

Newslink

State Notes

From Western Australia

AASR Conference, Perth 1989

Can you afford to miss the AASR Conference in Perth next year? We offer you the opportunity to combine our activities with those of three other conferences: the Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools/Society for Theological Studies (25-29 September), the Australian Anthropological Society (25-29 September) and the Oral History Conference (16-18 September).

Highlights of the AASR Conference will include an address by Professor Malcolm Jeeves, formerly of the University of Adelaide and now Dean of St. Andrew's University, Aberdeen. He will speak on psychology and religion. Dr. Rod Bucknell of the University of Queensland will deliver the Senior Charles Strong Lecture.

You will also have the opportunity to meet religious leaders and followers of a variety of traditions at a 'Forum on Spirituality in Contemporary Western Australia' arranged by Paul Stange and Franci Williams.

St. Thomas More University College, where the AASR Conference will be held, is within walking distance of two Aboriginal sacred sites, one connected with the Dreaming Track of the mythological Wagyl, a snake monster whose haunt was the Swan River. Aborigines state that these sites are being violated by riverside redevelopment.

Historic Fremantle, still retaining a blush of pride from the 1987 America's Cup, has an Anglican sacred site in the City Square. There you will have time to explore and perhaps enjoy an informal meal. But the Conference Dinner is to be held on a river cruiser as it wends its way along the Swan River.

Mindful that you will have travelled far to reach us (but no further than we travel to you each year!), we have arranged two excursions to allow you to experience the spirituality in Benedictine or Buddhist monasteries. The first, on Sunday 24 September, will take you to a Spanish Benedictine monastery at New Norcia, 80 kms north of Perth. Built as an Aboriginal mission in the 1840's by Dom Salvado, the monks persuaded parents to leave children in their care so that they could create a new civilised, Christianised generation. Regarded as the most successful mission in Western Australia in the nineteenth century, its practice was adopted elsewhere.

But by the end of the century it had declined as Aborigines did not stay in the area. (See your copy of Rose and Swain's *Aboriginal Australians and Christian Missions*, Chapter III for more detail). Today the school and monastery remain and have a valuable art collection and library. The monastery's restored mill, the oldest in the state, still grinds home-grown wheat for the bake-house.

The second excursion, on Wednesday 27 September, will visit three of the State's

nine Buddhist centres. Bodhinyana Monastery, in the hills south of Perth, is unique, being the one Theravadin Sangha in Australia where monks and nuns train and are ordained under the guidance of Ajahn Jagaro. At the International Meditation Centre at Mahogany Creek, Burmese Vipassanā meditation retreats are held. The Centre has a small but beautiful Light of the Dhamma Pagoda with a golden spire. The final stop will be at the new Vietnamese Mahayana Temple in North Perth, spiritual home for Perth's 2000 Vietnamese Buddhists. Here the people will welcome you and serve one of their vegetarian lunches: an unforgettable experience.

Details of the Anthropology Conference are available from Dr. David Trigger, Anthropology Department, University of

Western Australia, Nedlands, WA 6009 (phone 09 380 2847). For information on the Oral History Conference, write to the convenor, Mrs. Robyn Jamieson, Battye Library, Alexander Library Building, Perth Cultural Centre, Perth WA 6000 (phone 09 427 3291 or after hours 09 457 3702). Information on the ANZATS/STS Conference will be published by AASR in a later *REVIEW*.

For delegates who will be in a holiday mood, there are daily river cruises to wineries in the Swan Valley and ferries to take you across the America's Cup course to Rottnest Island.

This is the fare we have planned for you in 1989, at the first-ever AASR Conference in Perth. See you here!

— *Enid Adam*
Vice President, AASR

Notes from New Zealand

Religious Studies in New Zealand, and also Feminist Studies/Women's Studies, suffered a severe loss in October with the death of Renée Turner. Renée, a Canterbury Religious Studies graduate and part-time lecturer and then a Massey full-time lecturer, has had a major impact on Religious Studies through her skill and persistence in recovering and presenting women's religious experiences, and through her persuasiveness of others to recognize and start redressing the male bias in our subject. She also contributed to staff and students alike her wide knowledge of religious traditions and her keen mind and lively wit. She is sorely missed by family, friends and colleagues.

We will honour her memory most appropriately by trying to continue feminist revision of Religious Studies. A thesis currently being written at Canterbury University by Lynne Alice is important in this connection. Lynne has analysed some

of the current Religious Studies courses at Canterbury from a feminist perspective, and is also reviewing recent writings on feminist methodology and applying her findings to Religious Studies.

