
Dean's Say: Self-accreditation, Honours and Darwin

In April the College was assessed by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training for self-accreditation status. I am pleased to say that the panel will be recommending to the Minister that the ACT be awarded such status. The ACT is the first Australian non self-accrediting institution to apply and be assessed for self-accreditation.

Three people who are important to the operation of the ACT were honoured in the June Queen's Birthday Honours. They are Ross Clifford, Principal of Morling College, Allan Harman, the Principal Emeritus of the Presbyterian Theological College of Victoria, and David Cohen, the Honorary Accountant for the ACT. Congratulations to these three for their lifetime of service to churches, to theological education and to a host of para-church organisations.

Congratulations to each of these servants of Christ.

Readers may be interested to know that a new film called *Creation* will be released on 15 July. The advertising we have received in the ACT office says that *Creation* "will take a unique and inside look at Charles Darwin, the founder of evolutionary biology, husband to a passionately religious wife, and a great family man". The film will follow his struggle to finish research for his book *On the Origin of Species*. The film is based on the biography written by Darwin's great, great grandson, *Creation*, and stars real life husband and wife Paul Bettany and Jennifer Connelly.

Rev Dr Mark Harding
Dean

The 400th Anniversary of the King James Bible

The King James Bible (or Authorised) Version of the Bible first appeared in 1611. Most ACT students, even if they do not use the version, are well aware of its significance in putting into our hands a version of the Bible that has retained its power to move and inspire generations of believers.

Next year marks its 400th anniversary. A Trust has been established to coordinate celebrations of this event. Among the celebrations are the commissioning of new music and literature, the development of educational school projects, lectures at Oxford and Cambridge, and major exhibitions. The celebrations culminate in a service in Westminster Abbey on 16 November 2011 where the final editing of the Version took place. The Trust's website is www.2011trust.org

Most of the celebrations will take place in the UK. However, the Trust is also organising a project by which it is hoped that the whole of the AV will be

read chapter by chapter on You Tube. The Trust urges us all to consider participating. Information about the You Tube Bible can be found at <http://www.2011trust.org/get-involved/the-youtube-bible/>

The Trust site contains some examples of chapters being read. The well known Richard Dawkins reads Song of Songs chapter 2. The actress Patricia Routledge reads John chapter 20.

Members of the ACT staff are keen to participate. I would like to encourage students to do the same. It sounds like a great way to celebrate a landmark event in the history of the translation of the Bible and the consolidation of a Christian worldview among English-speaking people across the globe.

Rev Dr Mark Harding
Dean

Registrars' Conference 2010

The ACT holds annual meetings of affiliated college registrars. This keeps the registrars up to date with changes in ACT regulations and upcoming government issues. The Conference gives registrars the opportunity to share college experiences with their peers. This year's meeting was held at Mary Andrews College in Sydney on 28 May.

The day began with an open session where registrars discussed issues of student withdrawals, and ways to best combat problems arising out of students altering their course after enrolment. The financial and academic implications of late withdrawal are important for students to be aware of at enrolment stage, so that they do not get nasty surprises if circumstances force them to withdraw.

Charis Mitchell from Vose Seminary in WA gave a presentation on a course pathway tool that Vose uses to ensure that students enrol in the right mix of units, rather than just the right number of credit points. This was such a success that the ACT plans to develop this further and roll out a template to all colleges for use. Hopefully this will enable students to see clearly the course

pathway laid out for them, be able to check which units they still need to complete, and to allow the student and his/her enrolling college to keep track of the their studies

The ACT's Associate Dean, Graeme Chatfield, spoke on the state of the research student sector in the ACT. The enrolment process for MTh and ThD candidates is set to change from semester 2, 2010. It is hoped that this will result in a simpler application process.

The Academic Administrator, Anne Bates and the Dean, Mark Harding, both reported on self-accreditation. Anne outlined the changes that will be made to major change applications for colleges. Dr Harding outlined the implications that self-accreditation status will have on the ACT network and colleges.

The day was closed at 3:30pm. There was agreement that these meetings be held annually. You can view a photo taken after lunch on our website at www.actheology.edu.au/news.php.

