
Newslink

State Notes

From New South Wales

Australian Catholic University

The big news from Catholic College of Education Sydney is that from January 1st, 1991 the College is part of the Australian Catholic University (ACU). This university is an amalgamation of the existing 4 Catholic Colleges of Education: The Institute of Catholic Education, Victoria; Signadou College of Teacher Education, Watson, ACT; McAuley College, Mitchelton, Brisbane and the Catholic College of Education, Sydney. During 1991 we will be continuing as at present, though the structures will gradually change.

There has been a great deal of development of new programmes in Sydney over the last few years so the offerings from the RE Department have consequently diversified. Bioethics is offered in the preservice and Graduate Courses in the Nursing Programmes and the College has established a Bioethics Centre which is working closely with the Catholic Hospitals. One of our staff, Dr Bernadette Tobin, has been awarded a three year Post Doctoral Fellowship to pursue research in this area. The Bachelor of Human Movement Studies, Bachelor of Social Science,

Habilitation and the Bachelor of Business all have or will have Ethics units which require applications to very different situations.

Our main area of concern is still Religious Education in Preservice and Post Graduate courses. A small number within the new BA degree are talking about the possibility of instituting Theology units. We are in the process of developing Ed.D and Ph.D proposals in Religious Education which will need notification by La Trobe University as they are the sponsoring body for ACU.

New South Wales is at last in the process of getting a Syllabus for Studies of Religion in the Secondary School. As Chairperson of this Committee, I am personally involved in this new development and as a Department we have already begun to offer Inservice for a Content approved, Other Endorsed Subject in Religious Studies which can be offered in the Schools in 1991. There is a great deal of work ahead if teachers are going to be ready to teach the courses when they become available.

*Dr Patricia Malone RSJ
North Sydney Campus*

University of Sydney

It is now 'official' that a new School for the Study of Religion will be formed at the University of Sydney. Initially it will be an amalgamation of the Arts department of Religious Studies and the programme under the Board of Studies in Divinity (as from January 1991). The move holds promise of some expansion in otherwise straitening times.

Various matters have to be worked out in detail, but, in three days of consultation, a Committee of Enquiry (including the highly respected visiting adviser Max Charlesworth) set useful guidelines. The upshot has been that:

- * at the undergraduate level four major strands of study have been identified - World Religions, Biblical Studies, Methods in the Study of Religion, and other university courses on religious issues. These areas, according to Eric Sharpe's proposals as put forward before the Committee, are all in place and already well managed at Sydney. They provide the sound basis for a good undergraduate programme which the new School needs. The problem is how to lay the programme out in detail. Certainly a first year course in World Religions is considered essential for such a programme, and in that sense Religious Studies I already provides the foundation for a re-designed edifice. Redesigning will doubtless entail rationalising courses, and the Department of Semitic Studies, which runs Biblical Studies along with Religious Studies will be enmeshed in this process. Some would like to see Semitic Studies, with its courses on Jewish and Islamic Studies, fully amalgamated into the new School, but it is sufficient at this early stage that their offerings will con-

tinue to be part of the undergraduate programme in religion.

- * a new Centre for Postgraduate Studies in Religion and Theology will be established, which will begin with around 100 enrolments and portends to be one of the most exciting developments in the country. That grouping within it which focuses on theological studies will naturally open its doors to seminaries wishing their better students to take higher degrees. It looks as if these degrees will be all Arts-type ones (MA, MPhil, PhD), and it is also likely that, for the most part, the centre will consist of two discrete groupings - one concerned with comparative religion and the other theology. How such a large postgraduate population will be managed is the subject for much discussion.

- * the first Headship of the School (a three year position) will be taken by Associate Professor James Tulip, who though an English Professor, is currently Chairman of the Board of Studies in Divinity and has long been a protagonist for expanding the study of religious issues at the University. He was involved in the process of setting up the Department of Religious Studies long before the coming of its staff, and the new School will be fortunate to receive his skills. Although the Headship is essentially an administrative position, Jim will probably mount a course on Religion and Literature within the School.

- * the various participants and offices in the school will be brought together in closer geographical proximity.

