

Money where the Mouth Is

Strategic Directions 2010–2012

NO ONE CAN BE IN ANY DOUBT THAT the impact of the Global Financial Crisis upon the Diocesan coffers necessitates focused spending according to clear priorities.

On 21st October Sydney Synod will have the opportunity to discuss the *Strategic Directions 2010-2012* paper, before dealing with the bill for the Synod Appropriations and Allocations Ordinance 2009.

The recommendations of Strategic Directions are unambiguous: 'in the changed conditions, central funding must consolidate around Policy 3, and local projects will need to be funded through local fundraising'. It sensibly allows the response to the crisis of the moment to be governed by what is important for the future. The recruiting and training of gospel workers (in all their variety) 'is the best strategic use of central funds for church growth in the long term'. It commends Youthworks Year 13 programme as a means of motivating young people into ministry, and the particular importance of Moore College is reflected in the bill's recommendation that

'Synod provide as much funding as possible for Moore Theological College.'

This priority for resourcing Moore College is crucial for continuing the supply of gospel workers for the Lord's harvest both locally and worldwide. It has extra importance because of the Global Anglican Crisis. The Theological Education Commission of the Anglican Communion (TEAC) has been at work since its formation by the Primates in 2001. TEAC's output to date includes the development of a range of questions about theological education discussed by five 'target groups'. It has also made a book grant available to theological libraries consisting of about 30 books important for 'the Anglican Way'. With this renewed discussion of theological education going on in the background, it is important for Sydney Synod to continue its support of Moore College as one of the finest examples of theological education in the Evangelical tradition. If the feet which bring good news to the world are beautiful, the mouths that speak that message need to be trained to speak with great clarity and critical insight. *Strategic Directions* rightly seeks to put the money where the mouth is. ●

'Some persons seem to think that almost any person will do for a clergyman; but I take such a different view of the ministry of the Gospel that I think scarcely any man good enough for it.'

REV. WILLIAM COWPER (1778–1858)

Contents

- P2 Higher Education Connections Improve Quality**
 Alan Höhne
- P2 The fool says in his heart "There is no God"**
 John Chapman
- P3 Editorial**
- Moore Faculty on Mission**
- P4 George Whitefield College (Cape Town, South Africa)**
 George Athas
- P4 A visit to the Philippines**
 Bill Salier
- P5 CALVIN@500**
- P5 The Woodhouse Years: An Interim Report**
- P6 The gap between The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion widens**
 Gav Poole
- P7 Theological Education: the Next Battlefield**
 Mark Thompson
- P7 The Rhetoric of Division**
 Peter Bolt
- P8 Women and the Word: Equip What next for ministry to women?**
 Carmelina Read

Gary Goes Global

THREE YEARS AFTER HIS APPOINTMENT as Director of External Studies at Moore, Gary Nelson thanks God for the opportunity. He brims over with stories from his students, scattered throughout the known world. 'I met Raj in Kuala Lumpur earlier this year. After completing two thirds of the ThC [Certificate in Theology] course, he told me: "it has been a life changing experience for me".'

Gary is convinced of the value of the course for training people—in Australian parishes, or overseas countries. 'Our courses are one way in which we can be entrusting the knowledge of God to others'. The course has a proven track record. Overseas it is used to



equip pastors, evangelists and lay preachers for their ministries. Special intensive programs run in African countries (e.g. Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and Nigeria) and in many locations within India. Isaac, a Malawi pastor, spoke of

Gary Goes Global [CONT. FROM PAGE 1]

being transformed by 'Doctrine 1': 'The topic of grace and the Gospel has touched me. This was not just theology but it was reviving. There was life in it'.

To help meet the overwhelming needs for Bible training, especially in developing countries, External Studies have been translating the ThC course. The course is already in Spanish, and is being used extensively in Latin

America. Half the course is in Chinese, and other translation projects include Hausa (Nigeria); Arabic; Swahili (East Africa); French (Indian Ocean); Malay (Malaysia); Khmer (Cambodia); plus a number of Indian languages.

As a new development this year, the ThC can now be studied by means of the Online Learning Environment (OLE). The plan is to have the OLE established for Preliminary

Theological Certificate (PTC) in English, Spanish and Chinese within 3 years. Kathryn, one of the first OLE students, is blunt but clear: 'If you're a potential student wavering about whether or not to enrol in a PTC course – do it!'

