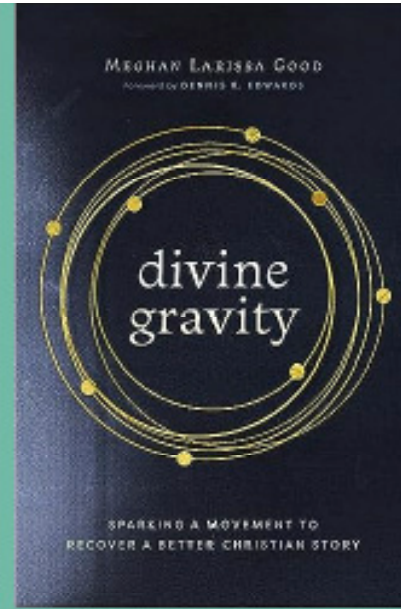
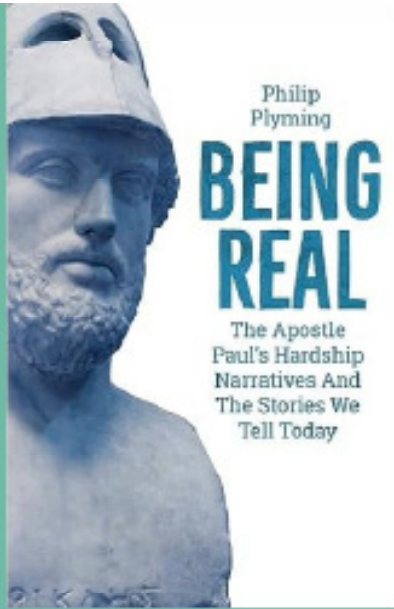
story the church has been telling has become too small, and we are at a dead end.

There is hope. Author and pastor Meghan Larissa Good invites readers into a movement that is finding ways to tell a better Christian story—a movement that is already emerging spontaneously as a work of the Spirit in many different wings of the church. Along the way, readers will encounter core rediscoveries of this authentic, Jesus-centered Christianity: through Christ, God is breathing life among us, restoring creation, and reconciling all divided things. In this better story, isolation, intolerance, polarisation, and death have no grip. This story satisfies our deep spiritual hunger, beckoning us to renew the church for the coming centuries and reignite a world-changing global movement.

Forthcoming

Michael Bird (Ridley), [*A Bird's-Eye View of Luke and Acts: Context, Story, and Themes*](#), IVP Academic, forthcoming

In this accessible and compelling introduction, Michael Bird draws us into the wide-ranging narrative of Luke-Acts to discover how Luke frames the life of Jesus and of the first disciples who set out from Jerusalem to “the ends of the earth” proclaiming the Good News. Bird shows us how these two books, when read together, tell a cohesive narrative about Jesus, the Church, and the mission of God—with implications for the whole of our lives today. Situating both books in their historical and literary context, Bird moves through an exploration of their central theological themes and culminates with consideration of the books' relevance for contemporary social issues.



FIRESIDE

Q: What is a favourite story and why? Inside & Outside Scripture

Andrew Judd, Deputy Principal: Community, Ridley College



Inside the Bible:

I love the story of Esther - it's so well crafted, and full of delightful twists and turns.

Outside the Bible:

Outside scripture it's got to be *Children of Men* by PD James. She is such an insightful student of human nature

Kate Snell, Dean of Students, Mary Andrews College



Inside the Bible:

I recently preached the story of Jesus walking on the water. Jesus speaks, "it is I; don't be afraid." In the turbulent waters and howling wind he comforts the disciples with his words and presence. He

identifies himself with the I AM and enacts out the gospel in the way he rescues the disciples.

Outside the Bible:

I love reading fiction and with two young children, I have discovered a whole new delightful world in children's fiction! We are enjoying *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*. A beautiful story about memories and what they mean to us, of friendship, the guilelessness of youth and dignity of old age.

Stephen Sarkoezy, ACT Academic Quality Officer

Inside the Bible:

The story of Joseph. I grew up in the Catholic tradition so I had never read the Bible. At school

a priest read the story of Joseph's life from Genesis. I had never heard these stories before and was amazed. I became a Christian about 20 years later, so I think a seed was planted.

Outside the Bible:

The Victorian Internet: The Remarkable Story of the Telegraph and the Nineteenth Century's On-Line Pioneers, Tom Standage.

This book argues that the telegraph was a major qualitative shift whereas the internet is only a quantitative shift. Within a very short time, there was the telegraph, electricity distribution, the motor car and powered flight. Most of the technology we have now is just a more developed version of what came before.



Buffy (Elizabeth) Greentree, Librarian, Brisbane School of Theology

Inside the Bible:

I've rediscovered a love for the story of Hannah after working through the Hebrew where she is portrayed as much more passionate than the English suggests. Like Jacob, when God challenges her to wrestle with him, she takes up the fight, opening by calling him the military title "Lord of Hosts." She is, as she tells Eli, a woman of fierce/persistent spirit.



