

# Y A N A

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New Zealand Association for the Study of Religion [NZASR]



*Taking on Tolerance: Millennials changing views on religion*

## Preface

Welcome to the 66<sup>th</sup> edition of **YANA**, the “vehicle for ferrying news and views among members and contacts of the New Zealand Association for the Study of Religions [NZASR].” Religious Studies continues to make significant strides in New Zealand and beyond, in spite of the many challenges. Yana is pleased to bring you the latest news, upcoming conferences, recent publications and general announcements from our various programmes. We also bring you an exciting interview with Prof Douglas Pratt. As usual, we would like to express our profound appreciation to the departments for sending in their news updates, Prof Douglas Pratt for the interview, and our general membership for your continued support. We look forward to your submissions and suggestions for the next edition. We hope that you enjoy the read.

Comfort Max-Wirth

Editor

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## News from programs

### Otago



In 2019 the sixteen existing Departments in the Division of Humanities will be regrouped into seven schools. The Religion programme will be a part of the School of Social Sciences, which will place us alongside programmes (such as those in Anthropology, Politics and Sociology) with which we already collaborate quite closely in areas such as supervision of graduate students. Theology will become a part of the School of Arts (together with Classics, English, History, Languages and Philosophy). We will also be relocating, from the brick house where we have been based for the past five years to the south tower of the Richardson Building. When the former Faculty of Theology was joined with Religious Studies to create the Department of Theology and Religion (in 1996), Albert Moore characterised the relationship between the two as “together, though different.” Being together, as part of a larger unit, has undoubtedly had its advantages but all too often it has not been sufficiently apparent to the wider university community—and in particular to students—that we were also different. Thus while there are challenges associated with being one of the smaller components of what will be a very large school (with over 1200 EFTS and 80 FTE academics), these are outweighed by the benefits of a clearer identity. Greg Dawes’s joint appointment in both Schools, and our other connections (such as teaching in Asian Studies) mean that we will still have close links with the School of Arts. The new structure will also bring to an end Will Sweetman’s term as Head of Department. From 2019, John Shaver will be Head of Programme within the new School of Social Sciences.

Since the last issue of *Yana*, three staff have been promoted at Otago. In 2017, Greg Dawes (or part of him, at least) became Professor of Philosophy and Religion; in 2018 Ben Schonthal was promoted to Associate Professor and in 2019 John Shaver will be promoted to Senior Lecturer. Keziah Wallis was appointed as a fixed-term full-time Teaching Fellow. Three PhD students have graduated and another is under examination. Helen Bradstock’s thesis (“Let’s Talk about Something Else”: Religion and Governmentality in New Zealand’s State Primary Schools’) was approved late in 2016

and is available for download from the Otago research repository: <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/handle/10523/6941>. Helen hopes her work will play a role in the ongoing debate on the place of religion in primary schools. Linda Zampol D'Ortia ('The Cape of the Devil: Salvation in the Japanese Jesuit Mission under Francisco Cabral (1570–1579)') and Sara Rahmani ('Drifting Through Samsara: Tacit Conversion and Disengagement in Goenka's Vipassana Movement in New Zealand') completed in 2017. Linda has secured a Research Fellowship in the Käte Hamburger Kolleg Dynamics in the History of Religions between Asia and Europe at Bochum for the 2017–18 academic year. Sara has been awarded an \$111,000 research grant from the Templeton Foundation, distributed via the University of Kent's Understanding Unbelief project. Her proposed research will involve a cross-cultural investigation of the nature of unbelief among practitioners of Mindfulness Meditation to identify whether it functions as an equivalent of religion for unbelievers. Tongthida Krawengit's MA thesis ('The Three Trials of Khruba Sriwichai') was approved in 2018. Four new PhD students, as well as one new MA student, have begun work in the last two years.