With such evangelists helping him in his task, Gary Nelson delights in being involved with this missionary arm of Moore College.

FROM 2008 'MID-POINT REPORT' Outside the Diocese we are seeking to strengthen our strategic links with leaders in churches which are part of the new Global Anglican Future movement. In part these links will be used to significantly expand the distribution of Moore Theological College's Certificate of Theology by Correspondence course materials.

Higher Education Connections Improve Quality Alan Höhne



Alan is the Dean of Quality and Planning at Moore College

MOORE COLLEGE IS NOW OFFICIALLY part of the main stream of Higher Education in this country. With this privilege comes obligations such as a quality audit conducted in July 2008 by the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA), which is

used by the (Federal) Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to satisfy itself that the College continues to meet standards required of providers whose students are entitled to government loans to cover tuition fees (FEE-HELP). DEEWR congratulated Moore on the outcome of the audit, commending it for 'its high academic reputation, its effective governance, the accessibility of its staff, its student-centred approach and its attention to continuous quality improvement'.

Along with official recognition has come increased interaction with peer institutions to advise, contribute and learn. Senior members of five universities occupy advisory positions

on various College committees and two universities have accepted the College as a partner in jointly offered PhD programs. Moore Faculty members participate in course review panels for other providers. Several other institutions have sought advice from Moore in preparing for their AUQA audits, and Vice Principal, Bill Salier, has become an AUQA auditor looking at both universities and private institutions. Principal, John Woodhouse, has been invited to join the body representing the theological education discipline to Government. Each of these openings offers avenues for the College to learn and so improve its ministry to students as they seek to learn to know God and to make him known.

The fool says in his heart "There is no God"

John Chapman



John Chapman reflects on folly.

THE FOOL SAYS IN HIS HEART, "There is no God." (Psalm 14:1)

Psalm 14 knows nothing of political correctness. With disarming clarity it states that the person who claims that there is no God is a fool. I find this a wonderful relief. The atheists I have met always appear

to be so sophisticated and clever. I am tempted to feel inferior in their presence and I have been encouraged to hear God's assessment of them. They are fools.

Do you remember the farmer in the bible who had good crops year in and year out? He said, "I don't know what to do; I will pull down the barn and build a greater one. I will say to myself 'You have much good laid up for many years. Take life easy. Eat, drink and be merry'". God said "You fool. Tonight your soul is required of you". He was a fool because he lived as if God was not there. When he discovered that He was, it was too late. He had provided for everything that he thought mattered but he had no provision for meeting his Maker in judgment.

The same psalm ends with the longing of the Godly person: "Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!" He longs that salvation will come from Zion. Is he longing that salvation will flow to the end of the earth? I think so!

For us on our side of Calvary I think it is the prayer "Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven", which sums up our longing.

What could be better than for Christ to return and take us to be with Him in the new creation? "O that salvation would come".

Nobody longs like this who hasn't had their sins forgiven by putting their trust in the death of the Lord Jesus. Indeed, those who meet God in the judgment are fools.



SOURCE: ISTOCKPHOTO

THE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS REPORT SHOWS THAT the Global Financial Crisis has resulted in two positive outcomes in Sydney Diocese.

Firstly, the report affirms the priority of the local parishes and reinforces this priority by refusing to make up any shortfall in the central funds through increasing assessments on the congregations. Previously available seed funding for local projects, however, will cease, leaving local projects to operate through local fundraising.

This will certainly bring its own challenges for congregations. But this renewed stress on local autonomy can also be viewed as a 'windfall'. For this strategy will not only encourage greater ownership of local initiatives, it will also enhance the independence of congregations from central denominational influence. For sure, the 'influence' has been positive—and even much-needed or necessary. But, given developments elsewhere in the Anglican Communion, this is not a day for greater centralization, and it is almost imperative to move towards less. As central denominational bodies deprive local (and theologically or ethically conservative) congregations of their property elsewhere, it is a salutary reminder that local congregations need to be treated as the engine-room of a denominational system. Perhaps this

present necessity for greater financial independence should also place an item on the agenda of the Diocesan Mission, under Policy 4 (Reform Structures): to review the way that church property is controlled, to ensure protection to Sydney congregations against any potential denominational 'property grabs' that may take place on these shores.

