

Aotearoa New Zealand Association for Biblical Studies 2023 Conference

Schedule and Abstracts

Ngā kōrero mō te hanganga

1 I te tīmatanga, te hanganga a te Atua i a Rangi-nui rāua ko Papatūānuku, ²e takoto kau ana, kāore he āhua o Papatūānuku. Hōhonu ana te pōuri o runga i te mata o Tangaroa, ā, e topaki ana te wairua o te Atua i runga i te wai, pērā i a Tānerore. ³Nā, ka mea te Atua, “Kia mārama,” nā, ka puta mai te māramatanga. ⁴Ā, he pai ki tā te Atua titiro. Nā, ka wehea e ia te mārama mai i te pōuriuri, ⁵ka tapaia e ia te mārama ko te “Awatea”, ko te pōuriuri ko te “Pō”. Nā, ka hipa te ahiahi ka tau mai ko te ata - ko te rā tuatahi tērā.

Te Kupenga – Catholic Theological College
4–5 December 2023

Preliminary Conference schedule		
	Monday 4 December	
	Rm 1	Rm 2
9:00	Registration	
9:30	<i>Mibi mbakatani</i>	
	Chair: Kevin Waldie	
10:00	Paul Trebilco, Paul as Not-the-Founder of the Christ-believing Community at Ephesus	
10:30	W.H. Chong, How to (and not to) Speak in Tongues: Exegetical, Historical and Practical Reflections on 1 Corinthians 12–14 and Paul’s use of γλῶσσα / 方言 within a multi-lingual diasporic Chinese Christian church context	
11:00	<i>Morning tea</i>	
11:30	Jonathan Robinson, Is there a (Symbolic) Marriage in John 4?	
12:00	David Tombs, They gathered the whole cohort around him (Matthew 27:27b) [Zoom]	
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
1:30	<i>ANZABS AGM</i>	
	Chair: Tekweni Chataira	Chair: Jonathan Robinson
2:00	Karen Newton, Ποιέω: Poetry in Creation and Communication	Phil Church, Hebrews 13:9–16: Following Jesus outside the Camp
2:30	Herry Susanto, The Cosmological Redemption and Ecotheology in the Indonesian Context	Chris Northcott, The Distortive and Distractive Power of an Inappropriate Question: Early Calvinist Counterinterpretations of Heb 6:4–6
3:00	Sarah Hart, Contemporary writing on Ecology and Biblical Studies published in French	Chanki Shin, A Dialogue between Two Jewish Metaphorical Fathers of the Second Temple Period: Paul (1 Cor 4:14–21) and the Examiner (CD XIII 7–16)
3:30	<i>Afternoon tea</i>	
	Chair: Emily Colgan	
4:00	Tekweni Chataira, Reading Esther 2:1-18 Intercontextually <i>seMadzimai</i> - Encountering Narratives of (former) Child Brides in Zimbabwean contexts	
4:30	James E. Harding, Orality and the Book of Job [Zoom]	
5:00	Marshall Scott, Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Exploring the nature of Job’s Knowledge of Yahweh in Job 42:5	

Zoom link for Lecture Room 1 <https://zoom.us/j/6493611053>

Zoom link for Lecture Room 2 <https://zoom.us/j/6493611054>

Preliminary Conference schedule			
	Tuesday 5 December		
	Rm 1: Hui/Talanoa stream		Rm 2
8:30	Registration		
9:00	Chair: John de Jong		
9:10	Clare Knowles, Responses to New Māori Scripture Translations in <i>He Tīmatanga</i>		
9:50	Lyndon Drake, The Māori and ancient Near Eastern pantheons in the context of Genesis 1 in te reo Māori		
10:30	<i>Morning tea</i>		
	Chair: Lyndon Drake		Chair: Paul Trebilco
11:00	Deane Galbraith, Tāwhaki among the Nephilim: Heroic Descendants of Rangi-nui and Papatūānuku in the Māori Bible	11:00	Emma Stokes, A Samaritan at the feet of Jesus
11:45	Eugene Fuimaono, “Te Atua”, a definition for tomorrow?	11:30	Kathleen Rushton, Exploring Flesh (<i>sarx</i>) in the Johannine Prologue (1:1–18) and its Implications for an Anticipatory Reading of the Gospel according to John
		12:00	Mary Huie-Jolly, Reading Matthew 1 and 2 alongside an Aramaic sacred marriage text [Zoom]
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>		
	Chair: John de Jong		
1:30	Brian Fiu Kōlia and Emily Colgan, Will you Ta'alo with Leviathan? A Moana Reading of Job 41		
	Chairs: John de Jong & Lyndon Drake		
2:10	Kōrero: <i>He Tīmatanga</i> , Indigenous readings		
2:45	Hometime!		

