

# New College

# Bulletin 2009

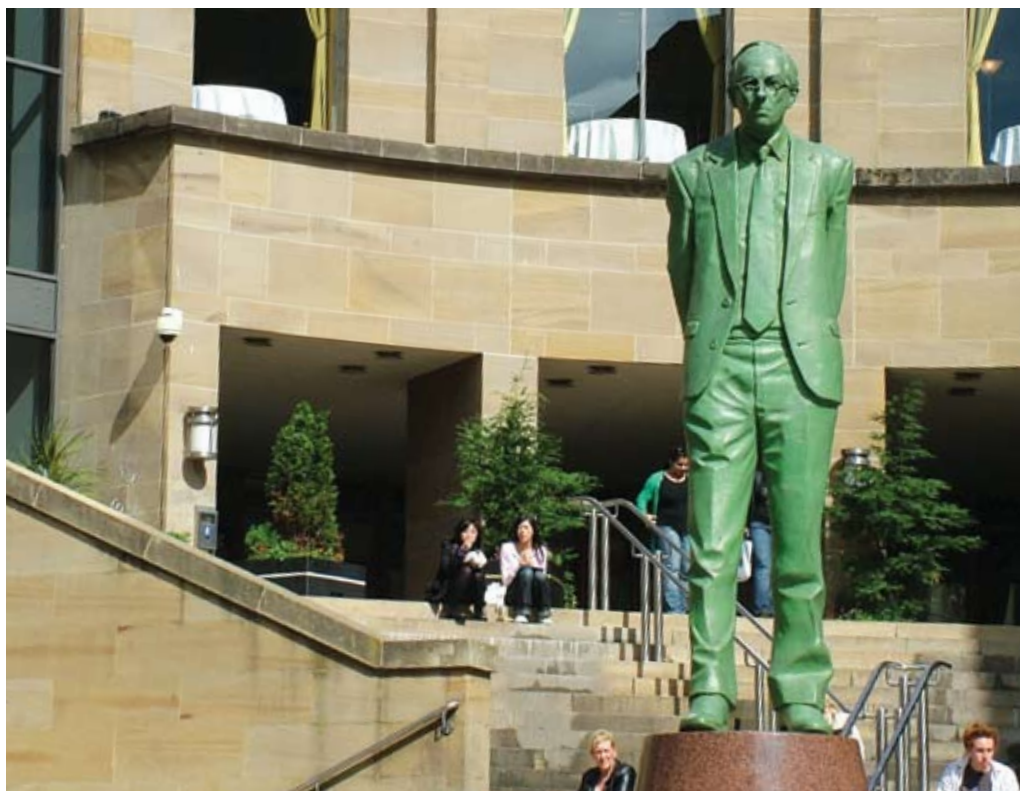
## Theology in the Public Square in Post-Devolution Scotland

This is the title of a two-year research programme in the Centre for Theology and Public Issues, funded by the Binks Trust and headed by Rev Dr Graham K. Blount, who for the previous 10 years was the Scottish Churches Parliament Officer. *Dr Blount writes:*

This project aims to resource the Christian Churches in Scotland by providing focused research in the area of Public Theology. In practice, it will have two main strands:

- to review and reflect upon the perspectives and strategies of Christian engagement in Scottish public debate since devolution; and
- to identify, in consultation with the churches, policy areas where there is need for theological resourcing and to develop – in partnership with the churches and others – theological perspectives on the issues.

*Continued on Page 2*



### Inside Bulletin

'My grandfather was a minister...' **02** | The Head of School's Message **03**  
Marcella Althaus Reid **06** | Africa In Scotland, Scotland In Africa **10**  
'The wilderness shall rejoice' **11** | Publish and Be Blessed **12**  
Human & Humane **14**



### From Page 1

Having started on this project in January 2009, I feel it is well-timed, as post-devolution Scotland celebrates its tenth anniversary. The challenge is to show the added value which a theological perspective can bring to discussion of public issues. I believe that the move towards more holistic approaches to problems and issues opens up the possibilities of new dimensions in the debate – including a theological dimension – which will resonate widely.

Both strands of the project are well under way. I hope soon to have a paper available reviewing public debate around criminal justice, and how the churches have engaged with that; this will pilot a method for reviewing, across key topics, what the churches have brought to public debate and how they have engaged with the devolved structures.

For the second strand of the project, the aim is that both the process and the outcome will be valuable to the churches. A starter paper was widely circulated, and 25 church representatives met for a roundtable discussion in April.

From that conversation, a programme of working with grassroots and national groups, and partnerships with bodies like the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships and Scotland's Poverty Truth Commission, will explore (between now and summer 2010) a range of topics, from responding to the recession to the future of the family. In the latter half of 2010, we will look at weaving the outcomes of these discussions around cross-cutting themes, such as home/identity/community/security.

Let me know if you are interested in being part of one of the groups associated with the project, and I'll send further details, or if you'd like to be kept in touch with future developments and events.

*Rev Dr Graham K Blount*  
Centre for Theology and Public Issues  
Graham.blount@ed.ac.uk  
0131 650 7912



## 'My grandfather was a minister...'

### Student information at New College

*New College Librarian,  
Christine Love-Rodgers writes:*

At New College Library we frequently receive enquiries from family historians, and from the Presbyterian church family worldwide, asking about ministers who studied at New College. While New College Library does not keep transcripts of students' academic records, we were able to provide some details to answer these enquiries using typewritten lists of matriculated New College students and the printed reference resources in New College Library. We were keen to make this information more easily accessible to the world, and in partnership with Edinburgh University Archives have produced an online database of information about New College students from 1843 to 1943. This is freely available on the Internet at <http://www.archives.lib.ed.ac.uk/students/>

The data is a combination of two different lists drawn up by J. Robb and Hugh Watt. Together they provide the master list of students who matriculated at New College for the first 100 years of its existence. Nearly 5000 men (and a few women) are

listed, who came from all over the world to study at New College, Edinburgh. The entries have been augmented with brief biographical information (where available) drawn chiefly from the Annals of the Free Church of Scotland, but also the Annals of the United Free Church of Scotland 1900-1929 and the *Fasti Ecclesiae Scoticanae*, subject to data protection guidelines. The data entry work was generously funded by a grant from the Church of Scotland.

New College Library also maintains a New College Archive which contains class photographs, student magazines and information relating to New College student societies. If you are interested in consulting this archive collection, we would encourage you to visit the library in person, as the collection has an outline index only and you may need to browse through the collections. It is not generally possible to search the collection by names of individual students.

For more information about historic Edinburgh University records, please see the guide produced by the University Archives at <http://www.lib.ed.ac.uk/resources/collections/specdivision/euaguide1.shtml>



# The Head of School's Message

The School of Divinity (New College) continues to thrive, and the academic year 2008-9 was for us busy and successful. In the late summer 2008, Professor Jane Dawson received news of the success of a £300,000 research grant application to the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council for a project on 'The Wode Psalter'. Professor Dawson leads an international collaboration involving museums and universities in the UK, Ireland, and the USA.

