

Aotearoa New Zealand Association for Biblical
Studies (ANZABS)
&
Systematic Theology Association of Aotearoa New
Zealand (STAANZ)

2024 Annual Meetings
Schedule and Abstracts

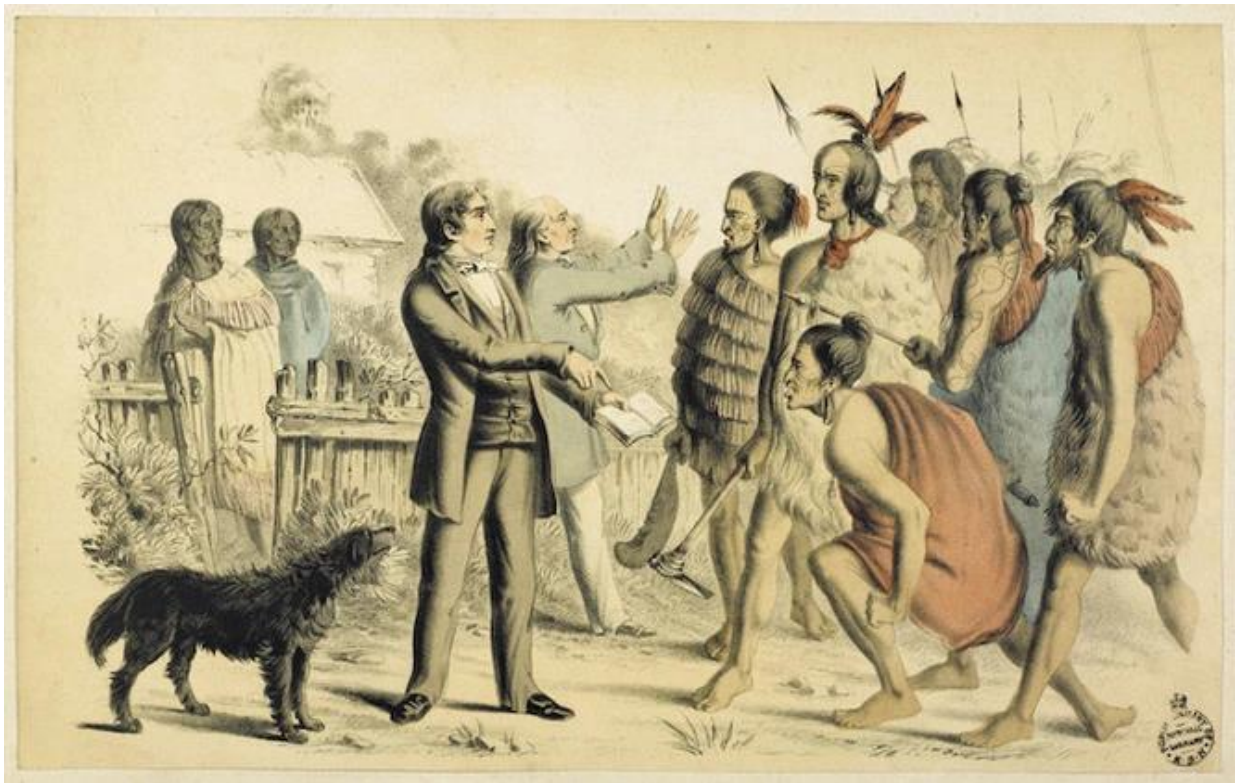


Image credit: Artist unknown,
in "Illustrations of missionary scenes" (1856), vol 2, plate 13.
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Carey Baptist College/Te Kāreti Iriiri o Carey
2–3 December 2024

Register here : [ANZABS & STAANZ Conferences 2024 — Carey Baptist College](#)

Conference Information

Attending in person

Carey Baptist College/Te Kāreti Iriiri o Carey is located at [473 Great South Road](#), Penrose, Auckland.

You can access campus from both Great South Road and Greenpark Road.

There is a large carpark behind the main building, please park in the white marked spaces (not the yellow spaces). There is a bike rack behind the wharekai. Ellerslie and Penrose train stations are within walking distance.

Registration includes morning and afternoon teas. Lunch is BYO (kitchen available) or can be bought at local eateries.

The conference dinner on Monday evening will be at a local restaurant and is not included in registration. Details to be finalised based on numbers, but will be pay-your-own-way in the best Dutch tradition.

Attending Online by Zoom

Zoom links will be provided by email to those registered for online attendance.

Registration and Payment

Register online. Click here: [ANZABS & STAANZ Conferences 2024](#)

In-person registration. \$50 waged, \$Free unwaged.*

Zoom registration. \$25 waged, \$Free unwaged.*

Preferred method of payment is bank deposit in the ANZABS account 12-3125-0475839-00, using your surname as reference. Email PChurch@laidlaw.ac.nz for a receipt. For those attending in-person EFTPOS/CC payment is also available.

*E.g. students, superannuitants, etc.

