



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

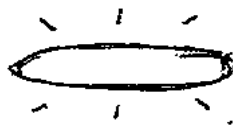
Newsletter

GoldingCentre for Women's History, Theology and Spirituality

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[The Golding Centre is situated within the Faculty of Theology and is named to honour the women Annie and Belle Golding and their married sister Kate Dwyer, women of the late 19th and early 20th centuries whose activism was underpinned by wide reading and in-depth research. Writing and public speaking were integral their efforts to promote political and social reform. All were committed Catholics.]

Editorial



significance of saints

The importance of the public recognition of saints for the welfare of our world has been enthusiastically acclaimed as well as critically challenged in recent times as Australians generally celebrated the canonisation of Mary MacKillop. Even the sceptics of the Roman canonisation, however, conceded that Mary MacKillop had made a significant contribution to Australian education, especially in rural areas. Rarely, however, was prominence given to Mary MacKillop's awareness for the need for professional education for teachers, and specifically for the members of her own congregation. This awareness underpinned her educational endeavours and was basic to her argument for centralised government, which, in fact the relevant Roman authorities were favouring at that time even if many Australian bishops were not.

There has been little prominence given in the wider community to the fact that the flourishing of Mary MacKillop's educational heritage and her strong all-encompassing Church vision, led to the Sisters of St Joseph establishing a Teachers College open to other religious congregations and lay women. This initiative would eventually provide one of the major building blocks for the establishment of the Australian Catholic University.

In the light of this heritage it is not surprising that Mary MacKillop's heirs, the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart, were among the founding benefactors of the Golding Centre and that many Sisters of St Joseph are among the Centre's Friends. Indeed, even before the official canonisation, Mary MacKillop was one of the Centre's Patron Saints.

While focussing on the significance of canonised saints it is noted, perhaps surprisingly, that among the Chapter of Saints of the Golding Centre the religious congregation which features most prominently is the Carmelites. Somehow St Teresa of Avila, St Therese of Lisieux and Edith Stein have formed a solid block of friends upon whom the Centre could rely. Certainly Edith Stein was, and no doubt is, a declared feminist, understanding this term to mean a person who truly respects women, acknowledging and promoting their particular gifts and

rights for the benefit of all. On reflection, it is not difficult to make a case for describing her more senior Carmelite associates, Teresa and Therese, in these terms.

It is relevant also to point out that in 2000, when the Founding Team turned to the religious congregations for support, while they were relying on the larger congregations (historically founding congregations of ACU) for such support, to their initial surprise, two women Carmelite congregations expressed strong support for the project and, though not able to make a financial contribution, promised prayers. This promise, which is renewed from time to time, has always been a comfort to the Co-Founders.

Notably the canonisation of Mary Mackillop stimulated conversation about our many unsung saints in the various Christian denominations and other religious traditions. Such recognition is to be applauded. The Golding Centre was named to celebrate three unsung saints; this is not to say that they were perfect but that they were extraordinary in the loving service of their neighbours.

Kate (Golding) Dwyer (1861-1949), the second eldest of the Golding sisters, like her siblings, exemplified this extraordinary loving service of her individual neighbour and the wider community. She was politically active in promoting their good. First in the 1890s in the Womanhood Suffrage League, then in 1901 as one of the founders of the Women's Progressive Association, and shortly after in 1904 as the founding president of The Women's Organising Committee of the Political Labour League. She is credited with being one of the small group of women who confronted J.T.Lang in 1925, when he failed to include child endowment and widows' pensions in his campaign speech, compelling him to do so.

As Heather Radi points out in her redress anthology, *200 Australian Women*, Kate Dwyer's radicalism was directed to town planning and worker housing, and the appointment of women to public office. Education was also a focus of her reform endeavours, particularly for girls at the secondary and tertiary level. She served from 1916-1924 on the Senate of the University of Sydney.

During the 1914-1918 war Kate Dwyer was one of the key organisers of the anti-conscription campaign. She also lobbied to secure a military contract for unemployed needle-women. Among many other activities Kate Dwyer served on the committees of the Benevolent Society of New South Wales, the Royal Hospital for Women, the Renwick Hospital for Infants, Scarba Home for Children and the King George V and Queen Mary Jubilee Fund for Maternal and Infant Welfare.

The above is but a fraction of Kate Dwyer's activities in service of her neighbour. Heather Radi concludes her entry with: "A devout Catholic she died in the Sacred Heart Hospice for the Dying on 3 February, 1949". We are all exceedingly challenged by our saints, canonised or not!