When the results of the latest UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) were announced in December 2008, our standing as one of the top departments of Theology & Religious Studies in the UK was reconfirmed. In overall results, we tied for third place in the UK, and have the highest percentage of top-rated research in Scotland. (Indeed, we have won 42% of the total Scottish research funding in Theology and Religious Studies on the basis of our RAE performance.) Likewise, in the most recent university league tables, we continue to be regarded as among the best places to study Theology & Religious Studies in the UK.

But it was not all good news this year. For we were all saddened at the death of our colleague, Professor Marcella Althaus-Reid. She had acquired a wide international recognition as a provocative theological voice, and it is now difficult to think that we shall not again have her lively presence in New College.

One of the current emphases of the University is 'internationalisation', encouraging contacts, collaboration, staff/student exchanges, and overseas student recruitment, and in this the School of Divinity is already well positioned. For example, we have a far-reaching international profile, with some two-thirds of our postgraduate students from non-EU countries. Also, we have exchange

programmes with universities and theological colleges in several countries. But we continue to explore further international contacts. One of the most exciting opportunities I've had as Head of School was to travel to Beijing, Hong Kong and Singapore this Spring.

My visit to Singapore was at the invitation of Trinity Theological College, to give the Chen Su Lan lectures there. This visit also afforded the opportunity to discuss future collaboration options with colleagues of Trinity Theological College. My time in Singapore also included a lunch-meeting with key colleagues in the National University of Singapore to discuss future collaboration with the School of Divinity. One of our alumni, Professor Alastair Campbell, is founding Director of the Centre for Bio-Medical Ethics in the National University of Singapore, and it was a pleasure to make his acquaintance and get an orientation to the research conducted in this Centre.

In Hong Kong, I was the guest of the China Graduate School of Theology, another important contact for us in Asia. President Carver Yu was a gracious host, and I trust that we will be able to pursue further contacts in coming years. In Hong Kong, I also visited the Institute for Sino-Christian Theology, and learned about their impressive efforts in translation of Western theological works, and in promoting academic contacts between Western scholars and colleagues in Chinese universities.

But the most exciting part of the trip was Beijing, where I met with key representatives of Peking University and Renmin University, and found in both a very welcome response and readiness to develop further contacts with New College. Indeed, I was astonished at the high level of interest in Chinese universities, among scholars of Marxist



outlook, in the study of theology and religion in general and of Christianity in particular. I hope that we will now be able to follow up on my initial visit and develop ongoing relationships with Chinese colleagues.

Alumni from around the world visit New College, whether informally or for an extended time of study and research. We value our alumni and we know that they value their time here. The newly opened Alan Robinson Garden of New College (described more fully in this issue of the Bulletin) is a tangible expression of the fondness of one alumnus for New College, the major enhancement of the garden paid for out of the £25,000 left to New College in his will. But gifts great and small are most welcome, and are invited especially toward our endowments to provide scholarships for students from all over the world. Please do get in touch with me if you are interested in making a gift.

The vital part which the study of theology and religion makes to education as a whole is discussed elsewhere in this issue of the Bulletin. We in New College are proud of our part in it.

*Professor Larry Hurtado*

# The Principal's Message

Since my induction as Principal, I have appreciated the extent to which New College continues to blend aspects of its tradition with new developments and shifts in its profile. We are a larger, more ecumenical and diverse community than at any stage of our history with successful degrees in Religious Studies and Divinity now significantly outstripping recruitment to the traditional BD degree and attracting large cohorts of school leavers from around the UK. Yet we have sought to maintain our commitment to ministerial formation, our close contacts with churches and other faith groups in Scotland, and the expansion of postgraduate students from across the world. The BD continues to attract a welcome number of ordinands, our current cohort being the largest in Scotland. All this is achieved only with much goodwill and cooperation, and no doubt some tensions also. But New College is a place that continues to command the loyalty and affection of its students, and for this we are grateful.

For me, a highlight of the past year was the study tour to Jerusalem and other parts of Israel/Palestine under the leadership of Graeme and Sylvia Auld. Around 20 church candidates and several members of staff spent eight days of intensive travel and visits to sites around the Holy Land. We returned not only with a heightened awareness of the history and geography of Scripture, but also a chastened sense of the profound difficulties facing those who live in that part of the world today. The triennial cycle of study tours for church candidates continues with a visit to Rome this summer.

We remain committed to the housing of day conferences for our wider constituency and this year's event in honour of T. F. Torrance attracted a full house. The proceedings of the conference will be published later this year by

**'For me, a highlight of the past year was the study tour to Jerusalem and other parts of Israel/Palestine under the leadership of Graeme and Sylvia Auld.'**

Theology in Scotland. We hope to run a further event this autumn as part of the Calvin quincentenary celebrations.

Attendances at the weekly communion service have been healthy throughout the session and much enriched by the input of our choir. Earlier in the year, we took part in the Radio 4 service for Advent Sunday which was broadcast live throughout the UK.

I have been grateful for the support of many colleagues and students during this last year, not least Karoline McLean in the School Office and Alison Jack, who as Assistant Principal, has taken responsibility for the organisation of many of our activities.

*Professor David Fergusson*



## Improving

Three visible improvements have been:

- rebirth of the Garden
- installation of a hoist on the top floor for disabled access to Lecture Room 1
- new and brighter lighting in the approaches to the Rainy Hall

A less visible but great enhancement was a generous £10,000 gift from the Church of Scotland for books for the Library.

Now visible in a different way is a short video – and even shorter trailer – to assist recruitment of new students.

To see and hear them go to:  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZNhup24AEk> and  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k4pOTaSOuRQ>

## The Reverend Professor John Clark Love Gibson

'A scholar minister of humour and passion' who 'spent most of his working life in the University of Edinburgh, but for whom the wellbeing of the Scottish Kirk and nation, and proper education for its ministers, had a high claim on his attention.'

So wrote Professor Graeme Auld about The Reverend Professor John Clark Love Gibson who died on 17 November 2008, in Edinburgh, aged 78.

Born on 28 May 1930 in the manse of Whifflet in Coatbridge. John Gibson graduated twice at Glasgow University, as MA with a 1st in Semitic Languages in 1953 and BD with distinction in 1956. Following a DPhil of Oxford, where he had researched with the Hebraist Sir Godfrey Driver, he was minister of New Machar, Aberdeen for three years. The rest of his working life, from 1962 to 1994, was at New College, first as Lecturer in Hebrew and Semitic Languages, then as Reader (1973) and finally as Professor (1987).