- * the teaching of Divinity has hitherto been exclusively postgraduate and by part-time teachers, but the formation of the School may well lead to a new Lectureship in Biblical and/or Christian

Studies, with a lesser number of part-timers. Time will tell.

Meanwhile, the Department of Religious Studies has a further year of existence in its present form. Important recent developments include the appointment of John Cooper for three years as fractional Lecturer in the History of the Gnostic Tradition, and the reappointment of Rachael Kohn as fractional Lecturer in both Religious and Semitic Studies teach-

ing Jewish Civilisation, the Sociology of Religion and Far Eastern Buddhism. Applications are now being made to the Zoroastrian Community to set up a fractional lecturer in Iranian studies (non-Islamic). And of course, the organising of the AASR 1991 Conference at St John's College, 3-7 October, is underway.

Garry Trompf
Religious Studies

From South Australia

Flinders University

In 1991 Flinders University, in conjunction with the Adelaide College of Divinity, will offer a new degree, Master of Theological Studies. The degree programme comprises coursework and a supervised research project or dissertation, and may include approved topics from other Master's degree programmes at Flinders University.

David Hilliard (History) read a paper on the religious culture of Australian cities in the 1950s to the meeting of the Commission Internationale d'Histoire Ecclesiastique Comparée at the International Congress of Historical Sciences at Madrid in August 1990

David Hilliard

S.A. College of Advanced Education

In the past year a number of significant developments have happened in Religion Studies in South Australia. At the S.A. College of Advanced Education an M.A. in Religious Studies has been accredited and will commence in 1991 and will complement the Master of Education

in Religion Education. While some Graduate Diplomas are dying with the rise of Masters degrees, the same cannot be said for the external Graduate Diploma in Religion Education which continues to have a high intake and serve teachers in independent schools, state schools and parishes. It is anticipated that within the next few years a PhD in Religion Studies will commence.

We are sorry to announce that Tom Atherton, an expert in ethics, moral education, Greek religion and the psychology of religion will be leaving the College and returning to the ministry. We wish him well.

The merger negotiations mean that most Religion Studies staff will join the new University of South Australia and probably be within a Faculty of Humanities. Vic Hayes from the Sturt Campus will join Flinders University.

Staff have delivered papers around the world: Robert Crotty at the IAHR in Rome; Norman Habel at the SBL in Anaheim; Vic Hayes travelling on leave in America; Penny McKibbin in India; and with Mick O'Donoghue and Tom Atherton running their annual tours to Egypt and Greece respectively.

In Secondary Education the proposed new S.A. Certificate of Education for years 11 and 12 to be introduced in 1992 includes plans for two Level 1 units (=Year 11) units on Religion Studies. The existing Year 12 units will be assessed for

rewriting later. Considerable discussion is taking place about the most appropriate form such units should take.

*Norm Habel
Underdale, Campus*

From Victoria

Deakin University

1. In November a consultation was held at Deakin to discuss the place of religion in the university. Issues discussed included chaplaincies and the possibility of a religious centre. Participants came from all Victorian universities, Geelong and Warrnambool, and from Deakin.

As a result of initiatives taken early in the life of Deakin, a disused church was obtained and erected on the campus. This facility will eventually be supplemented with facilities suitable for the wide variety of religious traditions present at Deakin. Students in the third year course in Architecture will all be set the task of designing a centre suitable for the university, which has two campuses, many of whose students are scattered across the commonwealth.

The ecumenical chaplain at Melbourne University, John Bodycomb, and several of his colleagues discussed the wide range of roles and functions that chaplains have at their university. The humanising of institutions that are increasingly large was particularly emphasised together with services for staff as well as students.

Dr Owen Parnaby gave a brief history of the ways in which the churches in Victoria were able to create new forms of participation in Monash University when the 'secular' clause from Melbourne Univer-

sity was left out of the Monash Act. Robert Gribben, the Secretary of the Victorian Council of Churches widened the horizons of the discussion as he illustrated the possibilities of an ecumenical presence.

Professor Peter Fensham from Monash University precipitated a lively discussion. Fensham drew attention to the ways in which religion can be marginalised and called for some serious thinking to face that problem. The chairman of the organising committee, while accepting Professor Fensham's challenge also drew attention to the essentially marginal position at the core of many traditions and the strengths that come from such weakness.