Outside the Bible:

I love *Jane Eyre* for a similar reason: she is thought of as dull, but underneath burns a great passion. "Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! — I have as much soul as you — and full as much heart!"

HIGHER EDUCATION NEWS

CAMPUS REVIEW:

[Research Shows We Can Improve Student Equity](#)

Research shows that student poverty is an almost impossible barrier to student equity in Australia.

Campus Mail

[Campus Mail has shut down as of June 2023.](#)

Inside Higher ED

[A Call for Cognitive Kindness](#)

Drawing lessons from cognitive psychology, we must transform our courses and university structures to be more kind to students' minds.

TEQSA

[Protecting sector integrity: Assessment reform and AI](#)

TEQSA's Chief Commissioner, Prof Peter Coaldrake, has written to all HEPs outlining the significant challenges to sector integrity which artificial intelligence presents to assessment.

The Conversation

[Sexual harassment impacts university staff – our research shows how](#)

Last month, the Universities Accord interim report said sexual assault and harassment on campus are “affecting the wellbeing of students and staff, and their ability to succeed”.

Times HE:

[Universities Accord ‘priority’ bill passes Australian parliament](#)

Legislation giving effect to two “priority” recommendations from the Australian Universities Accord has been approved by parliament, despite resistance from the main opposition parties



WHAT'S THE STORY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY?

Graham Stanton. An extract from a forthcoming book in the ACT Monograph Series, *Australian Evangelical Perspectives on Youth Ministry* edited by Ruth Lukabyo.

“What’s the story with young people today?” It’s the question often asked by exasperated parents at their wits end with how to relate to their teenage child. It’s the question asked by bewildered senior pastors wondering why the members of the youth group aren’t paying attention to their sermons. It’s the declaration veiled as a question made by sophisticated young adults expressing their newfound disdain for the demographic with whom they are so glad to no longer be associated.

While others may ask this question with some degree of exasperation, those who want to advance Christian ministry to, with, and by young people hear this question as part of the search for answers regarding what to do with young people. However, the question of what to do with young people (or what to do for them, or what to enable to be done by them) must come second to an understanding of who young people are. In this we might take C. S. Lewis’s advice shared in his work *A Preface to Paradise Lost*:

The first qualification for judging any piece of workmanship from a corkscrew to a cathedral is to know what it is—what it was intended to do and how it was meant to be used. After that has been discovered the temperance reformer may decide that the corkscrew was made for a bad purpose, and the communist may think the same about the cathedral. But such questions come later. The first thing is to understand the object before you: as long as you think the corkscrew was meant for opening tins or the cathedral for entertaining tourists you can say nothing to the purpose about them.¹

¹ Lewis, *A Preface to Paradise Lost*.

So, to use Lewis’s language: What are teenagers? What are they intended to do? How we answer those questions depends on what kind of story we tell about teenagers and how we talk about this period of life we call adolescence.

The Power of Story

Human beings tell stories to connect and identify with action. As Scottish social philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre has said, “Man [sic] is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal . . . I can only answer the question ‘What am I to do?’ if I can answer the prior question ‘Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?’”² Our world is full of stories: personal stories of what happened to me yesterday on the way to the shops; family stories about how our ancestors moved from China to the Australian goldfields; national stories about settlement or invasion; cultural stories from fairytales to cinema blockbusters. Stories are at once backward as well as forward facing, expressing how we understand our identity and shaping what our identity will be.

Among all these are stories about young people. How we view young people and this stage of life we call adolescence is reflected in and shaped by the exploits of Dustin, Will, Eleven, and Max from *Stranger Things*, by the relationship Ricky Baker has with Hector in *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, and even by the almost total absence of young people in stories like *The West Wing* or *Better Call Saul*. We’re shaped by stories on the news about “teenage gangs” terrorising suburban streets, by school newsletters profiling the latest

² MacIntyre, *After Virtue*.

group of high achievers, and grandad's stories that begin with "When I was a boy."

This chapter outlines five stories that we tell about youth, young people, and adolescence: the story of young people themselves, or of adolescence itself, is variously told as a problem to be solved, a challenge to be met, a resource to be utilized, a lifestyle to be enjoyed, or a gift to be received. In various ways each story has shaped how the Christian church has approached youth ministry at different points in history and across different theological traditions or ministry approaches.³ Each of these stories connects in some way with the biblical story (some more closely than others), and each can be pressed well beyond where Scripture leads.

While we can learn from each story and the ministries shaped by them, ultimately Christian ministry to, with, and by young people will flourish not when we make them the center of the story but when we recognise how they are caught up in the story of God and his mission in the world. In all this, those involved in youth ministry are encouraged to reflect on their own stories of engagement with young people. What stories have you been shaped by? What stories do you tell that influence or shape others? How could your ministry among young people become more resonant with the story of Jesus and the kingdom of God?

