

# encounter

## Partnerships

Dr Rod Thompson | National Principal

In his book *The Next Evangelicalism*, Soon-Chan Rah reflects on the dramatic shift away from a northern and western hemisphere-centred Christianity to a southern and eastern hemisphere-centred Christianity. Fifty years ago the typical Christian was thought of as American, middle-class, white, male, and affluent. Today, Soon-Chan Rah affirms that the typical Christian would be described as “a young Nigerian mother on the outskirts of Lagos, a university student in Seoul, South Korea, or a teenage boy in Mexico City”. 1 By 2050, African, Asian and Latin American Christians will constitute about 71% of the world’s Christian population.

Jesus Christ’s concluding, climactic and compelling words in the book of Matthew are: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been

given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (TNIV).

Christ’s Gospel mission to the nations is expressed in many ways at Laidlaw College. As I write this article, I am two days away from travelling to Bangalore, India where I will teach biblical theology to students in the MDiv programme at the South Asian Institute for Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS). SAIACS is an excellent theological college of which the founding Principal was Graham Houghton, a graduate of our College in 1961. The current Principal is Ian Payne, who, along with his wife Judith, worked for our College in the 1980’s and is also a graduate.

Today, five Korean students along with Rev Dr Jae-Piel Park, Director of the Glocal Ministry

Centre at the Presbyterian University and Seminary (PUTS) in Seoul, arrive at Laidlaw. This is the first student exchange visit between our Colleges, an expression of our recently reinvigorated Memorandum of Understanding. In July, Dr Tim Meadowcroft from our School of Theology will travel to the Christian Leaders’ Training College (CLTC) in the highlands of Papua New Guinea to teach into their Master of Theology programme. Currently, Laidlaw is hosting two staff members and their families

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Rod Thompson at PUTS

from CLTC, who are about to commence doctoral studies at Otago University.

Laidlaw College is now, and will increasingly be, part of an international community of evangelical institutions shaped by a shared desire to practice education that is faithful to the Gospel of Christ and responsive to Christ's command to make disciples of all nations. Our task is to equip graduates with biblical wisdom, skills and godly character, who will be part of God's purposes in renewing cultural contexts, not only in Aotearoa New Zealand, but throughout the world. Current international partnerships include those with CLTC in Papua New Guinea, SAIACS in Bangalore, PUTS in Seoul, Eastern University in Philadelphia, and Corban University in Oregon. We will be prayerfully considering new partnerships in future years. Through these partnerships our staff and students will be mutually enriched. Resources will be shared. New friendships will be forged. And our commitment to Christ's mission to raise up disciples in all nations will be further realised.

1 Rah, Soong-Chan (2009). *The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity*. InterVarsity Press. Downers Grove, IL. p. 13.

## Welcome to the Kims

Jenny Mackie | Alumni Coordinator/Student Dean

A sixth generation Christian, Hyeong Kyoon Kim traces his Christian roots back to the early evangelisation of Korea. His arrival at Laidlaw College this year is a step towards his dream of completing a doctorate in Asian church history. Ordained into the Presbyterian ministry, Hyeong has worked as a youth pastor for the last two years, and also assisted the Dean of Church History at the Presbyterian University and Theological Seminary (PUTS) in South Korea to write the history of a Korean church. It was that same Dean who encouraged Hyeong to come to Laidlaw College.

Hyeong, his wife Song and 17 month old son Ju Ha, are loving living on Laidlaw's Henderson campus and forming friendships with students from other cultures. The green spaces and birdlife are also a welcome

contrast to central Seoul! Ju Ha's first words each morning are: "Duck? Duck?"

With a Bachelor of Theology, Master of Divinity and Master of Theology from PUTS under his belt, one could ask what Laidlaw College can teach him. But Hyeong is relishing the different teaching and learning style in New Zealand, and our Laidlaw community has been greatly enriched by the Kim's presence.



Song, Ju and Hyeong Kim

## Fifty Years Later...

John Hitchen | Laidlaw College Honorary Research Fellow and Previous Principal of both CLTC and BCNZ

In 2015, the Christian Leaders' Training College (CLTC), Laidlaw's partner College in Papua New Guinea (PNG), celebrates fifty years since its first students commenced study in 1965. CLTC students come from all the provinces of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, as well as Samoa and Tonga occasionally.

