

AASR 1996

Abstracts from the First Combined Conference of the AASR and the New Zealand Religious Studies Association Christchurch NZ July 1996

We bring you the abstracts of the last AASR conference in keeping with the resolution of the AASR Conference of 1994. As only a small band of Australians were able to participate, we have included the NZ papers as well. We regret the delay in bringing you these abstracts but NZ were not able to provide them in time for the last issue. Addresses for participants are correct to the best of our knowledge. Members wanting copies of papers are asked to contact presenters direct.

Charles Strong Memorial lectures

RULE, PAUL

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The strange death of religion in China

China today presents a striking paradox in that an atheistic state is experiencing what is officially described as 'religious fever'. This is one of the many contradictions in Chinese social and intellectual life arising from the economic and political changes of the last twenty years. When social controls were lifted after the Cultural Revolution traditional Chinese religious practices revived, and Christianity and Islam flourished. Even during campaigns against 'spiritual pollution' and the crackdowns after the 1989 Tiananmen massacres, there was no observable decline in religious practice. Publications relating to religion have multiplied, not only from the officially controlled religious presses but from university and commercial publishers. In the renewed search for values for the new China after the discrediting of Maoism, religious values are being scrutinised and their role of promoting social order and national cohesion reexamined. Serious social research has been conducted to discover the reasons for the religious revival and a revision of the Marxist theory of religion undertaken. Younger scholars and students, especially, show a keen interest

in religious ideas and practices, ranging from Christian theology to the occult. The Marxist project of the death of religion has proved to be a strange death indeed.

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Archetype and kerygmathe legacy of Northrop Frye

Northrop Frye has been among the most powerful theorists of the relation between religion, literature and culture in modern times. His voluminous writings of the past fifty years and the wide international acclaim his work has received along with its controversial aspect make it timely to assess his achievement as a figure of integration and cultural reconciliation in western intellectual and spiritual terms.

Frye's study of William Blake, *Fearful Symmetry* (1947) and *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), established him in Toronto at the forefront of a new professionalism in literary studies in North America. His theory of archetypes separated him off from the New Critics of Yale and the Aristotelians of Chicago. But his efforts to unify western culture in relation to its biblical basis and origins gave him a clear position and role in modern theorising. The focus on deconstruction and differentiation from the mid 1960s through the 1980s isolated Frye, but his vigorous return in *The Great Code* (1980) and *Words with Power* (1990) to the Bible from the perspective of literature has thrown out a challenge to biblical scholars and literary theorists alike. The 1992 conference held not long after his death in Toronto saw a collection of papers published as *The Legacy of Northrop Frye* (1994) which attests to his wide influence. His final thinking on 'Kerygma' and its interrelationship with creative imagination is but one of his rich and stimulating insights.

Conference Papers by theme areas

1. Australian and New Zealand Religious History

Moani, Hedi, 'Women and the New Zealand Baha'i Community - an historical perspective'

Simpson, Jane, 'Lay piety in New Zealand'

van der Krogt, Chris, 'The Catholic campaign against contraception in New Zealand during the 1930s'

2. Maori and Aboriginal Religion

Nicholson, Rangi, 'The theological implications of a three cultural strand Anglican Church - a Maori perspective'

See also Fletcher, under Religion and Gender stream

3. Religion and the Arts

Bell, Roslynne, 'Death and desire - the creation of Cybele tristis'

Hardy, Ann, 'Image, motion, spirit - the construction of spirituality in contemporary film'

Isichei, Elizabeth, 'Mammy Wata - the life and times of an African mermaid'

Moore, Albert, 'Improvisation in music, life, and religion'

4. Religion and Gender

Adam, Enid, 'Buddhist nuns in Ladakh - orphaned or secular?'

Blackstone, Kate, 'Outsiders on the inside - a study of Bhikkhunis in the Pali Vinaya'

Fletcher, Adele, 'Christian civilisation and native women - a report on my doctoral research'

Guthrie, Elizabeth, 'The Ye Chi and the reconstruction of Buddhism in Cambodia'

McLean, Malcolm, 'A new approach to the problem of classification of goddesses'

Moorhead, John, 'Ambrose on women'

Woodhead, Linda, 'Spiritualising the sacred - a critique of feminist theology'

5. Religion and Literature

Boer, Roland, 'Green ants and Gibeonites - Sreten Bozic, Joshua 9 and the problems of postcolonialism'

Burgess, David, 'Angels in my tables'

Burgess, Hazel, 'Thomae venerabilis ossa or ossae venerabilis?'

Conrad, Ed, 'Interpreting Isaiah and the twelve as prophetic books'

Crotty, Robert, 'Qumran and early Christianity - present state of play'

Dawes, Greg, 'Typology, allegory, and the interpretation of Matthew 2'

Green, Dennis, 'The concept of God as "Father" in the Gospels, the Rabbinic literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls'

Holcroft, Alison, 'Doing it backwards: The Gospel of Nicodemus and late antique readers'

Rule, Paul, 'Critical approaches to early Chinese texts'

Simms, Norman, 'Guilds, passions, and the shameful thing'

Veitch, Jim, 'Translation, heretics, and belief in a post-secular age'

6. Religion, Philosophy, and Ethics

Almond, Philip, 'Eve in Eden in 17th-century English thought'

Ballis, Harry, 'Expastors and the collapse of the Adventist world view'

Bucknell, Rod, 'Conditioned Arising evolves - Evidence of variation and development in the Buddhist panyicca-samuppâda formula'

Cooke, Bill, 'Is humanism a religion?'

Crangle, Edward & Jordan, Trevor, 'Ethics and enlightenment in Theravâda Buddhism'

- Donovan, Peter, 'From logic to rhetoric - politicizing the God-talk debate'
- Fudge, Thomas, 'The fate of God in post-modern theology and the option of Martin Buber'
- Garfield, Jay, 'Three natures and three naturelessnesses - comments concerning Cittamtra conceptual categories'
- Harrison, Paul, 'Reflections on Mañjuāri and other "Celestial Bodhisattvas"'
- Harrison, Peter, 'Subduing the earth: Genesis 1, modern science, and the exploitation of nature'
- McCormick, Gregory, 'How Lévy-Bruhl thinks natives think - a note on some unexamined presuppositions'
- Perrett, Roy, 'Symbols, icons and stupas'
- Reat, N. Ross, 'Buddhism and constructive postmodern theology'
- Siderits, Mark, 'On the Continuity Thesis'

7. Religion and Social Justice

- Fudge, Thomas, 'Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Gustavo Gutierrez: unlikely allies in Christian revolution'
- Mitchell, Nigel, 'Works righteousness and the Synagogue of Satan - rethinking Christian theological caricatures of 1st century Judaism'
- Sheen, Juliet, 'Freedom of religion or belief: contemporary global issues'
- Vincent, Barbara, 'The religious ideology of the New Zealand Business Roundtable - an analysis of their documents'

8. Religion and society

- Blombery, 'Tricia, "Lord, her watch thy Church is keeping" or is she? Religion and the environment'
- Cohen, John, 'The judges of the Hebrew Bible'
- Elsmore, Bronwyn, 'The melting pot is fine and dandy? The westernization of Chinese religion in Hawaii'
- Finlay, Shiva, 'The religious settlement of Zen Buddhism in Australia. A test case for Stark and Bainbridge's theory of religious conversion'
- Low, Peter, 'The evolution of the Quaker Peace Testimony in the twentieth century - progressive revelation?'
- O'Donoghue, Michael, 'The Letters to the Dead and ancient Egyptian Religion'
- Petersen, Mary, 'Spirituality, Religious Studies and Religious Education - possibilities and challenges from contemporary New Zealand society'
- Pratt, Doug, 'Statement of Alexandria: report and reflections on a conference of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs'
- Schalk, Peter, 'Secularism and religious pluralism - key concepts of Ilavar State formation'
- Shepard, Bill, 'Tracking a radical's development: the changes in Sayyid Qutb's Islamist thought as reflected in the various editions of one of his books'
- Wyatt, Adrienne, 'Mahatma Gandhi and the power of self-control'

9. Religion, Health and the Body

Colless, Brian, 'The body as a source of signs and symbols for ancient writing and religion'

Eastwood, Heather, 'Why are GPs using alternative medicine?'