John Shaver received a grant from the Templeton Foundation for a project entitled "High Fertility and Child Flourishing: The Success of Religions." The grant supported fifteen months of work to prepare a further ambitious multi-year grant proposal to explore how religions simultaneously influence human reproductive decisions and promote child success. It will develop an infrastructure capable of systematic cross-disciplinary investigation, meld the evolution of cooperation literatures with religious demography literatures, and begin to test the hypothesis that cooperative childrearing in religious groups mitigates the costs of high fertility. The results of this support will be publicly available bibliographies, completed analyses of pre-existing data, and a grant proposal for research that has the potential to change how we understand the success and future of religion. John convened a workshop in 2018 in Pittsburgh to develop the proposal for the larger grant and recently heard that the proposal is through to the second round.

Ben has been working on his three-year project on Buddhist monastic law in contemporary Sri Lanka. His latest research involves a large, island-wide survey of Buddhist monks about their attitudes towards monastic and civil law which, if it works (he hopes so!!), will be the first large-scale research of its type in Southern Asia.

Student numbers are as strong, or stronger, than they have ever been. Summer courses have had particularly strong enrolments. An important new initiative at Otago has been the development of a 180-point coursework MA in the Humanities. Ben has taught one of three new core papers available to students in all disciplines (Key Debates in the Humanities). Within the frame of the new MA, we will offer an MA in Buddhist Studies. This will include one paper on Buddhist Texts which will be taught by a visiting lecturer. In 2019, Professor Justin McDaniel will read Buddhist Cosmological Texts with students on the MA as well as with interested PhD students and staff.

We are continuing to prepare for the IAHR 2020 Congress and expect the website to be launched this month ([www.iahr2020.kiwi](http://www.iahr2020.kiwi)).

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## **Victoria**



The past year has involved considerable activity but also significant change and challenge for Religious Studies at Victoria. In early 2018 we bade farewell to two dear and longstanding colleagues: Michael Radich, who took up a position as Professor of Buddhist Studies in the “Asia and Europe in a Global Context” Cluster of Excellence at the University of Heidelberg; and Joseph Bulbulia, who was appointed as the Maclaurin Goodfellow Chair in Theological and Religious Studies at the University of Auckland. With Rick Weiss also on parental leave in 2018, we were delighted to have Dr Venetia Robertson, a recent graduate from Sydney’s Studies in Religion programme, join us as a teaching fellow for the second half of 2018. In addition to coordinating established courses, Venetia mounted a fascinating and well-received special topic: “Superhuman, Transhuman, Nonhuman”. This course built on Venetia’s broad-ranging interests to explore the role of other-than-human entities and identities in religious contexts. Dr Chris Joll also joined us from Thailand for a year as an adjunct research associate in 2017-2018.

A large number of postgraduate students completed their studies. Dorcas Dennis, Seth Tweneboah, Benno Blaschke, Kevin Connors, Fredrick Acheampong, and Hanlie Booyens all successfully defended their PhDs in 2017-2018, while Shivani Bothra and Sue Ann Teo’s PhD theses are presently under examination. Ali Tilley, Rebecca Todd, Eseta Ioane Roach, and John Chote all completed MAs; Lynne O’Brien has also submitted her thesis. A number of our PhD graduates have secured academic positions. Other recent graduates have also enjoyed success: Bruno Shirley won a scholarship and

entry to the PhD programme in Asian Literature, Religion and Culture at Cornell University in New York; Sophie Florence was awarded a DAAD scholarship to study in Germany, and is pursuing an MA in Transcultural Studies at the University of Heidelberg.

The programme enjoyed hosting a number of high-calibre scholars. In 2018, Philip Fountain put together a seminar series that included talks from Paul Weller (Derby), Pamela Klassen (Toronto), and Michael Wilkinson (Trinity Western, Canada), as well as visits from Mark Mullins (Auckland), Mike Grimshaw (Canterbury), David Tombs (Otago), and Sin Wen Lau (Otago). The St John's Visiting Scholar programme continued with an outstanding, well-attended series in 2017 on St Augustine, delivered by Emeritus Professor Gillian Clark (Bristol). In 2018, Professor David Maxwell (Cambridge) delivered a St John's lecture on "World Christianity," based on his 2017 volume on that subject. Professor Maxwell also contributed to a small workshop on nineteenth-century Christian missions and peacemaking organised by Geoff Troughton in July 2018, which brought together a high-powered group of scholars from the UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan to address this theme.