At Victoria University, in an attempt to reduce confusion with Church-based Christian "Religious Studies" programmes, the department has changed its name from "Religious Studies" to "Department of World Religions." As if to underline the need for this clearer demarcation, Auckland University is going ahead with a proposed degree in Christian Theology, to be taught by Church-based Theological Colleges, despite objections from Religious Studies departments, especially Canterbury.

The new Religious Studies courses at Waikato University, offered by the sole lecturer Doug Pratt with assistance from Norman Simms of the English Department, had a good start in 1988. Fifty

students took the Part 1 courses and 25 the Part 2. Part 3 is planned for 1990, as is a Diploma in Religious Studies which will make the subject available to school teachers.

The 1989 NZASR Conference will be held at Waikato University in August — enquiries to Norman Simms, English Department. The NZASIA Conference will be held at Canterbury University, also in August — enquiries to Paul Harrison, Religious Studies Department.

Otago University is adding a third full-time staff member to the Religious Studies Department, initially for a three-year term commencing probably around the middle of 1989. It is planned the appointee will take responsibility for courses on Judaism

and Islam. This is a great boost for a small hard-pressed department, especially considering how tight times are for universities at present.

At Canterbury University, foundation Religious Studies staff member Jim Thornton retired at the end of last year but has carried on part-time till a replacement comes. In May 1989 Diane Proudfoot, from England, will take over from Jim responsibility for Philosophy of Religion courses in the joint Philosophy and Religious Studies Department, and will also add much needed expertise in Feminist Philosophy and methodology.

— *Jim Wilson*
Canterbury University

Obituary . . . reprinted from *Yana*, December 1988

Renée Turner was an AASR member for many years, and a supportive long-distance member of the AASR Women's Caucus. We join with New Zealand colleagues in expressing our appreciation of Renée's commitment to Religious Studies, especially to women as students and scholars.

— *Penny McKibbin*
AASR Women's Caucus.

Renée Emma Turner, 1935 - 1988

On Monday October 24 Renée Turner finally won her long battle with cancer, dying with inspiring courage and dignity in her home in Christchurch in the loving company of her family. Religious Studies in Aotearoa thereby lost one of its most important people, at a particularly crucial time.

Renée came to Religious Studies relatively late in life, after she and her husband Trev had raised a close-knit family of one daughter and three sons. She moved through B.A., to a first class

M.A. in 1973, and then on to part-time lecturing and tutoring, in the Canterbury department. During these years Renée was the major influence in starting the long, slow and still very unfinished process of changing Religious Studies at Canterbury from men's studies to human studies, urging and persuading us more gently than we deserved given the gravity of the problem. Her influence was also strongly felt, and more warmly appreciated, amongst students. For twelve years Renée gave to women's students at least one woman's kindness and understanding to relate to. And her lectures and tutorials always evoked warm appreciation from class members of both genders. Then, for three extremely fruitful but all too brief years Renée taught full-time in the Massey Department, bringing to bear her great breadth of understanding of religious traditions allied to her strong awareness of the need to revise Religious Studies in the light of feminist insights and concerns. Her illustrated study-guides on women

and religion are models of academic excellence combined with warmth and wit and readability, and will remain a permanent legacy she has bequeathed to Religious Studies and to Women's Studies.

Recognition and appreciation, and a full-time opportunity to influence Religious Studies, came late in life to Renée, late in a life-time of overcoming many obstacles both as an individual and as a woman. I am torn between thankfulness that they did come before she died, and an intense sadness that her time to use her power directly was so short. The gap she

leaves will be difficult to fill, and it threatens to break the momentum of redressing the male imbalance in Religious Studies. But Renée leaves also great inspiration and guidance to continue the momentum, great warmth of love and courage, and grateful memories of a keen mind and lively wit.

With Trev, Stephanie, Mark and Merryn, Martin and Matthew, we share our great grief at Renée's death, and our gratitude for her influence on us and for the inspiring courage of her dying.

— Jim Wilson

The AAR Convention - 1988

The annual three ring circus of the American Academy of Religion was held this year in full splendour in the refurbished Hilton Hotel (the original model) on Chicago's Michigan Avenue in mid-November. The usual 3,000 or so performers and spectators were in attendance - I have never heard an exact head count.

As anyone who has ever been near an AAR knows, it's quite difficult to cover the myriad of simultaneously happening sections, round-tables, addresses, films, and receptions as well as catch up on the latest gossip and discuss one's most recent achievements/failures with friend and foe alike. As my own interests are both philosophical and feminist in nature, the events I attended were particularly biased in this direction.