2. 1990 saw the end of the first year of a new second year course at Deakin. *Religious Systems* was written to replace material from the Open University that has been used. The new course includes major studies in the idea of Sacred Place, in several traditions; and a study of the ideas of the self and its destiny in three traditions. The material, written by Peter Fenner, Purusottama Bilimoria, Harry Wardlaw, Abdullah Saeed and Ian Weeks, is beautifully prepared and presented by the Deakin University Publication Unit. The department is contributing two segments on 'Representations of the Self - East and West' for Humanities Honours Seminars in 1991'.

3. During 1990 Peter Fenner was on leave for four months to teach at Bond University. Carol Cusak from Sydney took up a

four month appointment during Peter's absence. Peter Oldmeadow from ANU took a break from his Sanskrit and tutored in Religious Studies. Fabian Hutchinson also tutored, part-time, in the area. Purusottama produced a book on the building and life of a hindu temple, as well as attending the VIII World Sanskrit Congress in Vienna, the IAHR Congress in Rome, the American Academy of Religion Conference and the American Philosophical Conference in America. Ian Weeks visited Canada and shortly goes to Denver as scholar -in residence. Wayne Whillier and John Arapura visited from McMaster University in Canada. Professor Max Charlesworth is retiring at the end of 1990. A replacement for him has not yet been advertised, but will probably be in philosophy. Max has been invited to give lectures and teach a course at Bond University in 1991.

Ian Weeks
Purusottama Bilimoria

La Trobe University

Dr Eli Franco is spending the long vacation in Europe and Canada, undertaking research in Buddhism.

Dr Anne Gardner is spending time in England and the USA as part of her OSP period. During this time she will be completing her book on Daniel.

Dr Paul Rule concluded his period as Head of the Division of Religious Studies at the end of 1990. Dr Greg Bailey replaced him from the beginning of 1991 for a two year term.

Eleven new post-graduate students will be commencing work in 1991, represented in most areas where the Division has specialists.

A new Master of Religious Studies programme will be launched in 1991. A course work degree, it is being developed primarily to equip teachers for working within the provisions of the new Victorian Certificate of Education.

The subjects can also be taken for the M.Ed. Prerequisites are an Honours degree or a satisfactorily completed M.A. prelim; the degree can be completed in one year full-time or two years part-time.

Greg Bailey
Paul Rule

New Zealand Notes

From the Yana
and other reliable sources!

University of Canterbury

Bill Shepard attended the International Conference of Asian and North African Studies in Toronto in August and

presented a paper on 'The doctrine of progress in modern Muslim thinkers'. He also attended the conference, 'Valuing Education', run by the Churches Educa-

tion Conference, in Wellington in August. Peter Donovan was also there.

Bo Sax attended the 15th annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin, where he presented a paper, 'The many forms of Nandadevi'. On his way home, he gave an invited lecture at the University of Arizona entitled 'Priest, Pilgrims, and Politicians in a Central Himalayan Pilgrimage'. Bo and his family left for India in December for six months' research on the Pandavalila, a central Himalayan tradition of competitive bardic recitation and performance of the Mahabharata.

Paul Harrison has taken over from Bill Shepard as Subject Co-ordinator of Religious Studies.

Last year Canterbury introduced a new course: Religion, Society and Power, which deals with four major themes each with reference to specific traditions. The themes are: religion and ideology (Chinese religion); Religion and nationalism (Judaism); religion and ecology (Native American and Maori); and, religion and gender (Christianity).

University of Otago

Douglas Campbell took a month's leave in North America, presenting a paper at the annual meeting of the American Academy of religion and the Society of Biblical Literature meeting in New Orleans and lecturing in USA and Canada. His PhD thesis (1989 Toronto) on the subject *Greco-Roman Rhetoric and Jewish Martyr Theology in Paul's Letter to the Romans* is soon to be published by Sheffield Academic Press in Britain.

As a result of continuing interest in the study of religions by graduates and former students it was decided to provide

a forum for visiting speakers and for informal gatherings. Eventually it was decided to call the group 'The World Religions Society, meeting approximately every two months.