Secondly, in affirming the priority of central funds being directed towards Policy 3, Strategic Directions clearly places theological education on top of the agenda. This affirmation comes at exactly the right time. Internationally, Theological Education is being discussed in the Anglican Communion. Locally, when half way through the Diocesan Mission, murmurs were heard as to whether Theological Education is more of a bottle-neck, than a conduit to the church-planting dream.

Evangelical history already has sufficient cases to demonstrate how easy it is to allow the pressing need for the world to have preachers, to erode the message preached by compromising theological standards (e.g. SCM; YMCA). Pragmatic fast-tracking can shift the focus from growing quality in ministry to simply gaining a qualification for ministry.

Strategic Directions clearly places theological education on top of the agenda.

Strategic Directions does not succumb to such dangerous short-sightedness, but sets the spending priorities with a view to the longer term. The world may be in financial crisis at the moment, but it still languishes under a far greater crisis. To meet the needs of a world in rebellion against the Creator, under his wrath, and hell-bent on its own destruction, gospel workers are needed. However, Policy 3 is not about simply multiplying their number. It carefully states that this number needs to be well-trained. ●

The Australian Church Record

The Australian Church Record is an evangelical newspaper in the Reformed Anglican tradition of the historic creeds and the 39 Articles of Faith, and the standard of teaching and practice in the Book of Common Prayer. We accept the Scriptures as God's word written, and as containing all things necessary for salvation and the final authority in all matters of faith and behaviour.

Publisher: Robert C. Doyle, Chairperson,
Australian Church Record ACN 000 071 438

Executive Editor: Peter G. Bolt
All enquiries: PO Box 218, Camperdown NSW 1450

Donations towards the publication of the ACR can be sent to the Treasurer, at the above address.

From 2004 The Australian Church Record is only published in electronic form which can be subscribed to through our website, www.australianchurchrecord.net

Readers can also subscribe on behalf of other people, who will be able to unsubscribe later should they wish to do so.

The Australian Church Record is designed and typeset by Lankshear Design Pty Ltd. Telephone: 02 9868 7044

MOORE FACULTY ON MISSION

George Whitefield College (Cape Town, South Africa)

George Athas



George Athas teaches Old Testament and writes Hebrew text-books.

IARRIVED IN SOUTH AFRICA NOT knowing quite what to expect. I'd heard the good stories of how beautiful the landscape was, and how vibrant the Christians were. But I'd also heard the horror stories of muggings at gunpoint, carjacking, social meltdown, and corruption.

Well, it turns out everything was true. No, I didn't get mugged at gunpoint, though I met people who had been. And yes, this beautiful country is trying to recover from years of endemic corruption and the crippling effects of racism, which are evident at almost every

turn. But most hopeful of all is the fact that in Cape Town there is a thriving evangelical college that is feeding churches and communities with vibrant Christian leadership.

I'm talking about George Whitefield College.

I went over to 'GWC' to teach an Old Testament unit to students in their Honours year. My class consisted of 11 people, and we had a great time grappling with the books of Joshua through to 2 Kings. Some of the students were already engaged in significant Christian ministries, such as pastoring congregations and children's work. Still others are seeking to become theological educators. All of them have a fervent desire to see people transformed by Christ in the countries they have come from.

All this means that GWC is running a very strategic operation on the African continent. There is great need throughout Africa for leaders who not only have that classic evangelical zeal to serve, but also the biblical



grounding and theological training to sustain them for the years ahead. Although the human condition is the same the world over, our African brothers and sisters often face contexts that we in Australia will rarely, if ever, encounter. And GWC is doing a fine job in equipping them to meet those challenges. Principal David Seccombe heads up a small but dedicated faculty and staff who are serving over 100 students drawn from all over the continent: South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya, Ghana, and elsewhere. They have their work cut out for them, and are in need of more suitably qualified people to join them in the task of teaching and training. Please join with me in praying that God will continue to prosper their endeavours to see Christ's kingdom grow. ●

A visit to the Philippines Bill Salier



Bill Salier is Vice Principal, with a love for teaching New Testament.

