



<https://www.missionstudies.org.au/>

AAMS Newsletter No. 4 December 2021

President: Rev Dr Dean Eland

Secretary: Rev Assoc Professor Darrell Jackson

Vice-President: Rev Dr Xiaoli Yang

Treasurer: Dr Peter J Wilkinson

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER

Officers of AAMS presented reports at a successful AGM and the following items are some of the highlights.

The outgoing President of AAMS, Prof Therese D’Orsa, listed 8 points about achievements of the year. These included the benefits of our online resources, journal, and the quarterly newsletter. These she noted “provides the Association with the flexibility to communicate with an interested audience of members and others regarding studies, publications, and events. It provides the potential for a wider group to be drawn into membership of the Association.”

The Secretary’s report underlined the importance of developing the web site as a resource for others. “I am now able to regularly update our page presenting members Publications and our Newsletters. You are all welcome to submit details of any publications to which you have contributed a chapter or an article. There is much potential for the membership to grow... healthy membership numbers depend on people seeing that AAMS has something to offer.”

The Treasurer reminded members that income is based on annual subscriptions and a substantial amount has been set aside to assist in hosting the International Conference of Mission studies to be held at Morling College Sydney from 7-11 July 2022.

Reports from NSW and Victorian emphasised the significance of five state-based events during the year. Both groups highlighted how important these sessions were during the lockdown and that online events expanded the number of people involved and have implications for meetings planned in the years ahead.

New South Wales hosted three meetings. On the 26 March a panel of local Christian leaders explored the Sydney Statement, and on the 13th of June Tanya Riches and Mikenzie Ling reflected on the way Aboriginal-led Pentecostal missiology is renewing the Pentecostal movement’s theology. For the final meeting of the year members met online on September

17th and were joined by a good number of interstate members to reflect on what shape post-COVID mission might take.

Victorian members organised two very successful events. On 2nd July, Professor Kirsteen Kim, online from the US, addressed the theme, 'Uncovering Issues of Race in Mission Studies'. Her presentation was accessible for some time and sent on to a wider audience. On Saturday 6th October, over 370 people registered for the online Mission Day, co-hosted by AAMS and our SVD friends. The meeting explored indigenous spirituality and related themes and launched Dr. Michael Bowden's book *Unbreakable Rock: Exploring the Mystery of Altyerre*.

The President, Secretary and AJMS chair Helen Stewart were involved in planning and presenting this event and was certainly the largest gathering in which AAMS was involved during the year and provided insights for those planning the IAMS 2022 International Assembly.

"Again, we are indebted to our indefatigable AJMS editorial team who continue to deliver a quite outstanding Journal. During the latter part of the year, the Secretary has been scanning back issues of AJMS and upload them to the website. Only three years remain to be scanned as pdf versions of the published journal, with those editions only available online in a pre-publication format."

"Much had been learned about the effective use of Zoom throughout the past 18 months and the AAMS program for 2022 will focus on hosting the International Assembly in July. We will also continue to be involved with the SVD Mission Day in October and propose that that three inter-state events, each hosted, respectively, by NSW, VIC and SA be accessible via mixed mode, both online and in-person. Guest speakers might include a mix of off-shore and on-shore presenters, with each related to the IAMS."

Members of the Executive committee for 2021-2022 were elected at AGM on 22 October. Officers are Rev Dr Dean Eland President, Rev Dr Xiaoli Yang Vice-President, Rev Assoc Professor Darrell Jackson Secretary, and Dr Peter Wilkinson Treasurer. Committee members are Prof Therese D'Orsa, Rev Dr Titus Olorunnisola, Helen Stewart, Rev Dr Paul Goh, Dr Fr Jacob Joseph, Rev Dr Patrick McInerney and new member Rev Sandy Boyce.

Sandy is President of DIAKONIA World Federation and in November concluded her placement with Pilgrim Uniting Church Adelaide after 12 years in city ministry. <https://diakonia-world.org/> Sandy will encourage members of diaconal networks to be involved with 2022 mission events.

Thank you to Rev Dr Ian Grant who retired from the executive and has served on the committee for several years. Eleven membership applications were received and accepted as members of AAMS.