Contact

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Preliminary Conference Schedule

Monday 2 December			
	ANZABS		
	Wharekarakia	LR1	LR2
8:45	Registration		
9:15	<i>Mibi whakatau</i>		
9:30	Hui-talanoa Chair: Lyndon Drake		
	Te Aroha Rountree, Andrew Picard, Emily Colgan, Ngā Waiata: Savage Interpretations. Robert Maunsell's Translation of Te Paipera Tapu		
10:15	John de Jong, Māori Peace-making as 'the Word of the Gospel of God'		
10:50	<i>Morning tea - Wharekai</i>		
11:20	Hui-talanoa (cont.) Chair: Emily Colgan		
	Katene Eruera and Lyndon Drake, Mana Motuhake as Prophetic Hermeneutic: Reimagining Right Relationship in Aotearoa/New Zealand		
11:55	WH Chong, Rangi or Rangi-nui? Shén (神) or Shàngdì (上帝)? Examining translation issues arising from new test translations of Te Paipera Tapu (The Māori Bible) in conversation with the 1919 Mandarin Chinese Union Version (和合本)		
12:30	<i>Lunch – Wharekai or local eateries</i>	Logia Lunch. https://logiatheology.org/	

Monday continued			
2:00	Hui-talanoa (cont.) Chair: John de Jong		
	Michael Rhodes, Keep Your Hands Off God's Dragons! Biblical Sea Monsters as Divine Limits on the Human Vocation in Gen 1:26-28 Respondent: TBC		
3:00	<i>Afternoon tea – Wharekai</i>		
	STAANZ	ANZABS	
3:30	Hui-Talanoa Chair: Christa McKirland	Gospels session 1 Chair: Philip Church	Hebrew Bible Session Chair: John de Jong
	(3:30-4:10) Travel Makara, Mātūtū Theology: A Holistic Approach to God, Land, and Mental Health in Avaiki Nui.	ONLINE: Mary R. Huie-Jolly, Expanding the definition of sacred marriage in a study of Matthew 1 and 2	Don Moffat, Genealogy, Genesis and Genre
4:00	(4:15-4:55) Taulu Schuster, O A'U, O A'U LAVA: Faith in a New Zealand-born Polynesian Generation-Z World	Richard Neville, Moral Repair and Managing Sin in Matthew's Gospel	Deane Galbraith, Why Did Jews Steal 'Israel'? Developments that compelled Ancient Jewish Appropriation of Israelite Identity
4:30		Kathleen Rushton, "Believing into" (<i>pisteuein eis</i>) and its Implications for an Anticipatory Reading of the Gospel according to John	Therese Aitchison, Hanging in a Tree Between Heaven and Earth: Symbolism in 2 Samuel
5:00	<i>Drinks followed by Dinner (optional, local restaurant TBC)</i>		

Tuesday 3 December				
	ANZABS		STAANZ	
	Wharekarakia	LR1	LR2	LR3
	Paul session Chair: Paul Trebilco	Gospels session 2 Chair: Richard Neville		
9:00	Chanki Shin, A New Perspective on the Content of <i>Imitatio Pauli</i> in 1 Corinthians 4:16	Kevin Waldie, Revisiting Compassion – A Focused Reading of Luke 10:25-37	Nicola Hoggard Creegan Christianity and Climate Change: Can Ecological healing be the kernel of Christian faith?	Hazel Tattersall God is (Not) an Artist
9:30	Karen Harmer Newton, Gaze Drawn Beyond: Poetic Language in Colossians 1:14-23 and 2:6-15	ONLINE: David Tombs, Is there an echo of Judges 19:25 in Matthew 27:31? Reflections on indirect references to sexual violence in the Bible	ONLINE: Liam Miller Rethinking Doctrine as Grammar with Decentred Playwriting Practices	Steve Taylor Knitting as public theological witness
10:00	Hebrews debate showdown Chair: Jonathan Robinson			
	Philip Church, A Sacrifice in Heaven? The Application of the Yom Kippur Ritual in Hebrews to the Self-Offering of Jesus		ONLINE: Jess Hall Towards a Menstrual Body Positivity: Theological Obstacles and Affirmations	Tom Yates & David Lewis Maximal Blameworthiness and Sin-Relative Omniscience: A New Argument Against Hell as Eternal Conscious Torment
	Katie Marcar, Not with the Blood of Goats: Yom Kippur and Cultic Ritual Sprinkling in Heb 9:11-14		Philip Sampson “Behold the Rubbish Truck of God, who takes away the sins of the world!” A Contextual Atonement Metaphor for Aotearoa New Zealand	Christa McKirland Reflections on Being Baptist: Preparing for Project Violet
11:00	<i>Morning tea – Wharekai</i>			

Tuesday continued				
11:30	Early Christianity session 1 Chair: Deane Galbraith		STAANZ	
	Jonathan Robinson, Mystic or Sarcastic? 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 as Greco-Roman Parody of Jewish Mysticism		Jaimee van Gernerden An Inquiry into Pākehā Feminist Theology	Jeremy Tattersall Ancient Righteousness: The Implications of a Torrancean Justification for Abraham's Redemption
12:00	Paul Trebilco, Debating the Date of Ignatius' Letters		Karen Davinia Taylor Reading Matthew's judgment parables from a liminal space	Myk Habets Theosis in Recent Protestant Thought: Movers, Shakers, Mystics, and More
12:30	Sean du Toit, Speech Ethics in 1 Peter		Andrew Clark-Howard, A 'Special Connexion' to Judaism: The Unexamined Problem of Supersessionism in Schleiermacher's <i>Glaubenslehre</i>	
1:00	<i>Lunch – Wharekai or local eateries</i>			
1:30	ANZABS AGM		<i>Lunch (continued)</i>	
2:00	Early Christianity session 2 Chair: Richard Neville	Reception session Chair: Karen Newton		
	Derek Tovey, "The Jews" in John's Gospel Revisited: Do negative references refer to the Jewish leadership?	Mark J Keown, The Missional Power of the Christ-Hymn Take 2		
2:30	Philip Sampson, Christ Died for Us: Paul's Use of Culture in Gospel Proclamation as Subversive Fulfilment	ONLINE: Sam T. Rajkumar, The Reception History of Psalm 137: Cultural Memory, Lament, and Reappropriation		
3:00	<i>Home again (but no rush if you want to noho and continue the kōrero)</i>			

ANZABS Abstracts

Therese Aitchison (University of Otago/ Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Hanging in a Tree Between Heaven and Earth: Symbolism in 2 Samuel 18:9

2 Samuel 18:9 describes a scene in which Absalom, caught by his head in a tree, hangs suspended between heaven and earth. This pivotal scene in the story of King David can be read on three levels. The first is as a literal description of events as they unfold. The second is as an account in which the writer has consciously used the symbolism associated with head and hair, hanging and mules to present a particular view of the events. The third level involves a deeper level of symbolism, below the conscious awareness of the writer. I use Jungian insights into masculine and feminine aspects of personality to show how this scene may be read symbolically as an image of a potential for balance between masculine and feminine attributes which I show as out of balance in King David.