RECENTLY I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY to visit the Philippines. I went with a friend in order to speak at a couple of conferences organised for pastors and church workers in the towns of Butuan City and Cagayan de Oro on the northern tip of the island of Mindanao. This is the third time I have had the opportunity to do so and each time the numbers attending have risen as people continue to express a hunger to hear God's word and learn better how to use it in their ministries. There is much enthusiasm for

evangelism and ministry amongst the many independent, often family based, churches in these places but often little knowledge of Scripture. Over the course of the respective conferences I had the privilege of unfolding Paul's letter to the Romans in two days. This was quite a ride for both speaker and audience.

In a land where it appears that everyone believes in God, Protestants account for about 5% of the population. The rest is Roman Catholic. The chief issue in evangelism is salvation and how it may be obtained and maintained through grace not works and so the letter to the Romans spoke powerfully to pastors who had a grasp on this but whose understanding was deepened in the course of Paul's exposition.

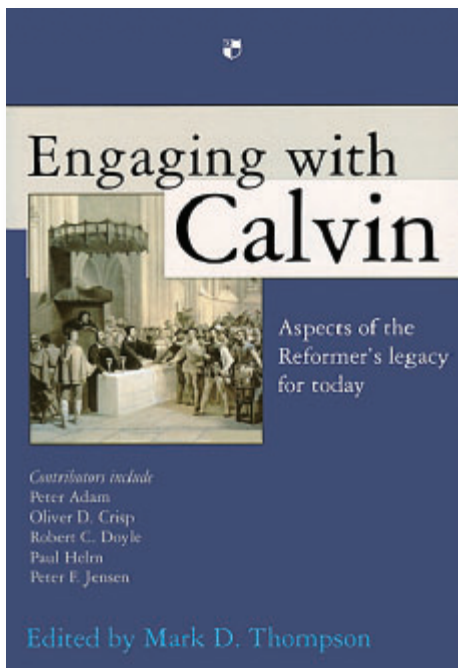
The Philippines has many problems, economic, political and social as well as spiritual. It is a place ripe for evangelism and a place where many churches stand in desperate need of quality Bible teaching. This said it is

also a challenging place. Time after time we met people conducting ministries literally on a shoestring, praising God for his goodness ('God is good; all the time' is the Filipino equivalent of the Anglican, 'The Lord be with you') in many surprising ways in the midst of abject poverty and expressing their dependence on him in fervent prayer while seeking in bold and innovative ways to proclaim the name of Jesus to the glory of God. We even saw a Roman Catholic 'church plant' (of sorts) operating on Saturday evening in the midst of the shoppers in the heart of one of the huge shopping complexes in metro Manila!

Travel often provides a mirror to one's own situation and for a brief moment I was able to see much to be thankful for in my own context as well as a number of attitudes that require adjusting. Pray for a deepening knowledge of God, a firm commitment to his word, and much fruit in evangelism for the Filipino born again believers. ●

CALVIN@500

SOURCE: PHOTOS.COM



more generally. Calvin's theological contribution has played an important part in shaping contemporary Sydney Anglicanism.

One of the special features of this School of Theology was the number of guest speakers who joined the Moore College faculty for the occasion. Paul Helm of Regent College, Vancouver, Oliver Crisp from the University of Bristol, Ashley Null, currently researching at the Humboldt Institute in Berlin, joined Australians Peter Adam from Ridley Melbourne, Marty Foord from Trinity

interview of Oliver Crisp and Paul Helm by Andrew Shead was one of the highlights. So too was a taped interview with Bruce Gordon, author of what is perhaps the best recent biography of Calvin.

Moore College stimulates local theological discussion by Celebrating Calvin's birthday.

Theological College, Perth and John McClean from the Presbyterian Theological Centre in Sydney. To the excellent contributions from each of these scholars were added papers by Moore's own Colin Bale, Andrew Cameron, Robert Doyle, David Höhne, Michael Jensen and Mark Thompson. Archbishop Peter Jensen also contributed a paper.

The papers were excellent and there were many opportunities to talk informally with each other and with the speakers. A brilliant

It is too easy for those who have grown up within the Reformed branch of Protestantism to assume that they know all about Calvin. This conference gave an opportunity to get a bigger picture of Calvin's contribution, and so to expand our vision of God.