*Rev Dr Mark Harding
Dean*

Jonathan Edwards Center Launch at Ridley Melbourne

As part of its Centenary year celebrations, the Jonathan Edwards Center at Ridley Melbourne was launched on April 29, 2010 with a lecture by Professor Stuart Piggin from Macquarie University on "The Spirituality of Jonathan Edwards." The JEC is a partnership between Yale University and Ridley Melbourne to promote the study of the texts and teachings of Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), one of the foremost Christian philosophers and theologians in American history. Dr Kenneth Minkema, Executive Director of the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, has endorsed the center as "a significant expansion of Edwards scholarship and will serve widely both academia and the church". The strategic partnership exemplifies the vision of Ridley Melbourne to be an internationally renowned theological and training school.

As Coordinator of the Center, my great passion for Jonathan Edwards is really a passion for the contribution which the study of Edwards can make to the life of the church in Melbourne and beyond. There is great need in this city to support

the study of evangelical history, which is otherwise rarely pursued. His writings are a bridge between a Puritan world in which he was formed and the evangelical and revivalist world which was then being born, and they offer insights into the bigger themes of American history and the growing influence of the American church in Australia today.

The Principal, Canon Dr Peter Adam, suggested that Edwards's own prayer and global vision for the advance of the Gospel has been (in part!) answered with the establishment of this Center at Ridley.

Bishop Stephen Hale officially launched the partnership, which involves other such Centers in South Africa, Poland, Germany, and soon Brazil and Benelux. Ridley Melbourne has devoted significant resources to establish the library's Charles Perry Collection, honouring the first Bishop of Melbourne, which contains works both on the history of evangelicalism more broadly to set Edwards within his historical and theological context, and also provides an outstanding

collection of books by, and concerning, Edwards himself. Study space is available in the College for those researching in this area, along with the resources from the Jonathan Edwards Online Archive, and a file of rare or inaccessible journal articles.

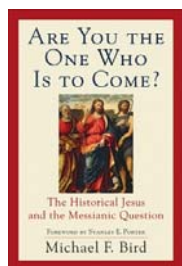
We look forward to the visit of Professor Minkema to Ridley from September 20-24 to lead

an MA unit on Edwards, and to deliver a public lecture on “Edwards and the Great Awakening”.

For more information, contact us at jec@ridley.edu.au

*Rhys Bezzant
Ridley Melbourne*

Are you the One Who is to Come?



During my doctoral studies on the historical Jesus and the Gentiles, I was attracted to the issue of Jesus' messiahship including its historical origins as well as the significance of Jesus as Messiah for the Christology of the Evangelists. I looked forward to revisiting the issue, but was momentarily distracted by debates about the New Perspective on Paul. After extracting myself from Pauline scholarship I set out again to study, read, and write something on Jesus the Messiah. My initial intention was to engage the theological horizon of the canonical Gospels without delving into too much of the 'historical Jesus' (beginning with some articles written for RTR). After all, the 'Third Quest' was beginning to peter out and I had had quite enough of reading the painfully dry and poorly argued assertions of Rudolf Bultmann's *History of the Synoptic Tradition*. Anyway, around the same time Joseph Fitzmyer's *The One Who is to Come* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007) was published. Fitzmyer's book is typically erudite, brilliant on Semitic languages, and is probably best described as a TDNT essay on steroids. Yet I was perplexed and dissatisfied by his reluctance to ascribe a messianic claim to Jesus. A Jesus who understood himself as an eschatological somebody, but not as the Messiah, has been common place in NT scholarship. Apart from a few lone dissenters (e.g., Ben Meyers, Martin Hengel, N.T. Wright, and Dale C. Allison) not many have challenged the scholarly consensus and certainly no one had

tried to do so at the monograph level. So with that in mind, I switched from a canonical to historical Jesus approach and decided to try and grapple with the 'messianic consciousness' of the historical Jesus. My research uncovered a great deal of attention paid to the subject in late nineteenth and early twentieth century German scholarship with William Wrede pretty much winning the day. But I discovered several pockets of scholarship on which I could lean in the effort to try to demonstrate that Jesus understood his vocation, role, mission in messianic categories. In writing up the book, I attempted some mammoth tasks such as summarizing messianic expectations in Second Temple Judaism in little over thirty pages and having to engage the very confusing Son of Man debate. In a nutshell, the book looks at several themes from Jesus' ministry and the events of his last week with a view to showing how the messianic faith of the early church is best explained by arising from an individual who understood himself to be the Messiah of the Last Days. All books should be a learning experience for the author, and this one gave me some hands on experience for using the Dead Sea Scrolls, learning about messianic exegesis, and then asking 'so what?' so as to provide some theological reflection on the enduring significance of the confession: "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41).