It was in fact a vintage year for women academics, two of the keynote addresses being given by brilliant female academics who have recently published fine (if controversial) books. Martha Nussbaum entranced the audience with her discussion of Seneca's "Medea" - her focus being on the problems of love, an issue she felt

had not been sufficiently attended to in her book *The Fragility of Goodness*. The following evening Elaine Pagels gave her version of sex, sin and the Augustinian tradition which has disturbed some Augustinian scholars (females included).

Other marvellous fare included two panel discussions with about six presenters on each. One was concerned with Letty Russell's new book, "Reclaiming our Mother's Garden", devoted to third world women's perspectives on religion, and major commentators here included Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza and Dolores Williams. The other panel was on the book edited by Arvind Sharma, "Women in World Religions" and participants were Rosemary Ruether (Christianity), Katherine Young (Hinduism) as well as women discussing most major denominations. Rich fare indeed!

Lest one feel my participation reinforced my own prejudices, I should mention a fine panel discussion I attended on Reiner Schürmann's recent book on Heidegger, an East-West discussion on hermeneutics and K. Abe's work featuring David Tracy, as well as various postmod-

ern presentations on the French feminists and Mark Taylor's latest explorations in paralectics.

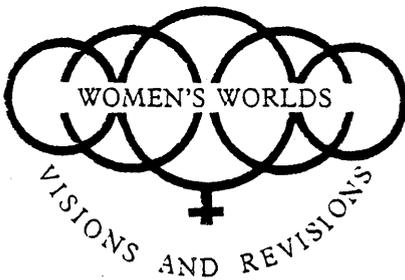
No doubt those in Theology, Biblical Studies, Church History and other disciplines found as rich and seemingly indigestible a mixture of ingredients.

Enough to keep all happily embroiled in controversial thoughts and midnight-oil rebuttals during the year till the next extravaganza occurs.

— Morny Joy

Thomas More Institute, Montreal

Visions and Revisions - Dublin Congress on Women 1987



THIRD
INTERNATIONAL
INTERDISCIPLINARY
CONGRESS ON
WOMEN

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AN TRÍÚ
COMHTHIONÓL
IDIRNÁISIÚNTA
IDIRARAÍONACH FAOI
MHNÁ

To write about a Conference after about twelve months has elapsed would be a formidable task if it were not for the fact that some Conferences do make an enormous impact on the participants. Such a gathering was the Third International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women held at Trinity College, University of Dublin in July 1987.

Having started to write about the Conference I discovered that the official

title was Congress on Women not Conference on Women. The Macquarie dictionary soon revealed the significance of the former word over the latter. It seems that Conference has to do with 'masculine' ways of operating viz., consulting, organizing and discussing (not necessarily with representatives of people for whom decisions are being discussed and made). It also is used for the official assemblies of clergy and shipping cartels, maybe they are synonymous! On the other hand the word Congress is a meeting of representatives as envoys; for discussion, arrangements or promotion of matters of common interest; it can signify an encounter (which the Dublin Congress was for me) and finally it can mean social relations and converse. It seems that the word Congress more aptly describes what the 'feminine' is about both in process and outcome.

The Title of the Congress "Visions and Revisions" was apposite, in that the twenty-three areas of interest are not markedly different from the second such Congress held in Nairobi but the reflections (Revisions) on these areas certainly, for me, held wonderful new visions of hope and solidarity. The thousands of participants came from every corner of the world predominantly from the U.S.A. and Canada. What really gave the greatest fillip to my hope was the presence of the great body of ordinary Irish women who

showed such dynamism, creativity and determination to withstand the pressure of 'violence' from both Church and State. As an aside, I know that 'Church', embodied in the Roman Catholic expression of the Christian tradition, and 'State' are so inextricably bound together in forming the Republic's national identity that citizens would almost have to abjure being Irish to free themselves completely from the bind and its consequent life-long ramifications. It is significant that women seem to be the ones willing to risk such a move at the present time. More about how this was evident at the Congress later on.

First some facts and figures. From memory there were over three thousand participants; nine hundred and forty-eight pages of abstracts, twenty of these papers being prepared and delivered by men. Keynote speakers included Mary Daly, Helen Caldicott, a Norwegian woman called Brigitte and a group of Irish women including a barrister, poetess, historian, and the Opposition Spokesperson on Education, Gemma Hussey. An interesting snippet of information about the historian was that she had recently won a High Court challenge against Trinity College Dublin over the appointment of a Head of Department. It was said that she already had another job (Prioress of a Dominican nunnery) and therefore was ineligible for the post. She contended that her failure to be appointed to the position was because she was a woman - she won the case and was appointed! There were about fifteen Australian contributions (my paper was caught up in the Irish Ecclesiastical Bureaucracy) and a strongly worded paper on the Emergence of Womens' Studies in China by Wan Shamping from the Womens' Studies Centre in Beijing.