Living for Shalom

The AGM was followed by the launch of Jeanettes Wood's biography of Ross Langmead, *Living for Shalom: the Story of Ross Langmead*. Members were joined online by members of

Ross' family and all were reminded of the formative role he played as the secretary of AAMS. The book explores the way music, community engagement, applied research, neighbours, family, friends and the Westgate Baptist Community were central to his life and expressed his commitment to mission.

AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF MISSION STUDIES

The following notes provide insights into the achievements of the Editorial Board. Helen Stewart, chair of the board reports: "I am blessed to have Peter Woodruff as Editor and Jim Mulroney as Publisher. Both do an amazing job editing and collating the journal ready for publication. Peter's in-depth knowledge of editing is highlighted continuously with each edition of the journal. Jim's experience in journalism in Hong Kong highlights his expertise at layout of every publication of the journal."

The Editorial Board continues to grow and "last year we added Randall Prior who brought a wealth of experience in Oral Cultures in the Pacific. Randall's in-depth knowledge led us to a deeper understanding and we acknowledge that we are continually mindful of including the voices of those from Oral Cultures in our journals."

"Board members have done a tremendous job in sourcing reflections, articles and reviews. I would like to specifically acknowledge the article composed by Latu Latai, an ordained minister of the Congregational Christian Church Samoa and a lecturer in Church history at the Malua Theological College. His article titled 'Reconciling Remnants of the Past' is an outstanding example of the 'crucial value of oral history.' This article was published in the June 2021 journal."

"The December 2021 journal will have reflections in response to the questions: 'Why am I still a Christian' and 'why do I remain a Christian.' Take time to read these reflections because each one expresses deep exploring and searching. Rev Dr Ian Robinson was seconded to lead the working group in creating a framework to support those responding to these questions. Simultaneously, the question of how we define 'Mission' was raised. Lively discussions ensued and in future editions this definition will be explored. Thank you to all members of the Editorial Board because each one of you plays an important role in ensuring we create two journals per year. We look forward to another successful year in 2022."

Committee positions for the Journal were confirmed at the AGM. Editor, Peter Woodruff. Publisher, Jim Mulroney, Chair of Editorial Committee, Helen Stewart. Members. Ian Robinson, Randall Prior, Albano Da Costa, Darrell Jackson, Xiaoli Yang, Ross McKinnon, Robyn Reynolds, Joy Sandefur and Dean Eland.

IAMS 2022 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE - UPDATE

<https://missionstudies.org/>

The 15th General Assembly of the International Association of Mission Studies has been postponed for some time due to COVID-19 resections. Officers are now pleased to

announce that the assembly will be convened and meet on **7th -11th July 2022, at Morling College, Sydney**. The conference theme will be “Powers, vulnerabilities, and marginalities: mission in a wounded world” and members are invited to submit papers as part of the five-day programme. Many will be able to access major presentations and conference proceedings online.

The AAMS Executive committee has appointed a local support group to assist and liaise with the International Executive. Members include Peter Wilkinson, Xiaoli Yang, Dean Eland and Darrell Jackson. The local committee will focus on hospitality and invite others to join in and share their interest and expertise.

The recent edition of Journal of the IAMS Mission Studies Vol 38 No. 2 2021 includes several obituaries including Fr Larry Nemer SVD by AAMS committee Vice President Xiaoli Yang and a second for Robert J. Schreier C.P.P.S. The lead article, *Learning from “Fresh Expressions of Church” and the “Loving First Cycle” through a Case Study from Cape Town*, reflects on significance of the contextual model of fresh expressions of being the church. Schreier’s 1985 publication, *Constructing Local Theologies* continues to be of significance to all those working on the front line in disadvantaged communities.