Faculty have continued to publish and engage broadly with the wider community. As ever, Paul Morris conducted many public addresses and media engagements addressing a wide range of religion-related public issues. Eva Nisa has contributed to public commentary, and continued her research projects on Muslim marriages in Malaysia and Indonesia, the influence of al-Azhar University in Asia, and an "Islamic (inter)faces of the internet" project funded by the Austrian Science Fund. Geoff Troughton and Philip Fountain launched a website, [www.pursuingpeace.nz](http://www.pursuingpeace.nz), in conjunction with the Anglican and Presbyterian Church Schools offices. This website stands alongside their publication *Pursuing Peace in Godzone* (2018), which addresses various strands of Christian peace activism in the period since World War Two. The volume complements Troughton's *Saints and Stirrers* (2017) which focused on Christian anti-war thinking and activism in New Zealand from 1814-1945. Another major recent publication from the programme was Philip Fountain et al.'s volume *The Mission of Development* (2018).

Amidst all of this activity, the programme was involved in a major restructuring. A School review in late 2017 ultimately led to a Faculty decision to dissolve the present administrative structure and relocate Religious Studies to the School of Social and Cultural Studies from 2019. The restructuring process was fraught, and driven by budget considerations within the School and Faculty. Sadly, our programme administrator, Aliki Kalliabetsos, who has been the heart and soul of the programme for many years and dearly loved by a generation of students and faculty, will finish her role at the end of 2018. Paul Morris will also conclude his time as Professor. Paul has been a remarkable and influential leader in the programme, and for religious studies nationally, since his appointment at Victoria in 1994. His full-time presence will be

sorely missed. We look forward, however, to his ongoing involvement with the programme and to working together in the years ahead.

Religious Studies at Victoria, therefore, faces a new era. Looking ahead, the programme finds many reasons for optimism. Religious Studies retains a solid platform of staff and students, and relocation to the School of Social and Cultural Studies promises to provide a positive, constructive and well-led environment in which the programme can flourish. Congratulations are also due to Rick Weiss who was successful in his application for promotion to Associate Professor, a promotion that takes effect from the beginning of 2019.

Geoff Troughton, Programme Director

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## **Waikato**



In the absence of the University of Waikato Religious Studies Programme due to its closure in July this year and the consequent departure of Prof Douglas Pratt, we at the University of Waikato Islamic Studies Group found it crucially important to keep the discussion around the role of faith in society alive in academic circles outside the university. To that end the University of Waikato Islamic Studies Group, in conjunction with the Anglican Action Centre for Social Justice, has organized the "2018 Symposium on Faith and Society" to be held on November 22nd 2018 at the University of Waikato.

In the "2018 Symposium on Faith and Society" twelve prominent scholars and practitioners will discuss different issues of social justice in Aotearoa New Zealand and the role that faith can play in addressing them. Legendary advocate for prison reforms, Dr Kim Workman, is going to talk about long due reforms in our criminal justice system, Archbishop Sir David Moxon will discuss unfamiliar faces of modern slavery in Aotearoa, Dr Anna Casey-Cox will shed light on the role of faith in decolonisation in

Aotearoa, Dr Ann Hardy will cover the relationship between Maori religion and the wider society, Dr Ottolie Stolte will examine the most urgent issues of social justice our society is facing today, Dr Rose Black and her team from the Waikato DHB will talk about the role of faith in social wellness, Anglican Action Youth Team and the Kids First Whanau Programme will run a mini workshop on “Caught in the crossfire: Troubled children and tough on crime religious conservatism,” and many more.

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## Retrospective Interview with Prof Douglas Pratt



Prof Douglas Pratt was Professor of Religious Studies in the School of Social Sciences, University of Waikato, and currently an Honorary Academic in Theological and Religious Studies at the University of Auckland.