Other areas of interest included: Socialization, Relationships and Changing

Gender Roles, Expressing our Vision, Creativity, Literature and the Arts, Work, Politics, Violence, Education, Technology, Natural Science, Ecology, Refugee and Migrant Women, Nuclear Threat, Feminization of Poverty, Philosophy and Theory and Reproductive Freedom and Reproductive Technology. These are but a few of the twenty-three issues addressed both in workshops and informally everywhere two or three women gathered.

For the remainder of this report I would like briefly to reflect on the keynote speakers and some papers I attended. The 'men's response' papers are worth a comment. The striking contribution of the ordinary Irish women via Community Women Workshops will be looked at and the contributions in the section Spirituality and the Challenge of Feminist Theology will be assessed.

Brigitte, the Norwegian woman and one of the earlier keynote speakers, quite passionately addressed the issue of woman and peace. She reminded us that Nobel's secretary for a time, Von Suknor, author of "Down with Arms" was the 'brains' behind the idea of the Nobel Peace Prize and who incidentally is never given the credit for such an inspiration. She made the point that the two words 'boycott' and 'girlcott' are indicative of two different approaches to the issue of promoting peace. In relation to the New Zealand policy on nuclear ships and the ensuing debate the approach of 'boycott' can and was complemented by the 'girlcott' by which women promoted publishing books on peace and encouraged buying New Zealand goods as a means of support and solidarity for a stand that needs to be affirmed.

Helen Caldicott followed a similar theme by being very explicit about facts, figures and people who were responsible for the precarious position the world is in at present. My previous experience of

Helen was at a peace March in Sydney some years ago and I must confess to being put off by the stridency and 'American' tone of her delivery. This time, however, what she had to say drew applause from the audience after almost every sentence. No doubt, the European scene is closer to the physical presence of nuclear weapons than is Australia. Helen courageously named people, encounters she had had, and conversations which anyone could have verified and which had an urgency and imperative feel about them. It seemed to me that we cannot hear it often enough that the future of humankind is too precious to be left in the hands of men, especially bureaucrats and politicians.

Mary Daly, as usual, was her linguistically and semantically brilliant self. She discussed the making of a Radical Feminist dictionary i.e. the process involved, the form taken by the Dictionary *Webster's First New Intergalactic Wickedary of the English Language*. In discussing the form of the Dictionary, Mary explained that the work moves through three phases. Firstly, special articles or webs are woven, these strangely resemble and differ from the preliminary essays found in a normal patriarchal dictionary. Thus this work has Preliminary webs on the History/mystery of the work, Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation and Guidelines. All these subjects take on very different meanings in this context, for in the context of *Wickedary* they come alive. For example Spelling is about casting spells, and guides are not mere banal guidelines, but rather, vivacious spirited creatures, such as cats, owls, gnomes, sylphs and undines who guide the reader through the work.

In the second phase *Websters Discover* three major tribes of New/Archaic words and phrases. Therefore there are three interconnecting word-webs constituting the core of the *Wickedary*. Thus

the first word-web of the core consists of Elemental philosophical words and phrases and other key words. Be-witching and Gyn-Ecology are examples of such words. The second word-web contains words for the inhabitants of wild reality (the background), such as Grimalkin and Crackpot Crone, their activities and characteristics. The third word-web contains words for the inhabitants of the foreground, the man-made pseudoworld, their characteristics and behaviours. *Academentia* is an example of this class of words. The third phase consists of the *Appendicular webs*, on such subjects as plastic/dummy terms, Be-laughing, Spinning beyond the Compass and Jumping off the clocks of father time. One would not have to be too imaginative to know how this type of address went over at the Congress.

While the presentation was clever, witty and linguistically scintillating, I found the person a little off-putting in her seeming preoccupation with phallic imagery and language. It seems to be that would-be leaders in the whole area of raising peoples' consciousness to feminist issues need to be careful not to assume 'masculine' stances in language, imagery, clothing and approaches that alienate their hearers.

Quite a good balance to this approach was provided by Jean Grimshaw, Senior Lecturer at Bristol Polytechnic, who reflected on Mary Daly's book *Pure Lust* in terms of autonomy and authenticity. She argued that certain interpretations of autonomy and authenticity, with reference to Mary's work and that of Janice Raymond, are problematic in that they fail to explain a great deal of female experience. Particularly is she critical of the dearth of material on black and working class women in *Pure Lust* and as a result these interpretations move from being problematical to being potentially divisive

and alienating to many women. Jean goes so far as to claim that Mary Daly's work in this instance is largely idealist and elitist. Since Mary was not at this workshop we did not have the benefit of the reply. I say *reply* because my experience of Mary Daly is that she is not into dialogue.