WH Chong (University of Otago/ Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Rangi or Rangi-nui? Shén (神) or Shàngdì (上帝)? Examining translation issues arising from new test translations of Te Paipera Tapu (The Māori Bible) in conversation with the 1919 Mandarin Chinese Union Version (和合本)

In March 2023, the Bible Society of New Zealand (BSNZ) invited feedback on *He Tīmatanga*, a compilation of 10 newly translated Bible portions into te reo Māori (the Māori language). While the majority of survey responses were concerned the use of names of atua Māori (Māori divine beings) in place of existing terms for natural features in Genesis 1–11, other issues BSNZ sought feedback on included whether individual dialects ought to be presented; the appropriate way to render the divine name יהוה (YHWH); whether a formal or dynamic equivalent translation philosophy was preferable; and the use of footnotes. During the mid-to-late nineteenth century, Bible translators in China were also engaged in spirited debates regarding the “Term Question” and other linguistic and theological issues ahead of producing the 1919 Mandarin *Chinese Union Version* (CUV) of the Bible. Through intercultural engagement with select Biblical texts in conversation with both “outsider” and “insider” scholarship surrounding the Mandarin CUV translation committee’s work, this paper aims to show how an awareness of their cross-cultural complexities could have better informed the production and publication of *He Tīmatanga*. Some “culturally-adjacent” suggestions regarding future translations/revisions of Te Paipera Tapu (The Māori Bible) will be tentatively offered.

Phil Church (Laidlaw College/Te Wānanga Amorangi)

A Sacrifice in Heaven? The Application of the Yom Kippur Ritual in Hebrews to the Self-Offering of Jesus

In his ground-breaking, award-winning book *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* and elsewhere David Moffitt has highlighted the importance of Jesus’s resurrection in Hebrews. This has led to his main contribution to Hebrews scholarship, that just as the Yom Kippur ritual focuses on the aspersion of blood in the Holy of Holies, the writer of Hebrews focuses on Jesus’s presentation of his life to God in the heavenly sanctuary after his resurrection.

Over against those who argue for the centrality of Jesus's death, Moffitt argues that the atonement involves the entire complex of Jesus's death, resurrection and exaltation. This paper examines Hebrews 9:11–14 in its context and critiques Moffitt's reading of that text. Moffitt argues that this text refers to Jesus's passage through the heavenly holy places to present his blood before God. I argue that the text refers to Jesus's death as his offering of himself to God to achieve eternal redemption.

Sean du Toit (Alphacrucis College)
Speech Ethics in 1 Peter

In this paper, I will focus on Peter's speech ethics as a means of negotiating the hostility these Christians faced. In response to this Peter offers an ethic of speech that builds on the Christological example (2:23) and specific instructions regarding non-retaliation (3:9) grounded in the Jewish Scriptures (3:10-12). and Peter's offering of an alternative response (3:10-12). This paper proceeds to outline the Graeco-Roman context of responding to enemies and their insults. We then provide the context for analysing the specific situation that Peter addresses. Then we move to discuss the virtues of speech in the context of honouring and next discuss Peter's instruction regarding silence. We end with a reflection on the Christological example offered by 1 Peter in support of his speech ethics.

Katene Eruera (Kingi Ihaka Research Centre) and Lyndon Drake (Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Oxford)

Mana Motuhake as Prophetic Hermeneutic: Reimagining Right Relationship in Aotearoa/New Zealand

This paper reimagines the Indigenous Church's prophetic hermeneutic in Aotearoa/New Zealand by engaging with biblical texts through a dialogue between patristic theology and Indigenous constructs like Mana Motuhake and Tūrangawaewae. Drawing on theological concepts rooted in scripture, such as covenant, the *imago Dei* and *theosis*, it argues for an Indigenous vision of right relationship with God and community. Tūrangawaewae is presented as a sacred space of encounter, akin to biblical notions of land and covenant, where communities embody their divine calling in a post-Christendom context.

Deane Galbraith (University of Otago/ Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Why Did Jews Steal 'Israel'? Developments that compelled Ancient Jewish Appropriation of Israelite Identity

A major puzzle in the study of the Hebrew Bible is why Judahites/Judeans/Jews adopted the name 'Israel', the name of the former Northern Kingdom. The debate centres on the search for what Kristin Weingart terms *der Wendepunkt*: the historical turning point that caused the extension of the term 'Israel' to Judah/Yehud/Judea. Various *Wendepunkte* have been proposed, and may be classified under three main types: primarily political, involving ongoing Israelite control in Judah (Davies 1992, 2007; Frevel 2016); primarily ethnic, involving a sense of common community or kinship, including ongoing physical presence of Israelites in Judah (Finkelstein and Silberman 2006; Weingart 2014; Crouch 2014; Schütte 2016); or primarily

cultural-religious, including shared Yahwistic cultic practices or beliefs (Høgenhaven 1988; Williamson 2001; Kratz 2001; Na’aman 2010; Hong 2024). Existing theories adequately identify causes of Jewish appropriation of elements of Israelite religion or political power, yet offer no persuasive reason why Jews were compelled to do so as ‘the people of Israel’. To be convincing, an explanation of Israelite identity must give due recognition to the highly unusual nature of the historical development in which one particular people, Jews, adopted, without evident external compulsion, and exclusively, the name of another distinct people. The reason that compelled them, I will argue, lies in the particularist nature of the Northern traditions that Jews adopted within what was their own increasingly exclusive monolatristic cult of Yahweh.