Rosemary Goldie, who died earlier this year, and was celebrated in our last newsletter and in the recent public lecture hosted by Professor Gabrielle McMullen, Deputy Vice-Chancellor

(Academic), belongs to this category of people who lived the gospel radically. Her God-given gift of scholarship, which she put at the service of the Church, the Pilgrim People of God, especially the laity, during her long life is given testimony to in our Feature Essay in this Newsletter.

Feature Essay

Feature Essay

Rosemary Goldie – The Scholar

[This is a translation of the preface written by the scholar and editor Albert Béguin for the French publication of Rosemary Goldie's Master of Arts thesis *Vers un Héroïsme Intégral Dans La Lignée de Péguy* (Towards a Complete Heroism in the Poetry of Péguy). Charles Péguy (1873-1914) was a noted French poet, essayist and editor. After years of uneasy agnosticism, he became a devout Roman Catholic. From the time of his conversion Catholicism strongly influenced his work.]

When, many months ago, Mademoiselle Rosemary Goldie gave me her manuscript to read, I expected to be disappointed. The subject appeared to me to be ambitious, difficult and well defined, full of traps for a foreigner.

Heroism to a French person is so little like all other heroism and so little has been seen in France for such a long time that that one runs the risk of failing to recognise it. I feared that heroism according to Carlyle would throw its shadow here, or that romanticism or some nostalgic medievalism would confuse the issue. It is not so easy to understand certain French simplicity.

I was wrong and I think all the readers will be amazed, like me, to see someone coming from the Antipodes able to so accurately place our authors, never to err in her references, in short to be so totally aware of our spiritual geography. Nothing in these pages betrays the awkwardness which one often notices throughout the world when writing about France. A young Australian is at one with our poets. I even asked myself if she speaks of the poets of her own language in our fashion.

The fact, without doubt, is not unique and, as I encountered her writing, it demonstrated to me, not superficially but in-depth, the universality of the French spirit, particularly the French Catholic spirit. One can come into France from other countries and sense the spirit of France. What touches me is that right down to the South Pacific and in the heart of the Anglo Saxon world, French literature is so highly valued and such praise, coming from a French person, would be considered arrogant. It is admirable that our way of looking at things has been as well explained by an Australian.

Mademoiselle Goldie, whose personal preferences are Péguy, Claudel and Bernanos, and more moderately St Exupéry, has the honesty to say that the choice of other sureties might suggest a different image. Her critique is, therefore, resolute without partiality. She does not fall into the common error of choosing according to some edifying propaganda. Her options

are given because they are real. It will be in vain to discuss them, as I was tempted to do, when I saw credit given to Barnés; also to close my eyes to the weaknesses of Psichari or ignore with what despair St Exupéry died – because these thoughts would ruin the fragile edifice of her humanist doctrine.

I regret certain silences. A fleeting allusion does not suffice to mention a certain black heroism. She does not speak of Communism within the personage of Malraux. Mention of the work of Giraudoux only shows how she safeguards a heroism without grand gestures.

But what does all this matter! Mademoiselle Goldie is not trying to write a history of our times. She has enough to do to contemplate the works of her choice and by their teaching bring out the delicate notion of a complete heroism touching on the confines of sanctity.

The conclusions of Mademoiselle Goldie, like her whole book, are optimistic; not only because she has confidence in France's future in a universe with which she wishes to enter in total communion; above all she is optimistic because her implicit theology puts in continuity the natural virtues and the benefits of grace. From hero to saint, she reduces the margin as much as possible and it is this assimilation which she wishes to render to the French masters.

It is delightful, in short, to see something other than the severities of profane pessimism or the moral regains of Jansenism. It is true that sons of France such as Bloy, Péguy, Claudel and Bernanos have been instrumental in this.

I wish to add a simple remark. If in effect it is agreed that the temporal and the spiritual virtues of nature and the virtues of grace lie in such a way that the flesh finds itself raised up without lowering the spirit, then this solid Christian affirmation is not contrary. As for Léon Bloy, the man is capable of God but in the condition of being ravaged by pain. For Péguy, if life with its exigencies is to be loved, it is because of the expectation of a death more vivid than life. Where heroism alone to him assures the passage of holiness, this is of another order. Claudel says, stripped of all honour, to present at the gates of the Kingdom of God, not without the last day of Rodrigues' satin shoes.

Mademoiselle Goldie does not ignore any of this and it is not in vain that many times she recalls the cross planted in earth. The complete heroism in her eyes must be Christian. The order of faith, hope and charity transforms all worth into the unique royalty of love.

Your situation now that the century heads towards the year 2000 is not simple enough for the simplicity of heroism. As Sartre showed recently, it engenders the adventurer and his brother antagonist the Militant. Neither one nor the other wishes to be heroic.