*Mike Bird
BCQ*

Assessment and Learning Outcomes

For a number of years an increasing number of ACT affiliated colleges have been investigating the relationship of assessment tasks and unit learning outcomes. People rightly recognise the value to student learning of clearly identifying expected unit learning outcomes in their assessment tasks. Previously ACT unit outcomes were expressed as teaching outcomes designed to show that the unit material had been

covered. A student's learning related to knowledge of the unit content. Now student learning outcomes are defined in terms of the application of knowledge and skills in specific situations. Students who successfully complete unit assessments demonstrate they have achieved the desired learning-outcomes. The unit learning outcomes for a whole course should

align with the specified graduate outcomes for the course.

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

Mapping graduate outcomes against learning outcomes and assessments, capturing data that verifies the achievement of graduate and learning outcomes, assessing that data to feed back to individual lecturers to improving the student learning outcomes for specific units, and putting all of this up against the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) learning outcomes is a task the ACT is required to do by government accrediting and assessing agencies.

My recent visit to the Methodist Theological School of Ohio (MTSO), with whom we have a benchmarking agreement, provided the ACT with a working model of just such a mapping exercise. MTSO took seven years of careful thinking through the graduate outcomes for each of the degrees they teach; and aligned the graduate outcomes with the respective degree level graduate outcomes as defined by their accrediting body. MTSO then determined which units should be included in a degree; what the student learning-outcomes were for each unit

and how they related to the graduate outcomes. MTSO then determined which specific piece of assessment from each unit would validate the designated student learning-outcome. They put in place a process for gathering this assessment data and to feed back to lecturers where learning-outcomes were not being met. As well as student reviews of each unit, MTSO instituted a review by the unit lecturer of student progress against a pre-determined list of graduate outcomes. These online review documents are collected in a student portfolio and used in a mid-course student interview conducted by faculty to determine student progress attaining graduate outcomes. At the end of a course, exit students complete an exit questionnaire and participate in an exit interview to determine the level of attainment of the desired graduate outcomes.

The ACT has begun the process of reviewing the learning-outcomes and assessments of units taught by ACT affiliated colleges. The possibility is before us to do something much more significant; to map ACT graduate outcomes against learning-outcomes and assessments and against the AQF graduate learning outcomes, as well as improve out feedback to lecturers about areas where they can enhance the learning outcomes of their students.

*Graeme Chatfield
Associate Dean*

Office Corner

"Could you give us 400 words on your time at the ACT for the July newsletter?" How do you sum up 16½ years in 400 words? Do I talk about the staff here, how fantastic and generous they are to work with? Do I talk about the students, listing the funny, sad, encouraging, frustrating or wonderful moments I've experienced in my dealing with them? Maybe I should mention the various staff at our affiliated colleges, and how they have made my job so much more than just an office role. Achieving self-accreditation status would be a big thing to talk about, but others can do that one better than I. I could describe how my role changed over the years from a simple one of keeping track of the postgraduate student files to the complicated, yet rewarding one I now have of dealing with everything from developing policies and writing reports for Government departments to making tea and coffee for visitors.

Of all the jobs I've had over the years since I first left high school, this one has been the most rewarding, enjoyable, and pleasant place in which to work. It has stretched me in ways beyond my own imagining and allowed me the freedom to develop skills I would not have thought I had. There have been hard times, and frustrating times, and times that would test the patience of Job! But through it all the support of my colleagues, both in the ACT office and the wider theological education community, have made everything worthwhile.

In finally making my decision to leave the ACT, I realise what a great community it is to be a part of, one that I will miss very much. It has been a joy to see students and staff grow and learn and achieve so much. I will continue to maintain my interest in the work of the ACT.

*Anne Bates
Academic Administrator*