PUBLICATIONS, MISSION STUDIES & RESEARCH PROJECTS

This section includes links to groups and items of interest from denominations, projects & meetings

COP26 Key Ecumenical and Interfaith Events

Australians have been following the Glasgow meeting and churches from across the world were present and expressed their commitment to the environment. The following WCC link, Care for Creation and Climate Justice is a rich resource of research and insights to draw on. “The Bible teaches the wholeness of creation and calls human beings to take care of the garden of Eden (Gen 2:15). The God of the Bible is a God of justice who protects, loves and cares for the most vulnerable among his creatures.”

https://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/care-for-creation-and-climate-justice?fbclid=IwAR1ZQj8SxnoIlg7Kem3SwDx_UeHZzYAiM4MsYQofoBpSyBN5LxKx8ot_FmK8#cop26

WCC 2022 Assembly

Nearly 60 ecumenical officers recently met to focus on plans for the World Council of Churches (WCC) 11th Assembly in 2022. Theme of the assembly is “Christ’s love moves the world to reconciliation and unity.” Our world needs love, reconciliation and unity. And our fellowship is called to respond in prayer and with acts of transforming discipleship”. The 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches will take place in Karlsruhe, Germany, from 31 August to 8 September 2022.

Australian Catholic Community

Three recent reports from the Catholic community include the official summing up of the Catholic Plenary Council. “Through the journey of the Plenary Council and this week’s assembly, the Word of God has come to us as a call, every bit as much as it did to the rich man in the Gospel we have heard,” he said. “Rich he may be, but he is also a searcher, as we have been through this week.” That searching will continue in the period between now and the second general assembly in July 2022.

“As we turn from this week, we look to the months till the second assembly where we will – please God – gather face-to-face in Sydney,” Archbishop Coleridge said.

“Our discernment will continue intensely through the months of fermentation, so that the seeds sown in the first assembly may finally bear fruit in the second assembly, equipping us well for the journey beyond the phase of the Council’s celebration to the long phase of implementation of its Spirit-shaped decisions and decrees.”

<https://mediablog.catholic.org.au/plenary-members-present-final-reports-of-first-assembly/>

Catholics for Renewal newsletter is a summary of views about the outcomes of the Plenary Council

<https://www.catholicsforrenewal.org/news-2021>

AAMS member appointed auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Brisbane

Pope Francis yesterday announced that Society of the Divine Word priest Fr Tim Norton will become an auxiliary bishop in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. “Fr Norton, who is currently in ministry in Italy, will early next year join Auxiliary Bishop Ken Howell in supporting Archbishop Mark Coleridge in serving the Catholics of Brisbane Archdiocese.

Since June 2020, Fr Norton has been working full-time with consecrated women and men promoting interculturality, something his order – commonly known as the Divine Word Missionaries or SVDs – are renowned for, including in Australia.

Fr Norton said ministry to multicultural communities is an important way his order is already involved in Brisbane Archdiocese. While head of the Australian province, he worked with Archbishop Coleridge to establish a Divine Word Missionary presence in two parishes – Inala and Kingston-Marsden.

“It is indeed difficult to imagine myself as anything other than an SVD,” he said. “So, for the last two weeks, I have been trying to think of myself as a member of the ACBC and the Archdiocese of Brisbane, who, as an SVD, will bring a focus on culture and mission that may be helpful.”

<https://cathnews.com/cathnews/42709-pope-francis-appoints-new-auxiliary-bishop-for-brisbane>

Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

Bridges is the quarterly newsletter of the (CCCMR) and offers current news and views on Christian-Muslim Relations, Islam and Interreligious Dialogue. The newsletter features concerns often overlooked by the mainstream media and is a counter-balance to populist

stereotypes. Bridges is particularly useful for more informed discussions in schools and community groups. <https://www.columban.org.au/our-work/>

Anglican Board of Mission

Check out the monthly ABM e-news **On a Mission** and resources include study material and articles of interest.

<https://www.abmission.org/pages/about.html>

At Choral Evensong on Sunday 21 November 2021 at St Peter's Cathedral, North Adelaide the Archbishop of Adelaide, the Most Rev Geoffrey Smith, Commissioned the Rev Paul Devenport as SA Provincial of ABM and commissioned committee members.