Ferris, Mike, 'Finding the road to self-respect'

Hutch, Richard, 'From magic to mysticism. How Brian Keenan managed captivity, torture and pain as a hostage in Lebanon'

Lindsay, Elaine, 'Friend Death'

10. Religious Studies Pedagogy

Holm, Jean, 'Structure and sequence in the study of religion in state schools'

McGrath, John, 'Advancing the educational study of religion in religiously affiliated schools'

11. Religious Studies Theory and Method

Coco, Angela, 'Making new sense of old values'

Crangle, Ed, 'Hermeneutics and the ontological categorisation of religious experience'

Morris, Paul, 'Religion, Religious Studies and postmodernity'

Sax, Bo, 'In defense of the exotic: Religious Studies, Orientalism, and the "Other"'

Abstracts in Alphabetical Order of Presenters**ADAM, ENID**

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Buddhist nuns in Ladakh - orphaned or secular?

This paper considers the fate of girls and women who become nuns in the oldest surviving Buddhist land in the world. Although Ladakh is part of the northernmost state of India, the geographical isolation imposed by the Himalayas has ensured the preservation of its religion and culture. Buddhism was introduced from the plains of India but it was later influenced by Tibetan teachers. In practice, however, it has become finely tuned to the seasonal economic activities of the community. For girls or women who follow their own or their parent's wishes and become nuns, the ordination ceremony may allow them to wear robes but it is not a rite of passage that clearly ends their secular lifestyle and marks the beginning of a full-time religious vocation. Instead, nuns remain unpaid family servants and continue their traditional secular activities. Educationally, these nuns may be doubly deprived of both secular and monastic education.

What is the status of the nuns of Ladakh? Are they essentially secular women

with mere trappings of a religious vocation, or have they become, Ladakhi-style, 'homeless ones', daughters of the Buddha and recognised members of the monastic order?

ALMOND, PHILIP

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Eve in Eden in 17th-century English thought

This paper examines the central place which the Edenic myth held in seventeenth-century England, with particular reference to the figure of Eve. It examines the continuities and discontinuities between readings of the Paradisal narrative then and now. It hopes to illuminate the way in which the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden was the focus of heated debates on the status and role of women, on the relationship between the sexes, on nakedness, on sexual libertinism, and polygamy. It will be argued that while a subordinationist position on the role of women is dominant, it is so within a much greater set of contestatory, arcane, and often obscure readings of Genesis.

BALLIS, HARRY

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Ex-pastors and the collapse of the Adventist world view

More than 180 pastors left the Adventist ministry in Australia and New Zealand between 1980 and 1988, a figure that is equivalent to an astonishing 40 percent of the movement's ministerial workforce in these countries - a statistic without precedent in the Adventist Church at any other time or in any other place. Drawing on the data gathered from interviews with 43 ex-pastors this paper chronicles the collapse of the sectarian world view of former Adventist pastors and maps the contours of their religious outlook from exit to interview. Using Hirschman's theorising on 'exit' and 'voice' in organisations the paper highlights why some ex-pastors were prepared to complain (voice) and others were not, why ex-pastors' criticisms of Adventist theology had focused on a handful of doctrines that lay at the very heart of sect identity, and more importantly, why in the majority of cases exit was accompanied by the collapse of the sectarian world view. The interviews with ex-pastors reveal that the sectarian community is far more fissiparous than researchers have heretofore acknowledged and enable us to gain a better understanding both of the fragility of belief and the precariousness of the sectarian world view.

BELL, ROSLYNNE

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Death and desire - the creation of Cybele tristis

This paper will focus on an interpretation of the Roman statuette of Cybele, (1st - 2nd century AD), currently in the University of Canterbury's James Logie Memorial Collection. In many ways this figure is akin to the innumerable canonical representations of this mother-goddess which served as cult statues and votives throughout antiquity. The Logie statuette, however, also exhibits a number of atypical iconographic features. Topics discussed will include the interpretation of these features as motifs appropriate to the goddess in her mourning aspect, i.e. as Cybele tristis, and the hypothesis that it was with the intention of providing worshippers with a caring sepulchral guardian that such images were produced. Reference will be made to the legends associated with Cybele and her consort Attis, developments in cult ritual during the Roman Empire, and the conventions of Graeco-Roman funerary art.

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Outsiders on the inside - a study of *Bhikkhunis* in the Pali Vinaya

The Vinaya (the Buddhist code of monastic rules and regulations) is a systematic articulation of Buddhist renunciant identity. On this, scholars are generally agreed. Scholarly studies, however, tend to refrain from analysing how this identity is achieved and the power relations in which it is embedded. The rules and procedures prescribed in the Pali Vinaya set up boundaries between 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. Throughout the Vinaya, women, even ordained women (*bhikkhunis*) symbolise the outside world beyond the boundaries. Consequently, *bhikkhunis* are systematically excluded from full participation in the affairs of the Buddhist monastic order. Focusing on this exclusion, my paper argues that the presentation of *bhikkhunis* is an important strategy in the development and justification of the particular renunciant identity the Vinaya advocates. In short, the exclusion of *bhikkhunis* reveals more about the self-definition constructed by Vinaya authors and compilers than it reveals about the historical role and influence of *bhikkhunis* in the Buddhist order.

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“Lord, her watch thy Church is keeping” or is she? Religion and the environment

Research shows a high overall concern among Australians for the environment and an acceptance that humans are largely responsible for the deterioration and also the remedy. There is also ample evidence to show that there is a strong although small group made up chiefly of people who believe in God without doubt and weekly church attenders who accept the aspects of the creation stories presented in Genesis. While some feel this gives them the right of mastery over creation, more would see themselves as caretakers or stewards of nature. Strangely, this support of the creation stories does not generally translate to a respect for nature as sacred because it is God's creation nor into concrete action or commitment towards environmentalism or conservation. When both ideals and practical measures are tested against religion it seems, where it makes any difference at all. It is those who have less involvement - the non-believers, the non-attenders and those with no religion - are more active.

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Green Ants and Gibeonites - Sreten Bozic, Joshua 9 and the problems of postcolonialism

The issue on which I focus is the dialectic of postcolonial voices, or the question of who can speak in a postcolonial situation. I am also interested in the nature of postcolonialism and its uniqueness. To examine these questions, I juxtapose contemporary Australian writing and a biblical text. The former is that of Sreten Bozic, a Serbian immigrant to Australia, anthropological field worker, and writer of novels and short stories in the name of an Aboriginal woman, Banumbir Wongar. These novels problematise the very distinctions they seem to set up European and Aboriginal narratives, Serbia and Australia, white European and black Aboriginal, white male and aboriginal female, conquest and reconciliation. In many respects Bozic's work embodies the contradictions of postcolonial cultural production.

Over against these works is Joshua 9, a story about the deception of the invading Israelites by the Gibeonites. This text may be read in at least two ways a postcolonial text that celebrates the duping of the invading forces by the indigenous inhabitants, and a complex reflection on Israelite identity, especially from an exilic perspective. Here the constantly shifting subject positions of Bozic's text and the biblical text intersect. The paper explores the implications of these constant shifts.

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Conditioned Arising evolves. Evidence of variation and development in the Buddhist *panicca-samuppāda* formula

Scholarly discussion of the Buddhist doctrine of Conditioned Arising (panicca-samuppāda) usually focuses on the well-known twelve-membered formula, beginning with ignorance (avijjā). However, examination of the textual sources reveals at least four major versions of the formula, all of which ought to be taken into account in any adequate study of Conditioned Arising. The present paper illustrates this point by comparing two of these versions and showing how such comparative study can throw light on the evolution of this important piece of Buddhist doctrine.

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Angels in my tables

Angels have achieved an enduring and endearing position in popular culture. Indeed many people are favourably disposed towards the notion of angels who would not ordinarily profess attachment to organised religion. Thus it is tempting to extricate angels from the religious milieu and view them as secular supernatural agents. Notwithstanding their popular desacralisation, angels are frequently mentioned in the primary sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This essay surveys the references to angels in the Hebrew Scriptures, New Testament and Qur'an. 129 references to angels in these texts have been categorised according to five criteria. For each criteria attention is paid to differences between Jewish, Christian and Moslem references. These criteria and the categories within them were defined so as to facilitate consistent and defensible classification. This approach, combined with the large number of references mitigates the effects of subjectivity and validates the broad conclusions. A complete list of references and their classification is available.