Mary R. Huie-Jolly (NZACPE)

Expanding the definition of sacred marriage in a study of Matthew 1 and 2

Matthew’s genealogy, pregnancy, and infancy narratives make better sense in relation to the cultural commonplace of sacred marriage derived from Mesopotamian culture. Originating in ancient Sumerian mythology, sacred marriage metaphors were adapted over millennia in diverse contexts to support divinely ordained kingship. Though traditionally defined by a sexual encounter between a god(s) and a human leader, I include intimacy between divine and human, not sexuality, as the persistent marker of sacred marriage. Hebrew prophets, from whom Matthew quotes, communicated divine /human intimacy using both husband/wife, and parent/child metaphors, as do Assyrian oracles contemporary with them. An Aramaic speaking immigrant community in Egypt (circa 500-300 BCE) used sacred marriage imagery alongside a meal incorporating newcomers within the family of their ‘king.’ Broadening the definition of sacred marriage makes more sense of the family of God and the kingdom of heaven introduced in Matthew 1 and 2.

John de Jong (Laidlaw College/Te Wānanga Amorangi)

Māori Peace-making as ‘the Word of the Gospel of God’

Tamihana Te Rauparaha famously defied his father, Te Rauparaha, and journeyed to Te Waipounamu to preach the Gospel and make peace. In his own words, he went to put “an end to the fighting, to establish a firm and lasting peace based on the word of the gospel of God.” Tamihana shared a strong conviction with many early Christian Māori that peace-making was an essential element of the Christian faith. Yet the British missionaries who brought the Gospel message, while encouraging peace-making among Māori, belonged to an imperial power that was constantly engaged in warfare. In this paper, with a focus on Tamihana Te Rauparaha, I explore the hermeneutic that made peace-making central to the Bible and the Gospel message for early Māori Christians.

Mark J Keown (Laidlaw College/Te Wānanga Amorangi)

The Missional Power of the Christ-Hymn Take 2

Earlier this year, I published “The Missional Power of the Christ-Hymn” (<https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/15/6/711>). I argued the hymn can be read missionally

noting six aspects of it: 1) The missional historical setting; 2) The missional “fabric” of Philippians; 3) The hymn’s missional movement; 4) The hymn as evangelistic proclamation; 5) The missional purpose of Christ’s exaltation; 6) The missio-liturgical climax of the Hymn. Another aspect warrants further exploration—Christ as missional example to us today. I would like to develop this in my paper.

First, I will position myself in the story of the Pacific and its ongoing evangelization. Second, I will briefly summarize the earlier paper and its potential meaning for mission in the Pacific today. Third, I will suggest how the mission of God and his Son as described in Phil 2:6–8 could inform future evangelization. Fourth, I will draw together a range of threads for ongoing mission in the Pacific.

Katie Marcar (University of Otago/Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Not with the Blood of Goats: Yom Kippur and Cultic Ritual Sprinkling in Heb 9:11-14

David Moffitt in *Atonement and the Logic of Resurrection in the Epistle to the Hebrews* has argued that the resurrection and ascension of Jesus should cause a dramatic re-evaluation of how atonement is achieved in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Namely, he has argued that the Jesus’ high-priestly work takes place in heaven. This thesis has not convinced all interpreters. This paper will therefore aim to do three things. First, it will evaluate how well Moffitt’s thesis coheres with Heb 9:11-14. Second, this paper will respond to Philip Church’s paper, “A Sacrifice in Heaven? The Application of Yom Kippur Ritual in Hebrews to the Self-Offering of Jesus.” Finally, this paper will offer some observations on the nature of Hebrew’s creative exegesis of both text and ritual, drawing particularly from recent scholarship.

Don Moffat (St John’s Theological College/Hoani Tapu Te Kaikauwhau i te Rongopai)

Genealogy, Genesis and Genre

Genesis has a genealogical structure, but that structure is rarely influential in discussion of genre. Genesis is also unique among literature of the ancient Near Eastern region in using such a structure for its origin stories. Yet cultures as diverse as Māori and ancient Greek give clues for understanding the structure and genre of Genesis.

Richard Neville (Laidlaw College/Te Wānanga Amorangi)

Moral Repair and Managing Sin in Matthew’s Gospel

This paper investigates why the Gospel of Matthew includes so much unique material dealing with moral repair. Matthew is the only Gospel to include a text addressing the responsibility of the *offender* to seek reconciliation with the person they have injured (Matthew 5:21-26) and most of what Matthew says about the responsibility of the *injured party* to forgive is also unique to Matthew (e.g., Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-35). This investigation finds that Matthew’s interest in moral repair is part of a larger theme in Matthew’s Gospel. This theme represents an important contribution to biblical ethics; one that has not previously been identified by Matthean scholarship.

Karen Harmer Newton (Laidlaw College/Te Wānanga Amorangi)

Gaze Drawn Beyond: Poetic Language in Colossians 1:14-23 and 2:6-15

God creates and communicates in words, often words of poetry. There is also a growing desire for poetry and the poetic in the world. Poetic language in the NT is the use of compressed, concentrated, exalted language that is informed and elevated by knowledge of the gospel and the cost of the new covenant. It includes a mixture of convention, structure, novelty, and improvisation that surprises the recipient into thinking afresh about a subject. It also appeals to human senses and emotions through clarity, wholeness, and beauty, and has the power to awaken the entire soul of the person in a creative process akin to God's. In Colossians 1:14-23 and 2:6-15, the writing is richly poetic while being soundly theological. It gives today's church examples of how to communicate poetically in teaching, evangelism, and worship without losing any depth of theology. Communicating in such a way may enable the church to reach a post-Christian society as logical, scientific language is replaced with theologically informed poetic language so that a new generation can hear and receive the gospel.