The papers from the conference (with the sad exception of Ashley Null's) have already been published by IVP. *Engaging with Calvin: Aspects of the Reformer's Thought for Today* is available at Moore Books. ●

THE 2009 MOORE COLLEGE SCHOOL of Theology was a celebration of the five hundredth anniversary of John Calvin's birth. Calvin, the French Reformer who served the church in Geneva for most of his life, has greatly influenced the shape of Protestant Christianity and Western culture

The Woodhouse Years: An Interim Report

ALTHOUGH ONLY AN 'INTERIM REPORT' is possible at this stage, it looks like the 'Woodhouse Years' will go on the historical record as a period in which Moore College was dramatically reshaped ready for the next stage of its history.

In 2003, the year following John Woodhouse's appointment as Principal, a radical review of the curriculum began, especially in response to student perceptions of high workload. Continuing revisions now aim to achieve academic rigor and high quality theological education on a principle of 'less is more'. In 2005, Government FEE Help became available for theological students, requiring new processes for Quality Assurance and a new structure of governance for the College (due to come before the 2009 Synod).

The much-discussed redevelopment of the overcrowded Newtown site is about to begin. A long-overdue purpose-built library

for the magnificent Moore College collection will be one of the first priorities. Other purpose-built facilities will add positively to the students' learning environment.

Renowned as a preacher, Dr Woodhouse's leadership is marked by his Bible teaching. First years relish his Doctrine 1 lectures, and the whole College appreciates his sermons in the Friday Chapel. Moore College has trained preachers for so long, that its graduates now train preachers elsewhere! The current reviews monitor the contribution every element of the College curriculum plays in producing able teachers of God's Word.

Community life exerts a profound influence on the students' character and theological development. Growth in student numbers has required rethinking some of the structures of pastoral care to further enhance the community.

The Ministry and Mission Department continues to develop a greater integration with

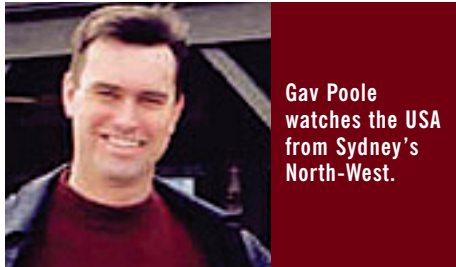
churches and agencies in the wider community.

Other changes include the full integration of women into Moore College (2008), the appointment of female chaplains (2008-2009), and two women to the faculty (2009), as well as the introduction of part-time study towards a degree (2010). Student application and entry procedures have also been streamlined, and—despite the pressures of the Global Financial Crisis, and several factors in the current climate tending to undervalue the importance of theological education—student numbers for 2010 are already encouraging.

As this refreshment of the College continues, the quality of the theological education enjoyed at Australia's oldest and largest theological College can only be further enhanced. In years to come the graduates trained during 'the Woodhouse Years' will have much to remember, as will the congregations that rejoice in their ministry. ●

The gap between The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion widens

Gav Poole



Gav Poole watches the USA from Sydney's North-West.

Evangelicals wonder whether to distance themselves further from The Episcopal Church, USA (TEC) in response to its repeated rejection of Biblical authority. TEC is saving us the trouble as they continue to separate themselves from the rest of the Anglican Communion.

THE JULY GENERAL CONVENTION passed two resolutions that further show them to be out of step with God's word and the Anglican Communion. Resolution Co56 calls for "... an open process for the consideration of theological and liturgical resources for the blessing of same gender relationships." Resolution Do25 affirms, in effect, that unrepentant, practising gay and lesbian persons, may be called by God to any ordained ministry in TEC. It further affirms that the church attempts to discern that call through a 'discernment process'. But surely such a discernment process should include searching the Scriptures to discover the type of person God calls to positions of leadership in the church and this would lead to the conclusion that such a lifestyle disqualifies a person from an office until they repent.

The Windsor Report and the subsequent Primates' communiqué requested a moratorium on consenting to the election of bishops in a same sex union. A resolution passed at the 2006 General Convention (Bo33) would have led us to believe that TEC intended to take this moratorium seriously. The latest resolutions seem to be an attempt to create more wiggle room.



SOURCE: ISTOCKPHOTO

To be fair, TEC has not explicitly overturned the moratorium but this is typical. Many of their statements are vague and have hidden meaning. We are often teased with "could be saying—may not be saying" type of language. In a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori called the ordination resolution "more descriptive than prescriptive ...", avoiding both an affirmation of the moratorium, and an assurance that no such consecration will be approved.

newspaper one day and discover that TEC has consented to another unrepentant, practising gay person elected to the office of Bishop.