BURGESS, HAZEL

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Thomae venerabilis ossa or ossae venerabilis?

Much has been written about the 18th century revolutionary Tom Paine by both ardent admirers and unrelenting vilifiers. The practice continues. Disowned by three countries and the Quaker faith who refused him burial in their ground, his later life was spent in ignominy. In 1988 a skull purported to be that of Paine was exhibited at a Sydney antiques fair. That object led to my research which is virtually a new writing of his life and beyond in the context of retribution. Access to the skull enables my thesis to cross into the realms of molecular biology where I endeavour to establish that, contrary to popular belief, Paine fathered a child. Several people believe they are descended from him; they can be of assistance to me in DNA analysis. By similar means I hope to validate the skull as being that of my subject. Paine, who died in

1809, was exhumed from his rude grave at New Rochelle, New York, by William Cobbett, 1819, who transported the remains to England where he hoped to stage a grand funeral. It did not occur and the story of Paine's disownment and retribution for his attack upon the Bible continues posthumously.

COCO, ANGELA

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Making new sense of old values

With the changing nature of contemporary religiosity, it is opportune to advance a methodology which enables us to grasp the often contradictory and ambivalent stances people may adopt with respect to their personal religious heritage. Such an approach, which can identify the communicative moves believers make in constructing workable meaning systems, is the 'Sense-Making methodology' developed by Brenda Dervin in Communications Theory. It offers researchers an holistic approach to predicting the ways some people, raised in the Roman Catholic tradition, negotiate tensions that arise between life experience, and doctrinal and belief systems. Traditional religious organisations, in their attempts to bridge the gaps between religious teaching and adherents' life processes, may benefit from insights gained through this approach.

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The judges of the Hebrew Bible

The high point of the push into Canaan by the Israelites came to an end with the death of Joshua. Those who came to power after him were often military leaders who claimed specific territorial jurisdiction rather than national authority. Nevertheless the text of the Book of Judges pronounces them as national heroes. This paper will place the judges into historical and religious context and examine the roles played by the first named two in the Book of Judges Othniel and Ehud and the last named Samson. It will be seen that a close reading of the text shows a subversion of the authority of the judges rather than a fulfilling of their mission. Although they are said to be imbued with the spirit of God in their task of conquering the land of Canaan there is in fact ultimate failure. As the tribal amphictyony attempts to come to grips with its desire for a king and its unwillingness to fully obey the Deuteronomic law the strength of the judges runs out of steam. Although the paper will not examine the role of Samuel it is with him that the focus of the judges comes to an end with the establishment of the monarchy.

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The body as a source of signs and symbols for ancient writing and religion

My research on the origins of the alphabet has shown me that in the proto-alphabet of Canaan (ancient Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, in the second millennium B.C.E.) more than half of the two dozen alphabetic pictographs represented parts of the body or the entire body, mostly the human body, but also the bodies of other animals (namely ox, snake, fish). The remainder consisted of objects from human culture or the natural world.

The predecessor of the alphabet was a pictographic syllabary, connected with Byblos, the famous Phoenician city. A third of its signs, amounting to two dozen out of some six dozen, are physical, physiological.

The statistics have no significance, but the interest lies in tracing some of the obscure signs to their physical source. In the proto-alphabet and the syllabary, Egyptian hieroglyphs have been borrowed and given new acrophonic values (the first consonant or the first syllable of the Canaanite word that goes with each picture). Three fascinating examples are the 'ankh symbol of 'life', the djed column signifying 'stability', and the mysterious nefer sign denoting 'goodness' and 'beauty'. The physiological symbolism of these and other signs will be explored and discussed.

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Interpreting Isaiah and the twelve as prophetic books

Prophetic books have for a long time been viewed as composite works. Earlier in this century the focus of critical scholarship was to discover the authentic words of the original prophet in prophetic books in which the redactor was primarily understood to be a collector. More recently redactors have come to be understood as 'authors' who played a more active role in shaping prophetic books. In both cases the growth of a prophetic book was understood to have a long history of development. In this paper I want to offer a different way of understanding Isaiah and the Twelve as composite works. I understand them to have had their origin at a point in time rather than developing over a long period of time. I also argue that their composite nature can be understood when they are read as a literary collage requiring the reader to configure the parts. My paper will also be an exercise in intertextuality because I will read Isaiah in conjunction with the Twelve.

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Is humanism a religion?

There have been attempts both from proponents and opponents of Humanism to have it labelled as such. This paper will examine whether such a description fits New Zealand humanism. Current authorities will be cited and the various writings of New Zealand humanists will be gone into to see whether humanism may validly be seen as a religion. Some interesting conclusions about what constitutes a religion can be drawn from this exercise.

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Hermeneutics and the ontological categorisation of religious experience

Within the study of religion, the fundamental attitude or preferred cognitive style of the scholar to the basic data determines, to a degree, his methodology; his methodology then determines the extent to which examples of religion are understood as reconcilable or vice versa. Some methods, by their specific nature, tend to emphasise the differences in the data while others suggest their similarity.

This paper intends to relate a conceptual framework that articulates adequately the direct relationship between ontological categories derived from two types of religious experience 1) dualism, which emphasises differences and 2) monism, which stresses similarity. That is to say, the paper attempts to adapt to the basic data of religious experience an approach that emphasises both difference and similarity, so as to answer adequately the armchair comparativists who say that all religions believe in some Ultimate Reality beyond the individual.

This is perhaps a rather ambitious undertaking considering the complexity of the problem. Nevertheless, it can be done by drawing upon established (though little known or appreciated) schools of thought and behaviour within Buddhism and Hinduism; namely, the Chinese Buddhist school entitled Hua yen, and aspects of the devotional cult named Íaktaism or Tantrism.

CRANGLE, EDWARD & JORDAN, TREVOR

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Ethics and Enlightenment in Theravāda Buddhism

The interdependence of principle and practice for the attainment of nibbāna places morality and ethics at the centre of the Theravāda Buddhist way of life. The present paper explores briefly the short-comings of some studies in this area and argues that it is not by asking Western questions that we gain a better understanding

of Theravāda Buddhism in its own terms, but rather, that a proper understanding of basic Buddhist affirmations will reveal the fundamental importance of ontological and epistemological presuppositions in ethical systems. In considering Theravāda Buddhist ethics and morality in particular, an understanding of the relationship between the 'karmic' or 'kammatic' (non-normative) and the 'nirvā^{ic}' or 'nibbānic' (normative) is crucial. This paper focuses on the normative vision rather than its vicissitudes.

The paper concludes that an overemphasis on the alleged 'psychological' basis of Theravāda Buddhism has clouded perception of the importance of basic Buddhist affirmations, ontological in nature, in the formation of the Buddhist ethic. Neglect and misconception of the doctrines of anattā, kamma, the three trainings (sila, samādhi, and paññā), along with erroneous views about nibbāna and its relation to the Path, have shown that 'asking Western questions' can lead to a distorted perspective on Buddhist ethics. Considering whether Theravāda Buddhism is moral should proceed with ontological presuppositions of scholar and subject material in full view.

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Qumran and early Christianity: present state of play

Jesus research and reconstructions of early Christianity have taken up various stances towards the scroll finds in the Judean desert since 1947 and the archaeological work at Qumran since 1951. Generally, three major established positions regarding the scrolls have emerged the scrolls were the writings of proto-Christians; the scrolls were the writings of Jews, some of whom became part of the first Christians; the scrolls were writings of Jews who lived at the same period as the first Christians.

However, the consensus position on the scrolls and the archaeological data that had been established by the International Team under Roland de Vaux, which would prefer the second or third of the above options, have both recently come under review. There has been considerable reinterpretation of the archaeology of Qumran and de Vaux's conclusion that it was an Essene monastery and the publication of all the scroll material from Cave 4 seem to give less support to the notion of one single sect (such as the Essenes) being responsible for the entire corpus of scrolls.