Sam T. Rajkumar (United Theological College, India)

The Reception History of Psalm 137: Cultural Memory, Lament, and Reappropriation

Abstract: The paper explores the diverse receptions of Psalm 137 across cultural and historical contexts. Originally expressing the sorrow and longing of the Israelites during their Babylonian exile, the psalm has resonated with communities facing oppression and displacement throughout history. The study delves into its reception in Jewish, Christian, and non-Western traditions. Through the lens of reception history, it examines how various communities have reinterpreted the psalm's themes of exile, lament, and justice to address their socio-political realities. The analysis also covers artistic, literary, and musical adaptations, emphasizing how the psalm's universal themes of grief, resilience, and the quest for justice have allowed it to remain relevant across time and cultures. By examining these diverse interpretations, the paper highlights Psalm 137's enduring global impact as a profound expression of human suffering and hope.

Michael Rhodes (Carey Baptist College/Te Kāreti Iriiri o Carey)

Keep Your Hands Off God's Dragons! Biblical Sea Monsters as Divine Limits on the Human Vocation in Gen 1:26-28

Powerful sea creatures frequently appear in the HB/OT. Some texts imitate aspects of the ancient Near Eastern "conflict myths," in which the ruling god defeats the divinized Sea and its monsters (cf. Psalm 74:13-14; Isaiah 27:1). Other texts allude to such "conflict myths" subversively. In Gen 1:20-21, God's creation includes "the great sea monsters." Such monsters are not enemies to be destroyed, but creatures in which YHWH delights.

The relationship between these "sea monsters" and the human vocation in Gen 1:26-28 warrants further investigation. I will argue that the great "sea monsters" are not included in the category of "fish" in Gen 1:26-28, and that they therefore place limits on humanity's "rule," however construed. Indeed, a significant strand of HB/OT thought identifies such creatures with

dangerous, mysterious aspects of creation that God delights in and places beyond human control, with significant ecological implications for religious readers.

Jonathan Robinson (Carey Baptist College/Te Kāreti Iriiri o Carey)

Mystic or Sarcastic? 2 Corinthians 12:2-4 as Greco-Roman Parody of Jewish Mysticism

In this paper I suggest a solution to the puzzle of the Apostle Paul's vision in 2 Corinthians 12. The account's distinctive use of the third person, its disjointed syntax, its disregard for the body, and its contradiction of Paul's previously espoused anthropology and cosmology, have generated a range of proposals. However, the general consensus is that Paul is describing his own visit to the third heaven in the third person. Consequently, the experience of 12:2-4 becomes data to be included in Paul's anthropology, cosmology, and biography. This study will combine two minority proposals that have previously been kept separate: 1) that Paul is making use here of mockery and irony (Betz), and 2) that Paul is speaking of someone else rather than himself (Hermann/Goulder). Utilising recent research on the Greco-Roman rhetorical technique of *sarcasmos* and on early Jewish heavenly ascent traditions, I will argue that, rather than an account of his own vision, Paul is mocking his opponents in order to expose what he considers to be their vague and incoherent mystical boasting.

Te Aroha Rountree (Trinity Methodist Theological College), Andrew Picard (St John's College / Hoani Tapu Te Kaikauwhau i te Rongopai), Emily Colgan (Trinity Methodist Theological College)

Ngā Waiata: Savage Interpretations. Robert Maunsell's Translation of Te Paipera Tapu

Robert Maunsell was a renowned CMS missionary, educationalist, archdeacon, and linguist, who is celebrated for establishing mission schools in Aotearoa New Zealand and translating the Bible into te reo Māori. In his own day, Maunsell was widely regarded as one of the foremost experts on te reo Māori and was awarded an honorary doctorate from Trinity College in Dublin for translating the Hebrew Bible into te reo. Our histories remember his "exceptional knowledge" of te reo Māori, which "made him more sensitive to Māori culture than most Europeans. He respected and was respected by many Māori" (*Dictionary of NZ Biography*). Such conclusions overlook the ambiguities of Maunsell's legacy. Maunsell believed Māori customs, culture, and language were inherently inferior to British customs, culture, and language. Māori, he argued, were wild and ferocious savages until civilized through British Christianity. Recent decolonial discourse has employed the term epistemicide to describe the intellectual genocide and erasure of Indigenous knowledges through colonisation. All translation is an act of interpretation, and Maunsell's attitudes cannot be abstracted from his translation. This paper explores the extent to which Maunsell's epistemicide impacts his translation of the Hebrew Bible into te reo Māori. We examine portions of his translation of the Psalms through the lens of epistemicide to assess how it influenced his translations and their legacy. This is an important historic as well as contemporary question, as Maunsell's translations remain central to the contemporary worshipping life of Māori Christian communities without wide knowledge or critique of this violent colonial heritage.

Kathleen Rushton

“Believing into” (*pisteuein eis*) 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. This approach sees creation 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 call all creation into being in an unfinished, evolving universe. My focus will be on exploring the expression “believing into” (*pisteuein eis*) which is unique to John, found mainly in John 1-12 and aligns with the evangelist’s preference for verbs and action.

Philip Sampson (University of Otago/Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Christ Died for Us: Paul’s Use of Culture in Gospel Proclamation as Subversive Fulfilment

In Romans 5:6–8, Paul compares and contrasts Jesus’ death to the likelihood of someone dying for righteous people and good causes. Interpreters have debated both the meaning and the source of Paul’s language. In this paper, drawing on insights from exegesis, cognitive linguistics, and anthropology, I argue that Paul was bringing the gospel to expression by drawing upon but also subverting narratives of “dying for” cities and people in Graeco-Roman culture. I conclude that in his gospel metaphors, Paul both drew on cultural narratives and called them into question; his relationship to culture was one of subversive fulfilment through the gospel.