To celebrate Harold Turner's 80th birthday, Albert Moore initiated and collated a set of letters of greetings from friends and colleagues. The collection of letters, which make an interesting both to Harold's own significant contribution and to the development of Religious Studies, are available through Albert Moore.

Victoria University of Wellington

A highlight of last year for Religious Studies at Vic was the presentation to Lloyd Geering of a Festschrift entitled *Faith in an Age of Turmoil*, by the Governor-General of New Zealand, the Most Reverend Sir Paul Reeves. The book was edited by Jim Veitch and essays were contributed by several well-known, international scholars.

During 1990, Elizabeth Isichei gained a Doctor of Literature from Canterbury University for a submission of eleven books, or parts of books, and a number of articles. These included her earlier books on the Early Church and on Victorian Quakerism, as well as her later books on Africa.

Dr Kapil Tiwari was invited by the University of Auckland to deliver a public lecture in their annual Winter Series.

Jim Veitch has gone on sabbatical to Westminster College, Cambridge.

There has been a notable increase in the number of students in Religious Studies courses and in the Sociology of religion course offered by the Sociology department.

Mike Hill of Sociology, who is currently working on religion and nationalism and religion and deviance, will be taking sabbatical from July. Part of his time will be spent in Melbourne and Sydney on the way to the Institute of South East Asian Studies in Singapore and various centres in Britain.

University of Waikato

Doug Pratt reports exciting news of his one-man Religious Studies 'department'. By making use of two new courses - Ritual and Religion and Sociol-

ogy of Religion - which are being introduced in the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, a sufficient number of papers can be offered for Religious Studies to rank as 'first support' to another major. Three people are expected to graduate Diploma in Religious Studies this year and enrolments are being taken for both the MPhil and DPhil research degrees. A special seminar series 'Research in Religion/ Religion in Research' is planned for 1991. Doug hopes to produce the deliberations as a fourth volume in the valuable Waikato Studies in Religion series.

Overseas Conferences Coming Up !

**British Sociological Association
Sociology of Religion Study Group**
Lincoln, 8-11 April 1991

Theme: Religion and Social Justice

Further details from the convenor: Dr Grace Davie, Department of Sociology, Amory Building, Rennes Drive, Exeter, EX4 4RJ

**Network for the Study of Implicit
Religion - Denton Conference**
Ilkley, 10-12 May 1991

Contact Edward Bailey, The Rectory, 58 High Street, Winterbourne, Bristol.

**Christ and Context
The Confrontation between Gospel and
Culture**

University of Otago, 13-18 May 1991

For information and registration forms contact Mr Hilary Regan, Chairperson Planning Committee, University of Otago, PO Box 56, Dunedin, New Zealand.

**Lancaster University Department of
Religious Studies in association with
the Centre for the Study of Cultural
Values**

Lancaster University, 14-17 July 1991

Theme: Religion and the Resurgence of Capitalism

Contact Dr Richard H Roberts, Reckitt research Fellow, Department of Religious Studies, Lancaster University, Lancaster, LA1 4YG, England.

**Tenth Meeting of the International
Association of Buddhist Studies**
Paris, July 1991

Papers must be submitted to Prof Luis Gomez, Department of Asian Studies Languages and Culture, 3068-70 Frieze Building, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA 48109-1285.

Call for Papers - 1992 International Congress

July 12 - 17, Melbourne

Suggestions of special topics are requested and will be considered by the Joint Committee. An open invitation for paper and report proposals from all areas in the study of religion and the Bible will be accepted by a joint committee. Concurrent sessions will be devoted to the specialised areas of biblical and religion studies as well as cross disciplinary and more general studies.

Proposals for reports (20 minutes without discussion) and papers (30 minutes followed by 10 minute discussions) will be accepted. Reports and papers may be read in German, French or English. The proposals must include a title in the language of the presentation; an abstract in the language of the paper/report not to exceed 200 words; name and institution of the presenter; and indication of whether or not the presenter is a member of one of the cooperating organisations (in the case of ASR and SBL please provide the member number). Since more proposals are made than can be accepted please indicate if you are willing to make the presentation as report and/or paper.