This paper will review the changing ground of debate and the new possibilities relative to the history of early Christianity that it heralds.

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Typology, allegory, and the interpretation of Matthew 2

The interpretation of the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke poses in a particularly acute form the question of the historical value of the Gospels. This paper is a critical examination of Raymond Brown's exegesis of Matthew chap. 2, which offers itself as a (not untypical) example of recent study of the infancy narratives. Along with most modern commentators, Brown accepts that very little of the story of Herod and the Magi can be described as 'historical'. Therefore, in order to rescue Matthew 2 for Christian use, he treats this story as though it were an allegory, a form of narrative in which the literal sense of the story is the (dispensable) clothing of a spiritual message. However, this involves him in an inconsistency. For his own exegesis suggests that Matthew was constructing, not an allegory, but a typological reading of the events surrounding Jesus' birth, a reading in which (in the mind of the evangelist) the real events of one age are seen to reflect the real events of another. If Brown's concern is to respect the evangelist's intention, he cannot separate the theological value of this story from its (intended) historical reference. If his judgement is that the events narrated by Matthew are unlikely to have occurred, then he cannot suggest that the evangelist's 'message' nonetheless remains valid. Brown's exegesis therefore belongs to the long tradition of Christian attempts to allegorise texts whose literal sense has proved to be embarrassing.

DONOVAN, PETER

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From logic to rhetoric: politicizing the God-talk debate

The mid-century philosophical debate about religious language seems somewhat dated today, yet many of the issues raised remain unresolved. Setting the discussion within the broader, multi-disciplinary area of 'discourse analysis' enables us to recognise what the linguistic philosophers largely ignored the essentially rhetorical character of religious discourse. Recent studies of the 'rhetoric of inquiry' are used to suggest how philosophy and religious studies can better come to terms with the pragmatic and political sides of religious discourse, while retaining an interest in epistemology and avoiding over-simple moralising about interests and agendas.

EASTWOOD, HEATHER

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Why are GPs using alternative medicine?

In a recent explanation for the convergence between orthodox and alternative medicine Evan Willis calls attention to the paradox of orthodox medical practitioners

who employ a range of complementary treatments. Despite such attention in recent health literature there exist extremely limited Australian data on this topic. This paper addresses this issue and presents a computer program assisted qualitative analysis of interviews with three groups of Brisbane health professionals (n=60). Two major trends are identified in the data for GP use of alternative medicine in their daily practice. The first trend is consumer demand for such therapies. The second trend is a shift towards holistic health, a paradigm that recognises the role of spirituality in health. Using the cultural theory of Douglas and Wildavsky the paper draws upon this data to explore issues of health, the body and spirituality as understood by the groups interviewed.

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The melting pot is fine and dandy? The westernization of Chinese religion in Hawaii

This paper is a companion paper to the one I presented two years ago at the last NZASR Conference. Both of these arose out of research leave I took in 1993 in Hawaii for the purpose of looking at the westernization of oriental religion. Two years ago I presented the Japanese side of my findings, in the paper 'A funny thing happened on the way to the temple', and now I will consider the Chinese side of the picture. However, one is not dependent on the other, and this topic stands on its own for anyone interested. The paper examines the history and the results of acculturation, and the attitudes of Chinese-Hawaiians to the changes.

ENGLAND, JOHN

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Asian Christian writings from inner and East Asia in the 7th-14th centuries

Significant collections of Christian writings by Asian authors of the 'medieval' period have seldom been recognised in studies of the religious history and literature of the region. The largest number of these, comprising many hundreds of manuscripts, were discovered in Turkestan and China in the first decades of this century, although many have only recently been classified. Major collections in Syriac, Sogdian (Iranian), Uighur (Old Turkic), and Chinese have been identified, along with others in a total of seventeen languages and twenty-four different alphabets.

Syriac materials include a wide range of Biblical, liturgical and homiletic writings, along with apologetic and narrative works. In Sogdian and Uighur, in addition to the above forms, there are numbers of apocryphal, biographical and martyrological writings, some of which are clearly shaped by Turkestani history and culture. Chinese writings include the Sian-fu Stele, and the 'A-lo-pen' and 'Cyriacus' collections of

sutras. These are in the form of treatises or extended hymns which express Biblical truths in the language and thought-forms of a largely Buddhist culture.

Together, the manuscripts and fragments provide a remarkable picture of thought and practice in Christian communities across the region. Their blend of apologetic and dialogical concerns, and of Biblical and distinctly vernacular imagery, provides a rich resource for contemporary study.

FERRIS, MIKE

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Finding the road to self-respect

L. Ron Hubbard, the founder of the Scientology religion, wrote in 1973 “When religion is not influential in a society or has ceased to be, the state inherits the entire burden of public morality, it then must use punishment and police. Yet this is unsuccessful as morality, not inherent in the individual cannot be enforced with any great success ...”

The culture in which we live has come to this crossroads where the state has taken on the responsibility of morality and as a result the role of law enforcement is far greater today than ever before.

I have been working with youth-at-risk in Auckland for the past two years, coordinating with established half-way houses where youth are placed by the courts and Social Welfare.

While these youth have a host of personal problems often stemming from violent and abusive upbringings, they share a common denomination of a loss of self-respect. A number of these youth have resorted to drugs as a solution to ease the pressures of their past. However, using simple methods of restoring self-respect, these youth are gaining a sense of worth and understanding of the world around them. Many of them have turned away from crime and have gotten employment for the first time in their lives.

The methods employed by the volunteers from the Church of Scientology working in this field lie in the field of education and more specifically the barriers to learning. Teaching youth what stops them from learning not only rehabilitates their willingness to learn, it also appears to restore confidence and self-esteem in many cases. “There must be more reason and more emotional reasons to be moral than the threat of human discipline.” (L. Ron Hubbard)

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The religious settlement of Zen Buddhism in Australia. A test case for Stark and Bainbridge’s theory of religious conversion

The focus of this paper is both religious and sociological. The religious strand sets out a definition of Zen Buddhism and its history and organisation in Australia. The sociological strand examines the implantation of Zen Buddhism in Australia through conversion. It is demonstrated that to become a committed Zen practitioner depends on experiencing and attributing positive changes to the practice of Zen meditation.

The paper uses the process of conversion to Zen in order to examine a particular model of religious conversion which was elaborated by Stark and Bainbridge as a part of their general theory of religion. Their theory claims the essence of religion is a system of what they term general compensators based on supernatural assumptions rather than real rewards. Conversion and commitment to Zen however, presupposes an evaluation of compensators through the experience of actual rewards, rather than the mere acceptance of compensators.

Stark and Bainbridge's model cannot adequately account for conversion to Zen. As a reward oriented religion Zen challenges both the central role Stark and Bainbridge assign to compensators, and their supernatural criteria of religion which renders compensators unavailable for unambiguous evaluation.

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Christian civilisation and native women: a report on my doctoral research

I will discuss some material written by Pakeha in English and Maori about Maori women and their roles prior to 1860. Of key interest will be Pakeha representations of the impact of Christianity and civilised mores on Maori constructions of gender. I will also discuss the ways in which such material can be used to generate an analysis which does not focus solely on western representations as constructs unrelated to the Maori realities of the period.

FUDGE, THOMAS

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Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Gustavo Gutierrez - unlikely allies in Christian revolution

In 1945 one week before he was hanged by the Nazis at Flossenbuerg for his part in the plot to kill Hitler, Dietrich Bonhoeffer told a fellow prisoner that as a pastor it was his duty, not only to comfort the victims of the man who drove in a busy street like a maniac, but also to try and stop him. Bonhoeffer's most important contribution to Christian thought was his theology of fragments left behind at his death 'religionless Christianity'; 'worldly holiness'; 'Jesus, the man for others'. How

can theology be done 'in-a-world-come-of-age'? 'Who is Christ for us today'? Faith must be lived out in the radical option 'even if there were no God'. His challenge has been met and taken up by Latin American liberation theologies. The prophetic imagination of a man condemned to the gallows and the basic thrust of liberation theology expressed by Gustavo Gutierrez have combined to form a new theological world order which subverts tradition; the official church and theological orthodoxy. The young German and the old Peruvian are responsible for attempting a revolution in the name of Jesus Christ.