Chanki Shin (University of Otago/Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

A New Perspective on the Content of *Imitatio Pauli* in 1 Corinthians 4:16

Boykin Sanders wrote, “Paul offers almost no guidance that would enable us to ascertain specifically what aspects of his life are to be imitated. The lack of specificity on Paul’s part has vexed many interpreters of 1 Cor 4:16.” In agreement with Sanders, this paper attempts to identify a particular aspect of Paul’s life that he exhorts the Corinthian assembly to imitate in 1 Corinthians 4:16. The paper begins with briefly surveying recent scholarly views on that aspect. Then, the paper examines Paul’s ὁδοί mentioned in 4:17c since they play a crucial role in identifying the particular aspect of Paul’s life exhorted to imitate in 4:16. Finally, the paper suggests a new perspective on the content of *Imitatio Pauli* in 1 Corinthians 4:16. The paper will argue that Paul exhorts the Corinthian assembly to imitate how he articulates his Christ-following identity in 15:10a-b.

David Tombs (University of Otago/ Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Is there an echo of Judges 19:25 in Matthew 27:31? Reflections on indirect references to sexual violence in the Bible

Content warning: Sexual violence. The first part of this paper explores the ways that sexual violence is referenced in contemporary torture reports. Rather than frank and direct references to sexual violence, present-day torture reports often reveal ‘reticence’ (reluctance to speak), ‘restraint’ (a tendency to understatement), and ‘indirect referencing’ (euphemisms and discrete allusions).

These three dynamics can encourage biblical scholars to think about how crucifixion as a torture is presented in the New Testament. The second part of the paper takes the potential echo in Matthew 27:31 of *empaizō* from Judges 19:25 (the rape of the Levite's wife), as a possible example of an indirect reference to sexual violence. This possibility has been considered by Philippe Lefebvre (2021), and in my own work (Tombs 2021, Tombs 2023). The ways that translations of *empaizō* might erase the possibility of sexual violence when men are the object has been discussed by Barbara Thiede (2022). In this presentation, I consider Lefebvre's language of 'play', 'Les soldats se jouent de Jésus' (the soldiers play with Jesus). In English translation, *empaizō* is more commonly translated as 'mock'. I ask whether Lefebvre's choice of language might make the reader more attentive to understatement and euphemism in the text. I conclude that the frequent use of euphemisms in speaking of sexual violence deserves more attention when considering the mistreatment of Jesus. Care and attention should be given to what is explicitly said and to what might be implied—but not directly said—in the biblical presentation of Jesus' experience. To this end, present-day torture reports might offer hermeneutical insights for more careful reading of the text.

Derek Tovey (St John's Theological College/Hoani Tapu Te Kaikauwhau i te Rongopai, ret.)

"The Jews" in John's Gospel Revisited: Do negative references refer to the Jewish leadership?

This paper revisits the question of the use of the designation "the Jews" (*hoi Ioudaioi*) in John's Gospel. I will argue that, when used negatively, the reference is to opponents of Jesus, and frequently the Jewish religious leadership. This usage may not have been peculiar to the Gospel's usage. I will suggest that 2 Corinthians 11:24, "Five times I have received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one" (NRSV) is a Pauline instance. I will give an example of an interesting modern usage.

Paul Trebilco (University of Otago/Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Debating the Date of Ignatius' Letters

There has been significant debate in recent years about the date of Ignatius' letters. Currently, there are three main options - 105-110 CE, 120-140 CE, or 160-180 CE. This is an important issue because Ignatius' letters give us evidence for a whole range of matters relating to the study of the New Testament and Christian communities in the second century, including the use of books that became part of the New Testament, the development of leadership structures in early Christian communities, the persecution of Christians, and the development of Christology. The date of Ignatius' letters is also very important for dating Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians*. In this paper I will present and evaluate the arguments for the different dating options and put the case for a date of 120-140 CE.

Kevin Waldie (Te Kupenga Catholic Theological College)
Revisiting Compassion – A Focused Reading of Luke 10:25-37

In this paper it is my intention to critically consider what current scholarly discussion has to say about the notion of compassion, with a special focus upon its role within the delimited text of Luke 10:25-37. Conscious that there has been a degree of imprecision and difficulty associated with the direction the topic has taken of recent, I am therefore especially interested in pursuing a more refined biblical definition of the word compassion itself. My aim is to work towards greater clarity by drawing upon what the evangelist Luke conveys to his reader / listener through his chosen narrative content and structure. And, in particular, I am intent upon discerning what comes to light as a consequence of his redactional decisions.

STAANZ Abstracts

Andrew Clark-Howard (PhD candidate Charles Sturt University)

A 'Special Connexion' to Judaism: The Unexamined Problem of Supersessionism in Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre*

A new wave of Schleiermacher reception can be observed within English-speaking theology in which careful rereading of Schleiermacher's work is promoted as a means of addressing an array of important theological issues. Less attention has been given within this new reception to Schleiermacher's deeply supersessionist account of the development of religious ideas within the introduction to his *Glaubenslehre*. Far from rejecting the recent impetus of Schleiermacher's new reception, in this paper I attempt to make the case that an important part of this reception must attend to the logics of primitivism and supersessionism that lie within Schleiermacher's theological imagination and rendering of Judaism, logics which cannot be disconnected from the attendant violence of European colonialism and the development of race in the modern period.

Nicola Hoggard Creegan (NZCIS/Ngā Karaitiana Kimi Matū)

Christianity and Climate Change: Can Ecological healing be the kernel of Christian faith?