Since change in the female role requires corresponding change in the male role, a positive response by men to feminism involves men in re-perceiving their own needs and changing the way they relate to other men as well as women. This is how Eamonn O'Dwyer from the Psychology Department of Trinity College Dublin expressed *Men's Response to the Feminist Challenge*. Dr. Paul Surlis from New York succinctly tied together some of the 'feminine' issues in his paper, *Revisiting Ethics and Morality in the Light of the Feminist Challenge* when he said, "Feminist scholars are to the fore in arguing that the 'personal is the political' and in linking such issues as violence against women and children, ecological destruction, poverty, militarism and nuclearism with anti-feminism that is latent in individualistic, repressive sexual moralizing". Raymond Lloyd from England and Gary Woodill from Canada were two of the men who used current research into the male response to the feminist movement. A panel of men from Boston Men's Centre dealt with a specific group's response to the issue, while Europe (predominantly Holland and Germany) was represented by men working in the area of European men's reaction to the feminist challenge.

Because of how unintentionally divisive the whole feminist movement may be it was good to see these men participating and to see the genuine efforts of both groups to listen to each other. I know however that many women would not agree with this last statement, nor did all the participants appreciate the presence of any men at the Congress. However, if we

are on about freeing ourselves and others from prejudice we surely must see the need to listen to all, even those who still see patriarchy as a valid way of organizing society and peoples' lives.

As I mentioned earlier the most hopeful aspect of this Congress was the contribution of ordinary Irish women. My initial encounter with a group of Irish women was the Panel referred to as one of the Keynote addresses. All four women were scholarly, articulate and outright irreverent in relation to both Church and State structures. Their stance was reflected in the groups of women whose contributions ranged over such wide areas, both geographical and in terms of topics, e.g. *Cork Women's Poetry*, *Dublin Travellers' Education and Development Group*, *Galway Women's Education Group*, *Clonmel Rape Crisis Centre*, *Irish Family Planning*, *Dublin Women's Aids Group* and a mixed group of women who were involved in centring, reflection and creative meditation. One workshop that was repeated each day was that organized by Mairead Wrynn from County Offaly in Assertive Communication. Quite a number of individual workshop presenters belonged to W.I.L., Women In Learning and their contributions took many creative forms such as dramatized account of travelling women's daily experiences, composed, prepared and presented by travelling women themselves. *Accents and Class*, *Richness and Diversity - a Vocal Celebration* touched on the effect of accent on lives and behaviour. I make note of these workshops because they seem to me to embody the feminine approach to learning; it was, in the jargon, a 'hands on' experience each time. Many of these sessions I attended went beyond the time allotted, were found to be operating in corridors and on landings (obviously the organizers had not bargained for such a powerful drawcard as these women and

their education offered). There was an earthiness about their sessions, an openness to life and living and above all a wholesome sense of people determined not to be colluding in their own subjugation any longer.

The twenty-seven papers devoted to *Religion, Spirituality and the Challenge of Feminist Theology* seemed to have a strongly goddess/healing/spirituality emphasis rather than a cognitive/scripture/theology stress. Only two papers addressed specific scripture/theology issues while about eight discussed topics such as: Pictorial Aspects of the Sun as Feminine, The Goddess Re-born, The Great Goddess and the Hebrew Bible, Women, Cosmology and Medicine, Reclaiming Ancient Knowledge through Ritual and Healing and associated issues in religious traditions other than the Judaeo-Christian tradition.

One of the workshops that was particularly memorable was a group of women treating mystical aspects of Women's religious practice. These included Indian Dance, Brazilian healers, Californian Ritual makers and a Canadian woman immersed in Creation Spirituality who took Julian of Norwich as the prototype of this emphasis. Each of these women, with the exception of the last speaker, demonstrated by means of actual dramatizing or through other visual media the essence of their message. The dance steps and healing rituals were performed, and slides of actual Nevada Cedar meals and coven activity helped make the presentation typically 'feminine' and truly activating of all the senses of the participants.

Gloria Orenstein (from the Jewish tradition which she maintains she has not abandoned) brilliantly initiated the group into her belief that we "do rituals to resanctify the earth". The whole experience is best expressed in Gloria's own

words - 'ritual and healing have become increasingly important as sources of new cultural visions, enabling women to create community, to impart and reclaim lost wisdom from ancient cultures, to reconnect culture to nature through practices that promote the expansion of feminist and ecological consciousness'.

Much has been omitted from this report of the Congress happenings but as one person I only have my perspective to communicate. With so many women throughout the world working to raise consciousness that must be cause for hope.