Reports may be given in any area of biblical and related studies. Papers must be presented in one of the following areas:

Biblical and Related Studies

ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN STUDIES
 ARCHAEOLOGY
 METHODS and MATERIALS
 Hebrew Bible; Early Christianity
 HEBREW BIBLE
 Pentateuch; Historical Books; Prophets
 Psalms, Proverbs, Job; Megillot
 INTERTESTAMENTAL HISTORY AND
 LITERATURE
 EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE
 Gospels and Acts; Catholic Epistles
 Revelation; Pauline Literature
 Johannine Literature
 NEW TESTAMENT APOCRYPHA
 HISTORY OF INTERPRETATION

Study of Religion

GEOGRAPHICAL
 Africa; Asia; Europe; Americas

Australia; Oceania
 TRADITIONS
 Buddhism; Hinduism; Christianity
 Judaism; Islam; Tribal Religions
 APPROACHES
 Historical; Comparative; Theological
 Social Scientific; Phenomenological
 SUBJECT AREAS
 Religion and Literature; Religion and Art
 Religion and Society; Women's Studies
 Ethics; Religion and Education
 Spiritual Formation
 Social Justice

Congress Coordinator

Send suggestions and proposals to:
 Prof Kent Richards
 1992 International Congress
 2201 South University Blvd
 Denver, Colorado 80210 USA
 by September 1991.

**Société Internationale de Sociologie des
Rélígions/ International society for the
Sociology of Religion(SISR/ISSR)
Conference**

Maynooth, Ireland, 19-23 August 1991

Theme: Religion and the Economic

Order

Contact Enzo Pace (Secretary General
SISR), via Andreini 12, 35100 Padova,
Italy.

**Association for the Sociology of
Religion (ASR) - 1991 Annual
Conference**

Cincinnati, Ohio, 20-23 August 1991

Contact Lorraine d'Antonio, Marist
Hall (Room 108), Catholic University of
America, Washington DC 20064.

**New Zealand Association for the Study
of Religion, 7th biennial conference**

Massey University, 23-26 August,
1991

A planned feature of the conference is
the participation of the Massey Maori
Studies Department. Offers of papers are
requested - full paper 40 min; research
report 20 min. For details contact the Con-
ference Office, Religious Studies, Massey
University, Palmerston North, New
Zealand. Telephone: 0011 663 69099 x
8268.

**Society for the Scientific Study of
Religion - 1991 Annual Meeting
Religious Research Association 1991
Annual Meeting**

Pittsburgh, PA, 8-10 November 1991

Contact: see ASR above.

**British Sociological Association
Sociology of Religion Study Group
British Association for the Study of
Religions**

**Political Science Association: Religion
and Politics Section
Joint Conference**

St Mary's College Twickenham, 8-11
April 1992

Theme: Religion in the Common
European Home

Five plenary sessions: Unity and
Diversity; Europe's intellectual roots/
Europe's theological tradition; Europe's
Religious Minorities; The State; Where
do we go from here?/ Europe and the
World

For information contact: Dr Grace
Davie (see above); Dr Kim Knott, Depart-
ment of Theology and Religious Studies,
The University, Leeds, LS2 9JT; Profes-
sor Kenneth Medhurst, Department of
European Studies, The University, Brad-
ford, BD7 1DP

Report of the Asian and Comparative Philosophy Society of Australasia

For some years, Dr Purusottama
Bilimoria (of the School of Humanities,
Deakin University, Geelong) has been
devotedly running a skeleton society of
Asian and Comparative Philosophy with
a mailing list and a newsletter. Now it is
becoming a corporeal entity, with flesh
and sinew, having had an inaugural meet-

ing and a conference which were agreed
on all sides to have marked an auspicious
beginning.

The conference, which enjoyed spon-
sorship from the Asian Studies Council
and Deakin University Foundation, was
held on September 23 and 24 at St Mary's
College, University of Melbourne. It was

feliculously able to follow on from, and partly to share enrolment with, the Phenomenology and Social Philosophy conference, which ran from September 21 to 23. One plenary session was common to both conferences (delivered by Professor J N Mohanty from Temple University in Philadelphia).

