

ANZABS ANNUAL MEETING, 14-15 NOVEMBER 2005
UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO, DUNEDIN

PROGRAMME AND ABSTRACTS

Venue:

Room 4.19 in the Commerce Building which is located on the corner of Clyde St and Union Street East. For a map of the campus go to www.otago.ac.nz/disabilities/html/maps/maps.html, and click Central Campus Accessible Buildings. The Commerce building is in the middle at the bottom.

Monday November 14

9.30-10 am: Registration (Coffee and tea available)

10-10.30 a.: Welcome

10.30-11.10 am: Judith McKinlay, "Huldah speaks again and again."

This paper considers the role of Huldah in 2 Kgs 22 and its implications when read alongside the reform in chapter 23. After employing a hermeneutics of imagination to explore some historical-critical issues, it briefly moves to a final text reading, experimentally employing some of the insights gained from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and Homi Bhabha.

11.15-12.15 am: James Harding, 'In the Name of Love: Resisting Reader and Abusive Redeemer in Deutero-Isaiah'

It has been customary to apply a positive hermeneutic to the opening words of Isaiah 40, reflected in translations such as "speak tenderly to Jerusalem" (Isa 40:2 NRSV) or "siaradwch yn dyner wrth Jerwsalem" (Y Beibl Cymraeg Newydd), and in scholarly elaborations such as "speak to the heart of Jerusalem, meaning, speak words of encouragement and reassurance ... since she can look forward to a better future" (Blenkinsopp 2002: 182). This paper balances this trend by reading Isa 40:1-2 from the perspective of a resisting reader, in light of intertexts that share with Isa 40:2 the idiom *dbwr 'l lb* (Gen 34:3; 50:21; Judg 19:3; 2 Sam 19:8; Hos 2:16; Ruth 2:13). In an important 1989 article, Fokkelen van Dijk-Hemmes noted that three of these texts (Gen 34:3; Judg 19:3; Hos 2:16) relate directly to the perpetration of sexual violence. In light of this, there is a strong case for reading Isa 40:2 as assuming the prophetic metaphor of Israel as wayward bride and Yhwh as violent rejected husband. If so, the text also assumes that the sexual violence with which Yhwh threatened Israel in Hos 2:4-15 has in fact been perpetrated (Lam 1:8; cf. 5:11). Yhwh's overtures of comfort, redemption, and love in Deutero-Isaiah, which call to mind his love song in Hos 2:16-25, must thus be resisted. The reader who co-operates with these overtures of love also implicitly valorises a metaphor that re-inscribes the most violent and abusive aspects of male power, evident elsewhere in Deutero-Isaiah in the image of the divine warrior, and colludes in the sexual violence perpetrated on Babylon in Isaiah 47, an act threatened in the name of love (Isa 48:14). The only appropriate position for the ethically responsible reader is to resist.

12.15-1.15 pm.:

LUNCH

1.15 -1.55 pm: Geoff Aimers, 'All the President's Men: Poetics and Characterization in the book of Job.'

The poetics of the book of Job are examined with a view to deriving an alternative characterization of Job and the Friends. The Dialogues are understood with reference to the 'Contest Pattern' as a failed test of 'hospitality' of the Friends. This provokes the manifestation of the Divine Warrior. This makes sense if, according to the 'Wisdom Script', Job and the Friends represent king and royal counsellors who have committed the apostasy of social injustice to their subjects. Job's epiphany represents a transformation of social ethics of the king which sees the transformation of the community to a genuine idyll.

2.-3 pm: Robert McIvor, 'Oral Societies and the Limitations of Human Memory: Implications for the transmission of the Jesus traditions.'

Human memory preserves but an inaccurate representation of events, but even so, oral cultures have some success in preserving traditions of their own histories. This paper evaluates the effectiveness of the preservation of oral traditions, and considers some implications that this might have for the preservation of the Jesus traditions in the first century.

3-3.30 p.m.: AFTERNOON TEA

3.30-4.10 pm: Tom Innes "The influence of the OT Jubilee on the shaping of Luke's gospel, with the focus on Luke 4:18-19.'