In this paper I will make the case that Christianity should not just have creation care or stewardship as a worthy "fifth mark of mission" or something similar. Ecological transformation and healing should be at the heart of who we are as Christians. I argue that just as Coakley has argued that the pray-er in silent prayer is drawn towards and is able to discern the movement of the Spirit groaning within and toward the Source, so the believer in contemplative connection to the natural world, also feels the "groaning of creation" and the delight of creatures for God. But Christians labour under layers of theological obfuscation, a long obsession with the apocalyptic as well as common cultural acceptance of an inert materialism. Yet there are signs that in the last 50 years there has been a movement back towards nature as a theological source, and as manifesting the energies of God. How can the Christian faith be transformed so that it not only inspires climate activism but also reveals its deeply ecological heart?

Jaimee van Gernerden

An Inquiry into Pākehā Feminist Theology

White feminism, including feminist theology, has been thoroughly critiqued for universalising white experience and failing to engage thoughtfully with the diverse racial experiences of women.

Similarly, dominant theological discourse, and specifically for this project theologies from colonial contexts, is identified as centralising white experience and ignoring the concerns of the land on which this theology is done. In this paper I ask questions central to a constructive proposal for a post- and/or de-colonial white feminist theology that can speak self-critically about the limitations of both white feminist theology and colonial theology. My proposals for a post- and/or de-colonial Pākehā feminist theology include utilising intercultural theological practices in order to reckon with white women's own complicity in colonisation, and to consider the possibility for constructive offerings to the wider field of postcolonial feminist theology.

Myk Habets (Laidlaw College/ Te Wānanga Amorangi)

Theosis in Recent Protestant Thought: Movers, Shakers, Mystics, and More

Anglican and Protestant traditions are recipients of the ecumenical achievements of the twentieth century. This has borne fruit in the interest in doctrines of theosis. Across denominational lines, doctrines of theosis are being constructed in ways that remain faithful to the central defining dogmas and practices of each tradition. These traditions utilize sophisticated methods of theological retrieval to look backwards before moving forwards. A new generation of scholars is now publishing significant works of constructive theology in which theosis finds a central place. More work is yet to be done, and the ecumenical potential theosis offers is yet to be fully realized, but the signs are healthy. Anglican, Reformed, Lutheran, Wesleyan, Pentecostal, Baptist, and Anabaptist voices are brought to the fore in a historical survey of representative theologians of theosis in these various Christian traditions since the middle of the twentieth century. On the basis of this study, several critical observations will be offered.

Jess Hall (PG Dip Otago University/ Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)

Towards a Menstrual Body Positivity: Theological Obstacles and Affirmations

Menstrual stigmas still circulate in the Western world, and those who bleed monthly are no stranger to them. If we were to go about investigating a theological framework for affirming the menstrual body as good, where would we look? In this paper I will exhibit some of the theological obstacles and affirmations that surround the menstruating body. In particular, using the work of Marcella Althaus-Reid and Karen O'Donnell respectively, I will demonstrate the difficulties and possibilities of turning to the bodies of the incarnation – Mary and Jesus – as resources for menstrual body positivity. Ultimately, I posit that the menstrual body can be a site of theological reflection, and affirming this has the potential to call us into a truly transformative menstrual body positivity that resists stigma by reverently affirming how our bodies witness to God's story.

Travel Makara (Pacific Theological College)

“Mātūtū Theology: A Holistic Approach to God, Land, and Mental Health in Avaiki Nui.”

Mātūtū Theology is a holistic framework that integrates the spiritual, environmental, and psychological dimensions of life within the context of Avaiki Nui. It underscores the interconnectedness of God, land, and mental health, emphasising sacred relationships between

individuals, their communities, and the natural world (Hikuroa 2016, 5; Tamasese et al. 2005, 300; Lockhart et al. 2019, 427). Rooted in indigenous Pacific perspectives, this approach highlights the fundamental role of spirituality in understanding mental health and wellbeing among Pasifika peoples (Tamasese et al. 2005, 301). Mātūtū Theology draws on the concepts of kenosis and liminality. Kenosis refers to the self-emptying aspect of divinity, emphasising humility and service, and demonstrating God's interconnectedness with creation (Moltmann 1992, 67; Cronin 1992, 5). Liminality, on the other hand, pertains to the transitional and transformative spaces where individuals or communities undergo significant change, fostering resilience and renewal (Cronin 1992, 6). This session will outline the components of Mātūtū Theology and its application to the burden of mental illness in Avaiki Nui.

Christa McKirland (Carey Baptist College/Te Kāreti Iriiri o Carey)
Reflections on Being Baptist: Preparing for Project Violet

In preparation for presenting at Project Violet (a Baptist initiative seeking to address sexism, racism, and ableism in the UK) I would like to share my analysis of some data from NZ Baptists related to authority and power. I believe this has resonance with some of the findings within Project Violet as it relates to collaboration, agency, and discernment. Baptist ecclesiology, in theory, should naturally address sexism, racism, and ableism. This is because communal discernment is based on every believer potentially hearing the voice of the Spirit and having space to express what is heard, and thus every member matters. However, in practice this is often not the case. Thus, this paper will propose some ways forward in bridging theory and practice that may have application both in the UK and here in Aotearoa.

Liam Miller (PhD candidate and Sessional Lecturer at United Theological College/Charles Sturt University)
Rethinking Doctrine as Grammar with Decentred Playwriting Practices

Theatrical practice has resourced recent work on doctrine. Many of these articulations find antecedents in narrative theology and Lindbeckian schools which view doctrine as grammar or rule. As a result, their theatrical approach emphasises the singularity of a script, the linear path of text to performance, and the passivity of the audience. This both misrepresents the nature of much contemporary theatre-making and creates theological problems for communities seeking to express their encounter with revelation and scripture in culturally integrous ways.