Graham Stanton is Director of the Centre for Children's & Youth Ministry at Ridley College.



³ Bonnie Miller-McLemore takes a similar approach, identifying various "images" or "constructions" of children and youth, some that are "problematic" or "damaging" ("kids as innocent, commodity, consumer, burden, and expendable") and three that offer "a revitalized Christian perspective (kids as gift, task, and agent)." Miller-McLemore, "Christian Constructions."



THE POWER OF STORY

Using narrative structure in the classroom

Tim MacBride

Preachers have long known the power of story. Not simply individual stories told in sermons, but where the sermon itself is structured as one big story. As a preacher and teacher of homiletics, a narrative approach to preaching has become foundational for me.

About six years ago, I started to apply to my lecturing what I'd learnt about narrative structuring, in a more deliberate and systematic way. Using ideas I'd picked up from my research in the fields of homiletics and social psychology, I found that it made a tangible difference in student engagement. In fact, there was one technique in particular—simple to use, yet powerfully effective—that kept students engaged and sustained interest throughout the lecture...

But I'm getting ahead of myself. I'll come back to that one at the end. What I'm offering here is a quick overview of five ways to use a narrative approach in lecturing that I've found helpful, with some concrete examples from when I teach New Testament—not because I consider myself an expert, but because I learn far better when I see someone putting abstract principles into practice in a field similar to my own.

1. Narrative structure in the unit

The overarching principle is to allow story to drive and organise the content: an inductive, rather than deductive approach. We're probably familiar with this within a single sermon or lecture, but it can also be done at a macro level when it comes to the structure of the unit.

For example, when teaching the introductory unit Jesus and the Gospels, the inherited arrangement I'd been using for years was topical: three weeks of cultural and historical back-

ground, four weeks on each of the Gospels, four weeks looking at topics connected with the kingdom of God, and two weeks on the passion and resurrection narratives.

Instead, I reorganised it to follow the contour of the story of Jesus. The first two weeks became an historical and theological "run-up," telling Israel's story and her expectations for the next chapter. Borrowing from N.T. Wright, they raised the driving questions for the whole unit: how did Jesus both fulfil and subvert Israel's expectations, to the point that it got him killed? And how did Israel's story become our story?

The subsequent weeks followed the "synoptic spine" of the Jesus story, drawing in cultural background and other topics when they occurred in the story (e.g. patronage in connection with the miracle in Luke 7:1-10; ethics when we reached Matthew 5-7; honour and shame during his passion-week series of challenge-riposte dialogues with the Jewish leadership). And at each point we'd ask the question: how did this both meet and subvert Jewish expectations?

In the final two weeks, the whole semester came to a climax, showing how our answers to that question are what led to his crucifixion, and how the new chapter was written by his resurrection—which includes us!

In the first semester of using the new structure, I saw an uptick in attendance later in semester (far fewer cases "week twelve-itis"), and higher levels of student engagement, both observed and in feedback forms. Stories hold attention.

2. Narrative structure in the lecture

This can also apply to the structure of each lec-



ture. It often takes the form of a driving question that creates a sense of quest, so that the answer will only emerge at the end. (Protip: manage your time well so that you actually get to the answer!)

For example, a lecture on the critical issues in the Fourth Gospel can be arranged as a quest: can we trust the historicity of the Fourth Gospel? Each element (author, date, purpose, textual integrity, etc.) is then examined not just for its own sake, but for how it impacts our verdict on the question of trustworthiness.

Another example is a lecture on the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15, to which there are two connected threads. I begin the first thread with the Levitical purity laws and their rationale, then launch a quest: how is it that the coming of Jesus has done away with (most of) those reasons? The second thread looks at what led to the council: tensions between Jews and Gentiles both generally and within the early church. The two threads are then tied together at the end, where they provide a rationale for the council's edict.

3. Debunking and Myth-busting

Eugene Lowry, in his influential book, *The Homiletical Plot*, encourages preachers to find a point of ambiguity—an upsetting of the audience's equilibrium—and use that to drive the narrative structure.

This can also work well in lectures, and is a feature of how Millennials and Gen Z tend to engage with informal learning. I call it the Adam Ruins Everything technique, named after Adam Conover's educational comedy videos, which teach by taking a commonly held view and showing it to be either untrue or overly simplistic.

Here are some examples of how Tim Ruins Everything in New Testament classes:

- * What if the Beatitudes aren't primarily a call to certain behaviours or characteristics (popularly, the "Be-attitudes": the attitudes we should be), but an announcement of the kingdom and a subversion of the honour/shame game in ancient society?
- * People often think that Jesus told parables to make things clearer. But what about when they don't? When even his own disciples had to ask for the explanation, and Jesus said that he spoke in parables to hide the truth from the hardhearted (Mark 4:10-13)?
- * We often think that account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness shows how he faced the same kind of temptations we do, as an example for us when we are tempted. Really? Have you ever been on a diet and had to resist using your supernatural power to turn pav-

ers into panini? Has the devil ever turned up in person to offer you dominion over the world? No? So maybe the story of Jesus' temptations might have less to say about us, and more to say about him and what he'd come to do.