Opinion is divided over the influence of the OT Jubilee on the shaping of Luke's gospel. This paper, focusing on Luke 4:18-19, surveys the significance commentators attribute to Jubilee as background to the passage, the criteria these commentators have employed in making their assessments, and the weight they attribute to the passage within the gospel of Luke. At each point hermeneutical questions are raised by the range of opinions expressed.

4.15-4.45 pm: Kath Rushton 'Some Implications of Wisdom and Friendship in John'

John's Gospel is often described as being "inward looking" or addressed to "insiders". This paper argues that attention to the Wisdom and Friendship motifs in John offers a counter view. This preparatory exploration considers the use of *parresia* (frank speech), a characteristic of friendship in the ancient world. This aspect of ancient friendship is evident implicitly in the portrayal of Jesus as friend and Wisdom. All encounters of Jesus (except Nicodemus, 12:1-8 and 13-17) are in public places.

4.45 – 5.30 pm: Derek Tovey, "'John I know, and Jesus I know, but what is History?'" Reflections on historical method in Casey and Blomberg.'

The paper provides a brief analysis of the modes by, and bases upon which Maurice Casey (*Is John's Gospel True?*), and Craig L. Blomberg (*The*

Historical Reliability of John's Gospel) have explored John's Gospel as a source for historical information about Jesus. I note the understandings (different and similar) that these scholars have both as regards the starting points from which, and the bases upon which the Fourth Gospel's use as a source for the historical Jesus should proceed; and the outcomes of such uses. I go on to suggest that the enterprise would be assisted by more reflection upon the nature of history, and what might be expected from historical claims. Specifically, I suggest that a clearer distinction is required between the use of John's Gospel as a source for historical data and the task of historical reconstruction. A clearer articulation of the relationship between historical description and interpretation, and the contributions of each to "History", is required.

Tuesday 15 November

8.45 –9 am Annual General and Business Meeting

9-9.40 am: Paul Trebilco 'When did "Christians" first call themselves "the Believers"?'

The 'label' "Christian" is only used three times in the NT and only becomes the most popular term for "Christians" in the writings of Ignatius. In the NT itself, a range of terms are used by writers as self-designations for themselves and their readers - brothers and sisters, saints, disciples, servants, "the Way", and so on. "The Believers" is one of the terms that is used fairly regularly, and across a range of texts. It is arguably the most distinctive of the terms Christians used for each other, since it is not a term taken over from Jewish use, nor a label used in the Greco-Roman world.

But when was this term first used? Paul uses it regularly, and Luke uses it in Acts from an early stage (2:44; 4:32; 5:14). In this paper I will seek to argue that the use of "the believers" as a self-designation is not a Pauline innovation, but rather goes back to the earliest period after the resurrection. As a distinctive term for the new movement, it gives us insight into one feature that was crucial for earliest Christian identity.

9.40 -10.40 am: Gillian Townsley '*Gender Trouble* in Corinth: Que(e)rying Constructs of Gender in 1 Corinthians 11.2-16.'

Queer theory closely scrutinizes gender behaviour labelled as 'natural,' often utilising the work of Judith Butler (1990, 1993). Her theory of 'performativity' demonstrates that practices of 'collective disidentification' unsettle the 'normal' and reveal gender as indeterminate. This paper proposes that a connection can be made between this notion of performativity and 1 Cor 11.2-16. Previous studies of this passage have focused primarily either on the surface matter of correct attire for worship, which occasions Paul's arguments (hairstyles or head coverings?), or on exegetical issues (does *kephale* mean 'source' or 'ruler'?). This paper proposes that an approach is needed which examines more closely the gender issues fundamental to this text and suggests that Butler's notion of performativity might therefore enable a new que(e)rying of this passage.

10.40-11.10 a.m.:

MORNING TEA

11.10-11.50 am: Peter Carrell 'Into the breech again: pronouns, childbirth, woman, and silence in 1 Timothy 2.11-15.'

Working backwards from the enigmatic pronouns in 1 Tim 2.15 this paper investigates whether any new light can be shed on 1 Tim 2.11-15 in respect of its apparent non-congeniality in the 21st century, and rebuts a recent attempt to suggest that the 'children' in v. 15 are noble virtues.