The conference had an additional cast, with speakers from New Zealand, India, New Zealand, Canada, and the USA; also there were speakers from the ANU, New England and South Australia as well as around Melbourne. Papers given reflected a considerable diversity of research interest, but at the same time the questions which followed each delivery showed that the divergent interests were not isolated compartments. Various themes (particularly the theme of cultural dialogue between different civilisations) recurred again and again, and the discussion was general.

Papers covered a wide spectrum, with Indian belief systems strongly represented, as might have been expected, but with valuable Sinological contributions, and a number of papers addressed to general questions of east-west cultural contact.

Though it is a mechanical exercise, a bare listing of the topics of papers may be as good a way as any to exhibit their variety:

truth theory in Neo-Mohist Philosophy (Keruo Ren); the relation between Indian and Western philosophies (J N Mohanty); Maori ethical systems (Roy Perrett); self-inquiry, in relation to western philosophy and Sankara's thought (Mishka Jambar); Tamil Saiva Siddhanta philosophy (Raja Jayaraman); the Taoism of Confucius (Paul Rule); technology, multiculturalism

and the Third World (Don Ihde); the life of Nagarjuna (Ian Mabbett); the religious background of Buddhist logic (Eli Franco); cross-cultural philosophising (J G Arapura), and Hinduism in nineteenth-century Bengal (Ajoy Lahiri). A workshop on integrating Asian philosophy in mainstream curriculum was also successfully held.

At a business meeting on the second day, an interim committee was elected to draft a constitution for the society, and there is every prospect that the society will act as host for the next conference of the International Asian and Comparative Philosophy Association with which it is associated. This is likely to be in 1992. (It would be tempting to say that the society has thus acquired both an *atman* and a *tao*, but for the fact that the *atman* is supposed to be illusory, and the wise do not speak of the *tao*.)

Participants came away with a strong sense that something of value had been achieved, for it has so far been rarely that people with this particular combination of interests have been able to meet and talk in Australia.

Ian Mabbett
Monash University

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Other Religious Groups

Institute for Theology and the Arts

A network of people interested in the dialogue between religion and the arts

The Institute for Theology and the Arts strives to promote a national network of theologians, liturgists, artists, musicians, and performers seeking to explore the relationship between religion and the arts.

Its aims are:

- * To develop arts-related resources for the church
- * To promote courses of study
- * To sponsor arts events
- * To co-ordinate conferences
- * To promote scholarly study of the relationship between religion and the arts
- * To establish a National Slide Archive of the Visual Arts
- * To develop an Archive of Christian art
- * To promote a Christian contribution to cultural studies in the wider community.

The co-ordinator of the Institute is the Reverend Rod Pattenden. Rod is a graduate of the City Art Institute in painting and a minister of the Uniting Church in Paddington, NSW. He is also a member of the Blake Society for Religious Art, Convenor of the Uniting Church NSW Committee for the Arts and Uniting Church adviser to the Christian Dance Fellowship of Australia.

The Institute has the benefit of a highly qualified, ecumenically based advisory panel. Members of this panel are:

- the Rev Dr Doug Adams, Professor of Christianity and the Arts, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley CA
- Dr Veronica Brady, English, University of Western Australia
- John Coburn, artist
- Fr Paul Crowley, Catholic Archdiocese

of Sydney liturgical consultant

- Sr Rosemary Crumlin, art historian
- Bishop Ian George, art critic
- Dr David Millikan, head of religious programmes ABC
- Harry Stephens, Architecture, University of NSW
- Assoc Prof Jim Tulip, English, University of Sydney
- the Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood, Moderator-elect, Uniting Church in Australia

Since its foundation, the Institute for Theology and the Arts has organised conferences on *The Arts and Social Conscience* and *The Arts in an Australian Context*. It co-ordinated a Summer School in Writing and the Visual Arts in Sydney in January 1990 and one in Performing Arts at Parramatta in January 1991. Resource people from the Institute teach Dance Drama and Visual Arts courses in the Sydney College of Divinity B Th degree. Several donations have encouraged the beginnings of a resource collection with manuscripts, slides and archival material.