Zoom link for Lecture Room 1 <https://zoom.us/j/6493611053>

Zoom link for Lecture Room 2 <https://zoom.us/j/6493611054>

Abstracts

Tekweni Chataira (Laidlaw College & Auckland University of Technology (AUT))

Reading Esther 2:1-18 Intercontextually *seMadzimai* - Encountering Narratives of (former) Child Brides in Zimbabwean contexts

My doctoral research emerged out of a quest to discover how to responsibly read biblical texts, particularly the Esther narrative, in ways that prioritises Shona Zimbabwean women's contexts—their experiences, challenges, dreams, and aspirations. A literature review on various biblical interpretation approaches, womanist, feminist, and African biblical hermeneutical readings of Esther revealed few studies engaging specifically with Zimbabwean women's contexts. Hence, I formulated *seMadzimai*, a womanist gender-sensitive Bible reading approach that takes into serious consideration Zimbabwean women's perspectives. In this paper I present an overview of two chapters that followed the *seMadzimai* approach in the doctoral research. One chapter focuses on the experiences of Esther and the young beautiful virgins in Esther 2:1-18 as they were forcibly conscripted to the king's palace and the other focuses on the narratives and experiences of several (former) Zimbabwean child brides. The paper stresses points of intersection between these ancient and modern women's contexts and finishes with a consideration of the factors that contribute to the prevalence of child brides in Zimbabwe while suggesting ways to end child marriages.

W.H. Chong (University of Otago—Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

How to (and not to) Speak in Tongues: Exegetical, Historical and Practical Reflections on 1 Corinthians 12–14 and Paul's use of γλῶσσα / 方言 within a multi-lingual diasporic Chinese Christian church context

From its inception, Chinese Christianity has involved speaking in tongues, across cultures, about the person and work of Jesus Christ. This paper presents a contextual original-language exegesis of the Apostle Paul's use of the word γλῶσσα / 方言 in 1 Corinthians 12–14, and seeks to understand this contested lexeme in light of the diasporic and multi-lingual reality of the Christian church in 1st century Corinth, and in view of the reception history of γλῶσσα / 方言 within Chinese church history. It is argued that understanding Paul's instructions regarding γλῶσσα / 方言 within the context of a multi-lingual Christian worship culture strengthens the definition of “tongues” as a grace (or spiritual) gift of speaking languages used and understood among inhabitants of Corinth. This reading may offer more fruitful application for those who shape and participate in the multi-lingual worship culture of the diasporic Chinese Christian church today.

Phil Church (Laidlaw College)

Hebrews 13:9–16: Following Jesus outside the Camp

Michael W. Martin and Jason A. Whitlark have recently argued that the food referred to in Heb 13:9 is food associated with idolatrous pagan worship, that the Christian altar of v. 10 is the eucharistic table and that the lasting city (that the readers do not have) of v. 14 is Rome. Close attention to the flow of the discourse in Heb 13:10–16 shows that the Christian altar is a metonym for the sacrifice of Christ and that the city said to be lasting but is not, is Jerusalem (soon to be destroyed). Since Jesus was excluded from Jerusalem and executed outside the city, the readers are exhorted to join him there and suffer with him. I conclude that the food is food associated with the Jerusalem temple and its ritual, in which the readers were participating or were considering doing so.