4. **Don't just tell—show (and do)!**

If television and social media have taught us anything about capturing our attention, it's that words alone won't cut it. Don't just talk about something: show it, whether it be a picture, or video, or physical artefact. Spend those extra few minutes searching for something to look at while you talk about it. Or do something; act out the story, rather than just telling it.

For example, the complex plot details in Revelation 12 (the vision of the woman and the dragon) can be difficult for an audience to keep in their heads. Whenever I teach on it, at the very least I have a slideshow of the chapter depicted in Lego, courtesy of *The Brick Testament*. Or, if I have enough time, I get the class to act it out as I read (leading to some child birthing images I'll never be able to unsee.)

Or when explaining the idea of firstfruits in 1 Cor 15:20, I bring a bottle of wine to class. (Non-alcoholic, because we're Baptists.) Acting as the waiter, I pour a small amount into a glass for a student, who has been carefully chosen and secretly briefed. They will sniff the cork ostentatiously, swirl it around, taste it, and proclaim it to be excellent. Then I don't give them any more and start to continue on with the lecture, at which point they proceed to become enraged: "why would you do that if you weren't going to give me the rest? Who does that?" Exactly. God's not going to raise Jesus without the rest of the harvest to follow.

5. **The power of the unfinished story**

Back at the start of this article, I alluded to a simple technique that I had found to be most

powerful. I assume you've read this far because you're dying to know, right?

It is, of course, the power of the unfinished story. It's why reality TV is always about to drop a bombshell announcement just before it goes to a commercial. It's why streaming dramas end on a cliff-hanger so you'll binge the next one rather than going to bed.

Lectures can make use of the same technique, raising an intriguing question or the prospect of a surprising conclusion that will be answered only at the end. This both sustains attention and aids memory. It plays on the Ovsiankina effect, referring to the drive to resume a task when it hasn't been completed, which is one of the ways video games are so addictive; and the Zeigarnik effect, in which an interrupted or incomplete activity may be more readily recalled. (Unrelated protip: the former effect can be harnessed when writing books or theses: at the end of a section or chapter, write the first paragraph of the next before taking a break, so that your brain is left in unfinished mode and will be more motivated to come back to it.)

For example, when teaching the hermeneutics of Revelation, I raise the question: what is the mark of the beast? I go through a number of ways people have interpreted it as an example of why we need to do hermeneutics. Then I ask: "what do I think the mark of the beast is? I'll tell you at the end of the lecture..."

Enough of my stories. Now go start your own.



**Tim MacBride is
Principal of Morling
College**

OUR TEAM

as of November 2023

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Research, Teaching and Learning Division

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Dr Edwina Murphy

Research

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Vicki Chen

Financial Accountant

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Academic Administrative Officer

Rebekah Wall

Academic Services Support Officer

Jayne Tan

IT Systems Manager

Witali Klein

Quality

Quality Manager

Lissa Philip

Academic Quality Officer

Stephen Sarkoezy

OFFICE NEWS

Megan Powell du Toit is leaving us as of 3 November 2023 to become Senior Pastor of Rouse Hill Baptist Church. Joining us in her stead is Louise Gosbell, for two days a week.

Louise has many years experience in the sector, most recently as Principal of Mary Andrews College.

Ian Packer is also moving on to a role outside the ACT, which is yet to be publicly announced.

PUBLISHED BOOKS

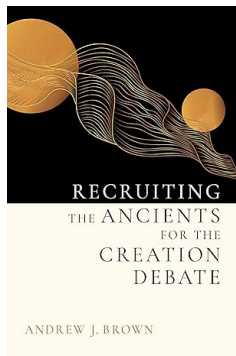
CONSORTIUM

Books published since our mid-year issue by faculty in our affiliated colleges.

Department of Bible and Languages

Michael Bird (Ridley), Brian Rosner (Ridley), Ruben A. Bühner & Jörg Frey, eds., [*Paul within Judaism: Perspectives on Paul and Jewish Identity*](#), Mohr Siebeck, 2023.

Michael F. Bird & Scot McKnight, eds., [*God's Israel and the Israel of God: Paul and Supersessionism*](#), Lexham Academic, 2023.

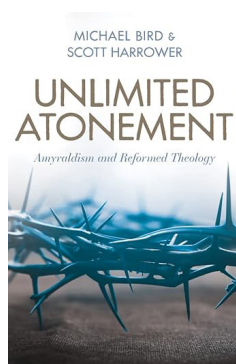


Andrew Brown (MST), [*Recruiting the Ancients for the Creation Debate*](#), Eerdmans, 2023.

Christopher Fresch (BCSA), [*Discourse Markers in Early Koine Greek: Cognitive-Functional Analysis and LXX Translation Technique*](#), SBL Press, 2023.