11.50-12.30 pm: George Wieland 'Crete and the Letter to Titus'

Various features of the letter to Titus have long puzzled scholars. These include the choice of Crete as implied destination and the unusual form of the Household or Station Code material in Titus 2.1-3.8. This paper will explore patterns of social organisation on Crete in Roman times and suggest that the behavioural instruction in Titus has in fact been shaped specifically to the Cretan environment. Implications for the provenance and purpose of the letter will be discussed.

12.30-1.30 pm: LUNCH

1-2 pm.: Margaret Eaton and Edmund Little 'How Should We Understand Difficult Texts?'

We are addressing those texts from the Bible which seem too violent or extreme for our ears, which seem to present an inappropriate picture of sex, or which present God and/or Jesus in a bad light. We are concerned with how such texts should be explained to non-academic believers. We will discuss how selected texts have been understood by various commentators, and will ask provocative questions designed to elicit audience participation. We look forward to a lively time.

2-3 pm: John Hale (with Donald Cullington) 'John Milton's Christian Doctrine: Six Problems'

I am editing and translating Milton's contentious theological manuscript, *De Doctrina Christiana*. Six problems of the large-scale undertaking are illustrated here, in the hope of enlightenment from a conference on biblical studies, since *De Doctrina* is nothing if not biblical. They can be termed problems of (1) transcription (2) translation (3) editorial presentation (4) authorial intention (5) readership and (6) connections to Milton's other work, especially *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. The first three problems concern my own scholarship, the last three Milton's; so the second three will be given greater scope here, but some understanding of the first group will help with the second.

How does a blind English author dictate and check Hebrew words? Should a translator of wordy Latin be equally wordy in English? Do readers of a bilingual book need both texts, and their notes, all gathered on the same double page? Does *De Doctrina* do what it says it will do, and if not, why not? Who were its intended readers and did the plan change? What is the relationship between the work and Milton's poems?

3-3.30 pm:

AFTERNOON TEA

3.30-4.10 pm: Martin Williams 'The Flood, Baptism, and Salvation in 1 Peter 3:21'

1 Peter 3:20d-21: [20d] [the ark] in which a few—that is, eight people [20f] —were saved by means of water. [21] This [Water] also now saves you, as baptism, an antitype of the flood—not as the washing of dirt from the body but as a pledge to God of a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:21 is one of the most difficult passages in the whole of 1 Peter (what does he mean when he says that “baptism now saves you”?). In addition to that, it is situated right in the middle of what is, without doubt, one of the most difficult portions of 1 Peter (3:18-4:6) and perhaps one of the most difficult passages in the NT (especially 3:19 with its reference to Christ’s proclamation to the spirits in prison and 4:6 with its reference to the preaching of the gospel to the dead). The purpose of this seminar, then, will be to discuss not only the meaning of 3:21 but the pivotal role that it plays within the larger context of 3:18-4:6 (which, as a chiasm [ABCCBA] pivots on 3:20-21). Two things will become clear from this analysis: (1) baptism is the means by which believers participate in the suffering (3:18ad; 4:1, 6b) and vindication of Christ (3:18e, 19; 4:6c), and (2) the salvific nature of baptism—as a pledge to God of a good conscience—lies in the complete reorientation of one’s life in relation to God and this final vindication.

4.15 –5 pm: Nasili Vakauta 'Reading beyond the Reefs: A Sketch of an Oceanic Hermeneutics'

Oceania, so strong in its service of contextual theology, offers so little in terms of its hermeneutical perspectives. This paper hopes to add some insights from the region by sketching an Oceanic 'alter-native' theory of interpretation (a hermeneutic) that is both contextual and emancipatory. For that purpose, the paper is divided into three short sections: first, as a point of departure, it critically interrogates some of the existing contextual propositions, thus calling attentions to some of the problems involved with such project; second, it outlines the goals, requirements, and categories of Oceanic hermeneutics; third, and finally, it proposes an Oceanic methodology for biblical interpretation, determined and informed by the proposed hermeneutics. The work is limited by the fact that: (i) it is done solely from a Tongan point of view, and (ii) it contains no engagement with biblical texts (a task for yet another paper).