Lyndon Drake (Kīngi Ihaka Research Centre)

The Māori and ancient Near Eastern pantheons in the context of Genesis 1 in te reo Māori

The recent test translation of *Te Paipera Tapu* has aroused considerable debate for its use in Genesis 1 of the names of atua Māori. These names of atua have been used instead of names of features of the natural world, which stands in contrast to the use of other kupu Māori in the earlier translation and its revisions. In this paper, I outline relevant members of the Māori pantheon and of some ancient Near Eastern pantheons, which are not identical. I then discuss the Hebrew text of Genesis 1 in its ancient literary context, making proposals about the use of the names of atua Māori in translations.

Eugene Fuimaono (University of Otago—Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

“Te Atua”, a definition for tomorrow?

Throughout the last 200 years, translations of the term “God” into reo Māori have varied, but the one that has stuck the longest is “te Atua”. What could have been a cause for celebration has at times been a source of confusion to reo reclaimers and topically relegated to being a colonial infraction. This paper will examine possible motivations for the usage of “te atua” as tool for acculturation (in contradiction to the standard belief that it was amalgamation) and offer insight into a Māori epistemological process to finding a better term.

Deane Galbraith (University of Otago—Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Tāwhaki among the Nephilim: Heroic Descendants of Rangi-nui and Papatūānuku in the Māori Bible

Māori gods in the Bible? Why not? Bible Society New Zealand’s 2023 publication of “he whakamāoritanga hou” of “ētahi wāhanga o te Paipera Tapu” (“a new Māori translation” of “some parts of the Holy Bible”), entitled *He Timatanga*, caused considerable controversy due to its translation of certain Hebrew terms with the names of atua Māori (Māori gods). In its rendition of Genesis 1–11, the names of Rangi-nui, Papatūānuku, Tangaroa, and Tānerore appear alongside ‘Atua’ (Yahweh). The current paper will argue that the sense of impropriety felt by many readers results from a retrojection of the modern concept of monotheism onto the Bible. Reading pūrākau featuring Tāwhaki alongside Gen 6.1–4’s story of the Nephilim not only furnishes mutual insight into Hebrew and Māori hero traditions but also supports the appropriateness and desirability of translating certain parts of the Bible with the names of Māori gods.

James E. Harding (University of Otago—Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Orality and the Book of Job

There are numerous instances in the book of Job of what might be described as “visual poetry,” where some poetic device or other is used that is primarily effective in the visual register. Choon-Leong Seow has argued, persuasively, that this offers a good explanation for some of the orthographic peculiarities of the book, which favours conservative orthography (Seow 2011: 83–85). If this is correct, then it supports the view that the book is written by a learned scribe for other learned scribes, echoing other ancient Near Eastern texts that employ devices of visual poetry. Yet there are other aspects of the poetry of Job that seem to be primarily aural. How might one then understand the poetry of Job as both visual and aural? In this paper, I will

suggest that, in the dialogue between Job and his friends, the poet uses poetic devices whose effect is primarily aural, by means of the fictive setting of an oral debate between skilled orators. For comparison, I will be drawing on Poia Rewi's work *Whaikōrero* (2010).

Sarah Hart (Te Kupenga—Catholic Theological College)

Contemporary writing on Ecology and Biblical Studies published in French

From the location of Aotearoa New Zealand, the English language seems to dominate writing and research in the field of Biblical Studies. The Society of Biblical Literature, which runs its meetings predominantly in English, has hundreds of members world-wide and can feel like a monopoly. I sense we may miss out on insights from those who speak and think in other languages. A current topic in Biblical Studies is ecology. Downunder, Norman Habel for example has done ground-breaking work. Putting my French to use, the interest of this paper is—what does current French thinking and writing offer in the context of ecology and Biblical Studies? A literature review of French writing on the topic begins with the work of Jean Bastaire and Fabien Revol.