David Ray (Ridley), [*Conflict and Enmity in the Asaph Psalms*](#), Mohr Siebeck, 2023.

Department of Christian Thought & History



Michael Bird & Scott Harrower (both Ridley), eds., [*Unlimited Atonement: Amyraldianism and Reformed Theology*](#), Kregel Academic, 2023.

Rachel Ciano & Ian Maddock (both SMBC), [*10 Dead Gals You Should Know: Leaving an Enduring Legacy*](#), Christian Focus, 2023.

Cameron Clausing (Christ College), [*Theology and History in the Methodology of Herman Bavinck*](#), OUP, 2023.

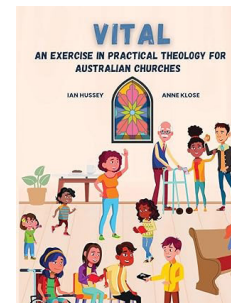
Jason Lam (MST) & Naomi Thurston (eds.), [*Moltmann and China: Theological Encounters from Hong Kong to Beijing*](#), Brill, 2023.

Tim Patrick (BCSA), [*Establishment Eschatology in England's Reformation: Evidence from the Doctrinally Binding Formularies of Faith 1534–1571*](#), Routledge, 2023.

Department of Ministry and Practice

Katherine Thompson (MST), [*The Discipline of Suffering: Redeeming Our Stories*](#), Acorn, 2023.

Ian Hussey & Anne Klose (Malyon), [*Vital: An Exercise In Practical Theology For Australian Churches*](#), Morling Press, 2023.



BEYOND

Robert Dixon (CTC) & Mary Eastham, [*Encountering God: Practical Theology and the Mission to Heal*](#), Coventry Press, 2023.

Garry Worete Deverell (UDiv), [*Contemplating Country: More Gondwana Theology, Faith and Justice in These Lands Now Called Australia*](#), Wipf & Stock, 2023.

Tania M. Harris (Regents), [*Hearing God's Voice: Towards a Theology of Contemporary Pentecostal Revelatory Experience*](#), Brill, 2023.

Gregory C. Jenks, [*Cultural Afterlives of Jesus: Jesus in Global Perspective 3*](#), Cascade, 2023.

CALLS FOR PAPERS & AWARDS

The Evangelical History Association has established a new prize, the [Robert D. Linder Evangelical History Prize](#). The Prize will be awarded each year to the best essay on a subject connected with the history of evangelicalism. Submissions are due by 31 January 2024.

Carey College is holding a conference [Tuning Our Hearts to the Psalms](#) on 17-19 July 2024. Submissions are due by 15 February 2024.

Ridley College is holding a [Paul Within Paganism Symposium](#) on 22 July 2024. Submissions are due by 31 March 2024.

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.

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



CONFERRALS

During 2023:

- six Masters of Theology,
 - four Doctors of Philosophy,
 - and four Doctors of Theology (honoris causa)
- were conferred.

The conferrals since the last NEXUS are listed below.

June - November 2023

Doctor of Philosophy

Tamie Davis, Sydney Missionary and Bible College

for a thesis entitled: *She Sees that Her Trading Is Profitable' (Proverbs 31:18): A Theology of Prosperity according to TAFES Women.*

