

### Editor's Editorial

This issue of *Colloquium* has special character for two reasons. In 2006 Executive of the *Australian and New Zealand Society for Theological Studies* (ANZSTS) moves from Perth to Auckland which becomes the new home for *Colloquium*, and this issue has a special on issues of theology and information technology, which Revd Dr Tim Bulkeley, Lecturer in Old Testament, at Carey Baptist College, Auckland, and at the University of Auckland, will introduce with guest editorial.

Perth hosted the ANZSTS/ANZATS conference, 4th-8th July, 2005, with the overall theme, "The Peril of Christianising Jesus: Faith, Conflict and Culture". Hailed as one of the most successful in recent years, it drew participants from across Australia and New Zealand and also from Europe, North America and South Africa, including a number who joined us after the International Meeting in Singapore of the *Society of Biblical Literature* (SBL), which also associated itself with our conference.

Professor John P. Meier provided a provocative series of lectures on "The Historical Jesus and the Historical Law", a foretaste of his forthcoming new volume on that theme in the series on *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*. SBL brought to us lectures by Professor Carolyn Osiek on "Women's Leadership in Corinth" and Professor David Clines on "Job's God". In addition there were special seminars on Imperialism and Religion; Ethics at the Margins of Life; and Australasian Spirituality, and 52 individual members' papers on a wide range of themes. Professor Fiona Wood, Australian of the Year was our After-Dinner Speaker.

The annual meeting of ANZSTS confirmed the transition from Perth to Auckland, appointed Professor Elaine Wainwright, Auckland University, as President for 2006, Dr Tim Meadowcroft and Dr Nicola Hoggard-Creegan of the Bible College of NZ as Editors of *Colloquium*, and Dr Derek Tovey of the College of St John the Evangelist/ Auckland University as Book Review Editor. The meeting thanked the Perth team, Dr Mary J. Marshall, Business Manager, Dr Michael Parsons, Book Review Editor, and Professor William Loader, President and Editor, and others for their work since 1997.

### Guest Editorial

Carey Baptist College sponsors small, focused, trans-Tasman research colloquia. They aim to stimulate research and publication in theology by providing a venue for greater collaboration and discussion, and encouraging participation by emerging scholars. The first Carey Colloquium, *Virtual Theology 2005*, addressed the move from analogue to digital communications. The group shared ideas and draft papers beforehand, and used time together to discuss and refine ideas, rather than reading papers aloud. Most of the papers from the *Virtual Theology 2005* colloquium are presented now to a wider audience in this issue of *Colloquium*.

Participants were drawn from several disciplines and approaches. Thus Horsfield and Bulkeley explore the impact of digital communication on the activity of theologising. Doherty examines similar issues as a philosopher, while Hardy and Griffiths consider the communicative styles of ecclesiastical websites from a media studies perspective. One aim was to encourage emerging researchers. Thus Garner's reflections on the engagement of theology and technology come out of his doctoral research on transhumanism and the *imago dei*, and both Teusner's postgraduate studies and his work at Cutting Edge - UnitingCare in Shepparton, Victoria, feed his consideration of the mythic language of horror movies.

Analogue communications (print and the like) produce a limited number of copies, each of which incurs costs; transmission is limited to the speed of the mechanical vehicle used. Often (as with print) complex, expensive and specialist equipment is needed to produce the media. Each copy of an analogue "text" in some sense represents the original directly. Digital media by contrast are transmitted at the speed of light and can be reproduced an unlimited number of times at negligible extra cost, the equipment (beyond a PC) is usually fairly minimal and not highly specialised. Thus using digital technology, a group of people from a few small churches can record and broadcast to the world, using only a couple of microphones and PCs. Because digital media do not directly represent, but rather encode, using an arbitrary file format, this data can be recoded, and used in other ways, for example as daily "podcasts" or downloaded and recorded on analogue tape to play in a cassette recorder (see <http://PodBible.com>).

Just as the uses of digital media are varied, so the papers from the colloquium are very diverse, but each seeks to explore aspects of how this change of communications paradigm is impacting, and might impact on, the theological enterprise. The future may be unclear, but will surely be different from the past. In the present we have the irony of a "real" colloquium on "virtual theology" being presented, on paper in a journal whose name suggests a (virtual) colloquium!

Tim Bulkeley