



Carey Research Conference 2018

September 20–21

Programme

September 20

9.30-10.20 am **Miha whakatau & morning tea**

10.30-12.00 pm **Session #1:** Chair: Myk Habets

10.30-11.00 am

Amanda Pilbrow - **Faith journeys and church experiences of LGBTI Christians**

Amanda Pilbrow: Making sense of citizenship and belonging are the motivations for this research, asking: What can be learned by paying attention to the faith narratives regarding encounters with God in our LGB Christian community? Following narrative inquiry protocols, seven LGB Christians were invited to share faith stories with the researcher. The resulting narratives were analysed and engaged along five themes: Beginnings of faith, Beginnings of sexuality, Coming-out, Responses, and Faith now. By paying attention to these faith journeys, this research aims to encourage the church towards an understanding of the tensions, faithfulness, and a broader appreciation of God's presence in the LGB Christian community.

11.00-11.30 am

Csilla Saysell - **The Servant as 'a covenant of/for people'**

The Servant in Isa 40-55 is twice called 'a covenant of/for people' (*berit 'am*), an odd expression that has puzzled commentators for a long time. In Hebrew this is a construct noun (two nouns placed next to each other with a relationship between them), but it is difficult to work out what the exact relationship is between the two parts. It is also hard to know who the people are (humanity? Israel?) and what the content of the covenant is. This research explores the different options in order to throw light on the Servant's mission and its implications for the NT

11.30-12.00 pm

Melissa Powell - **Strongmen, Dangerous Women: Reading the Samson Cycle in the Age of #metoo**

The story of Samson and Delilah has had a rich life beyond the text of Judges 13-16 capturing collective imagination in a way few biblical texts can claim. Traditional readings of the Samson cycle have tended to focus on Samson's relationships with women, and in particular his relationship with Delilah, as the key to understanding the story. But close reading of the narrative suggests that there is more at work in the story than a good man led astray by a bad woman. The story of a leader with dubious morality wrestling with his role as a leader of God's people, during a period fraught with religious, social and political tension has deep resonance for our current times. Taking a deep dive into the text may resource our conversation as we continue to grapple with the complex relationship between leadership and morality, and what it means to live as God's people in a pluralistic world.

12.00-1.30 pm Lunch in Dining Room

1.30-3.30 pm Session #2 Chair: Andrew Picard

1.30-2.00 pm

Laura Hill (PhD cand. Otago University) - **Practical theology and experiences of gender egalitarianism within Christian partnerships**

My interdisciplinary research brings together practical theology with sociological analysis and qualitative research methods to examine how Christian couples in New Zealand practise gender egalitarianism. This is the position that women and men are of equal, intrinsic value before God; there are no gender-based limitations of what functions or responsibilities each can fulfil in the home, church, or society.

Practical theology focuses on the practice of the church as it interacts with the practice of society, seeking to gain wisdom from multiples disciplines and sources to transform Christian practices. In my presentation I will define practical theology and feminist practical theology and explore how these are useful frameworks for thinking theologically about Christian egalitarian practices. Next, I will outline my own research project: my research questions, methods, significant themes within theological and sociological literature, and preliminary findings based on my data taken from interviews with couples. Lastly, my findings include practical and conceptual tools couples use to transform gender inequality and broaden conceptions of masculinity and femininity within their intimate partnerships, and I will highlight and discuss one recurring theme of 'new,' egalitarian masculinity in the context of Christian partnerships.

2.00-2.30 pm

Timothy Lim - **Protestantism in East and Southeast Asia**

The paper examines Protestantism in East and Southeast Asia broadly and illustratively, for understanding the present and envisioning the future. Pertinent sections include, empirical and denominational pluriformity, theological characteristics, ecumenism and ecclesiology, worship and liturgy, missions and witness, everyday life and culture (in terms of religious liberty and interreligious relations, persecution, public/political engagement) and theological education.

2.30-3.00 pm

George Wieland - **“Missional Households in the New Testament: Ground, pillar and realization of the household of God.”**

The New Testament documents give indications of numerous households that participated in various ways in the formation, life and witness of Jesus communities. In this paper some of those examples will be examined in the light of what may be known about forms and functions of households in the Roman world and implications drawn for the missional potential of contemporary households of diverse forms, particularly in urban Aotearoa New Zealand.

3.00-3.30 pm **Afternoon Tea in Dining Room**

3.30-4.30 pm Session #3 Chair: Sandy Kerr

3.30-4.00 pm

Jay Matenga (Mission Mobilization) - **Whanaungatanga: exploring theological implications.**

The cliché, “there are two types of people in the world...” can be applied in many ways. If pressed, social psychologists would agree that Individualists and Collectivists are two broad types that would fit the cliché. While we must be careful to avoid reductionism, over generalisation and stereotyping, tensions experienced in the world today can be tracked back to these two orientation types. Explored through the lens of kaupapa Māori, Jay Matenga treats the two types as epistemic domains and highlights core differences in the relationship orientations and prioritizations of each. Jay posits that an understanding and appreciation of relationship dynamics within the Collectivist domain, exemplified in the Māori principle of whanaungatanga, should be a primary hermeneutic lens for a wholistic reading of Scripture, our dwelling together as expressions of the Church, and our comprehension of God’s mission in the world today. Applied theologies that emerges from the Collectivist domain present challenges to theologies born of Individualist priorities that currently dominate the church of Aotearoa New Zealand. They often conflict but they can be harmonized.