The fate of God in post-modern theology and the option of Martin Buber

The idea 'God' throughout religious history has remained one of the great symbols of theology. Now that theological discourse has passed from modernity into that ill-defined and murky milieu called post-modern thought, the idea of 'God' has remained critical. Post-modern theology seeks to define 'God' in terms compatible with the age. No dominant construct has yet emerged. This paper proposes to examine the idea of 'God' in the thought of Harvard University theologian Gordon Kaufman. I contend that Kaufman's discourse with respect to 'God' is representative of one strand of post-modern thought. Over against this is the option of the unorthodox Jewish thinker Martin Buber. While Buber's language is couched within the contours of modernity his discourse on the 'Eternal Thou' is relevant for the post-modern age and remains an option within the collapse of the house of authority.

GARFIELD, JAY

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Three natures and three naturelessnesses: comments concerning Cittamātra conceptual categories

It is often taken for granted that the three natures (trisvabhāva/ngo bo nyid gsum/rang bzhin gsum) and the three naturelessnesses (trinisvabhāva/ngo bo nyid med gsum) of Yogācāra philosophy are the same. That is certainly the position of Tibetan Geluk-pa doxographers. I argue that this was not so from the beginning, and that in the Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra and in the works of Vasubandhu these triads are in fact distinguished. It is in fact in the commentaries of Sthiramati that the unification occurs. Nonetheless, I argue, it is a fruitful and progressive unification, illustrating the philosophical utility of Buddhist doxography. Moreover, an examination of the ensuing ontology demonstrates exactly in what senses Yogācāra is and is not continuous with Madhyamaka

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The concept of God as “Father” in the Gospels, the Rabbinic literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls

In 1962 Rabbi Samuel Sandmel claimed “In the variety of the Judaisms, as represented by such terms as Pharisees, Sadducees, Qumran, and Therapeutae, it is a restricted area which makes each of these groups distinctive within the totality of Judaisms; it is the distinctive which is significant for identifying the particular, and not the broad areas in common with other Judaisms.” With regards the use of the term ‘Father’ during the Second Temple period, debate has centred on the ways in which Jesus could be differentiated from ‘the Jews’. We will argue that, historically, both Jesus and the Pharisees used the term in very similar ways. Within the Gospels the historical evidence needs to be divorced from its theological setting. This evidence in no way suggests that Jesus’ usage of the term, and hence the concept of God which he held, is in any way unfamiliar to Rabbinic Judaism. However the use, or lack of use, of this term within the Dead Sea Scrolls suggests that it was the Qumran Covenanters who ought to be differentiated from ‘the Jews’.

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The Ye Chi and the Reconstruction of Buddhism in Cambodia

Over the last few decades, civil war and international politics have made many changes in Cambodia. Buddhism has survived these changes and still remains important for Khmer people today. Political instability in the region has meant that there are large gaps in our understanding of contemporary Khmer Buddhism and in particular, the religious beliefs and practice of Khmer women.

This paper looks at the women ascetics, or don chi of Cambodia, using fieldwork done at Wat Tway Bonkum in urban Phnom Penh done in April 1994 and February 1996. Although technically there are no ‘real nuns’ in Cambodia today (ordained nuns, or bhikkhuni died out in Cambodia a thousand years ago) there are women who act like nuns, called ye chi or don chi. These women take the eight (or ten) precepts, shave their heads, wear white robes, and live an ascetic life in huts on the wat grounds. While the history of the don chi in Cambodia and their relationship to the Cambodian Buddhist hierarchy remains ambiguous, it is clear that they have played an important role in the reconstruction of Buddhism in Cambodia since 1979.

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Image, motion, spirit: the construction of spirituality in contemporary film

Ever since cinema moved beyond the stage of being an industrial or aesthetic curiosity there has always been a tradition of 'high-art' film dealing with spiritual matters. Internationally the discussions on film and spirituality have focused on the work of modernist directors such as Bresson, Herzog, Dreyer, Tarkovsky and Ozu, using theoretical models which find evidence of spiritual concerns not just in matters of content but also in the employment of styles which use meditative concentration, minimalism and static imagery to approach moments of transcendence. This paper begins a consideration of the construction of spirituality in New Zealand film. Drawing on a range of examples from *The End of the Golden Weather*, *Vigil*, *Daughters of Heaven*, and a recent short film, *Puja*, it discusses the repudiation of traditional representations of religion, reviews the applicability of post-modern theory to New Zealand film and asks whether spirituality may also be found in movement, extremes, chaos, and uncertainty.

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Reflections on Mañjuâri and Other "Celestial Bodhisattvas"

This paper will attempt to answer the question, Is the notion of the 'celestial bodhisattva' a useful one? Although this concept enjoys a wide currency in contemporary Buddhist scholarship, it is appropriate to ask whether it is meaningful, and whether it corresponds to any indigenous Buddhist category. Focussing my attention on the Mahâyâna sutras translated into Chinese by the Indo-Scythian Lokakôema in the late 2nd century C.E., I will examine their portrayal of Mañjuâri, who may be regarded as a paradigmatic case of a so-called celestial bodhisattva. It is to be noted that in Lokakôema's texts Mañjuâri: looms rather large, while Avalokiteâvara is a comparative non-entity. The paper will also include some thoughts on this state of affairs, and on the early development of the bodhisattva ideal generally.

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Subduing the Earth: Genesis 1, Modern Science, and the Exploitation of Nature

In a well-known article published in 1967, Lyn White Jr. advanced the thesis that the contemporary tendency to exploit the natural world has its roots in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Central to White's case was the divine injunction in Genesis 1.28 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over ... every living thing that moves upon the earth.' White's thesis attracted a number of responses alleging variously that he had misunderstood the relevant text, that his thesis was broad and simplistic, and that little evidence had been provided to justify

its conclusion. In this paper I argue that these criticisms for the most part miss their mark. If we study the reception of the Genesis text in the early modern period we discover that it does indeed play a central role in the exploitative rhetoric of the new sciences, and thus that the connection between the divine imperative in Genesis and the emergence of modern science is actually stronger than White originally thought.

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Doing it backwards: the Gospel of Nicodemus and late antique readers

The late antique Gospel of Nicodemus provided ancient readers with an abundance of authoritative information on the trial, execution and resurrection of Jesus - information that had been, quite inexplicably, omitted by the writers of the major gospels. This paper examines the narrative of the Gospel and suggests that its content was shaped by the Christological controversies of the fifth century and contemporary tastes in popular fiction.

HOLM, JEAN

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Structure and sequence in the study of religion in state schools

As in other areas of the curriculum, Religious Studies must be structured through the secondary (and primary) school in such a way that students are enabled gradually and logically to build up an understanding of the nature of religion. This paper will discuss ways in which the aims and objectives of Religious Studies can be translated into teaching material across the age range, both as a separate subject and through being integrated into aspects of other subjects.

It will use as illustrations the development of students' ability to understand the nature of religious language, and their ability to recognise the role and significance of sacred writings in religions. Special reference will be made to the way in which the Christian Bible can be dealt with in the context of Religious Studies.

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From magic to mysticis: How Brian Keenan managed captivity, torture and pain as a hostage in Lebanon

The human body is socially encoded, and such encodement directs it towards political ends. Any interruption of the process of social encoding strips bare the body, so to speak. Conventional meanings of selfhood, itself an expression of the socially constructed body, dissolve. Extreme situations of captivity and torture,

involving considerable physical abuse and pain, bring this about. However, testimonies of hostages of Muslim political extremists in Beirut during the 1980s indicate that such dissolution can be magically reversed. The body can become a means for the effective moral subversion of the politics of extremism. The body, stripped bare of its usual social meanings, becomes the locus of intense religious experience that is induced by magical behaviour. This can lead to the formation of a mystical self in such situations. The process of the moral subversion of political extremism in situations of captivity, which involve long periods of torture and extreme pain, is illustrated by the autobiographical testimony of one hostage, namely, Brian Keenan, an Irish writer and one time lecturer at the American University of Beirut.