**Yana:** Who is Douglas Pratt? Please tell us a bit about yourself.

**DP:** I am married with four children and five grandchildren. I enjoy listening to classical music, watching good movies, taking long walks, travel, and occasional skiing.

**Yana:** Please tell us a bit about your academic journey—education, influences, what drives you, places you have taught and major positions held.

**DP:** Prior to setting off to Scotland at the end of 1978 to commence doctoral study in systematic and philosophical theology, I trained for the Methodist ministry at the Anglican and Methodist Theological College of St John the Evangelist in Auckland, completed degrees in philosophy (Auckland, MA) and theology (Otago, BD), and served four years as a parish minister. Eventually, by the late 1990s, I became an Anglican priest and, for a while, Canon Theologian in the Diocese of Waikato.

After two years' residency at the University of St Andrews (1979-80), I returned to further three years of parish ministry in Dunedin while tutoring in theology at Otago Uni and working on my PhD. I arrived at Waikato in January 1984 to commence an appointment as the ecumenical chaplain. My St Andrews' doctorate was awarded in mid-1984 and Waikato then invited me to teach in its 'General Studies' programme, in a

part-time capacity, while continuing my chaplaincy role. So began the journey into full-time academia. For, in February 1988, I was appointed foundation lecturer in religious studies. The rest, as they say, is history – but here is a little of it.

During my teaching career I have been an honorary lecturer at the University of Auckland and for the Melbourne College of Divinity, teaching the World Religions paper in the BTheol programme. At various points I lectured and presented seminars at the universities of Heidelberg (Germany), Copenhagen (Denmark), Leiden (the Netherlands); St Andrews and Edinburgh (Scotland), Durham (England); Georgetown, Washington DC, South Florida, Utah State, and Claremont, CA (USA), among others.

Since the early 2000's I have been at various times an Associate of the Centre for the Study of Religion and Politics (CSR) at the University of St Andrews, Scotland; an honorary Adjunct Associate-Professor (Research) at Monash University, Australia; a guest lecturer at the Universities of Birmingham and Oxford, UK; an Honorary Research Fellow at Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford, UK; a Visiting Scholar at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, UK; and the New Zealand Associate of the UNESCO Chair in Intercultural and Interreligious Relations – Asia Pacific.

In 2009 I was awarded the degree of Doctor of Theology from the Melbourne College of Divinity for a thesis examining interreligious dialogue and relations in the life and work of the World Council of Churches and the Vatican. In 2010 I enjoyed a semester as a Fulbright Fellow at Georgetown University, Washington DC. And in 2011, having earned a number of promotions, I rose to the rank of professor and later that same year appointed also an Adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Bern, Switzerland. I had spent the first half of 2011 as an invited Guest Professor at Bern.

**Yana:** What was your area of research and teaching at Waikato?

**DP:** My teaching and research interests encompass a wide field within religious studies, both as a generalist within the phenomenology of religion, and as, eventually, a specialist in Islam and Christian-Muslim relations, interreligious dialogue, and issues pertaining to religious diversity, fundamentalism and extremism.

As well as producing many publications, I have been a book review editor and associate editor for the journal *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*; co-editor of *Studies in Religious Dialogue*; co-founder and co-editor of *Interreligious Studies and Intercultural Theology*; co-founder and associate editor of the *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion*; and an associate editor and book review editor of *Colloquium – the journal of the Australia and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools*. I have served as a member and President of both the New Zealand and the Australian Associations for the Study of Religion and I have been an invited key-note speaker to the British Association for the Study of Religion. For several years until recently I was an international expert assessor for the Australian Research Council.

**Yana:** What have you been doing after leaving Waikato?

**DP:** It's only been three months so far! Other than not teaching, I have much ongoing academic work that keeps me very occupied!

Yana: What do you miss most about your teaching and research in Religious Studies at Waikato?