Mary Huie-Jolly (NZACPE Certified Educator)

Reading Matthew 1 and 2 alongside an Aramaic sacred marriage text

Matthew's genealogical pattern, father begat son, from Abraham to David to Babylon to Joseph, changes with Mary's pregnancy. Jesus' birth ushers in a new era. The sacred change comes from continuity. The worship of the king includes foreigners and fulfills angelic and heavenly order. A new age is established within tradition. Matthew's purpose matches the social function of sacred marriage. In ancient Mesopotamia, up through late antiquity, sacred marriage ritually served to legitimate royal succession, generating security in tumultuous times.

My socio-rhetorical interpretation explores Matthew 1 and 2 alongside a particular "sacred marriage" text: xvii of P. Amherst 63 (circa 4th century BCE, from an Aramaic speaking community in Egypt.) Though relatively distant in time from early Jesus traditions, its social context and function is like that of Matthew: welcoming newcomers into family-like alliances, and motivating the re-building of a hope that had been demolished.

Clare Knowles (Translations Coordinator at Bible Society New Zealand/Research Fellow at Laidlaw College)

Responses to New Māori Scripture Translations in He Tīmatanga

In April this year Bible Society New Zealand/Ngā Ringa Hāpai i te Paipera Tapu ki Aotearoa distributed a draft publication of new Māori translations of scripture portions called *He Tīmatanga*. The purpose of the publication was to get feedback from Māori Christians (and non-Māori who speak te reo) to contribute to the development of a translation brief for a new Māori Bible translation project. We developed an online survey and welcomed feedback to a dedicated email address. Our online survey posed a series of questions relating to dialect, the use of footnotes, the inclusion of names of atua māori in Genesis 1, translation model (dynamic equivalence vs. formal equivalence), and how the tetragrammaton ought to be rendered. In this presentation I will outline some of the key issues and the responses received.

Brian Fiu Kōlia (Malua Theological College) and Emily Colgan (St John's Theological College)
Will you Ta'alo with Leviathan? A Moana Reading of Job 41

The oral traditions of Moana communities throughout Oceania include numerous stories recounting human and divine interactions with Sea Creatures in days gone by. Bearing in mind these traditions, this chapter uses a Moana framework of talanoa to re-read the relationship between God and the Leviathan in Job 41. In doing this, we explore the Samoan idea of ta'alo (playfulness) as characterising God's encounter with the Sea Creature, which in turn resists more conventional western *chaoskampf* interpretations of this text. By closely reading Job 41 through a ta'alo lens, we explore ideas of delight and enjoyment that denote relationality in this passage, noting intertextual resonances with texts such as Ps 104. While not denying the inferences of violence, subjugation, and terror present in this text, our emphasis on playfulness seeks to decentre the human subject and resist the colonial impulse to put the self at the centre of meaningful existence while subjugating and mastering the Other. This Moana reading of Job 41 is a talanoa that offers insights into alternative modes of relationality beyond hierarchy and based on mutuality, awe, respect, and empowerment. In offering these alternative perspectives, our talanoa will ta'alo with the book of Job by interrogating, poking, probing, and furthering skeptical wisdom traditions, pushing back against conventional forms of wisdom and orthodoxy, which so often serve colonial agendas.

Karen Newton (Laidlaw College)
Ποιέω: Poetry in Creation and Communication

Recently God has been described as the poet of the world. This thought begins with the verb ποιέω in Genesis 1:1 in the LXX and the etymology of the modern English words “poem,” “poet,” and “poetry.” Ποιέω is an ordinary, everyday word that speaks of doing everyday actions. However, its use differs when referring to God, gaining a sense of grand acts of creation and communication—the word and the world coming into being. And, like a poet, God imbues his creation and communication with rhythm and poetry. Humankind, made in God's image, responds to him with words of poetry, recorded in his word. This poetic relationship between God and his people continues throughout history. In today's church, we still need to hear God's creative communication and teach his world his word with creativity and poetry.