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Mammy Wata: the life and times of an African mermaid

Mammy Wata is a classic instance of métissage; the name is in pidgin - it encapsulates her ambiguities. Mammy means mother but Mammy Wata is both childless and hostile to reproduction. Mammy Wata begins as the European mermaid - probably encountered on the prows of sailing ships; there is an early example in the corpus of so called Afro-Portuguese ivories. There is an indigenous form which is quite distinct - a figure with two legs curved outward, which become fish or snakes. The Mammy Wata image which is prevalent in the Niger Delta is based on a nineteenth century European lithograph of a snake charmer. Mammy Wata represents (and hence controls?) modernity and western culture; the snake charmer is a European image of the Other. Mammy Wata is an instance of enlargement of scale - from a myriad of water goddesses, often little known or documented. Her supernatural qualities depend in part on indigenous concepts of the dangerous qualities of the boundary (familiar from the work of Mary Douglas) - the perilous ambiguity of the wereperson/shapeshifter. In the Niger delta, Togo and the Republic of Benin, Mammy Wata is worshipped as a divinity. She is sometimes thought to be a Christian - another dimension of modernity. In Zaire, she is a common motif in popular urban art; here she appears as a seductress, the mermaid with mirror and comb - often placed in specific antithesis to the Bible. The variations in these representations of Mammy Wata are limited, because they are closely associated with a specific original - mermaid or snake charmer. In village murals in Liberia, recorded in the 1950s, the imagination riots through different permutations of the wereperson. This paper will be illustrated with overheads in colour.

LINDSAY, ELAINE

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Friend Death

“I like to think about Death. Death is a friend. This is not a morbid melancholy attitude ... I strive to live the little span of earthly living to reach it and the perfection that it will lead to. This is not a fashionable attitude today.” (Barbara Hanrahan, personal papers)

The idea has crept upon me, as I've been reading contemporary Australian women's writing and comparing it with malestream Christian theology and cultural commentary, that women and men approach the idea of death differently. My impression is that men tend to write of death in terms of an heroic struggle, the self fighting off dissolution, while women slip into it, welcoming the absorption of self back into nature. For men, death is a climax, an end-point; for women, death is a continuation, albeit on another plane.

Can these impressions be supported? Is there a gendered approach to death? If there is, does it have any theological implications? Are women, for instance, closer to paganism than men in their acceptance of the cycles of nature? This is an exploratory paper on death, gender and theology and will benefit greatly from a discussion of the subject.

LOUIS, EVELYN

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The Management of Religion in Singapore

The aim of this paper is to examine the attitude of the Singapore government towards religion. For example, does it view religion as a positive tool which helps maintain political and social stability in the country, in which case, religion would be encouraged. Or, on the other hand, does the government perceive religion negatively, imposing strong state control over religious groups and their activities in order to contain their influence in the country. This paper will also attempt to assess the secularism professed by the Singapore government.

LOW, PETER

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The evolution of the Quaker Peace Testimony in the twentieth century: progressive revelation?

One feature of Quakers has always been their refusal, on religious grounds, to engage in war. But this disengagement from the state's armies has been accompanied by something not typical of small sects a positive engagement in society. As William Penn said in 1682 'True godliness don't turn men out of the world but enables them to live better in it and excites their endeavours to mend it.'

In 20th-century Britain and the USA, Quakers have greatly developed their action and thinking in the fields of humanitarian aid, nonviolent alternatives,

reconciliation and mediation, peace-building and peace studies, far beyond what is normally understood by 'Christian Pacifism'. As a recent work puts it 'If we say "no" to all war, we have an obligation to do our utmost to prevent it ever happening.'

This paper presents some evidence of that practical action, along with an insider's view of the thinking that accompanies it. It describes the creative enlargement of a testimony, grounded in religious faith, which seeks to have a leavening effect on the world at large.

McCORMICK, GREGORY

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How Lévy-Bruhl thinks natives think: a note on some unexamined presuppositions

The importance of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's writings for the philosophical and anthropological study of religion is to be found in his suggestion that the concept of 'participation' is the fundamental mode by which men and women come to an awareness of themselves and their world. Closely associated with this concept is Lévy-Bruhl's insistence that all experience, including 'religious experience', originates in 'collective representations' rather than in a purely individual perceptual life; all human experience is socially conditioned well before individualisation becomes possible. It will be argued, however, that Lévy-Bruhl's descriptions of the workings of the 'law of participation' and of the intellectual and social content of religion, framed as they are within the confines of his fundamentally Cartesian and empiricist presuppositions, are finally inadequate. Like many thinkers formed in the intellectual climate of modernity, Lévy-Bruhl was unable entirely to disentangle the results of his researches from a system of interpretation which his results cannot consistently accommodate. In this respect, it will be suggested, Lévy-Bruhl's insight is perhaps more satisfactory than his logic.

McGRATH, JOHN

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Advancing the educational study of religion in religiously affiliated schools

The recently published religious education curriculum for Catholic secondary schools in the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney significantly advances the case for the educational study of religion within confessional settings. Called *Faithful to God: Faithful to People*, it establishes the classroom study of religion as a genuine educational endeavour. It is outcomes-based and operates like any other curriculum area. At the same time its content is substantially but not exclusively Catholic. The paper will argue that this approach provides a path through the 'religion education' versus 'faith development' dilemma which often preoccupies teachers of religion

in affiliated schools. In effect, there has been a convergence in methodologies that hopefully will benefit the religious literacy of all students and may contribute to the faith development of some. This convergence is also evident in the way in which the NSW Higher School Certificate course, Studies of Religion is seen as a viable means of fulfilling the curriculum's requirements. The speaker is well placed to comment on these developments he is both Project Leader for *Faithful to God: Faithful to People* and Chairperson of the NSW Board of Studies of Religion Syllabus Advisory Committee.

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Classifying Kali: the "classification of goddesses" revisited

Until recently it has been common for scholars to classify Hindu goddesses based on a system put forward by Lawrence Babb, which broadly saw unmarried goddesses as malevolent and married ones as benevolent. Recently it has been pointed out by many scholars that this is inadequate, that many goddesses do not fit into such a neat system of categorisation. A new book by Stanley Kurtz, *All the mothers are one*, seeks to improve Babb's system, but I wish to argue that it too is inadequate. It still splits goddesses according to the old malevolent/benevolent dichotomy, it is not how Hindus see goddesses. I wish to propose a better system, more true to the Hindu understanding, and based on indigenous categories, especially *lila* and *maya*.

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Works righteousness and the Synagogue of Satan - rethinking Christian theological caricatures of 1st century Judaism

The Christian story cannot be told in classroom or pulpit without reference to 'the Jews'. In the last 50 years, many crude racist stereotypes have almost entirely disappeared from the language and mindset of popular Christianity, but the pejorative depiction of 'the Jews' in much of the New Testament ensures that negative attitudes to Judaism continue to be promulgated as part of the Christian message. In this paper I will examine some of the inaccurate depictions of 1st century Judaism in the New Testament, and suggest some strategies by which those who teach Christianity can avoid the pitfalls of inadvertent anti-semitism. I will also present a critical appraisal of a recent publication by the Council of Christians and Jews (Victoria, Australia) entitled 'Rightly explaining the word of truth' which gives guidelines for Christian teachers and preachers in this area.

MOANI, HEDI*PO Box 32-079, Auckland***Women and the New Zealand Baha'i Community: an historical perspective**

This paper attempts to examine the role of women in the history of a New Zealand religious community that openly espouses equality of sexes as one of its cardinal principles. Since its inception in Aotearoa 1912, the Baha'i community has experienced a degree of participation and accomplishments by its women members totally disproportionate to their numbers. Typical of the growth of the movement in the West, the Baha'i women in Aotearoa constituted most of its early teachers, pioneers, saints, heroes, and administrators. Margaret Stevenson (the first NZ believer) and the majority of the Faith's early adherents; NZ's only 'Knight of Bah'u'llah' (the first Baha'i to reside in the Cook Islands); both NZ members of the 'Continental Board of Counsellors' as well as the majority of the community's elected and appointed officer bearers (55%), including almost the entire body of the staff at the National Baha'i Office in Henderson Valley, Auckland, consist of women.