He was widely recognised as a leading scholar of the nature and early history of the Hebrew language, but his linguistic expertise also included Arabic, Accadian, and Ugaritic, as well as general linguistics. As a participant in a living scholarly tradition he inherited projects and put his own mark on them. A notable example in the 1970s was his replacement in three volumes of George A Cooke's 1903 *Textbook of North-Semitic Inscriptions*, and his complete revision of Godfrey Driver's *Canaanite Myths and Legends* – important fresh studies of 2nd millennium BCE texts from the northern coast of Syria, whose discovery has illumined the eastern Mediterranean world that cradled both the Hebrew Bible and classical Greece. Returning in the 1990s to the Hebrew language, John Gibson again inherited and refreshed an earlier piece of work, in

a 4th edition of AB Davidson's classic *Hebrew Syntax* (3rd edition, 1901).

Through-and-through scholar though he was, he was also a teacher, preacher and writer of popular appeal. So it was no surprise that he was asked to complement William Barclay's best-selling Daily Study Bible (on the New Testament) with an Old Testament one. He recruited a dozen other scholars to help him produce the 22 volumes, and he himself contributed two volumes on Genesis and one on Job.

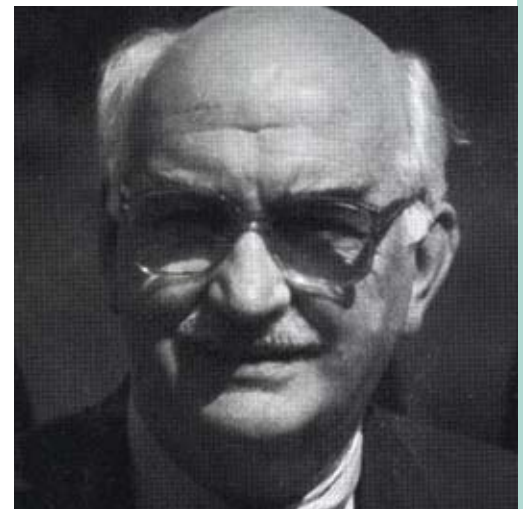
It is significant that his last publication, *Language and Imagery in the Old Testament*, was dedicated, as he himself was, to his students in New College. Although he regretted the end of compulsory Hebrew and Greek, he devoted himself for 30 years to communicating the allure of Hebrew to those with little or no knowledge of it, as well as the vitality of the scriptures written in it. In response students enjoyed the encounters with him in the class room

**'He was widely recognised as a leading scholar of the nature and early history of the Hebrew language, but his linguistic expertise also included Arabic, Accadian, and Ugaritic, as well as general linguistics.'**

as well as the golf course – and not least with his many different and equally flamboyant hats.

His last project, sadly frustrated by chronic and debilitating illness, was to commission and edit a translation into Scots of the Old Testament, to complement WK Lorimer's *The New Testament in Scots*, published in 1983.

After lengthy hospitalisation he died last November, leaving behind Nancy, his wife for over 50 years and their four sons and one daughter.



Professor Graeme Auld, in an obituary, recalls what John wrote, in his introduction to the Book of Job, in which he found 'incomparable glories':

"When we reach the end of this unique and scarifying and excoriating book, we will know that we have had an exceedingly uncomfortable and tempestuous ride. No

book before or since has so remorselessly peeled away the layers of piety and hypocrisy, of self-pity and self-deceit, of meretricious grovelling and heaven-defying arrogance with which, down the ages, humankind has tried to cover over the truth about itself."

## Professor Marcella Maria Althaus Reid

who in 2006 became the first ever woman professor of theology in the University of Edinburgh sadly died in 2009.

Born in Rosario, Argentina in 1952, Marcella Althaus first worked as a primary school teacher and private tutor, at a time when her country was suffering from a repressive military regime. Always an avid reader, she worked her way through much literature, philosophy, religion and sociology, as well as architecture and stage design. In Buenos Aires she became part of a circle of artists, photographers and musicians, some of whom were gay or bisexual. Inheriting the traditional Catholicism of her grandmother, she moved in her 20s to the Methodist Church, without losing the embodied quality of her inherited Catholic piety. In the 1980s she went on to study theology at ISEDET, the Protestant University Institute, Buenos Aires, with the intention of Methodist ordination. While there she engaged in pastoral work in a poor district. In 1984 she was sent to a World Student Christian Federation leadership course of several months in Hardanger, Norway, where she met her future husband, Gordon Reid. In 1985 the two engaged in study travel in the Netherlands and West and East Germany, and then attended both the Student Christian Movement conference in Edinburgh which marked the 75th anniversary of the World Missionary Conference of 1910 and the Methodist World Peace Conference in London. After graduating BTh at ISEDET in 1986, she returned to Scotland to marry Gordon. She worked for Tayside Council in Community Education in housing schemes in Dundee and Perth. At this time she added Quakerism to her membership of the church ecumenical. Her encounter with multiple deprivation, combined with her searching intellect, led her also to undertake research at St Andrew's University into Liberation Theology, leading in 1993 to a PhD. This

issued in invitations to lecture on the Pedagogy of Liberation in both Dundee College of Education and here in New College, where with the initial help of a Quaker fellowship in 1994 she began a series of contracts over 5 years, until in 1999 she became Course Director of the Masters in Theology and Development, moving later to the Theology and Ethics subject area. In 2006 she was awarded a Personal Chair in Contextual Theology.

It was in 2000 that Marcella was 'catapulted' into international recognition, with the publication of her first major book *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics*. Her identification with the marginalised had always gone beyond their need for justice to their capacity for creative theology. She shared this with other 'liberation', 'postcolonial' and 'feminist' theologians. But now she went beyond

**'Her identification with the marginalised had always gone beyond their need for justice to their capacity for creative theology.'**

the theological voice of the poor, the colonised and women to that of another group on the edge, the sexually 'indecent'. Thereafter she received numerous invitations to lecture all around the world, and she devoted herself to extensive writing. Her publications included: *The Queer God*, 2003; *From Feminist Theology to Indecent Theology*, 2004; *The Sexual Theologian* (with Lisa Isherwood), 2005; *Liberation and Sexuality*, 2006. At the same time she was heavily involved in both teaching and administration in New College, and latterly she was struggling with the onset of serious and chronic illness in the form of sarcoma, as result of which on 20 February 2009 (using her own image) 'the gently opening curtain opened fully'.



The President of ISEDET once said of her:

"Her religious and personal history is bound to a permanent search for the truth and a significant degree of spirituality which sometimes reaches characteristics nearly mystic."

Colleagues have spoken of her 'ready smile', 'unfailing kindness', 'outlandish sense of humour', 'quiet assistance to those in need', 'sense of beauty', and of a life lived 'against the odds' and with 'courage, determination, dignity, compassion and intellectual honesty'.

## Dr John C McDowell

Last December after eight and a half years we said farewell to Dr John C McDowell as he and his family emigrated to Australia where he is now Morpeth Professor Of Theology, The University Of Newcastle, New South Wales

John McDowell was Meldrum Lecturer in Systematic Theology, and latterly Senior Lecturer, from 2000 to 2008, as well as Director of Undergraduate Studies for the last two and a half of those years.