Chris Northcott (Laidlaw College)
Title: The Distortive and Distractive Power of an Inappropriate Question: Early Calvinist Counterinterpretations of Heb 6:4–6

This paper reviews the interpretation of Heb 6:4–6 by early Reformed interpreters (1500s–1700s) with respect to the identification of the people described therein. Particular attention is paid to their interpretive framework. All interpreters offered comment which was polemically oriented, with an eye on warding off Arminian rebuttals of the doctrine of perseverance. Some interpreters offered additional comment which was contextually oriented and gave an account of the function of the passage in its larger literary context. It is observed that those who framed their interpretation by the polemical considerations tended to diminish or even disparage the value of the markers in Heb 6:4–5. On the other hand, interpreters who paid attention to contextual considerations could point to the positive value of the markers. Those who focused exclusively on the polemical angle offered an interpretation which failed to account for the positive role of the markers, and led to later Calvinist interpreters adopting new interpretive strategies.

Jonathan Robinson (Carey Baptist College)
Is there a (Symbolic) Marriage in John 4?

In John 4 a Jewish descendent of Jacob meets a Samaritan descendant of Jacob at a well, a typical location for romance and matchmaking in Genesis. This paper will examine the presence and function of marriage symbolism in the Gospel of John and argue for the presence of a symbolic unification of the children of Jacob (Israel) in the story.

Kathleen Rushton

Exploring Flesh (*sarx*) in the Johannine Prologue (1:1–18) and its Implications for an Anticipatory Reading of the Gospel according to John

This paper is part of a larger project in which I am working towards an anticipatory reading of the Gospel according to John which sees nature and history as part of the world of becoming into which we insert our lives and particular callings as we journey towards the living God who is ahead calling all creation into being in an unfinished, evolving universe. My focus will be on exploring “flesh” (*sarx*) in the Johannine prologue and what this opens for this project in the light of recovering the ancient theological tradition of regarding the human person as a microcosm interconnecting both anthropology and cosmology.

Marshall Scott (Sydney Missionary and Bible College)

Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Exploring the nature of Job’s Knowledge of Yahweh in Job 42:5

The Yahweh speeches represent a real answer to Job; perhaps not the answer he wants, but the answer he needs. That message is that Yahweh rules his world not merely with power, but also with justice. Divine justice transcends a human understanding of the word, and cannot be confined to traditional concepts of retributive justice. Job’s transformation, however, is a function of more than a merely cognitive response to this message. Job comes to know God in the context of a second-person, “Franciscan” encounter (borrowing from Eleanore Stump). Job’s new-found intuitive knowledge is asymmetrically related to the verbal content of the Yahweh speeches. They function as a doorway through which Job, and the reader, are invited to enter. Once risking a relational encounter with Yahweh, Job is then vouchsafed a personal knowledge that goes way beyond the content of the speeches.

Chanki Shin (University of Otago—Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

A Dialogue between Two Jewish Metaphorical Fathers of the Second Temple Period: Paul (1 Cor 4:14–21) and the Examiner (CD XIII 7–16)

Paul’s metaphorical fatherhood in 1 Corinthians 3:1–3a; 4:14–21 was not the only phenomenon appearing in Jewish communities of the Second Temple period that claimed to be eschatologically enlightened. Damascus Document XIII 7–16 exhibits the Examiner (מבקר) as a metaphorical father in the Qumran community. How were these two metaphorical fathers similar or different from each other? The current paper seeks to answer this question. The paper first investigates Paul’s metaphorical children (i.e., the Corinthian church) and the Examiner’s metaphorical children in the Qumran community in light of their respective community rules. It then compares how Paul and the Examiner deal with the church and metaphorical children when they behave in conformity with the culture(s) of the elite Gentiles. Lastly, the paper concludes by propounding and discussing features of Paul’s metaphorical fatherhood in 1 Corinthians 3:1–3a; 4:14–21 that are unique to the Examiner.