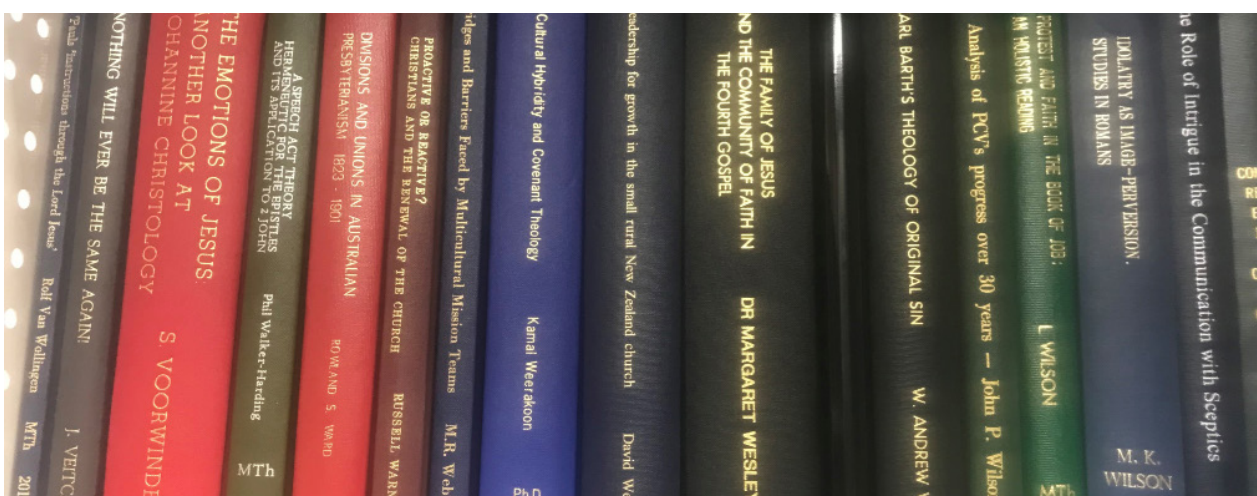
While the 'prosperity gospel' is thought to be widespread in Africa, little is known about theologies of prosperity in Tanzania, in interdenominational contexts, at the grassroots, or among women. This study seeks to address this lacuna by exploring the prosperity theology of women graduates of the Tanzania Fellowship of Evangelical Students (TAFES). Ethnographic methods including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups with 31 women graduates of TAFES provided qualitative data which was used to construct their theology of prosperity, here called mafanikio theology. *Mafanikio* is the standard Swahili word for prosperity. It was found that the women's conception of prosperity was of an ongoing process of reaching goals, which they understood to be God's will for his people. It extends over every area of life and is characterised by effort, perseverance, righteousness, and knowledge. Taking an appreciative approach, this study then brings *mafanikio* theology into conversation with the world around it and other theologies. In a series of concentric circles, it first examines *mafanikio* theology's historical and cultural influences and hermeneutical approach. It then moves to its commonalities and discontinuities with other African prosperity theologies. *Mafanikio* theology is understood to be a prosperity theology that offers a third way between profligate versions of the prosperity gospel and a poverty gospel, with dual goals of empowerment and devotion to Christ. The study then considers mafanikio theology's relationship to African theology more generally, engaging questions of whether it is either syncretistic or too influenced by outside sources, and identifying African modes in which mafanikio theology operates. Finally, mafanikio theology's own claim to be holistic is interrogated by situating it in relation to other models of holism including integral mission and the African philosophy of Ubuntu. *Mafanikio* theology is found to be a holistic African theology of discipleship.

Joshua George, Malyon Theological College

for a thesis entitled: *Understanding the attitudes of urban Indian millennials to preaching as listeners: A study in Practical Theology in Bangalore, India*

Using Practical Theology, this study attempted to understand the complex attitudes of urban Indian millennials to preaching. This study comprised of their beliefs, feelings, and actions only as listeners. When reflected upon theologically, this data provided information that could help develop a revised practice for preaching to the urban Indian millennials.

This study followed the four stages of the revised critical correlation model of Practical Theology by Swinton and Mowat. Stage 1 described the existing situation regarding millennials and preaching using information from social sciences and homiletical literature. Understanding this helped identify key issues that needed further investigation. Stage 2 used qualitative descriptive research methods and 'attitude' as a conceptual framework to identify and analyse the attitudes of fifteen urban Indian millennials from Bangalore towards preaching. The findings revealed that they had a largely positive attitude towards the overall concept of preaching but had a mixed response to how it was executed. In order to understand this further, the findings were divided into six components of preaching which included the content, preacher, communication, setting, listener, and teleology of preaching. Stage 3 used the understanding of preaching as God's continuous speech through human agency to reflect upon the findings of each component. The primary purpose of preaching as being the personal transformation of the listener was recognised to be an important foundation for developing a revised practice. Finally, in stage 4, the findings from the first three stages were brought together to develop a revised practice for preaching to the urban Indian millennials. The teleological purpose of preaching as being the transformation of the listener could encourage preachers to help urban Indian millennials move beyond their hunger for information towards experiencing transformation during preaching. It also provided an evaluative lens when considering an appropriate form of communication in the digital era. It was seen that urban Indian millennials respond positively to preaching



when they receive biblically and practically relevant content and can develop an authentic relationship with the preacher. They prefer preaching that is engaging, appropriately uses visual aids and humour, and adopts a more natural talking style of communication rather than speaking loudly. Preaching that took place in a physical gathering, according to the urban Indian millennials, increased listening receptivity as compared to those online. The social setting of the urban Indian context continued to have a high impact on their digital behaviour during preaching. Based on their pluralistic worldview, they responded positively to dialogical preaching that valued different voices and opinions.

Master of Theology

Joshua Ackland, Sydney Missionary and Bible College

for a thesis entitled: *Soul Food: A Figural Reading of Leviticus 11 in Dialogue with Origen of Alexandria and Ephraim Radner*