— Catherine Thom
Catholic College of Education, Sydney

Addendum: Australian Women's Papers from the Dublin Congress

H. Marshall and J. Smart

Women's Studies in a Working Man's College: Sex, Gender and Society at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

Dr. R. Roland- Deakin University

Living Laboratories: The New Reproductive Technologies and their Threat to Women's Autonomy

C. Crowe - Department of Sociology, University of NSW

Worth Another Try?: Women's Experiences of an I.V.F. Programme

Dr. J. Scutt - Barrister, Melbourne

Owning Women

S. Magarey and S. Sheridan - South Australia

Women's Studies in Australia: A Revolution in Knowledge

P. Morrihan - affiliated to Monash University

From Moses to Moore: The Legitimate Control of Women's Wages by the Australian State

R. Pringle - Macquarie University Secretaries

J. Smart

Working Class Women and Political Protest in Australia during the Great War

H. Marshall

Voluntary Childlessness: Ultimate Liberation of Equal Opportunity?

H. Molnar

Women's Oral History on Radio - A Creative Way to Recover Our Past

Dr. C. Ferrier - University of Queensland
Methodological Considerations and Problems in Writing a Biography of Jean Devanny

M. Theobald - Monash University
New Directions for the Historiography of Women's Education

Charles Strong Trust Lectures - 1989

The Charles Strong Trust continues to pursue its goal of promoting the sympathetic study of world religions here in Australia. In 1988 two lectures were sponsored by the Trust at the annual conference of the AASR, namely, *Ned Kelly Died for Our Sins* by Dr. Deborah Bird Rose and a study of *The Central Symbols of Mandaean Religion* by Majella Franzmann. Both of these papers were very well received and will probably be available in print next year.

There will be two Charles Strong lectures again in 1989. The first will be by Dr. Martin Marty, a noted historian of the University of Chicago. His program is scheduled as follows:

June 12-14 — Sydney

June 15-18 — Adelaide

June 18-30 — Melbourne and Geelong

At his request the tour will be limited to these locations. He will be meeting with various groups at these locations. The Charles Strong Trust Lecture he will give in each city will be entitled something like *Fundamentalism as a Phenomenon in World Religions Today*.

The Charles Strong Trust Lecture scheduled for a joint session of the AASR and the ANZSTS in Perth will be delivered by Dr. Rod Bucknell from the University of Queensland. He spent several

years as a practising Buddhist monk in Thailand and is a recognised scholar and researcher in meditation. His topic will be *Buddhist Meditation and the Study of Mystical Experience*.

The Trustees of the Charles Strong Trust welcome your suggestions for lecturers and projects for the Trust in the future.

Back copies of the following lectures are available *gratis* from my Office at SACAE, Holbrooks Rd, Underdale, SA 5032:

A.H. Johns *Moses in the Qur'an*
Liu Ts'un-yan *The Essence of Taoism*
R. Berndt *A Profile of Good and Bad in Australian Aboriginal Religion*

G. Rossiter *Studying Religion in Australian Schools*

P. Bishop *Tibet in its Place*

R. Ireland *Interpreting Babel: Towards a Sociology of Afro-Brazilian Cults*

K. Klostermaier

The Body of God: Cosmos-Avatar-Image

M.A. El Erian *Halal vs Haram: Behavioral Concepts in Islam*

— Norman Habel
Chairman, Charles Strong Trust

Mythopoeic Literature Society of Australia

The Inner Ring, or to give it its grander title — The Mythopoeic Literature Society of Australia, began some years ago in the English Department of the University of Queensland. It began as a small group of people meeting informally every week or two to discuss the work of the Inklings and, in particular, the writings of Tolkien and Lewis. The interest in Tolkien "down under" is an intriguing one. For example, in Brisbane, there is a boutique called *Gandalf's Garden* and a restaurant called *The Pippin Took*, and it would be difficult to find a bookstore that did not stock copies of Tolkien's works. However, it became clear very early on in the meetings of the Inner Ring that our interests were not confined to the Inklings and that we were attracting people whose interests ranged from the significance of role-playing games in popular culture to the place of myth in literature and art.

Our activities now reflect this range of interest. From time to time we hold weekend seminars at the University of Queensland, the most recent one being on Pre-Raphaelite stained glass in Australia. For several years we have held a national conference, usually at Brisbane but also on one occasion at Armidale and on another at Ballarat. In 1989 we will once again hold our annual conference in Brisbane. This fifth conference will be an international one, bringing participants from overseas as well as Australia. Our 1989 conference theme is "Mythopoeic Literature and the Spirit of Place", and will be concerned with the way in which particular localities and places, real and imagi-

nary, have been used in mythopoeic and fantasy writing. The term "mythopoeic" is a reminder of the extent to which our culture makes use of traditional "myths" and "signs" though, of course, we would have to concede that there is a wide variety of opinion about what such "myths" and "signs" mean for those who use them.