This paper intervenes by considering how practices of decentred playwriting, devised theatre, and community docu-drama can break the impasse of doctrine as either descriptive or prescriptive. In its place I propose an approach where doctrine can be developed from below, as a reflection on a community's experience and witness, but also performed in a manner which is formative and available for later adaptations by the wider church.

Philip Sampson (PhD student University of Otago | Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)
“Behold the Rubbish Truck of God, who takes away the sins of the world!” A Contextual Atonement Metaphor for Aotearoa New Zealand

The New Testament authors brought the gospel to expression using both biblical and cultural words. Christians in Aotearoa New Zealand today should both use biblical words to share the gospel, and bring this same gospel to expression in cultural words after the example of Scripture. In this paper I outline the methodology of critical dynamic equivalence (in conversation with Charles Kraft and Paul Hiebert) and suggest the language of Jesus as “the Rubbish Truck of God” as an appropriate relocated gospel metaphor for Aotearoa New Zealand.

Taulu Schuster (PhD candidate, Laidlaw and AUT)

O A’U, O A’U LAVA: Faith in a New Zealand-born Polynesian Generation-Z World

Times have changed for New Zealand-born Polynesians of Generation-Z regarding church community and attendance, making it a crucial research opportunity to learn and develop from. Which brings me to my research’s focus question: What causal mechanisms engage and disengage New Zealand-born Polynesian Generation-Z tertiary students (NZPI Gen-Z1) to the gospel of Jesus Christ? As we enter the 21st century, many New Zealand-born Polynesian Generation-Z do not follow the traditions of their parents, who grew up attending church during the 1980s in Aotearoa. Though Christianity is the largest religion of Polynesian peoples in New Zealand, there are different levels of engagement occurring with today’s New Zealand-born Polynesian Generation-Z. This research is to explore the reasons behind this.

Hazel Tattersall (Laidlaw College/ Te Wānanga Amorangi)

God is (Not) an Artist

There is a growing desire in churches to engage with art, yet this desire must be met with an equally strong commitment to theological precepts to avoid placing undue pressure on artists and limiting the Christian imagination. This paper considers the importance of the relation of the immanent and economic Trinity for understanding the theological role of Christian artists. These theological precepts help us avoid elevating the artist to the role of high priest which is reserved for Christ alone. This paper also offers a Christological perspective which gives the artist (and all the Church) freedom to share in Christ's perfect worship of the Father through her art.

Jeremy Tattersall (Laidlaw College/ Te Wānanga Amorangi)

Ancient Righteousness: The Implications of a Torrancean Justification for Abraham’s Redemption

Thomas F. Torrance claims that justification is not merely about forensic declaration, for it involves a real actualisation of righteousness. He argues that when we formulate justification solely as forensically imputed righteousness, and so avoid any notion of justification resulting in ontological righteousness, we are actually by-passing the event and effects of the resurrection. This paper presents Torrance’s doctrine of justification and highlights its significance for the way we interpret Abraham’s redemption in Scripture and history. The paper also highlights the profound and unrealised implications this reading of Abraham has for understanding what the life, death, and resurrection of Christ does to space-time in Scripture and beyond.

Karen Davinia Taylor (PhD candidate, University of Chester)
Reading Matthew's judgment parables from a liminal space

This paper offers a theological reading of a portion Matthew's judgment parables as they have provoked reflexive conversations regarding my relationship with the Bible, cultural values, community and identity. I bring to the text a hermeneutic of God's *hesed* as I interrogate it for an understanding of judgment as a relational accountability. In honouring the Bible as a place that potentially mediates revelatory encounter (Schneiders, 1999, p. 53) I recognised implicit cultural values - that (unknowingly) frame my interpretations regarding my relationships with the other/Other as well as the text itself. I return to the text with a hermeneutic of relational faithfulness. In this conversation I found myself – “being affirmed, being commanded, being questioned and searched, being surprised and opened to new possibilities, and being desired and loved” (Ford, 2007, p. 5).

Steve Taylor (Research Affiliate, University of Otago | Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka)
Knitting as public theological witness

This paper examines the ways in which acts of making are public theology. Matthew Engelke has researched how the Bible Society in the United Kingdom is active in public domains. He uses “ambient faith” as an analytical tool to theorise Christian activity that challenges the political and civic constraints imposed by the modern secular imaginary.

This paper applies “ambient faith” to recent practises of knitting in which Christians have been publicly active through yarnbombing and social activism. This paper draws on interviews with fifty knitters in four countries, along with participant observation of public interactions with several knitted projects, including visible displays of solidarity with those affected by abuse. While knitting is commonly seen as a domestic activity, done in private spaces, this paper describes how making offers new ways of relating and gives voice, particularly to lay women. This offers new ways to think about the nature of public theology and Christian witness.

Tom Yates (Massey University/Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa); David Lewis (Independent)
Maximal Blameworthiness and Sin-Relative Omniscience: A New Argument Against Hell as Eternal Conscious Torment

In this paper, we defend a novel argument against the “eternal conscious torment” (ECT) view of hell as punishment for the unrepentant. We argue that (1) if God damns anyone at all (i.e., if God retributively punishes the unrepentant in the afterlife), God damns the unrepentant to ECT only if they go to their graves *maximally blameworthy* for their sins. However, we draw upon recent analytic work on the epistemic condition for moral responsibility to make the case that (2) maximal blameworthiness for sin requires *sin-relative omniscience* (i.e., perfect knowledge of the precise nature in which sinful acts are sinful and why), yet (3) *no one*, we argue, is capable of sin-relative omniscience. It follows that (4) God damns no one to ECT. The upshot is that if God damns anyone at all, God damns the unrepentant either to annihilation or to a form of hell without ECT.

ABSTRACTS END