The paper further explores the reasons for the attraction of women in New Zealand to an Eastern religious phenomenon and reviews its appeal in the light of its relevant social and humanitarian teachings; its doctrine of the complementary nature of equality of the sexes; and considers the genesis of the Baha'i view that asserts the inevitable rise of women to prominence in every sphere of human endeavour, as an historical imperative of the age. This process, Baha'is believe, is destined to render the peace making and feminine qualities of intuition, nurturing, mental alertness and tenderness of heart, victorious over the practice of dominance by force imposed on humanity through millennia of patriarchal civilization. Finally the paper compares the New Zealand model of the Baha'i community with the ideal of a Baha'i community based on the principle that 'the reality of equality between man and woman is fully established and attained, the highest social development of mankind is not possible.'

MOORE, ALBERT*179 Signal Hill Rd, OOP, Dunedin***Improvisation in music, life, and religion**

Improvisation is often associated with popular, ephemeral and fragmentary forms of activity in the arts. However, from ethnomusicology and the examples of European composers it is clear that improvisation is a much more pervasive phenomenon in the arts, as it is more generally in life and religion.

Reference is made to the teachings of Rumi, the Islamic mystic associated with the music and dance of the Mevlevi order of 'Whirling Dervishes'. Human life is likened to an instrument being played by God. But this is not taken in a fatalistic sense. Rumi said 'Free will is the salt of worship ... God's Free Will has given

existence to our free will.'

This paper explores the idea of improvisation as an illuminating metaphor in religious experience and in the interpretation of religions and theologies. It is hoped to include some musical examples taped from Mevlevi performances at Konya and from modern jazz.

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Ambrose on women

It is a truism to say that the thinking of the fathers of the church is hostile to women, but for all that Ambrose of Milan is nuanced and consistently structured on the topic. His thought can be represented by a series of appositions, in which negative figures or situations are balanced by positive ones Eve by Mary, the married woman by the virgin, and slavery by liberty. Such appositions obviously suggest different ways of interpreting the position of women. But some of Ambrose's most powerful writing on the subject arises from the sensuous language of the Song of Songs, which he quite possibly adopts in an attempt to influence female susceptibilities, and here another series of appositions emerges delight stands to reason as does the body to the mind and woman to man. Whatever resources for female empowerment lie in the thought world of thinkers such as Ambrose are more than balanced by the negative aspects.

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Religion, Religious Studies and Postmodernity

The academic study of religion largely developed within the cultural context of modernity and has been animated by modernist distinctions such as that between 'modernity' and 'tradition'. If we are, in fact, moving into a novel context, that of postmodernity, what are the implications for (a) religions, and (2) the study of religion? Walsh and others claim that the removal of the constraints of modernist thinking (and institutions) has led - and will continue to lead - to a resurgence of religion. Is there evidence to support this claim? What sort of religion is (re)surgent? Is (are) there a postmodernist God(s)?

What impact has postmodernist theory had on the study of religion? What is the significance of post-colonial theory for Religious Studies? What is post-colonial religion? In this discussion paper I will attempt to raise these issues and offer some deliberations.

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The theological implications of a three cultural strand Anglican Church: a Maori perspective

*Kotahi te kohau o te ngira e kuhuna ai te miro ma, te miro pango, te miro
whero. I muri, kia mau ki te aroha, ki te ture, me te whakapono.*

“There is but one eye of the needle through which the white, black and red threads must pass. After I am gone, hold fast to love, to the law, and to the religion of Christ.”

King Potatau Te Wherowhero, 1858.

Diverse Maori experiences of oppression and empowerment in Aotearoa-New Zealand and elsewhere are the theological starting point in this paper for examining the implications of a three tikanga, or cultural strand, Anglican church. The sources for the exploration of Maori theological perspectives can be defined as Maori experience, Maori history, Maori language and culture, revelation, scripture and tradition. The norm of Maori theology can also be described as “the manifestation of the Triune God as the Maori God, Maori Jesus Christ and Maori Holy Spirit in true and real tikanga partnership and bicultural development which provides through aroha, or compassion, the necessary wairua, or soul, for Maori socio-economic, political and cultural liberation and praxis.” It needs to be acknowledged from the outset that the models as outlined in James H. Cone’s book, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, have helped to stimulate and clarify the development of the Maori theological perspectives expressed in this paper.

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The Letters to the Dead and ancient Egyptian religion

The evidence from ancient Egypt for a widespread and popular cult of the immediate ancestors seems to be growing. One source of this evidence is the small corpus of literature known as the Letters to the Dead. Since the genre was first identified by Alan Gardiner and Kurt Sethe (1928) further examples have been added (Gardiner (1930), A. Piankoff and J.J. Clere (1934), Cerny and Gardiner (1957), William Kelly Simpson (1966) and (1970), and Edward F. Wente (1976)) for a total of 14 examples of the genre. The letters were placed in the tombs and called on a dead relative to assist the writer in a personal crisis. They speak of a tribunal in the land of the dead, spirits of the dead afflicting and aiding the living, and other aspects of the Egyptian religious world view. This paper will explore what these letters reveal to us about the religion of ancient Egypt.

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Symbols, icons and stupas

The description of the Buddhist reliquary stupa as a psycho-cosmic symbol is a commonplace among historians of Indian art and religion. However, in a recent article Jane Duran has argued that this description is problematic ('The Stupa in Indian Art: Symbols and the Symbolic', *British Journal of Aesthetics*, vol.36, no.1, January 1996). This is because our notion of a symbol suggests that symbols are heavily conventional, but such a claim about stupas is implausible in the Indian context. Nor should we say that the stupa is symbolic in an iconic sense. Instead she proposes that a Langerian analysis which connects the notion of the symbolic to notions of rite and play is more fruitful for understanding both stupas and our notions of symbol and symbolic.

While I agree that connecting the notion of the symbolic to notions of ritual and play may indeed be useful, I shall argue that (pace Duran) the more usual senses of symbol and icon can quite plausibly be used of the Buddhist stupa.

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Spirituality, Religious Studies and Religious Education: possibilities and challenges from contemporary New Zealand society

This paper provides a brief survey of recent changes in New Zealand society, with particular reference to the impact of changes in educational administration and curriculum as well as the inevitable trajectory of post-modernism including the phenomenon of global interaction. The effects of these developments on the expressions of spirituality observed in the New Zealand community, the increased interest in Religious Studies in New Zealand universities, and the possibilities for varieties of styles of Religious Education in New Zealand schools. This paper will present an outline of research being undertaken and explore some challenges for the future.

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Statement of Alexandria: report and reflections on a conference of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs

As an invited participant at the Seventh Convention of the Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, held in Alexandria, Egypt in August 1995, I had an opportunity to gain a unique first-hand insight into some contemporary dynamics and affairs of

the Muslim world. In this paper I propose to share some of my experiences and insights and to reflect critically on the document that was pronounced at the end of the Convention and since issued under the title 'Statement of Alexandria'.

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Buddhism and constructive postmodern theology

This paper offers an alternative to the 'constructive postmodern theology' that is based on a union of religion and the 'new physics' and is advanced by writers such as David Ray Griffin as a critique of the 'deconstructive postmodernism' that relativises all worldviews and all truth in the course of attacking 'modernism'. The paper argues that the various traditional, religious worldviews can be recognized as individually valid on their own terms - without any reference to science, deconstructionism, or postmodernism - even while collectively contributing to a universally valid referent for meaning, purpose, and truth that is appropriate in this era of globalisation. Based on the analysis of *Buddhism in A World Theology* (N.R. Reat and E.F. Perry, Cambridge, 1991), the paper presents a 'constructive' analysis that 1) integrates the plurality of 'Buddhisms' and 2) simultaneously allows Buddhism, as a unified worldview, to contribute meaningfully and distinctively to global theological reflection without vitiating its foundational, atheistic premises.