Whatever the theme, papers given at Inner Ring conferences tend to cover such areas as Victorian and Modern Fantasy, religion and literature, children's literature, and the rhetoric and theory of mythopoeic literature. These areas are also reflected in our journal, *The Ringbearer*, which includes conference papers among its articles. To give an example of the areas covered by the journal, the next issue contains articles on the German romantic writer Ludwig Tieck, the British writer Richard Adams, the American Russell Hoban and the Australian novelist Patrick White. The Inner Ring also published another more "popular" periodical *Mathom* which caters for a slightly different readership and contains poetry and fiction and caters for those who are particularly interested in works of fantasy.

What I think we have discovered in the Inner Ring, in the short time we have been functioning, is that even in the superficial world of late twentieth century Australia, there is a continuing critical and popular interest in the myths and images of the "northern" world and that these may still have value for the twenty-first century.

— John Strugnell
University of Queensland

Mythopoeic Literature and the Spirit of Place

Papers are invited for the Fifth (International) Annual Conference of the Inner Ring (Mythopoeic Society of Australia)

The University of Queensland — May 13-16, 1989

Keynote speaker: Prof. Stephen Prickett (ANU)

All enquiries to: Conference convener, Dr. J. R. Strugnell,
Dept. of English, The University of Queensland

Report - Ecumenism Conference held at Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education on 15-16 November 1988

The Conference was enthusiastically received by those in attendance. It had the following, somewhat unusual, programme, which worked very well:

Tuesday - 15 November

09.00 am	Transport from Koala Motor Inn to Main Campus
09.30 - 10.30 am	Bishop Bede Heather: "Ecumenism in Australia Now"
10.30 - 11.00 am	Morning Tea - Staff Club
11.00 - 12.00 noon	Rev. Campbell Egan: "Ecumenism at the Local Level"
12.00 - 13.30 pm	Lunch - Staff Club
13.30 - 14.30 pm	Professor Mohammed El Erian: "Ecumenism: An Islamic Perspective"
14.30 - 15.00 pm	Afternoon Tea - Staff Club
15.00 - 16.00 pm	Workshop - Ecumenism in Australia Now
16.10 -	Transport to town

Wednesday - 16 November

09.00 - 10.30 am	Transport from Koala Motor Inn to Tree Chapel and Ethel Forrest Centre, Calvary Hospital
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10.30 - 11.00 am	Morning Tea - Ethel Forrest Centre
11.00 - 12.00 noon	Workshop - Ecumenism at the Local Level
12.00 - 13.30 pm	Lunch - Staff Club
13.30 - 14.30 pm	Workshop - Ecumenism: An Islamic Perspective
14.30 - 15.00 pm	Afternoon Tea - Staff Club
15.00 - 16.00 pm	Wind up Session with Panel
16.10 -	Transport to town

The Tree Chapel is in the Wagga Wagga Botanical Gardens; the different Churches combined to raise \$10,000 for its construction, which the City Council matched. The Ethel Forrest Centre is an aged care facility run jointly by Catholics and Anglicans employing about 40 people. Visits to these Centres demonstrated that Ecumenism works in practice.

In the main, the Conference was attended by lay people who had experience of ecumenism.

As the above programme was not difficult to organise, and as it brought together an interested, educated, outgoing collection of people, it is eminently replicatable. A better forum for religious education given to meet religiously interested town can scarcely be imagined.

— Dr. Reginald Naulty
Riverina-Murray I.H.E.

NCRC and CRA Sponsored Publications

Some New Australian Publications:

The latest National Catholic Research Council (NCRC) Newsletter mentions the publication of "six papers for the non-specialist commissioned by the NCRC to bring information on changes both in church and society to all involved in pastoral work."

The papers are entitled:

- Catholic Beliefs and Practices
- The Challenge of Secularization
- Families in the Modern World
- The Church's Mission in Australia
- In Search of New Wine Skins
- The Dreaming and the Missions

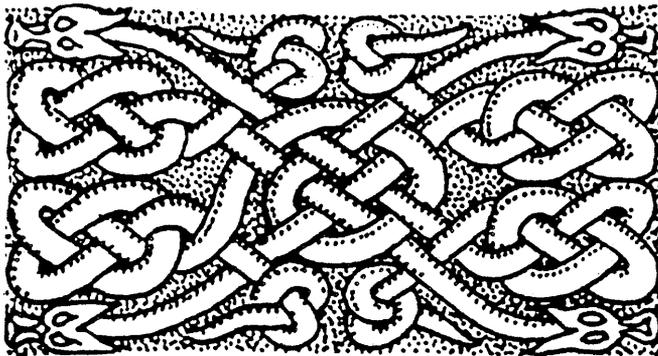
The papers are published by Collins Dove.