In the meantime: **1)** don't be fooled. The TEC has indicated that they intend to charge on with their unbiblical agenda despite its impact on others in the Communion. At best their agreement to the moratorium is a temporary and reluctant concession and at worst it is disingenuous. **2)** continue to speak out and name unbiblical decisions and behaviour when you see it in the so called church. **3)** offer

These resolutions show the heart of TEC. ... a snub to the majority of the Communion.

These resolutions show the heart of TEC. They show a lack of conviction about the moratorium and a snub to the majority of the Communion who have requested it. They word-smith resolutions that condone the consecration of practising gay and lesbian persons, but stop short of saying they are going to do it. I, for one, won't be surprised to open the

encouragement and support to orthodox Anglicans who intend to honour Biblical authority and will be harshly treated by revisionists. **4)** sit back and let the TEC show its true colours as it widens the theological divide.

Others need not worry about increasing the distance. TEC is doing a fine job of that already. ●

Have you bought your copy of *Donald Robinson. Selected Works* and *The Lord's Supper in Human Hands*? For details, see www.australianchurchrecord.net

Theological Education: the Next Battlefield

Mark Thompson



Mark Thompson is a member of the Theological Resource group advising the GAFCON Primates.

IT SHOULD COME AS A SURPRISE TO no-one that theological education has emerged as a new battleground in the war against liberal revisionism. The leaders of liberal churches such as The Episcopal Church in America, reeling at the resistance their program of revision has encountered from the Global South and conservative elements in the West, have embarked on an ambitious plan to win the long term struggle by taking charge of the agenda for Anglican theological education and infiltrating seminaries in the two-thirds world.

We sometimes underestimate the determination of these forces to win. For them it is a gospel issue: they believe they have uncovered the heart of the Christian gospel and they have put all their resources behind ensuring that their version of the gospel prevails. The inclusion of all people in the unfolding kingdom of God, irrespective of belief and irrespective of behaviour, must replace the ancient gospel of faith and repentance

flowing out of the incomparable mercy of God in Jesus Christ, the only saviour and the propitiation for our sins. Millions of dollars have already been spent to get their people on the ground and to finance programs of 're-education'. There is not the slightest sign that they intend to give up any time soon.

The sad thing is that this challenge to the long-term progress of the gospel comes at just a time when some in the West are questioning the value of a theological education,

who are able to bring the teaching of Scripture to bear on the new problems that will be faced then, and who have a depth of perspective that comes from serious engagement with two thousand years of faithful and thoughtful conversation about the teaching of Scripture. They will need leaders who are not tossed around by every new idea, technique or personality but who are able to make theologically-informed decisions, decisions which will bear lasting fruit for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This challenge to the . . . progress of the gospel comes at just a time when some in the West are questioning the value of a theological education.

especially the kind of rigorous theological education that has nourished the evangelical witness of this diocese. It's so expensive, it's so resource intensive, it's so dislocating—after all men and women leave ministries to go into College in order to train for ministry. And the results are not uniformly encouraging. Perhaps we can do without it and just let people get on with the job.

Yet what the churches of the mid-twenty-first century will need, both in the two-thirds world and in the West, is pastors and teachers who are deeply shaped by the word of God,

We need to be alert to this new challenge. If we do not give ourselves to passing on the gospel of sins forgiven and eternal life in Christ alone to the next generation of pastors and teachers and the congregations in their care, then be assured others will pass on a gospel of their own. Too often and in so many areas, liberalism wins because evangelicals have not even entered the field. But this time the stakes are incredibly high. Strategic thinking, generous support and courageous initiatives are needed now. Even a year from now may be too late. ●

The Rhetoric of Division

Peter Bolt



Peter Bolt seeks a little more colour.

MARKETERS LIKE A GOOD DICHOTOMY. It is either black, or white. Apparently some people with personality disorders see the world that way as well—only they probably don't get paid as much. Using such rhetoric, any new proposal is set up as a clear divide between two options. One will be heavily loaded with negative connotations supplied

by the deep primal structures of our brain. Usually it runs along a clear sequence: black/white, old/new, bad/good, your way/my way.