Emma Stokes (University of Otago—Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)
A Samaritan at the feet of Jesus

Luke 17:11-19 recounts an intriguing encounter between Jesus and ten lepers. The cleansing itself occurs from a distance and is eclipsed by the analeptic revelation that the only one to return to Jesus, praising God and giving thanks, is a Samaritan. This has led to interpretations that emphasize the foreign nature of the Samaritan and push towards a characterization of him as an outsider receiving the benefits of salvation. In this paper I will argue instead that the pericope assumes and engages with the complex relationship between Jews and Samaritans and the dispute between them about the proper place of worship. Further I will suggest that it points towards a resolution that can be found with the Samaritan at the feet of Jesus.

Herry Susanto (PhD student at University of Otago—Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka and faculty member of Tyrannus Bible Seminary, Indonesia)
The Cosmological Redemption and Ecotheology in the Indonesian Context

This paper examines the ecological implication of Pauline cosmological redemption from Colossians 1:15–20 in the Indonesian context. To connect Colossians and the need for ecological ethics in Indonesia, this paper utilises Irenaeus' creation theology to span the discrepancy between the two contexts. The paper argues that the goodness of creation in Irenaeus' theology facilitates a dialogue between Colossians 1:15–20 and the philosophy of *memayu bayuning bawana*, which expresses the sensibility of cosmic harmony. This paper addresses three aspects: first, it explores the scope of redemption in Colossians 1:15–20. Second, it analyses the main features of Irenaeus' creation theology, demonstrating the goodness of creation and how it fits into this study. Third, it illustrates the concept of ecological concern in the Indonesian context, using the interaction between Colossians 1:15–20, Irenaeus' theology, and the philosophy of *memayu bayuning bawana*.

Wayne Te Kaawa (University of Otago—Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)
He Tīmatanga, A Beginning

The publication of *He Tīmatanga* by the Bible Society of New Zealand in 2023 has given rise to much discussion and debate on the inclusion of Atua Māori in the biblical text. Based on conversations with various Māori, the main themes for the arguments both for and against the inclusion of Atua Māori in the biblical text will be provided. At the heart of the conversations is making Te Paipera Tapu relevant to a younger generation, is this achieved by translating the biblical text or indigenising the text to te ao Māori?

David Tombs (University of Otago—Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)
They gathered the whole cohort around him (Matthew 27:27b)

Matthew 27:27b records that after 'the soldiers of the governor' took Jesus into the *praetorium*, 'they gathered the whole cohort around him' (NRSV). This paper builds on the work of other scholars (West 2021, Greenough 2021), and my own previous work (Tombs 1999, Open Access <https://doi.org/10.7916/d8-wypm-vt48> ; Tombs 2023, Open Access <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429289750>), to argue that the stripping and mocking of Jesus in the *praetorium* is more disturbing than is usually acknowledged, and the cohort being gathered around Jesus has not received the attention it deserves. This paper will investigate five questions:

(1) Who are the ‘they’ in the words ‘they gathered’? (2) How many soldiers were there in a typical cohort? (3) What is to be understood by Matthew’s reference to ‘the whole cohort’ (see also Mark 15:16), and why do some commentaries say it does not mean a whole cohort? (4) What is to be made of ‘around’ as a translation of *epi*? (5) Why do these questions matter?

Paul Trebilco (University of Otago—Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Paul as Not-the-Founder of the Christ-believing Community at Ephesus

Irenaeus in *Adv. Haer.* 3.3.4 writes: “Then, again, the Church in Ephesus, founded by Paul, and having John remaining among them permanently until the times of Trajan, is a true witness of the tradition of the apostles”. Eusebius in *Hist. eccl.* 3.23.4 repeats this statement of Irenaeus, and so also presents Paul as the founder of the Church in Ephesus. However, in Acts 18:24–20:36, Luke does *not* present Paul as the founder of the church. Rather, it is clear that this is the result of the work of Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila. Given the key role Paul plays in Acts as a founder of Christ-believing communities, and the way Paul presents himself as a pioneer who does not want to build on the foundation of another evangelist (Rom 15:20), it is very surprising that Luke does not present Paul as the founder of such a significant community as the Ephesian one. This must be simply because Paul did not in fact found this church. Therefore, this is a significant argument for the historicity of Acts.