With a BD Hons (1993) of the University of Aberdeen and a PhD (1998) of the University of Cambridge, he became successively Undergraduate Tutor in Systematic Theology at the University of Aberdeen, Lecturer in Christian Doctrine,

Ethics and Philosophy of Religion at Monkfield Theological College, and Head of Religious Studies, Head of Philosophy, Co-ordinator of Sports, IT Tutor and English as a Foreign Language Tutor at Cambridge Arts and Sciences Independent Sixth Form College, Cambridge, until he came here in 2000.

Having focused in his doctorate on the work of Karl Barth, he wrote *Hope in Barth's Eschatology: interrogations and transformations beyond tragedy* (Ashgate, 2000) and with Mike Higton edited *Conversing with Barth* (Ashgate, 2007). Less predictably, except to those who knew him, he wrote *The Gospel According to Star Wars: Faith, Hope and the Force* (Westminster Journals, 2007).

His substantial contribution as teacher, supervisor, adviser and colleague and as



a lively member of the community will be greatly missed, and good wishes go with him for his future in the Antipodes.

---

## Dr T Jack Thompson

Also last December after fifteen and a half years we said farewell to Dr T Jack Thompson on his retirement.

Jack Thompson studied first at Queen's University in his home town of Belfast, gaining a Certificate in Biblical Studies in 1963 and a BA (Honours) in Modern History in 1965. After teaching History and Religious Studies in Regent House Grammar School in Newtonards for five years, he gained a Certificate in Mission Studies in 1970 and became a Missionary of the Overseas Board of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, serving in different capacities and in a long-range and long-term 'commute' between Malawi and this country. From 1970 to 1977 he was Head of the History Department of Livingstonia Secondary School. From 1977 to 1980 he studied here for a PhD in African Church History. From 1980 to 1983 he was Director of Theological Education by Extension in Malawi. He was then

seconded to work in this country, working from 1983 to 1993 at the Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, as Assistant Director and then Director of the Centre for New Religious Movements and later as Lecturer in Mission. In 1993 he came here, first as Lecturer in Mission, becoming in 2000 Senior Lecturer in the History of World Christianity and in 2005 Director of the Centre for the Study of Non-Western Christianity, in succession to Professor David Kerr.

A highly regarded historian (a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society), he has concentrated on the history of African Christianity, with a particular emphasis on the indigenous influences that have contributed to its distinctive patterns of belief, ritual, and social and political action. His South/North 'double vision' has led him to two further and rather different specialisms: new religious movements in Britain, and the impact of missionary photography on European and especially Scottish stereotypes of Africa.

His great contribution to Malawi, including its history, was recognised last year when



he was made a member of the royal clan of the Ngoni people. It was also fitting that he was asked to edit *From Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis: a Political History of Malawi*, the posthumous book of the late Andrew Ross, whose inspiring influence on him he cherished. His own influence as a teacher and scholar and as Centre Director is similarly cherished by students from many nations. We wish him well in his active retirement, which includes at present a spell in Malawi to further the Scotland-Malawi Partnership, the intergovernmental project, in the creation of which he played a leading role.

## Professor Brian Stanley

In January 2009 Brian Stanley became our new Professor of World Christianity and new Director of our Centre for the Study of World Christianity. A historian 'by training and basic conviction', whose undergraduate and postgraduate studies were at the University of Cambridge, he specialised in Victorian social history and developed a particular focus on the relation between imperial and missionary enthusiasms. His doctorate on the domestic base of early Victorian foreign missionary movements was followed by his first book, 'The Bible and the Flag' on Protestant missions and British imperialism. His subsequent career has been mainly in theological institutions. As a Christian of Baptist background he has found this congenial, one of his main concerns being to apply theological perspectives to history and historical perspectives to theology. His appointments

Church History, Mission Studies and World Christianity to an increasingly rich ecumenical mix of theological students, Baptist, Anglican, Methodist, Reformed, Catholic and Orthodox.

Believing that Christianity is essentially a universal and therefore missionary faith, being good news for everyone, Professor Stanley explores the question why it is often not perceived to be so. This leads him into a set of historical, cultural and contextual issues, including, as part of the baggage of the past, the confusion of mission with domination, whether in perception or in reality.

He believes that an essential skill for both the historian and the missionary is cross-cultural empathy. If, in L P Hartley's words, 'the past is another country' in which 'they do things differently', so also is another culture, present as well as past. This means that both historian and missionary must try to understand why those to whom they attend think and act as they do. It also means that historians

### 'He believes that an essential skill for both the historian and the missionary is cross-cultural empathy.'

have been successively at Spurgeon's College in London, Trinity College in Bristol and most recently in Cambridge where he has been engaged in both research and teaching. He developed and directed a research project in the University of Cambridge Divinity Faculty, first on the History of the Missionary Movement and then on Currents in World Christianity, the latter having more of a focus on the 20th century and on the world beyond Europe and North America. From 2001 to 2008 he was the director of the Henry Martyn Centre for the Study of Mission and World Christianity, located at Westminster College, Cambridge. Throughout all these appointments, including the research-centred ones in Cambridge, he has taught courses in

studying past missionaries need to do this better than some do!

Professor Stanley is pleased that the Centre now shares with his professorial chair the title 'World Christianity'. A problem with the former title 'Christianity in the Non-Western World' was that Christianity outside Europe seemed to be defined by what it was not, implying that the Western was the norm. It also needs to be recognised that we are now in a fluid and globalised world, in which the Christianities of Africa and Asia are also present in urban Europe and North America. So the Centre's work now addresses the multidirectional flows of migration and the increasing fluidity and integration of religious movements,



without neglecting the very specific past and present African, Asian, Pacific and Latin American embodiments of Christian faith. A balance is kept between showing the contributions of the regional specifics to the global and paying close attention to the contextual specifics of each region. And this is reflected in the Centre's division of labour between Brian Stanley with his global perspective and Elizabeth Koepping and Afe Adogame with their respective Asian and African ones.

The new Professor and Director hopes for a similar healthy balance between the Centre's specific identity and the overall integration of New College. He also plans to strengthen the wider interdisciplinary cooperation between the Centre and a range of academics such as historians, sociologists, anthropologists, economists, literary scholars and the University's regional centres.

As Edinburgh 2010 approaches, he has just had published a book which is likely to become authoritative, *The World Missionary Conference, Edinburgh 1910* (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2009). It is the latest in the series *Studies in the History of Christian Missions* which he has co-edited from its inception and to which he has contributed substantially.



## Dr Paul T Nimmo

Paul Nimmo, the new Meldrum Lecturer, describes himself primarily as a systematic theologian, with a special focus on the Reformed tradition. Born in Edinburgh, he studied Engineering and Management Studies in Cambridge, worked for two years in finance, then turned to theology, gaining a BD here in 2000, a ThM from Princeton in 2001 and a PhD here in 2005, having interleaved his research here with study in Tübingen and several summers of parish work. He was then appointed as a Research Assistant in the Faculty of Divinity of the University of Cambridge, working with Professor David Ford, before returning three years later to succeed John McDowell as Meldrum Lecturer.