Stan Grant on Australian Identity

Stan Grant will be guest of the Effective Living Centre (UCA Christ Church Wayville SA) and deliver the Wilks Oration on February 25, 2022. He will discuss key issues of our time including Australian identity and responses to the Uluru Statement from the Heart. There will be time for questions. A local Indigenous man will give the Welcome to Country and Vonda Last, an Indigenous woman will sing. For further information bookings contact

<https://effectiveliving.ucasa.org.au/>

This session will complement other events planned for Adelaide in the lead up to the 2022 federal election. A forum will be held in the Unley Town Hall for candidates in the federal seat of Adelaide. Focus of questions and discussion will include policies related to climate change and the Uluru statement. The date will be announced when the election is called. In March Pilgrim Uniting Church Flinders St will host the Rev Dr Denise Champion and leaders of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander and Christian Congress for a Friday night session and Saturday workshop.

<https://www.pilgrim.org.au/>

Study Guide. *The problem of men's violence*

The Creative Ministries Network Congregation of the Uniting Church recently launched its study guide. This study is the third bible study produced by the congregation during the pandemic. The problem of men's violence arose earlier this year when events in Canberra focussed the nation's attention on men's violence against women. Our members were shocked and disturbed by the unfolding events and agreed to give time to better understanding the problem of men's violence. Two CMN members, Margaret Neith and John Bottomley, offered to lead three studies, and later the congregation decided to make the material available to the wider church.

The Bible study guide was launched at the Port Philip East Presbytery Zoom Café by Julie McDonald, coordinator at the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania's Bethel Centre, a Centre providing support to those affected by violent behaviour. The three studies begin with an introduction by Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon, Academic Dean and Associate Professor, Hebrew Bible/Old Testament at Pilgrim Theological College, University of Divinity.

Co-editor, John Bottomley said, "The studies explore how both men and women are affected by and might respond to faith, cultural, and social norms around men's violence in their own lives, and how deeper faith understandings, truth-telling, and trusting support may contain seeds for change." Copies of the study guide may be downloaded free from the Creative Ministries Network Congregation's website: CMNC Study Guide_v3 (unitingchurch.org.au)

RECENT THESES and ARTICLES THAT HAVE COME TO OUR ATTENTION

Thesis from PhD candidate, Amy Shum, Whitley College, University of Divinity

A Chinese-Australian Rendition of The Pilgrim's Progress: pathway to becoming adult Christians in Australia.

Amy Shum PhD candidate, Whitley College.

The aim of the study is to utilise qualitative interviews to explore the pathway through which children of Chinese Christians from Hong Kong (CCCIHK) become regular church attending adult Christians by answering the research question: How do children of Chinese Christian immigrants from Hong Kong become regular church attending adult Christians in Australia?

The loss of younger attenders is a concern for many churches. Chinese churches face some cultural complexities when ministering to CCCiHK. Not only do Chinese churches need to navigate between two languages and two cultures, but they also need to minister to bicultural individuals who are different to the first-generation Chinese immigrants. Despite these cultural complexities, some CCCiHK have become regular church attending adult Christians in Australia (adult Christians). A study on their pathway to becoming adult Christians can illuminate for the church community as to how other young church attenders can be nurtured. So far, no such study on children of Chinese immigrants has been undertaken in Australia. The outcome of the study could provide insights to Chinese churches on how to remedy the loss of younger attenders. This study could potentially benefit the Chinese churches in Australia, as well as other ethnic churches which share similar cultural complexities.

Congratulations Fr Dr Jacob Joseph, AAMS Committee Member

On Saturday 20th of November, members of the University of Divinity celebrated the academic excellence of graduands. The St Athanasius College community celebrated with Fr Dr Jacob and his family on receiving his award for successfully completing his PhD. Fr Jacob also was also the mace bearer for the procession and received the University medal for his thesis in 2020. *The Christ Who Embraces: An Orthodox Theology of Margins in India (Pilgrim Theological College).*

This thesis develops a Christological response to Orthodox Christian mission in the context of caste dynamics among St. Thomas/Syrian/Orthodox Christians in India. In the context of

Dalit social and theological concerns, it intends to offer a casteless Orthodox theology of mission that envisions a reconciling mission through a miaphysite Christological embrace or kiss of peace.