From the beginning, Laidlaw College and our alumni have been deeply involved in CLTC's central bible teaching ministries, its administration and in its support programmes<sup>2</sup>. Some, like Garth and Ruth Morgan and John and Ann Hitchen have been significantly involved through the whole fifty years. BTI/BCNZ staff and alumni have served on the New Zealand CLTC Advisory Council, with Principal David Stewart as Chair, Hudson Deane as Secretary and Bev Blakemore faithfully handling donations and accounts through the early decades and the Thorps and Edwards more recently, with many others overlapping.

Since 2007 Laidlaw has had an official Memorandum of Understanding with CLTC which particularly links the two Colleges in their Master of Theology programmes. Laidlaw faculty regularly teach courses at CLTC and provide assistance in course moderation, examination and supervision of the research dissertations. Rod Thompson will also chair the South Pacific Association of Evangelical Colleges' Conference at CLTC in September.

From its inception, one distinctive aspect of CLTC has been its agricultural initiatives which help raise financial support for the College's educational programmes. Garth Morgan has organised and coordinated massive contributions from Kiwis. Many Laidlaw alumni, in a variety of professions, have provided expertise and hands-on-help in numerous practical support projects over the fifty years.

Add to all these the ongoing responses to calls to prayer for CLTC in reports and publications from Laidlaw, and you realise that the Laidlaw-CLTC partnership is no mere paper statement of intent. This partnership demonstrates that tertiary level, quality, evangelical theological education and formation of indigenous church and community leaders in Melanesia, and across the Pacific is truly an international, intercultural, joint venture for Colleges who share the same life in Christ Jesus. We both need each other in this partnership.

2 See John Hitchen, 'Evangelicals Equipping Melanesian Men and Women: An Interpretation of the Training Ministries of the Christian Leaders' Training College of Papua New Guinea, 1965-2010'; in Tim Meadowcroft and Myk Habets (Eds.) *Gospel, Truth & Interpretation: Evangelical Identity in Aotearoa New Zealand*, Auckland: Archer, 2011: 110-136.



CLTC Graduation Ceremony



Richard Neville with one of his classes at SAIACS

## From Christchurch to India

Dr Richard Neville | Senior Lecturer – School of Theology

The South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies (SAIACS) provides outstanding training for people preparing for a wide range of leadership roles throughout Asia, and partnering with them is a great privilege for Laidlaw College. Last November was my second trip to the beautiful campus located in Bangalore, India. The elevation of the city means that the climate is cooler than many parts of India, making it more congenial for a Kiwi from Christchurch. The accommodation is great and all the delicious Indian meals are provided free to visiting faculty. This all serves as the context for spending time with some of the most interesting and dedicated young Christian people you could wish to meet.

Most of the students come from various parts of India, and there are also students from countries like Nepal and Myanmar. Their stories are remarkable. Some speak of persecution, while others talk about the routine challenges of living out their faith in their culture. Young men called to the pastoral ministry share their concern about finding wives. Most Indian parents are hesitant to allow their daughters to marry young pastors, knowing they will be poor. A young graduate told me he recently had to break off an engagement to a young woman from a very wealthy family because she was insisting that he leave his ministry to live with her family in another part of India. This must have been a difficult decision, but to him nothing could be

more obvious. He works two jobs to make ends meet, and yet every time I go anywhere with him he insists on paying. “Dr Neville, you are the visitor, I will pay”, he says. He won’t stop calling me “Dr” either!

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*“I sat quite transfixed at the spectacle of people singing in a so many languages, from such diverse cultures, and yet all worshipping Jesus Christ.”*

If I had to pick two highlights from my last trip, the first would be an evening spent with the students from my class and their families. It started with a formal welcome from the Nepali student whose family was hosting the evening. Someone asked them to sing a Christian song from Nepal. And then quite spontaneously each family responded by singing a song of the faith from their home country or region of India. It was a magical time, with parents and children singing, faces beaming, and hands clapping (I’m pretty sure there was some thigh-slapping too). I sat quite transfixed at the spectacle of people singing in a so many languages, from such diverse cultures, and yet all worshipping Jesus Christ.

The other highlight was my friendship with the young man who broke off the engagement. I have great memories of us walking and talking together in the cool of a Bangalore evening on our way to the local coffee house where we sipped hot, sweet Indian coffee. He never would let me pay. No worries. He seems to have met another young woman, and I’ve just heard I’ll be needing to send him a wedding gift!