His research into the Reformed tradition, though initially focused on Barth, especially the relation between his ontology and his ethics, has also included work on Calvin, Schleiermacher, McLeod Campbell and Torrance. He is now exploring Reformed sacramentology, investigating a particular trajectory, from Zwingli to Barth, which concentrates on the *ethical* understanding of sacraments.

His passion is to make theology relevant to a world that is not so much opposed to God as oblivious to God, with a consequent loss of awareness of the relevance of theology. With the academy distancing itself from the church, the church has also been distancing itself from the academy and losing sight of the vital importance of theology for its life. Paul is one of several theologians working within the bounds of the church who are



dedicating themselves to closing this gap. Happy to be at New College, he hopes to contribute to continuing its good reputation and its friendly ethos.

The University's staff 'Bulletin' has recently taken note of the fact that, in a ceremony at the University of Heidelberg in May, Paul received a 2009 John Templeton Award for Theological Promise, which took particular note of his book, *Being in Action: The Theological Shape of Barth's Ethical Vision* (London: T&T Clark Continuum, 2007). This Bulletin is happy to echo that Bulletin in its comment that this award signified recognition 'as one of the most promising theologians on the world'.

**'His passion is to make theology relevant to a world that is not so much opposed to God as oblivious to God, with a consequent loss of awareness of the relevance of theology.'**

## IT & e-learning

Students of earlier generations would probably be amazed at the large place of online methods in present-day study. Under the leadership of our IT and E-learning Advisor, Dr Jessie Paterson, the School continues to be a pioneer in the educational use of digital technology. Recent or current projects include:

- developing a digital tool (wiki) for postgraduates who tutor undergraduates to help them share with each other their resources, ideas and experience an online handbook for those tutors
- an online course on research methods for postgraduates
- a wiki to encourage student collaborative work in one undergraduate course, produced under supervision by the students themselves
- research into how elearning tools which have been developed for one course could help the development of similar tools for other courses
- a pilot on online essay-marking, which has proved popular with students because they get fuller (and more legible!) feedback
- and for prospective students, both an informative DVD (also available online) and an online taster of what study here is like.

# Africa In Scotland, Scotland In Africa



It was fitting that a conference with this title took place in this University this year; for it is exactly 150 years since, in 1859, the first African to study at a British University graduated MD here – and David Livingstone went on his Zambezi Expedition.

Dr Afe Adogame, Lecturer in World Christianity, convened this big event from 29 April to 1 May, which was the annual international conference of the University's Centre of African Studies. It was a scholarly and interdisciplinary forum with great practical import. It examined the mutually influential and determining nature of relations between Scotland and Africa, past and present. Scotland has long had involvement with Africa, and now there is also a significant diaspora of Africans who have migrated to Scotland. On the basis of greater historical and contemporary understanding, the conference explored ways of strengthening the ties between Scotland and Africa, of creating new channels of understanding and cooperation, and of clarifying both the role of the African diaspora in Scotland and what Scotland can learn from Africa.

Over 100 participants – academics, policy makers and others – came from Africa, North and Latin America, and Europe. Themes of the 4 keynote addresses and 38 papers included: History, Commerce and Politics; Religion and Mission; Migration and Diaspora; Health; NGOs and Development; Arts; Epistemology, Politics and Race. (For more information, see [www.cas.ed.ac.uk/events/annual-conference/2009](http://www.cas.ed.ac.uk/events/annual-conference/2009) or contact Dr Afe Adogame 0044 (0) 131 650 8928 Afe.Adogame@ed.ac.uk).

The conference was opened by the Scottish Culture Minister, Mike Russell MSP; it was addressed by the former First Minister of Scotland and High Commissioner Designate to Malawi, Jack McConnell MSP, and it listened to the Royal African Society Lecture given by the former UK Minister for International Development and former Leader of the House of Lords, the Rt. Hon. Baroness Valerie Amos.

## 'The World Of Reformation Britain As Seen And Heard In The Wode Psalter'

This 3-year project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and organised by an international project team led by Professor Jane Dawson, involves multidisciplinary research, musical concerts, an international exhibition and permanent collections of recorded music, online images and other material.

The Wode or St Andrews Psalter, a collection of illustrated manuscript musical part books of the Psalter, containing 106 metrical psalms, was copied and compiled between 1562 and 1592 by Thomas Wode, vicar of St Andrews. It is preserved in 8 books, 5 belonging to the University of Edinburgh Library.

It became the 'gold standard' for post-Reformation devotion and worship in Scotland. Together with Wode's own copious annotations, it constitutes an audiovisual 'diary' of the world of Reformation Britain in the second half of the 16th century. This project will make it once again audible and visible to many.

## New Alumni

Welcome to a new alumnus, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who in May received the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity.



---

## ‘The wilderness shall rejoice’

The garden of New College may not have left much impression on students in the past. It was not very noticeable or inviting, being somewhat overgrown. This has all changed. Through the initiative of the Head of School and the generosity of a deceased alumnus, it has been transformed into a beautiful and sociable place. On 3 July, after the Graduation Tea in the Rainy Hall and in the presence of the Principal of the University, another alumnus, the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh, the Rt. Hon. George Grubb, opened the ‘Alan Robinson Garden’. Alan Robinson, who was born in 1929 and died in 2004, had graduated BD in 1992 and PhD in 1994, supervised by the late Professor George Anderson. An Old Testament specialist, his doctoral thesis was on ‘The Zion conception in the Psalms and Deutero-Isaiah’. He later

became Principal Lecturer in Theology and Religious Studies in the Derbyshire College of Higher Education (now part of the University of Derby). He wrote theological books and articles, as well as poetry and children’s books. The following titles show his range of work: *‘Process Analysis Applied to the Early Traditions of Israel’*, *Clouds of Glory; Tongues of Angels; The Treasures of St Paul: Selected Themes from Paul’s Theology and Ethics; Jesus according to John: The Sayings of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel; The Mystic Rose; The Hidden Christ; Time and Tide, The Apostles’ Creed: God’s Special Revelation; The Gate of Heaven: A Study in Christian Ethics.*

It would be appreciated if alumni who knew Alan Robinson would share their memories with us.



---

## The Usual and the Unusual

It is good if institutions, like people, are not too predictable. New College in session 2008-9 had a mixture of more and less familiar events.

### Among the familiar – and very successful – ones were:

- the Opening Day Event on 18 September, when alumni met for lunch and Professor James Cox gave his Inaugural Lecture on ‘Dressing Up an African God in Christian Clothing’
- the Burns Supper on 26 January
- the Spring Ball on 17 February
- the now Annual Alumni Dinner on 1 May, this time with special, but not exclusive, focus on the pre-1970 alumni
- the Alumni Lunch on 22 May, which was in the newly refurbished Garden.