University Medal 2020 Citation. Dr Jacob Joseph has completed a doctoral thesis of exceptional quality which has significance for Indian and global theology into the future. His thesis, *The Christ who Embraces: An Orthodox Theology of Margins in India*, engages in both Dalit and Orthodox theology, developing a constructive rereading of accepted concepts and practices. The thesis challenges the existing structures of knowledge, especially regarding a multicultural, yet deeply stratified, Indian society. Dr Joseph's reading is passionate and ingenious, presenting audacious arguments with conceptual clarity and accuracy.

International Review of Mission. Mission in Unity. WCC November 2021

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/17586631/current>

International Journal of Public Theology

The current edition of this Journal (15:4) is now with the publisher. Articles deal with the psychology of climate change, the place of theology in the church, the academy and the public domain; is a phrenetic use of violence justifiable in self-defence in lands where there is a history of attacks and reprisals; the relationship between the Christian faith and Islam in the service of a public theology; a theological response to the world of post-truth, alternative facts and fake news; and the vulnerability of individual protest over and against an injustice performed by a multinational conglomerate.

<https://brill.com/view/journals/ijpt/ijpt-overview.xml>

Locally based resources on public theology can be found at The Centre for Faith and Public Issues

<https://www.parramattamission.org.au/faith-and-worship/centre-for-faith-and-public-issues/>

William Temple Foundation Urban Mission

The Urban Tract Series. This latest free edition in the Foundation's Urban Tracts series is by author, Greg Smith and titled, *Urban mission 40years on towards an ongoing presence*.

"This tract offers an overview of UK urban ministry since the early 1980s and draws out some important lessons from the last 40 years. Are there distinctive characteristics and key principles that are transferable to new places, new times, and a new generation of practitioners? As we head, post-pandemic, towards a 'new normal' for urban society and the church there are exciting opportunities to be grasped, says Greg Smith."

<https://williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/temple-tracts/>

The Kindness Revolution

Book Review of Hugh Mackay's latest insights.

<https://southsydneyherald.com.au/the-kindness-revolution/>

MISSION HISTORY TURNING POINTS

Centenary of the International Missionary Council

A World Council of Churches (WCC) online missiological conference on 16-18 November celebrated the centenary of the International Missionary Council. The conference included public webinars, in addition to regional sessions of the International Missionary Council study process. Check out Wikipedia for background history as the IMC was formed in October 1921.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Missionary_Council

<https://www.oikoumene.org/events/missiological-conference-centenary-of-the-international-missionary-council>

We Were Brought Together

In February 2022 those with long memories will be celebrating 62 years since the first and only National Conference of Australian Churches. Meeting in Melbourne from 2-11 February 1960 members of 18 churches met to study and work in 5 commissions. Bishop Leslie Newbigin led the bible study on 1 Peter and guests from Asia and Europe included M. M. Thomas, H R Weber, Prof Masao Takenaka and Bishop E C Sobrepena. The final message of the conference was shared by Rev Prof Colin W Williams, Professor of Systematic Theology, Queens College Melbourne. Colin later produced two study books on mission, "Where in the World" (1963) and "What in the World" (1964). These publications and a 1967 national study programme were formative for those experiencing the social changes that came with the sixties. The conference and follow up meetings led to the commitment by many churches in Australia to the ecumenical Action for World Development programme.

INVITATION

AAMS members are invited to send suggestions and other notes to include in the March 2022 edition of our quarterly newsletter. Deadline is set for the end of the previous month. Contact the editor, Rev Dr Dean Eland. djeland@bigpond.com 0419 112 603.

A SONG OF HOPE FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

Come, now, long-expected Jesus

Come, now, long-expected Jesus,
born to set creation free;
from our deepest fears release us,
into love and liberty.

You our rest and consolation,
hope and light for all, you bring;
peace between us and our nations,
joy for every heart to sing.

Born so unexpected, Jesus,
not a king we'd recognise:
yours a realm of peace and justice,
welcome for the smallest lives.

With Creator, and with Spirit,
unify our diverse hearts;
grace and love we do inherit,
one within your Holy Heart.

Words by Sarah Agnew Dec 2018. Pray the Story. Tune: Stuttgart.
A reimagining of Charles Wesley's 'Come, thou long-expected Jesus'.