## Better Together

Fiona Sherwin | PA to Academic Dean/  
Disability Liaison

As a College we truly value the connections, both formal and informal, that we have with churches, educational institutions and various Christian organisations, NGOs and Mission Agencies around Aoteroa New Zealand. We deeply appreciate partnering with people who are also seeking to live as faithful followers of Christ in the context of this nation, and hope to make many more meaningful and intentional connections in the coming years.

2015 has been exciting for us with the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Laidlaw College and Equippers College. This MOU has meant that Equippers students can study towards a Laidlaw diploma within their church denomination, keeping the Equippers “flavour”.

Laidlaw has also had long term relationships with Bishopdale Theological College in Nelson, Booth College in Upper Hutt, the Auckland University of Technology, Otago University and Wellington Pacific Bible College. These partnerships are all mutually enriching and we value the opportunity to work together.



Signing of the MOU between Equippers and Laidlaw College (front: Steve Graham, Rod Thompson; back: Carolyn and Michael Hanson)



## It's Official

Shelly Neethling | Communications and Marketing Manager

In the March 2015 edition of Encounter, we featured a short article on the visit of Dr Janine Allen (Dean of Global Initiatives at Corban University), and spoke of the potential of establishing a partnership between Corban and Laidlaw. In May, this became a reality, and Michael and Carolyn Hanson (Director of Educational Services and Admissions Coordinator) travelled over to Salem, Oregon to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Laidlaw College and Corban University.

The Hansons – whose Kiwi accents were a great hit – were very warmly welcomed and thoroughly enjoyed their time with Corban staff and faculty. They even received an official welcome at the Corban Graduation ceremony, which turned out to be very similar to a Laidlaw graduation ceremony (if you can imagine a Highland marching band in place of the Kapa Haka!). Corban and Laidlaw have much in common, and a partnership between the two colleges opens up a world of opportunities. The most immediate outcome of the MOU will be student exchange programmes, followed by the potential for faculty exchange and the sharing of programme offerings. Corban offers a wide range of programmes and qualifications, including theology, teacher education and counselling (allowing for seamless student exchange with Laidlaw).

## ALUMNI

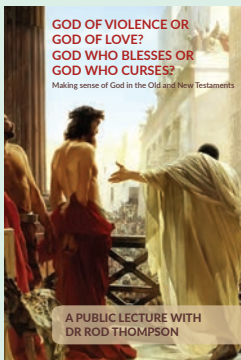
2015 Alumni Gatherings  
Auckland: Saturday 8 August  
Christchurch: Saturday 15 August

Alumni & Supporters' Meetings  
Invercargill: Tuesday 11 August  
Gore: Wednesday 12 August  
Dunedin: Wednesday 12 August

Please visit [www.laidlaw.ac.nz](http://www.laidlaw.ac.nz) for more details and to register.

Are you one of our alumni?  
Not receiving the alumni newsletter?  
Please let us know: [alumni@laidlaw.ac.nz](mailto:alumni@laidlaw.ac.nz)

Corban is committed to connecting with other like-minded colleges around the world and has many international partnerships and a strong focus on overseas mission. We are delighted to enter into partnership with Corban and are excited about the opportunities it will provide for our students and staff, along with the wonderful privilege of being a part of what God is doing around the world (as well as in our own backyard).



## Hot off the press ...

GOD OF VIOLENCE OR GOD OF LOVE?  
GOD WHO BLESSES OR GOD WHO CURSES?  
Making sense of God in the Old and New Testaments – \$15 (plus p&p)

This DVD is a must-have Bible study resource for use by churches, ministries and small groups. Dr Rod Thompson discusses some of the most pressing issues with which we are faced: how can we read the Bible well? Is the God of the Old Testament the same as the God of the New Testament? Do curses still impact the lives of Christians? Do we have a message of peace for the world? Is God violent? What about judgement at the end of our lives?

Go to [www.laidlaw.ac.nz/e-store/dvd](http://www.laidlaw.ac.nz/e-store/dvd) to order your copy!

If you would prefer to receive Encounter by email, please let us know: [jmackie@laidlaw.ac.nz](mailto:jmackie@laidlaw.ac.nz)

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