

Editorial

Again, we end a year and despite the stringent measures required in the pandemic some have managed to continue thinking and writing in the area where theology and practice interface. By good fortune rather than good management most of the articles in this edition, a ministry approach in 'test tube' and one of the book reviews included concern preaching or the teaching of preaching. The other two articles come to us from Adelaide concern science and apologetics, and ministry in the shadow of Covid 19.

Adrian Ch'ng and Andrew Malone present an article to do with what we can learn from the writer of Hebrews about effective preaching. In *The Homiletics of Hebrews: Preaching Pointers from a Superior Sermon*, they identify a whole complex of rhetorical devices whereby the writer is keen to reset old testament texts so as to reflect the behavioural response required by his audience when apostasy back into Judaism has its allure. This supplies current preachers with a license to use the rhetorical resources at our disposal to do more than educate the Christian mind but compel an embodied response.

Geoff New writes in *Leaping into the Void of Old Testament Narrative*, which is also an attempt to explore how to preach inside the church while engaging the deepest thoughts of those outside the church. To do this he skilfully reflects upon Jewish writer Elie Weisel's treatment of the Binding of Isaac from Genesis 22. This exploration is a foil for how to grasp the presence of God in the most tragic of circumstances. This is contrasted with Christian attempts to avoid the dark places in Scripture or our own world by side stepping these into Christological translations or other forms of spiritualising. Geoff New's new book is also reviewed in this edition.

Nick Hawkes who is on the verge of submitting his PhD in Adelaide has submitted *A New Enlightenment* that is in some respects a rebuttal of the so-called New Atheism. He makes accessible to the reader the convergence of extraordinary phenomenon from the discipline of quantum mechanics in dialogue with the mathematical probabilities. In light, of the remarkable constants of the fine-tuned universe we inhabit to make the case that the atheistic foreclosure against metaphysics is far too premature. Not only does he demonstrate in this brief article an extraordinary connectedness between Quantum theory and Mathematical theorem, positing that a conscious mind lays behind the incredible fine tuning, the coming into existence and sustenance of the universe, is a lot less problematic as an explanation than the proposals that popular scientific commentators have proposed.

Howard Harris and Sophie Relf-Christopher have provided a clear example of church based research into the creative ways that their liturgically centred Anglican church has managed to maintain a compelling public witness during this covid-19 restricted period. And this is despite the strong emphasis of this church and ministry flowing from the worship of the gathered community. Their

sacramentality has been consciously constructed out of the active participation of laity in various forms of selfless service. This exemplary case study serves to show the strong cultural values that underpin this particular parish in this and better times.

In the light of the homiletic articles the General Editor has delved into his previous life of teaching to share a teaching strategy which seeks to foster the preacher's confidence in both the logical and the creative aspects of their cognition, to truly find their voice and present more of themselves than a read script when behind the pulpit.

As we head towards Christmas in this often paranoid/split world, our prayer is that these resources here may so encourage you so that the greater story of God's eternal covenant promise fulfilled in the Son, loom much larger and brighter in the minds of our pastors, teachers and preachers in this season than the pathos that has typified the current milieu.

Jeff Pugh
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