**Not so familiar** but likely to become so were the barbecues in the Garden, at the

beginning and of the session, organised by the postgraduate students.

### Special events were:

- the induction of Professor David Fergusson by the Presbytery of Edinburgh on 17 September as the new Principal of New College
- a Radio 4 broadcast service on 30 November, in cooperation with Greenbank Church, at which Professor Fergusson preached and the New College choir took a leading part
- a presentation to Professor Barbara McHaffie and Professor Fraser McHaffie on 14 May in recognition of their years of service as our alumni agents in the USA, who among other things distributed this Bulletin there; this presentation was coupled with a Gunning Lecture of Barbara McHaffie on ‘Women, Scholarship and Christian Tradition’.

### One of the biggest events was

- a Day Conference on 29 October in memory of the late Professor Tom Torrance, which was attended by around 120 alumni. Personal memories were combined with expositions of his thought – on Christology, worship, the nature of knowledge and the relation between science and religion.



# Publish and Be Blessed

Staff publications continue to be hard to keep up with. Here are the ones spotted.

**Afe Adogame**, with **Roswith Gerloff** and **Klaus Hock** (eds.), *Christianity in Africa and the African Diaspora: The Appropriation of a Scattered Heritage* (London & New York: Continuum, 2008)

**Afe Adogame**, with **Magnus Echtler** & **Ulf Vierke** (eds.), *Unpacking the New: Critical Perspectives on Cultural Syncretization in Africa and Beyond* (Zürich & Münster: Lit Verlag, 2008)

**Stewart J Brown**, with **Christopher A Whatley** (eds.), *The Union of 1707: New Dimensions* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2008)

**Paul Foster** (ed.), *The Non-Canonical Gospels* (London: Continuum, 2008) – an edited collection

**Paul Foster**, *The Apocryphal Gospels: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: OUP, 2009)

**Paul Foster**, with **John Kloppenborg**, **Joseph Verheyden** & **Andrew Gregory**, *New Studies in the Synoptic Problem* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009)

**Christian Lange**, *Justice, Punishment and the Medieval Muslim Imagination* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008)

**Christian Lange**, with **Maribel Fierro** (eds.), *Public Violence in Islamic Societies: Power, Discipline and the Construction of the Public Sphere, 7th-19th Centuries CE* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2009)

**Brian Stanley**, *The World Missionary Conference: Edinburgh, 1910* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009)

**Nicolas Wyatt**, *The Archaeology of Myth: Papers on Old Testament Tradition* (London: Equinox, 2009)

## COMING IN SEPTEMBER 2009

**David Fergusson**, *Faith and Its Critics* (Oxford: OUP, 2009) – based on the Glasgow 2008 Gifford Lectures

**Duncan Forrester** and **Douglas Gay** (eds.) *Worship and Liturgy in Context: Studies and Case Studies in Theology and Practice* (London: SCM, 2009) – with a Scottish focus and with many New College contributors

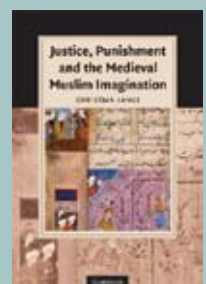
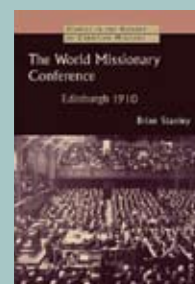
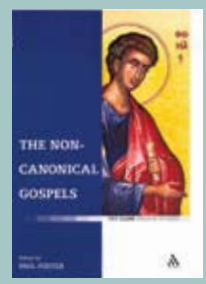
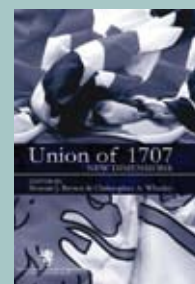
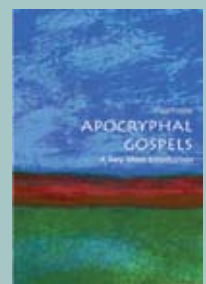
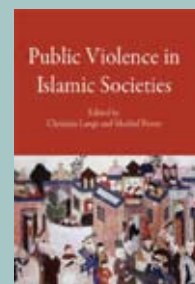
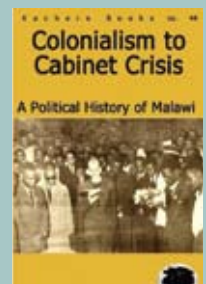
## PUBLICATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CENTRE FOR THEOLOGY AND PUBLIC ISSUES (CTPI)

**Johnston McKay** (ed.), *Christian Faith and the Welfare of the City* (Edinburgh: CTPI, 2008) – a collection of essays in honour of the CTPI Associate Director, Dr Alison Elliot on her 60th birthday

**Alison Elliot** & **Heidi Poon** (eds.), *Growing Citizens: an interdisciplinary reflection on citizenship education* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 2009) – based on a CTPI project

## POSTHUMOUSLY PUBLISHED AND EDITED BY JACK THOMPSON

**Andrew Ross**, *From Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis: A Political History of Malawi* (Malawi: Kachere, 2009)



## Where now are the two New College alumni who in recent years became University of Edinburgh Alumni of the Year?

**Ruth Patterson**, first woman minister in the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, is still working at reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

**Duncan MacLaren**, who was Secretary General of Caritas Internationalis, is now at the Australian Catholic University in Sydney, coordinating their education programme in Liberal Studies and in Theology for refugees from camps on the Thai-Burma border.

### And other alumni?

Here is an almost random sample

**Helen Blackburn**, having lectured in Health and Social Care in a Edinburgh college, became qualified as both a teacher and a manager, and is now Centre Manager in a Salvation Army homeless hostel.

**Alastair Brown** has just moved from Oxfordshire to become President of Northern Seminary in Chicago.

**Bob Faris**, after a period lecturing in Mozambique and then coordinating the Canadian Churches' Forum for Global Ministries, now directs the Churches' Council on Theological Education in Canada.

**Graham Hutchins**, having ministered in English-speaking congregations in East Asia, Latin America, Africa – and the USA, and having taught philosophy, literature, ethics and religion in several universities and colleges, is now much engaged in poetry and photography.

**Miles Jupp** continues to be a well-known stand-up comedian and actor.

**Sheilagh Kesting** became in May 2007 the first woman minister in the Church of Scotland to be elected Moderator of its General Assembly.

**Katrine Lygren** has recently entered the contemplative Benedictine monastery on the Isle of Wight.

**Murdoch Mackenzie**, former Ecumenical Bishop of Milton Keynes, has recently been assisting in the Graduate School of Ecumenical Studies at Chateau de Bossey near Geneva.