The Christian Research Association has recently prepared a series of studies

on *Faith and Work* — "presenting the facts about the involvement of workers in church life and the attitudes of church-goers towards work." Other CRA reports concern the *Church's Mission* (covering the areas of evangelism and social justice, missionary interest and overseas aid, welfare and education), and *Religious Broadcasting in Australia*. This latter report "provides a description of the kinds of people watching the various kinds of religious programs on television and listening to the various religious radio programs. It compares the Australian data with data from the United States."

Further CRA reports are being prepared on such topics as *The Understanding of God*, *Youth in the Church*, and *The Clergy*.

CRA publications are available from AASR member Tricia Blombery, 6 Balfour Street, Wollstonecraft, NSW 2065.



Australian Religious Studies:

A Bibliography of Post-Graduate Theses
1922 - 1986

Edited and Compiled
by Peter Bentley

Published by the National Catholic Research
Council
1988

Theses topics in:
Aboriginal Studies
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History of Denominations and Religions
Jewish Studies
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Literature
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Missions
Music
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Religious Faiths and Movements
Sociology of Religion
Welfare and Health

Copies available from:
NCRC
P.O. Box 98
Leichhardt, N.S.W. 2040
AUS\$6.50 including postage

ABC Prime Time Religious Programs

*Religious Broadcasting on ABC Radio and Television.
The Latest Update From David Millikan's Office.*

For the first time in many years Religious Programs have gone to prime time. It is perhaps a measure of the changing sense of importance which Australian culture is attaching to the world of belief and faith.

Radio

SUNDAY

SUNDAY MORNING

Radio National: 5:30-6:58 am

A program of religious music and hymns presented by Stephen Watkins.

Stephen Watkins (08) 344 0551

FOR THE GOD WHO SINGS

ABC FM: 7:15-8 am

Music created out of a yearning for the Sublime. (Starts March 5th 1989)

Kay McLennan (03) 640 3269

ENCOUNTER

Radio National: 8-8:45 am

(Repeated following Wednesday 7:15-8 pm). Regional Stations: 9:15-10 pm (Sunday)

Features and documentaries about religion in life.

Florence Spurling (07) 337 5143

INSIGHTS

Radio National: 5:10-6 pm

Insights to belief, religion, spirituality and theology. Prepared and presented by Ronald Nichols.

Ronald Nichols (02) 339 2454

SACRED MUSIC

Radio National: 6-6:58 pm

Prepared and presented by Kay McLennan.

Kay McLennan (03) 640 3269

SUNDAY NIGHT

Metropolitan and Regional Stations:

10:10 pm-midnight

David Millikan and guests discuss issues of belief and doubt ('Phone in questions are welcomed), overseas mission workers are interviewed.

David Millikan (02) 339 2781

SING TO THE LORD

3LO Melbourne Only: 6:30-7 am

Traditional and modern hymns presented by Lawrie Bruce.

Neil Gill (03) 640 3454

MONDAY

SPIRIT OF OZ

Radio National: 2-2:30 pm

Repeated following Tuesday 9:30-10 pm

Contemporary issues

Neil Gill (03) 640 3454

MONDAY - FRIDAY

SACRED READING

Radio National: 7:10-7:14 am

Selected Regionals: 5:56-6 am

Great sacred literature including the Bible.

Paul Collins (02) 339 2798

CAROLINE JONES

Radio National: 9:30-10 am Thursday & Friday

Radio National: 9-10 pm Saturday

Regional Stations: 9-10 pm Thursday only

Caroline Jones in conversation with Australians about their beliefs and the things that give meaning to life.

Stephen Godley (02) 339 2788

FRIDAY

KRONOS - A weekly report on Religion in Society

Radio National: 5:30-5:59 pm

Repeated following Monday 11:30-11:59am

Religious current affairs in Australia and around the world presented by John Cleary.

John Cleary

(02) 339 2783

TelevisionSUNDAY**WORSHIP SUNDAY**

ABC TV: All States 11 am-Noon

Telecasts of public worship around Australia.

Peter Kirkwood

(02) 950 4028

COMPASS

ABC TV: All States Noon-1 pm

Religious current affairs magazine, documentaries, discussions, commentaries.

Vaughan Hinton

(02) 950 4030

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Editor : R. WESLEY HARTLEY

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