Reading Old Testament law as Christian Scripture presents an enduring challenge to modern hermeneutics. For centuries, historical-critical methodologies have dominated the hermeneutical landscape. This presents a challenge for books like Leviticus for which authorship continues to be contested. This can result in confusion over the place of Leviticus and its subsequent neglect in the life of the church. Leviticus 11, with its seemingly redundant dietary requirements, is a case in point. But this has not always been so. For centuries the church read Leviticus 11 as distinctly Christian Scripture by allegorising its details. Leviticus 11 carried the living voice of its divine author in its own way, not just in historical preparation for the New Testament witness. This thesis assesses the hermeneutical possibilities of allegorical exegesis for a distinctly Christian reading of Leviticus 11 by comparing modern and ancient exemplars of allegorical interpretation. My analysis follows a Gadamerian dialogue, which accounts for the difference between ancient and modern interpretive situations. The dialogue is held between Origen of Alexandria, an ancient allegorist par excellence, and Ephraim Radner, a modern exponent of figural hermeneutics. The dialogue proceeds in two parts—first, an “initial dialogue” that provides a descriptive comparison of the two. Second, a “fusion dialogue” that results in a synthesis of the two readings of Leviticus 11. What emerges is a “thick” reading of Leviticus 11 that complements historical-critical and sociological readings, expanding the interpretive horizon to encompass more of the lived experience of the church. Exploring these interpretive possibilities may inspire the church to engage with neglected portions of its canon, like Leviticus 11.

Marshall Scott, Sydney Missionary and Bible College

for a thesis entitled: *Destabilising the Perception of YHWH? The Function of hinnam in the Book of Job.*

Tension is created in the book of Job by the admission by God that he has been incited by the satan to afflict Job “for nothing” (*hinnam*). It is a jarring note within the ethically black and white world of the prologue. It destabilises the reader by threatening to undermine his/her belief in the faithfulness of the covenant-keeping God. A Bakhtinian reading enables us to highlight the way this tension gains traction throughout the book. The monologic truth of the prologue is dissected and left “unfinalised” by the competing truth-claims of the dialogue. The negative implications of the word *hinnam* are reinforced by its double-voicing in 9:17 and 22:6, leading to further confusion for the reader. And yet, from the ashes of his shattered theology, as Job abandons the empty words of his friends, a tentative, renewed hope emerges. Despite unresolved tension, the reader is invited

to join with Job in a fresh journey of discovering God. The nature of Job's renewal of hope can be explained in terms of Franciscan knowledge—an intuitive knowledge that goes beyond the information disclosed in the text. The reader is asked to join with Job in trusting God “for nothing” (*hinnam*)—that is, without the material blessings Job had in chapter 1. Finally, in the Yahweh speeches, the word *hinnam* is placed within the context of a good God who restrains evil and rules his creation with justice. The tension raised by God acting against Job “for nothing” is not eliminated, but it is eviscerated of much of its sting. Moreover, the picture of Yahweh's covenantal care for even the wild wastelands re-voices the idea of him acting “for nothing” to encapsulate gratuity and generosity in his sovereign care for all of his creatures, including Job.

Shishi Shao, Melbourne School of Theology

for a thesis in Chinese entitled: *The Seat of Honour: Theological Significance of Honour and Shame in the Samuel Narratives of the Life of David*

The purpose of this paper is to interpret the concept of honour and shame in the Hebrew Bible by focusing on the account of David's life and to observe how the horizontal (man - man) and vertical (God - man) view of honour and shame influence David's behaviour and promote the course of events. This paper takes the approach of canonical criticism and study the text in its narrative flow. Eight accounts were selected from the narrative flow to interpret the causal relationship between the vertical and horizontal view of honour and shame. In David's narrative, the horizontal view of honour and shame greatly influenced the characters' decisions and actions that followed. The mediators, who appeared on various occasions, played an important role: they either saved David's life, taught him the necessary lessons, or showed him the right path. However, it is the vertical view of honour and shame that eventually determined how the story ends: the Divine-human interactions. He who honours God will be honoured; he who despises God will be despised (1 Sam 2:30) – this pattern runs through each of the eight honour and shame scenarios of David. To gain honour and to avenge shame in human terms will eventually leads to a chain of evil. On the other hand, by relying on God to avenge and to honour will lead to exultation, with or without human appreciation. For David, there is only one way to honour. If he does what is right in the eyes of God, even if it is not appreciated by the world, God would lift him up and make a way for him to honour in his disadvantage. If he does what is wrong in the eyes of God, even if it is appreciated by the world, God would bring him down to the shame of his sin.

ACT PEOPLE ONLINE

JUNE - OCTOBER 2023

Podcast and Video Series

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

Mike Bird (Ridley) [Early Christian History with Mike Bird](#), YouTube

Aaron Chidgzey (Morling) [Good Morling Australia](#)

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

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

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

Kara Martin (MAC) & Stephen Field, [Worship on the Way to Work](#), podcast.