**DP:** I invariably enjoyed class-room teaching; I miss the interaction with students. My research work continues. Since 2012 I have been a Team Leader on the University of Birmingham based, UK AHRC funded research project, *Christian-Muslim Relations – A Bibliographical History* and more recently commissioned to produce and edit a major multi-authored work on the thematic history of Christian-Muslim relations in the first millennium of contact, 600-1600CE. This work will continue for another 2-3 years. Happily, I have been made an Honorary Professor in the Theological and Religious Studies programme at the University of Auckland, so I have a continuing new academic home-base. Plus, I continue as an Adjunct professor at Bern for another couple of years. But a major loss is conference and study-leave funding and allied research support that comes with being a full-time paid academic staff member!

**Yana:** What do you see as the future of Religious Studies in New Zealand universities in particular, and Australasia in general?

**DP:** I am not greatly encouraged in the short-term, given the combination of rabid secularism that too often refuses to grant even the study of religion a right to exist in the academy, coupled with funding and fiscal policies of governments and Universities themselves that works against the Arts / Humanities in general, and our subject in particular. In an age when emotionally charged opinion and prejudice, coupled with culpable ignorance, too often trumps (I use the term advisedly...) rational & critical thinking, tertiary level study of, research into, and teaching about religion and religious phenomena has never been so needed, and so woefully decried. My slip is showing – I'll leave it at that.

**Yana:** Any advice for up-and-coming scholars, like myself, in Religious Studies? With the dwindling fortunes of Religious studies in recent times, should we advise ourselves and move on to something more “profitable” or stay put?

**DP:** Don't give up your interests and engagement in the field, but be prepared for the likelihood that this will not be the route to a secure livelihood. Flexibility and multi-tasking, a mixed personal economy is, I think, the way of the foreseeable future.

**Yana:** Any new projects you are currently working on?

**DP:** My involvement with the University of Birmingham based Christian-Muslim Relations bibliographical history project has increased with my being asked to take on a

new editorial role in the production of a 19<sup>th</sup> century online publication which will also produce some 8 volumes of around 900 pages each (published by Brill). I am currently editing a volume of thematic history of CMR which spans the first millennium (600-1600) or Christian-Muslim encounter. This will appear as vol. 15 in the CMR series of which vols 1-12 are published, 13 & 14 are in production, and it will be vols 16 onwards that I will now have new, and more, work to do. Retirement simply means no one paying you to do the work you need to do!

**Yana:** The 2020 IAHR World Congress would be held here in Otago, New Zealand; are you excited about this or not? What does the study of Religions stand to benefit from this conference? Please share your general thoughts on this conference.

**DP:** This is a very exciting opportunity for New Zealand and I hope it will lead to Religious Studies regaining a profile and traction within the Academy here. But I would not hold my breath.

**Yana:** On a lighter side, if you had a superpower, what would it be and what would you use it for?

**DP:** Ubiquity. I am tired of being on one side of the world wishing I could also be on the other – at the same time! And I would much prefer to be able to be in multiple places at once, without having the hassle of travel. But I guess I shall have to settle for imagination.

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## Recent Publications

Fountain, Philip and Marie Juul Petersen. 2018. ‘Religion and NGOs: Instrumentalisation and its Discontents’. In *Handbook of Research on NGOs*. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 404-432.

Fountain, Philip and Laura Meitzner Yoder. 2018. ‘Quietist Techno-Politics: Agricultural Development and Mennonite Mission in Indonesia’. In Catherine Scheer, Philip Fountain and R. Michael Feener (eds), *The Mission of Development: Religion and Techno-Politics in Asia*. Theology and Mission in World Christianity 10. Leiden, Brill, 214-242.

Fountain, Philip, Doug Hynd, and Tobias Tan. 2018. ‘Theology, anthropology, and the invocation to be Otherwise.’ In Jeannette Matthews and Matt Tomlinson (eds), Special Issue: Anthropology, Theology, and History in Conversation. *St Mark’s Review* 244, 9-20.

Max-Wirth, Comfort. "The Public Role of Religion in Modern Ghanaian Society." A book chapter on Charles Taylor's *Varieties of Religion: William James Revisited*. PNEUMA 40 (April, 2018), 71-90.

