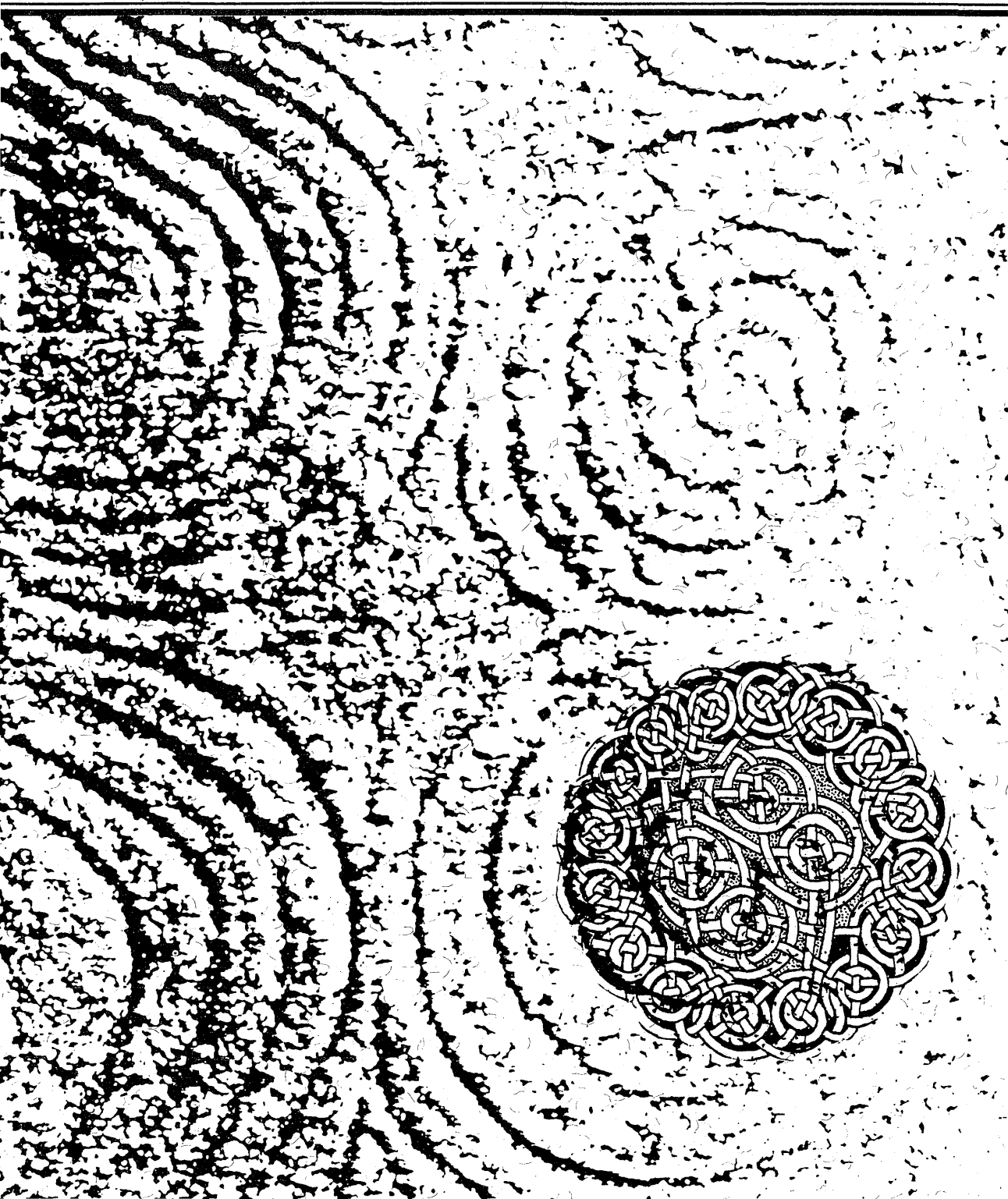


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Editors' Note

The International Congress for the Study of Religion has come and gone, with its highlights and its disappointments. It was an event full of strange paradoxes. In some ways, it felt like an American event on Australian soil, and largely populated by Australasians. Although some people here did put in considerable work, (and we are indebted to them) it was largely organised in Atlanta, U.S.A.. This had some draw-backs, especially prior to the conference when phone calls came through at 4.00 a.m.! Despite its international nature, it was, in general, a white Western event, both in its style and the content of its concerns.

One strength was the vast range of subject matter in the lectures one could attend. At any particular time, up to six alternatives were available. However, three main streams of interest emerged: Biblical studies, religious education, and women's studies in religion. Within these themes, a variety of content was evident. For example, there were lectures on most parts of the Bible: from Genesis to Revelation, not excluding the apocrypha. One disappointment was the number of lecturers who did not appear at their lectures. Numbers were certainly not what had been predicted, but evidently many people who had registered for the conference did not arrive.

There were many 'gems' in the lectures. Yet, despite the variety of material, or perhaps because of it, there were no major concerns which arose from the Congress as a whole, and few opportunities for plenary groups to pursue such themes.

Another paradox was in the means of communication. There were several ways in which the development of electronic media and the use of computer networking was brought to the attention of the Congress. Yet the major form of communication within the Congress was formal lectures which inhibited debate and discussion.

One of the highlights of the conference was the launching of *Religion and Multiculturalism in Australia*. It was one of warmest events of the Congress, and felt like the gathering of friends as a number of people expressed their thanks to Vic Hayes for his work in the field of religious studies.

We had a privileged position on the bookstall in Wilson Hall. That venue gave us many opportunities to renew acquaintances and meet new people. There was a steady stream of people, yet there was usually time to stop and talk. Surely the opportunity for personal communication is an important component of any conference.

Let us hope that the memories of this conference will make any future international gathering on our soil an even more productive time!

The report of the Annual General Meeting, held during the Congress, is included in this issue. We would like to express our thanks to the meeting for their confidence in re-appointing us as editors.

We would like to express our appreciation to Deborah Selway who courageously took on the task of editing the features section of this edition of the *Review*. If there are others who would like to help in a similar way with future editions, we would be delighted to hear from you.

'Tricia Blombery and Philip Hughes