Jenny Salt (SMBC) [Salt – Conversations with Jenny](#), Hope 103.2

One-Off Articles and Interviews

ABC

June 1 Michael Jensen (BCSA) & Patrick Parkinson, [Loneliness, Singleness, and the Christian Life: Supporting Single People in Family-Centric Churches](#)

July 4 Michael Jensen (BCSA), [Christianity and the Case for a Voice to Parliament](#)

July 21 Brian Rosner (Ridley), [How Godly Is Money? Panel](#), God Forbid

August 10 Michael Jensen (BCSA) With Patrick Parkinson [“Broken Families All Over the Place”: How Can Churches Better Prepare People for Marriage, and Support Them When Marriages End?](#)

CPX

September 21 Andrew Sloane (Morling), [The Wounds You Can't See](#)

Eternity News

September 15 Katherine Thompson (MST) [What \(Not\) to Say to Someone Who is Suffering](#)

October 20 Mike Frost (Morling) Interview: [Rethinking Our Calling: ‘Mission is the Shape Of Water’](#)

TGCA

June 4 Rory Shiner (TTC), [From the TGCA Chairman: ‘Gospelling’ and ‘Coalitioning’](#)

June 9 Rory Shiner (TTC), [Dear Penelope, or on Children and Hope](#)

June 16 Michael Jensen (BCSA), [The Voice: A Christian Consideration](#)

July 15 Tim Thorburn (TTC), [A Matter of Trust](#)

July 18 Rory Shiner (TTC), [Can I Share a Little Secret About Speaking at Conferences?](#)

July 26 Karl Hood (PTCV) [“Mental Health And Your Church”: An In-Depth Review](#)

July 31 David Mitchell (TTC), [Tax Returns and the Alternative Energy of the Gospel of Grace](#)

August 3 Rory Shiner (TTC), [Dear Adrian, or Travel is Overrated,](#)

August 21 Gary Millar (QTC) Interview, [Gary Millar Shares About How Leaders Must Contend for the Gospel in Their Own Heart](#), Commending & Contending Podcast,

September 1 Tim Thorburn (TTC) [The Hallmark of Genuine Christianity](#)

September 19 Kamal Weerakoon (Christ College) [Patient Apologetics](#)

September 20 Tim Thorburn (TTC) Review Of: [A Careful Critique: Why We’re Not Limited to the Prayers of Scripture: Answering Speech by Daniel J. Brendsel](#)

October 10 Rory Shiner (TTC) [The Day I Killed Tim Thorburn](#)

The Pastor’s Heart (Dominic Steele)

June 13 Rob Smith (SMBC) [Concupiscence and Sexual Same Sex Attraction?](#)

July 4 Kamal Weerakoon (CC), Rob Smith (SMBC) [The Gender Revolution](#)

September 5 Kristen Gatenby (SMBC) [Can We Redeem Halloween?](#)

October 10 Rachel Ciano (SMBC) [Dead Gals You Should Know](#)



EVENTS

You can now inform us of events using this [online form](#).

November 2023

- 1-3 [Uniting Church: PreachFest 2023, Sydney and Melbourne](#)
- 1 [CPX: Richard Johnson Lecture Sydney, Leisa Aitken](#)
- 2 [FBS Meeting Melbourne: Dr Chris Monaghan](#)
- 2 [Morling Open Night](#)
- 3-4 the collective: [Trauma, Abuse and The Church - A Conference in Public Theology](#)
- 4 [Trinity Melbourne: The Kingdom of God is near: Studies on the readings for Year B](#)
- 10 [Ridley Dinner: Rev Megan Curlis-Gibson, Answering the Call](#)
- 11 [SMBC and The Bridge Info Morning](#)
- 14 [Wellspring: Soul Nurture Day – Gifts from the Sea with Jo Lewis](#)
- 16-18 [NZHA: Wānanga Symposium: Christianity, the Māori world and Colonialism in Aotearoa New Zealand](#)
- 16 [SSEC Christmas Function Speaker: Gareth Wearne Topic Luke's Census](#)
- 25 [Wellspring: Aboriginal Spirituality with Brooke Prentis](#)
- 25 [St Francis: Seminar with Michael Trainor. A Day with the Gospel according to Mark](#)
- 29 Nov-1 Dec [ACT HDR, PD, DEPT Conference \(ACT people only\)](#)

December 2023

- 1 [Laidlaw: The Trauma Informed Church | Laidlaw Sturt Lectures](#)

January 2024

- 22 [SMBC Info Evening](#)

February 2024

- 5-8 [UDiv: Raising our Tribal Voice for Justice: An Indigenous Theological Revolution](#)

March 2024

- 9 [SMBC Women's Conference](#)

May 2024

- 4 [SMBC Children's Ministry Conference](#)
- 11 [SMBC Info Morning](#)

June 2024

- 24 [SMBC Info Evening](#)

July 2024

1-3 [ANZATS Conference: Connection and Community, Adelaide](#)

22 [Ridley: Paul within Paganism Symposium](#)

23-27 [Society of New Testament Studies conference, Melbourne](#)

August 2024

7-10 [International Conference on Baptist Studies](#)

31 [SMBC Info Morning](#)

September 2024

5 [Professional Development Zoom Info Evening](#)

November 2024

9 [SMBC Info Morning](#)



Transforming Learning

*Australian
College
of Theology*

2023 PD CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 29 HDR CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 30 PD DAY
DECEMBER 1 DEPARTMENTAL MEETINGS
MORLING COLLEGE
SYDNEY



Australian College of Theology
An Australian University College