The Institute produces a regular newsletter, the *Bulletin* with news of regional groups and significant pieces on theology and the arts.

For further information and back copies of the *Bulletin* and occasional papers contact:

The Rev Rod Pattenden
Institute for Theology and the Arts
PO Box 379
Paddington 2021

Women's Network '90 - A Report

Almost twelve months ago, a small networking circle began when Pauline Allen, Barbara Reynolds-Hutchinson and Elaine Wainwright dreamed of bringing together women who were already involved in the process of integrating their emerging feminist consciousness into the various aspects of their life's journey. We hoped that in coming together we might both support and challenge one another to continue to uncover the layers upon layers of patriarchal conditioning within ourselves, within the structures of our work, our places of living, and our relationships. The circle grew wider and wider as this small group notified those whom they thought may be interested and these in turn informed others until the contact network reached almost 800 women. There was excitement at the possibility of our meeting together, exploring aspects of life together, and making connections which would support us into the future. Within the original vision, there was also a dream that we would be able to devise a process for both the preparation and the facilitating of the weekend which would enable the maximum participation of all those interested.

These dreams were realised on the weekend of 7-9 September, when over 100 women gathered at the Franciscan Life Centre, Coorparoo, for the *Women's Network '90* Weekend. They had travelled from as far afield as Rockhampton, Sydney, Melbourne, and Adelaide and as near as Coorparoo itself to meet other women who were making similar journeys in their faith communities and in society, to explore aspects of those journeys, to be invited a further step along their way.

That this was a gathering of friends who were very easily able to welcome strangers into their midst was obvious in the energy and excitement palpably present as the networking began over food and drink and spilled over into the first plenary gathering. During this time, participants decorated a large hall to create a sacred space filled with colour, life, and creativity - the focal point of our gathering. A wall-hanging captured the spirit of this activity: **If you want something to happen make a space for it.** The full and active participation of all in the process of the weekend had begun.

It continued during the weekend and was facilitated by way of a variety of workshops. These workshops had been offered earlier and participants had been notified by mail of the variety available but were not asked to make a final choice until the weekend. This was done in a preliminary session to each workshop session which we named a 'Market Place'. During this session, those offering a workshop explained briefly both its content and process and participants were then able to make their final choice. Perhaps it was this very choice which was the most difficult part of the weekend. We were invited to explore the new science, the Grail, Celtic Spirituality, tales of ancient Europe, tales of the grandmothers, women's life experience in its varied expressions around the globe, and the Christian tradition as source of both old and new symbols. This began to meet women's present need for symbols enable the personal and political empowerment of their life's journey, especially as they search for a spirituality to nourish them in their response to their response to their personal needs and the

needs of our planet Earth. There was a sense of walking gently and tentatively on sacred ground as we listened to ancient myths and legends, heard the pain of the multi-faceted oppression of first and third world women, and told one another our own stories past and present. These stories were celebrated with weeping and dancing, in silence and with full voice. They were also explored in terms of their implications for women's work in the home and the public arena, for relationships, and for personal self-image and choices.

As we moved from one activity to another involving head, heart, hand, and body we were, in fact, weaving the connections that were enabling us to name ourselves and our reality. We heard of pain, oppression, anger, exclusivity, and destruction but also of liberation, creative space, solidarity, self-consciousness, self-caring, inner wisdom, and inclusivity. We spoke of reclaiming myths and traditions and the 'great cloud of witnesses', the women who have gone before us. We searched for a new language, for a key that would enable both personal and structural changes. And the dream of the weekend was realised - new networks

have been established that can support the personal and structural change that we glimpsed as a possibility. Perhaps a poem by Irene Poelzer which was used at the start of the weekend is also appropriate to end this brief description:

I
 Woman
 pulled myself up from oppression
 just long enough
 to hold my head
 a second
 above the mass of hurting humanity

And I caught in that second
 the first signs
 of Dawn
 touching the east.

And I smiled
 for having seen the sky
 my eyes prised the sun
 into the soul
 of that hurting mass
 which struggled
 to glimpse the sky

A SUNRISE
 of A Great New Day.

Elaine Wainwright