Take the recent introduction of the desire for Theological Education to be 'flexible', the clear opposite of 'inflexible'. This dichotomy-driven debate then colours Theological Education in its present form to become an extreme nasty. And, of course, in the 'vice-versa' of this dividing rhetoric, the automatic good guy is whatever the clever marketer wants.

But, as usual, life is not that simple—nor that destructive. What they really ought to be arguing for is multi-tiered theological education. Nothing new in this, really, we have always had the simple new-believers bible study,

Sunday sermons, part-time courses, and so on, through to the fully integrated theological education in a scholarly community which continues to produce the prime preachers and pastors that enrich congregations long-term.

If the needs press us for more gospel workers, the rhetoric of dichotomy and division will end up destroying what we must not destroy. On the other hand, if we adopted rhetoric that is less disordered, it would take on a richer personality. More levels can always be added to a multi-tiered approach. This will preserve what is good, and extend it even further. On that regime, we could aim to have any and every person getting as much theological education as their abilities and circumstances allow. ●

WOMEN AND THE WORD: EQUIP

What next for ministry to women?

Carmelina Read



Carmelina Read serves at Chatswood Presbyterian Church with her husband Jeff and four children. She is also the Dean of Women at the Presbyterian Theological Centre.

EQUIPWOMEN STARTED IN 1999 with a group of women who had a vision for an evangelical, interdenominational women's conference. At the first conference held at Moore Theological College, 150 women attended. The conference now has an attendance of 4,500 women and is held at the Darling Harbour Convention Centre. The format includes two identical main sessions (Daylight and Twilight) with four electives held straight after lunch.

The unique features of the conference include the systematic teaching of books of the Bible in consecutive years (so far the conference has covered 2 Corinthians, James and Esther), the high proportion of women aged between 18-35 and an annual elective topic which covers a gender issue from a complementarian basis. In partnership with Matthias Media, six of the electives have been incorporated into a cd pack entitled *Different By Design - God's word to women in a gender confused world*.



WOMEN AT AN ESTHER PARTY

The theme for this year's conference was *The Queen And I* and covered the Old Testament book of Esther. Large parts of the text were read out loud by way of dramatic readings in the first person (with permission from Zondervan). The Chair of EQUIPministries, Di Warren, said "Feedback from EQUIP '09 has shown us how important it is to make sure evangelical conferences study the Old Testament. Women said they loved hearing large sections



EQUIPWOMEN 2009 CONFERENCE



DI WARREN SPEAKING AT EQUIP 09

of the Scriptures come alive as they were read aloud and so many women commented on how they had never understood how the book of Esther points to Jesus." The desire of women to read the Scriptures together was further demonstrated by the success of the Esther parties. Prior to the conference, hundreds of women met together to eat middle eastern food and read though the entire book of Esther in one sitting.

The 2010 conference will take place on Saturday 8 May with the theme *The Great Escape*. This will be the start of a consecutive series on the book of 2 Peter. Due to increasing numbers, next year, the conference will include two additional electives. One of these will be a capped elective called *EQUIPworkout* designed to help women who are contemplating or training for ministry and will address the topic of opportunities for women in ministry. The hope is that God will continue to raise up women from the 18-35 age group for vocational ministry which is founded on a complementarian understanding of gender.

In 2008, EQUIP ministries ran its inaugural conference for ministry wives. So far, the conference has covered the topics of *Marriage Matters* (2008) and *Beyond Success* (2009). In 2010, EQUIPministrywives will address the topic of *Boundaries* (Saturday 14 August). Chairwoman Ainsley Poulos, has commented that "Feedback from the 400 delegates has confirmed the need for an interdenominational conference for ministry wives (ranging from clergy wives to people involved in student work) which looks at ministry as a privilege and is grounded on strong Biblical teaching. As women are taught about the unique role they play as the wives of men in ministry, they leave the conference better able to understand the pressures their husbands feel and the joys and special opportunities their role gives them to see people grow in Christ."

In the last 10 years, EQUIPministries has become further convinced that there is a continued need for women from all denominations to hear clear teaching from the Bible which is driven by God's word, challenges culture, trains and equips women in their service of the Lord Jesus, gives them confidence in the Christian world view and which doesn't shy away from the proactive and clear teaching of the Bible's complementarian view of men and women in both the family and the church.

For more information about EQUIP ministries please go to www.equip.org.au