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Critical approaches to early Chinese texts

Recent western scholarship on early Chinese texts has reached new levels of sophistication. Curiously, however, it has not yet approached that of biblical studies. This paper assesses recent work in Chinese textual studies; examines philological and text history studies, philosophical and literary approaches. With a very few exceptions, however, work in form criticism, redaction criticism, canonical criticism and various forms of structuralist and poststructuralist and literary criticism is only just beginning. The paper examines some preliminary work in these directions, outlines achievements and proposes future directions.

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In defense of the exotic. Religious Studies, Orientalism, and the 'Other'

Much of our effort as scholars of religion is to understand cultural and religious difference. But in recent years, study of the 'Other' has been subject to a number of influential critiques. It has been claimed that a focus on cultural and religious

difference is epistemologically and morally suspect. In this paper, I argue that such a focus on difference is inevitable, and that it can also be intellectually and morally positive.

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Secularism and religious pluralism: key concepts of Ilavar State formation

It is easy to point out policy statements of official character in which the Federal Party (FP), the Tamil United Liberation Front (T.U.L.F.) and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (L.T.T.E.) declare that they wish to establish a secular state. All three are here summarised as Ilavar, i.e. as those who yearn or once yearned for the separate state of Tamiliam. This state is regarded by the Ilavar as a reconstitution of a pre-colonial independent state.

The Lankans, ie those who yearn for a unitarian or united state, are here represented by the Constitution of Sri Lanka. In this Constitution's different versions (1972, 1978, draft Constitution of 1996), we do not find even once the word 'secular'. So, it seems that secularism implying religious pluralism on an equal basis, is a distinctive feature of the Ilavar on the level of the ideology of institution building and state formation. Many semantic problems remain, however, to be clarified, and implications of this feature regarding plausibility and legitimisation of political decision making remain to be studied.

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Freedom of religion or belief: contemporary global issues

Five years' work by the University of Essex Human Rights Centre has culminated in a world report which brings nearly sixty countries within a human rights perspective on the freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief. The report will be published by Routledge in 1997. This paper situates the study in the context of non-government, government and international endeavours focussing on compliance with international human rights standards. It also addresses matters such as definition and awareness of the issues involved and points to some neglected areas for future work.

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Tracking a radical's development: the changes in Sayyid Qutb's Islamist

thought as reflected in the various editions of one of his books

Sayyid Qutb was one of the leading Islamic activists in Egypt from the late 1940s until his death in 1966 and has been a major inspiration for later Islamic activists since his death. Until the mid-1940s he had been known as one of Egypt's secular intellectual elite, but with the publication of his book, *Social Justice in Islam*, in 1949 he signalled his conversation to an Islamist position. Over the following years his Islamism became progressively more radical and his latest writings are commonly considered a charter for Islamic revolution. The book, *Social Justice in Islam*, went through five more editions between 1950 and 1966 and in each the author made revisions that reflected his changing views. In this paper I shall trace some of the more significant changes using the various editions of this book and I shall make some suggestions about their causes and meanings. This paper is based on a translation and study of this book that I have recently finished and that is due to be published this year.

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On the Continuity Thesis

Both Nagao and Harris claim that there is far greater continuity between the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra schools of Indian Buddhism than recent scholarship would suggest. I dispute their reading of these two schools. Specifically I deny that both schools share the view that the ultimate nature of reality is inexpressible. I claim that their attribution of such a view to Madhyamaka is based on failure to appreciate the full consequences of the Abhidharma distinction between the two truths. This failure leads, I claim, to an inability to see the radical consequences of Nāgārjuna's anti-essentialism.

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Guilds, Passions, and the Shameful Thing

The organization and performance of Cycle or Mystery Cycle plays in England was under the supervision and control of city guilds. At a time when persecution of lepers, Jews and witches was carried out on the Continent, English energies seem to have gone into the creation of corpus christi drama, yet these plays seem to absorb the same anxieties, fears and despairs as the rest of Christendom. Part of the answer may lie, not in the temperament of the English, but in the structure of their guilds, and in the ways in which they regulated the drinking bouts, rioting and shameful things which lie at the centre of guild organization. As with child abusers and

murderers today, guild members create 'civil society' in order to hide their 'shame' from themselves as well as society.

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Lay piety in New Zealand

Very little is known in this country of the ways ordinary Christians regarded and expressed their faith in the various communities in which they lived. Much church history, written 'from above', has not helped us understand those Anglicans, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, and Methodists, who have formed a sizeable proportion of our population. Oral history, as 'history from below', provides an opportunity to rectify this. Lay piety concerns the ways in which lay people actively construct their faith from a variety of sources in a range of settings. This paper discusses 'The Lay Piety in New Zealand Project', a research exercise undertaken by my Stage II Religious Studies students. For four years now, they have conducted oral history interviews with a range of older lay people in order to explore the differences between official theology and popular piety. The tapes and accompanying material are available for researchers in University's Macmillan Brown Library and are the foundation of what could be in the future the most substantial record in New Zealand of the religious beliefs, practices, and experiences of ordinary Christians.

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The Catholic campaign against contraception in New Zealand during the 1930s

During the 1930s the Catholic church was the most outspoken opponent of birth control in New Zealand but its distinctive influence on public policy has been exaggerated. While the European birth rate had been declining since the 1880, and Catholic families were not far behind the general trend, only a minority of social reformers were prepared to demand publicly that reliable contraceptives should be more readily available.

Protestant ministers, physicians, journalists and politicians called for a higher birth rate and greater restrictions on the availability of contraceptives. Catholics similarly urged the necessity of a larger population and agreed with other conservative interests in complaining about the under-regulated advertisement and sale of contraceptives. However, while Catholics achieved minor victories like overturning the resolutions of women's groups favouring the establishment of birth control clinics, they were unable to impose their own distinctive views. Nothing less than a complete ban on the manufacture, import or sale of contraceptives would have satisfied the church's leaders. Official Catholic opposition to contraception was so

uncompromising that it could not endorse legislation restricting the distribution of contraceptives which would at the same time permit their sale by doctors or pharmacists to married persons.

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Translation, heretics, and belief in a post-secular age

I produced a New Testament in modern English and arranged it in a chronological order to produce a text for students unfamiliar with the New Testament. Whilst doing the translation I had to make decisions about the order and the divisions in the literature which opened up issues I had not thought a lot about. I also discovered that my motivation for such a project was not greatly different from that put forward by James Moffatt at the turn of the century. I will introduce and discuss such matters in my paper.

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The religious ideology of the New Zealand Business Round Table: an analysis of their documents

The paper is in two parts with the first part showing that the material in the New Zealand Business Roundtable documents is consistent with the contemporary, international, libertarian ideology. The second part draws parallels between this material and the characteristics shown by religious movements, including a claiming of authority from past prophets, a belief in an overarching Power, a missionary zeal to convert others, a canon of texts, a 'theodicy', a sense of bonding among believers, a 'doctrine' of humanity, and the use of ritual language. The paper concludes that the documents show a self-supporting belief system built on theoretical premises that suffer from the fallacy of misplaced concreteness.

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Spiritualising the sacred: a critique of feminist theology

This paper falls into two parts. In the first I consider the nature of the Feminist Theological critique of Christianity, and pay particular attention to the way in which Christianity is construed in this critique. I argue that Christianity is construed primarily as a textual tradition, a set dogmas reified by a self-serving clerical elite. I suggest that this is a polemical picture with a clear history in modern West, and that Feminist Theology has appropriated it too uncritically, failing to see the aspects of Christianity which it ignores. In the second part of the paper I consider the attempts

by Feminist Theologians to write alternative constructive theologies, using Schussler Fiorenza's 'Jesus' and Elizabeth Johnson's 'She Who Is' as examples. I argue that the notion of 'women's experience' upon which they rely in their attempts at construction is a confused and contradictory notion, and that this is exemplified by the way they are thrown back upon various contemporary forms of spirituality in their theological projects. In particular, I accuse much Feminist Theology of uncritically appropriating the pervasive idealism of the contemporary world ('spiritualising the sacred').

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Mahatma Gandhi and the power of self-control

This paper examines Hindu links between self-control, particularly regarding food and sex, and political power. It does so through the character of Mahatma Gandhi, focusing on the 1931 Salt March as an example of his ability to draw on ancient Hindu symbols in his campaign for self-rule. Such links are particularly relevant in light of recent Indian political events.