

Theology House 2019 Annual Report to Synod

2019 was a significant year for Theology House. With the election of our Director, the Reverend Doctor Peter Carrell, to be Bishop of Christchurch a change in leadership was necessitated. I am extremely grateful for the interim leadership of the Reverend Doctor Tom Innes during 2019 and for his communication between my appointment and starting in the role. Following the tragic events of the Christchurch mosque shootings, Theology House was able to offer resources for Christians who wished to engage with Muslim communities. Courses in Te Reo Maori continue to be popular. We were also pleased to be able to offer a conference on resilience. Our small team of three part-time staff continue to provide ongoing seminars, resources, and our library service.

Theology House's financial performance was boosted by a high level of investment returns in line with international markets. 2020 looks much less lucrative which highlights the need to ensure an ongoing diversity of income. We continue to be grateful for funding from St John's College Trust Board for Theology House's activities and for the Anglican Resource Centre which we manage on behalf of the Diocese. We are also grateful to retain the experience of Bishop Peter as Warden alongside our board chair the Reverend Doctor Meg Harvey.

I took over in December of 2019 after four years as a student-in-residence at St John's College in Auckland. I am conscious of having inherited a role with an august lineage and a collection of valuable regular activities and enormous scope. The fact that we can provide something like 2000 lenten studies to groups around the country and across denominations is truly remarkable. I look forward to working with the Cathedral to deliver a new season of "Theologians in the Cathedral" in winter 2020. We continue to deliver courses from the Diploma of Christian Studies taught by St John's.

My overarching vision is to increase participation in theological study across Canterbury, the West Coast and the Chatham Islands and for Theology House to be a hub for communities of learning. The bulk of my own study has been via distance learning and Theology House is well-positioned to help such students in our region overcome some of the barrier of distance and loneliness that come with that mode of study. I am interested to talk about the education needs of your faith communities. I look forward to meeting and working with you in the years to come

Gareth Bezett
Director
College House Institute of Theology trading as Theology House