4.00-4.30 pm

John Tucker - **“Baptists, Gospel and Maori in Aotearoa New Zealand 1840-1990.”**

5.30 pm Conference Dinner

7.00-9.30 pm Carey Celebration of Scholarship Evening

September 21

9.30-11.00 am Session #4 Chair: Csilla Saysell

9.30-10.00 am

Phil Halstead – **The New Antidepressants**

Statistics reveal that 1 in 8 men and 1 in 5 women in New Zealand will experience depression during their lifetimes and 1 in 4 people will suffer from severe anxiety. Given that these numbers are on the rise, the fact that the effects of depression and anxiety can be debilitating, and the reality that many people's experiences with conventional medicine have been unsatisfactory, this paper introduces the early stages of a study that seeks to identify and lead churchgoers along alternative paths towards healing.

10.00-10.30 am

Karen Taylor (PhD cand. St John's Nottingham, University of Chester) -
Finding the sacred in daily life: how AR helps frame the use of scripture in a WisdomCafe in a multi-ethnic church

"For the Christian first-person inquiry centres on how individuals seek God in their own experience. Second-person focuses on how Christians participate in communities of faith. Third-person finds expression in the corporate life of the church and in building up a more just and peaceful world" (Coughlan).

Finding Faithfulness began in response to personal experiences of church struggles with conflict and emerged as two distinct paths, one is the researcher's own experience of scripture in life, the other is WisdomCafe, a congregational reflection on their own lives in light of scriptural themes. Like the pastoral cycle and liberation theology's see-judge-act, this PhD project begins with experience yet the process engages with scripture differently.

This paper explores the AR practice of three-person inquiry as articulated by Coughlan as a potentially better fit than a pastoral cycle. Using third-person inquiry, the paper will outline and illustrate the project's first-person reflective engagement with scripture and its second-person inquiry using World Café in a congregational setting. Applying this AR framework also opens the way for a discussion of aspects of a wisdom hermeneutic with respect to scripture and epistemology.

10.30-11.00 am **Morning Tea in Dining Room**

11.00-12.00 am **Session #5** Chair: Phil Halstead

11.00-11.30 am

Rachel Roche - **OUR STORIES: Journeying Together in an Appreciative Inquiry with all ages at Franklin Baptist Church**

Gathering the stories of the 'best intergenerational moments' from the whole congregation at Franklin Baptist Church (FBC) was an intriguing process with interesting outcomes. People of all ages, ethnicities, gender and abilities shared unique and insightful stories that have helped determine key success factors of the intergenerational journey. This seminar will unpack some of these findings and the ongoing impact of this research project undertaken with AI at FBC.

11.30-12.00 pm

Jordan Jones (PhD cand. Otago University) - **"The Performative Body of Christ"**.

"In this age of purported pluralism and secularisation there are numerous areas where the demarcations and dichotomies of modernity are referenced and reified. Politics and religion. Spirit-led and liturgy. Physical and spiritual. Theology and sociology. Fortunately, these constructions are losing their charm and their clout. The riposte of political theologians has been particularly promising in breaking free from the fabricated and dualistic fencing strips of modernity. In the spirit of this emerging theo-political playing ground, this paper on "The Performative Body of Christ" will examine how the Holy Spirit shapes the body of Christ, noting especially the political import of the concept of the body. I will home in on Judith Butler's account of performativity (and, by extension, embodiment), proposing how this critical queer theorist can help the church's understanding of its formation and mis-formation, and the ekklēsia's corresponding political nature. The polysemic image of the body of Christ will also be unpacked with reference to how the Spirit was (and is) essential for Christ's humanity, as the vicarious man, and to the new humanity; the ecclesial body. The insights of Spirit Christologies and theologies of Jesus' vicarious humanity will be used to (re)imagine the church as Christ's body politic in the world."

12.00-1.00 pm Lunch in Dining Room

1.00-3.00 pm Session #6 Chair: George Wieland

1.00-1.30 pm

Gareth Bezett (BTh (hons) Otago University) - **Romans 7 and Human freedom**

A report on a project investigating human freedom in light of Romans 7. The project intends to use the respective commentaries of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth to develop a perspective on questions of free will and determinism. Specifically, the intention is to allow the tradition to provide the definitions rather than to attempt to prove or disprove any common conception.

1.30-2.00 pm

Myk Habets - **Can Even Baptists Be deified?**

Despite propaganda that theosis is a uniquely Eastern idea, Western theology has long embraced such a doctrine. While theosis has not gone unchallenged in Baptist theology, it has established itself as a particularly powerful way to account for the entire economy of salvation. This essay provides a brief dogmatic sketch that makes theosis the central and controlling doctrine within a Baptist ordering of dogmatics. What distinguishes a Baptist use of theosis from other accounts is the combination of the essential features of Christological, personal, and ecclesial aspects of theology.

2.00-2.30 pm

Andrew Picard - **Gunton's Trinitarian Ecclesiology and his Project of Creation in Critical Conversation.**

Gunton's trinitarian ecclesiology is profound, sophisticated, and better than Thomas F. Torrance's. How his ecclesiology intersects with what he calls the project of creation offers interesting insights for those who would seek to build upon his work. This essay sketches some of that construction.

2.30 – 3.00 pm TBA

3.00 pm Conclusion of Conference – Myk Habets