**Gordon Mole**, who has degrees in Development Planning as well as Religious Studies, has worked for the Cross River Partnership in central London and now manages a construction and employment training scheme, 'Building London, Creating Futures'.

**David Nussbaum**, who was formerly Chief Executive of Transparency International, is now Chief Executive of the World Wildlife Fund – UK.

**Timothy Tennent**, who has been Professor of World Mission and Indian Studies at Gordon-Cornwell Theological Seminary, is becoming President of Asbery Theological Seminary.

## Congratulations

to **Dr Susan Hardman Moore**, who at a ceremony on 8 January in the Tower of London was declared runner up for the annual History Today Book of the Year award for her book *Pilgrims: New World Settlers and the Call of Home* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007) and to **Dr Jeanne Openshaw**, who received the Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Award from the West Bengal equivalent of the Academie Française for her work on Bengali language, literature and culture.



## Deaths

We were saddened by the recent deaths of:

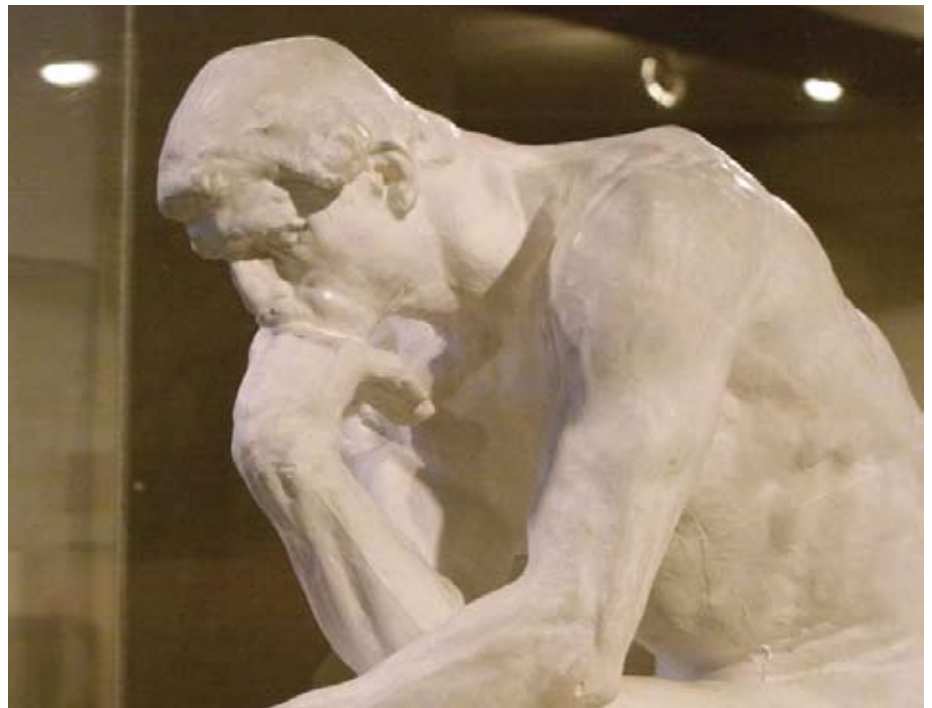
**Ian Baillie**, who in memory of his father, Professor John Baillie, for many years provided for an annual Baillie Lecture within the Centre for Theology and Public Issues.

**Penelope Carter**, a member of our Alumni Committee, who after graduation here became a librarian and was latterly Librarian of the National Gallery of Scotland

**John Howard**, a former New College Librarian, who was in University Library service for 30 years from 1965 to 1995.

# HUMAN & HUMANE

This University used to be divided into Faculties, one of which was Divinity. However, for the last few years it has been organised in Schools within three Colleges, Divinity being a School within the College of Humanities and Social Science.



If one turns the noun 'Humanities' into an adjective coupled with the noun 'Studies', a question arises; is it 'Human Studies' or 'Humane Studies'?

This indicates a fairly fundamental ambiguity about human beings. It is highlighted not only by this distinction between 'human' and 'humane' but also by two contradictory uses of 'human'. One is complimentary, as in 'she is very human'; the other is uncomplimentary, as in 'he is all too human'. Therein lies a big issue for philosophical or theological anthropology; but that is beyond this journal. What follows is less high flown and possibly of more immediate interest. It is a set of reflections by some of those who teach in New College on:

## THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY AND RELIGION TO 'HUMANE' EDUCATION


### Viewpoint 1

Part of the relevance of the academic study of theology/religion in a public-funded university in a pluralised modern society is the persistence of religions (of various hues and kinds) in characterising

the human race. 'Religion' covers a wide variety of things, some of them completely incommensurable with one another. 'Religions' can be powerful forces for good, motivating people to act selflessly; but 'religions' can also serve as legitimisations for the most shocking cruelty, oppression and downright evil. So, it is all the more important that 'religion' and religious beliefs be engaged with the seriousness that they deserve.

If universities are to be places where all important aspects of life are studied, then undeniably religion must be included. A recent visit to Beijing revealed that theology and religion are the focus of intense interest among scholars of Marxist background and orientation. These colleagues recognise that human cultures are shaped by religious ideas, traditions and values, and that we cannot understand ourselves or others without profound understanding of these matters.

Academic study of theology and religion does not require any particular religious commitment, or any religious commitment at all. But religious commitment and high-quality academic study of religion/theology are perfectly compatible, and the one is in no way an



impediment to the other. Students and staff of New College, for example, reflect a variety of stances on religious matters, and that only contributes further to its rich and stimulating atmosphere.

### **Viewpoint 2**

I tend to speak of 'liberal education'. By 'education' I mean 'a process of cultivation i.e. training the mind for a lifetime of growth through openness to new influences', and by 'liberal' I mean 'open-minded, tolerant, generous, benevolent and concerned for others'. Thus the person shaped by a liberal education is open to the ideas and beliefs of others, wishes to study other languages and other ways of thinking and acting, and is not quick to judge or dismiss. He or she reads, not to accept or reject the ideas encountered, but rather to weigh and consider the thoughts of others, not to praise or condemn, but to comprehend and empathise. Such education prepares people for a lifetime of learning and growth in which they gain a sense of perspective through an understanding of the human condition that will strengthen them against the adversity and suffering that touch all. They become more concerned for the welfare and comfort of others than with their own wants or interests, knowing that the greatest happiness comes through working for the happiness of others. They value humanity in all its variety and cultivate mutual respect through good manners and civil discourse.

There is perhaps no better description of this than by the great nineteenth century Christian intellectual, John Henry Newman in his account of 'humane discourse' in his classic study, *The Idea of a University*.

In a world deeply divided by religious beliefs, ethnic identities and ideological convictions we need people of such open and magnanimous minds, who seek understanding, mutual respect and reconciliation, and have an abiding sense of the human potential for good. This School of Divinity, which historically has represented a belief in the eternal value of each individual, rightly regards such a

liberal education as integral to its historic mission and identity.