Scheer, Catherine, Philip Fountain and R. Michael Feener (eds). 2018. *The Mission of Development: Religion and Techno-Politics in Asia*. Theology and Mission in World Christianity 10, Leiden: Brill.

Troughton, Geoffrey, and Philip Fountain, eds. *Pursuing Peace in Godzone: Christianity and the Peace Tradition in New Zealand*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2018.

Troughton, Geoffrey, and Philip Fountain. 'Introduction: Pursuing Peace in Godzone.' In *Pursuing Peace in Godzone: Christianity and the Peace Tradition in New Zealand*, eds. Geoffrey Troughton and Philip Fountain, 17-29. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2018.

Troughton, Geoffrey, and Philip Fountain. 'Afterword: Peace and Christianity in New Zealand.' In *Pursuing Peace in Godzone: Christianity and the Peace Tradition in New Zealand*, eds. Geoffrey Troughton and Philip Fountain, 228-36. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2018.

Troughton, Geoffrey. 'Australia, New Zealand, and Oceania.' In *History of Global Christianity, vol 3: History of Christianity in the 20th Century*, eds. Jens Holger Schjørring, Norman A. Hjelm and Kevin Ward, 422-443. Leiden: Brill, 2018. [German translation: 'Australien, Neuseeland und Ozeanien.' In *Geschichte des globalen Christentums, Teil 3: 20. Jahrhundert*, Hrsg. Jens Holger Schjørring, Norman A. Hjelm and Kevin Ward, 687-722. Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 2018.]

Troughton, Geoffrey, ed. *Saints and Stirrers: Christianity, Conflict, and Peacemaking in New Zealand, 1814–1945*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2017.

Troughton, Geoffrey. 'Samuel Marsden and the Origins of a New Zealand Christian Peace Tradition.' In *Saints and Stirrers: Christianity, Conflict and Peacemaking in New Zealand, 1814–1945*, ed. Geoffrey Troughton, 29-46. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2017.

Troughton, Geoffrey. 'Christianity, Peace and Opposition to War.' In *Saints and Stirrers: Christianity, Conflict and Peacemaking in New Zealand, 1814–1945*, ed. Geoffrey Troughton, 11-28. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2017.

Troughton, Geoffrey. 'Making Kiwi Christians: Children and Religion in the House of Reed.' In *Creating Religious Childhoods: Children and Religion in Anglo-World and British Colonial Contexts, 1850–1950*, eds. Hugh Morrison and Mary-Clare Martin, 181–98. London: Routledge, 2017.

## Upcoming Conferences

### NZASR 2019 Conference



Our next conference will be a joint meeting with the Australian Association for the Study of Religions, hosted by the University of Auckland on 29-30 November, 2018. The Call for Papers will be issued soon. Further details are available on the conference website: <http://www.nzasr.ac.nz/conference/index.php>.

### 'Mennonites and Anthropology' Conference



Philip Fountain (Victoria) and Royden Loewen (University of Winnipeg) are co-organising a conference on 'Mennonites and Anthropology: Faith, Ethnography, and Cultural Entanglements' at the Centre for Transnational Mennonite Studies, The University of Winnipeg from 18-19 October, 2019. For the full Call for Papers, please see: [http://mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/events/Mennonites\\_and\\_Anthropology\\_2019/callforpapers.php](http://mennonitestudies.uwinnipeg.ca/events/Mennonites_and_Anthropology_2019/callforpapers.php).

### IAHR 2020 World Congress in New Zealand



The IAHR 2020 World Congress will be hosted in Dunedin, New Zealand, by Otago under the auspices of the NZASR, Tourism NZ, and Enterprise Dunedin on August 23-29, 2020. The theme for the congress is "Centres and Peripheries." For further details, check the IAHR website at <http://www.iahr.dk>. The Call for Papers is on p. 49 of the IAHR e-Bulletin Supplement, Bern Edition <https://www.iahr2020.kiwi/>.

## PhD Comic

# ACADEMIA



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