### **Viewpoint 3**

Departments of Theology and Religious Studies play an indispensable role in the modern university because they remind us that human wellbeing is not determined by economic or technological criteria alone, and that for the vast majority of humankind throughout history and today, human existence cannot be fully described or adequately explained without resort to questions of ultimate truth. What is distinctive about this School is that, unlike so many other departments of theology and religious studies, it treats Christianity as a world religion and not simply a European faith. Thus the false dichotomy between theology as the study of European Christian tradition and religious studies as the study of what the rest of the world believes is largely eliminated.

### **Viewpoint 4**

The vast majority of nations in the world today are not simply secular, but nor are they simply religious; in the words of Professor David Ford of Cambridge, they are in truth 'complexly religious and secular'. Given this fact, and the evident national and geopolitical importance which pertains to it, two consequences for higher education seem to follow. First, it would seem greatly desirable that contemporary academic institutions actively support the study of religion, not only with a view to the way in which religious texts and traditions have informed our past histories, but also with the appreciation of how religions continue to shape our present circumstances. Second, it would seem eminently appropriate that such studies are allowed and indeed encouraged to proceed in diverse ways which do justice to the complexity of their subject matter: in particular, in ways which accommodate the perspectives both of those who are practising members of faith traditions and those who are not. The public forum of the university offers a unique and privileged space for this sort of multi-dimensional enquiry which alone can do justice to the nature of religious

traditions. In their activity in this domain, universities have a major contribution to make, not only to the education of individual students who pass through their halls, but also to the flourishing of the societies and of the nations of which they form a vital constituent part.

### **Viewpoint 5**

*A new member of the teaching staff, Dr Carys Moseley gives a rather more specific illustration of the wider relevance of theological study. A native of Cardiff, with a University of Cambridge BA (1998) in Classics, University of Oxford BA (2001) and MST (2002) in Theology, she gained her PhD here in 2007, and was appointed here in 2008 as a British Academy post-doctoral research fellow. She writes:*

#### **THE IMPORTANCE OF THEOLOGICAL WORK ON RELIGION, NATIONHOOD AND NATIONALISM IN MODERN EUROPEAN AND AMERICAN CHRISTIAN AND JEWISH THOUGHT**

My work focuses on theological-ethical engagement with the social sciences and political theory, concerning the fields of religion, nationalism and gender. Nationhood as a concept is firstly Jewish and then Christian, deriving from the ongoing interpretation of the Bible. Understanding this properly is key to understanding international religious and political issues today. Jewish loss and recovery of statehood in Israel can be read theologically as witnessing to recognition and preservation of other stateless nations through ancestral religious formation (witnessed even in secular movements). The thinkers that I read for my work include Karl Barth, Reinhold Niebuhr, Anthony D Smith, Adrian Hastings, Hannah Arendt, David Novak, Michael Wyschogrod, and Margaret Mead. I aim to promote a dialogue between European protestant theology, modern Jewish thought and American protestant thought that illuminates their commonalities and differences in a manner conducive to public engagement.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO SESSION 2009-2010

### Four September events

#### Thursday 17 September. Opening Day of Session

12.30 ALUMNI LUNCH  
2.00 INAUGURAL LECTURE

Professor Jane Dawson  
'SINGING THE REFORMATION:  
THE SCOTTISH EXPERIENCE'

#### Tuesday 22 September, 4.30

LAUNCH OF THE NEWLY  
RENAMED CENTRE FOR  
THE STUDY OF WORLD  
CHRISTIANITY AND  
OF TWO BOOKS ON  
EDINBURGH 1910

Brian Stanley, *The World Missionary  
Conference: Edinburgh 1910* & Kenneth  
Ross & David Kerr (eds.), *Edinburgh  
2010: Mission Then and Now*

#### Thursday, 24 September, 4.00

LAUNCH OF A BOOK BASED  
ON THE 2008 GLASGOW  
GIFFORD LECTURES

David Fergusson, *Faith and Its Critics:  
a Conversation*

#### Tuesday 29 September, 4.00 – 6.00

LAUNCH OF A NEW BOOK  
ON WORSHIP

Duncan Forrester & Douglas Gay, *Worship  
and Liturgy in Context: Studies and Case  
Studies in Theology and Practice*

### QUALIFICATIONS

#### Types of qualification offered in the School of Divinity include:

6 Honours Degrees, 3 General Degrees  
3 Postgraduate Degrees

#### Honours (4 Years)

BD Honours (if second degree, 3 years)  
MA Divinity  
MA Religious Studies  
MA Philosophy and Theology  
MA Divinity and Classics  
MA Religious Studies and  
English/Scottish Literature

## 2010 marks 450 years since the Scottish Reformation

**There will be a Cunningham Lecture  
series on five Thursdays at 5.15  
between November and January  
19 November, Martin Hall**

**THE KIRK AND THE  
REFORMATION**

Professor Jane Dawson

#### 26 November, Martin Hall

**REFORMED THEOLOGY  
IN SCOTLAND**

Professor Donald McLeod

#### 3 December, Martin Hall

**THE REFORMATION AND  
POLITICAL THOUGHT IN  
EARLY MODERN SCOTLAND**

Professor Roger Mason

#### 21 January, Assembly Hall

**THE KIRK AND LITERATURE**

Professor Susan Manning

#### 28 January, Assembly Hall

**THE KIRK AND MUSIC**

Dr Noel O'Regan and the  
Renaissance Singers

### For Your 2010 Diary

**NEW COLLEGE ANNUAL  
ALUMNI DINNER  
FRIDAY 30 APRIL 2010**

open to all alumni (100 maximum places)  
contact Andrew.Morton@ed.ac.uk

#### General (3 Years)

BD General  
BA Divinity  
BA Religious Studies

#### Postgraduate

MTh – by research  
MTh – taught  
PhD

### FACEBOOK

Some postgraduate students and alumni have set up a Facebook called 'New College, Edinburgh' and invite participation.

Keep up to date with New College in two ways, by regularly checking the website [www.div.ed.ac.uk](http://www.div.ed.ac.uk) and by registering for the email circulations through [Andrew.Morton@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Andrew.Morton@ed.ac.uk)

There is a new New College silk tie costing £17 contact [Andrew.Morton@ed.ac.uk](mailto:Andrew.Morton@ed.ac.uk). There are plans for a silk scarf and a sweatshirt.

## 2010 marks 100 years since the World Missionary Conference here in June 1910

**The events will be worldwide,  
but with a certain focus here.**

In June 2010 there will be a major conference at the Pollock Halls of Residence culminating in a celebration in the Assembly Hall. New College has had several other special links, including:

- its International Director, Dr Daryl Balia being based here on the New College staff
- one of the many global Study Groups, holding its second conference here this June on 'Christian Communities in Contemporary Global Contexts'
- and, as already noted, the new Professor of World Christianity, Professor Brian Stanley having just published a major history of the 1910 conference.