One can believe that there were heroes in the concentration camps. Is it not possible to have them in the concentration-like world in which we live? Heroism cannot exist in a system of derision.

It is a little old fashioned, a little imaged. It is not a man exalted or raised up, agitating against all new tyrannies. It is a humble man, stripped of all grandeurs. He does not return insults, his humanity is deeper than all that. It is within his interior sanctuary.

Such was the leper who attended at the Resurrection that Jean Cayrol shows in all his books. If it is today Holy Saturday, if we are in the time of expectation where we begin to

understand the entire story of that time, the hour is not of heroism but of sanctity. The sole sadness is that we are not of the saints of whom Léon Bloy shows us their infinite gentleness.

Albert Béguin

15 November, 1950

(Translation courtesy of Maree Buhagiar, Friend of Golding Centre)

Letter From London

Our London Correspondent, Carmen Mangion, Birkbeck College, University of London, sends the following Conference Report on ‘Female Religious on the British Isles: Interactions with the Continent’.

The eighth conference of the History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland was the first to be held across the Channel. Yet the location had some affinity with the British Isles, as the conference took place in the Irish Institute in Louvain, situated in the former Irish College. The organisation was conducted by KADOC, the Documentation and Research Centre of Religion, Culture and Society of the Catholic University of Louvain. Not inappropriately, given this collaboration, the main topic of the conference concerned interactions with the continent.

During the first panel, the presence of British female religious on the continent was discussed. All three papers in this session dealt with the early modern period. Patricia Harris presented the cross-continental interactions of Mary Ward’s institute during the seventeenth century. How these communities of English religious women were perceived by English Protestant travellers was discussed by Liesbeth Corens. She argued that the encounters between the compatriots of opposite confessions illustrated a positive sense of Englishness transcending the well-known negative national identity formation. Closing this set of papers, Pascal Majérus offered an insight on the use of languages in the Early Modern English convents. Ideally, the nuns aimed at preserving their English identity, and considered the exclusive use of their native language a crucial aspect therein. The reality of daily life, however, forced them to use the language of their host society which is reflected in surviving texts.

The second section focused on the institutional side of continental initiatives launched on the British Isles in the nineteenth and twentieth century. This session was opened by Olivier Rota who discussed the French order of Our Lady of Sion. During the nineteenth century, these women religious opened four houses in England, working towards the conversion of the Jews. In a very practical way, however, they met the need for Catholic educational institutions after the re-establishment of the Catholic hierarchy, fostering the idea of the ‘conversion of England’.

A second French congregation, the Filles de la Sagesse, was examined by Rebecca Volk, analyzing both successful and failed foundations. Carmen Mangion delivered a paper in which she incorporated the concept of cultural imperialism into the scholarship on religious communities; she scrutinized the history of the Dutch Sisters of Charity of Our Lady Mother of Mercy on the British Isles, disclosing how their insistence on maintaining an outspoken Dutch identity seriously impeded great successes.

Deirdre Raftery presented the ongoing research of Catherine Kilbride and herself on the Infant Jesus Sisters in Ireland. They illustrated a remarkably successful cross-pollination of ideas, initiated in 1908 by the Frenchman Père Charles Nain, hoping to gain new members in Ireland to send to the Far East. Antoine Jacobs presented the fortunes of the Dutch Carmelite Nunnery in London, discussing their failure to integrate no matter how hard they tried to adapt. Despite their efforts to learn English, they were incessantly referred to as ‘the Dutch sisters’, and closed down in 1996 after a mere 40 years of existence.

The third and last set of papers were all concerned with theorizing the very notion of female communities provoked particularly by the example of female independence and activity in the world. The first paper was presented by Margaret Ó Hógartaigh, who is working on a revisionist biography of Nano Nagle. By introducing the idea of ‘agency’, she presented Nagle as a more determined and international woman than formerly presumed. Raphaël Ingelbien analysed Lady Morgan’s representation of women religious in *The Princess; or the Béguine* (1835), demonstrating a continuous interaction between feminism, liberalism and nationalism. For Morgan, the beguines served as a model of female independence. Moreover, she explicitly linked Belgian Catholicism and the liberal struggles in the newly independent kingdom. Thereby she aimed at encouraging Ireland in its striving for autonomy, since the island’s identity was closely interrelated with the Catholic Church, and could therefore gain strength from the Catholic Belgian example.

Moira Egan also explored the intersections of gender, religion and national identity. She pointed out how nineteenth-century feminist writers, despite nationalistic anti-Catholic fears, made reference to continental women’s congregations in arguing for female autonomy. Dirk Van Overmeire presented the exchange of ideas on missiological research culture in an English and Belgian publishing series. The connecting thread here with the conference theme was Sister Margaret Thornton (1898-1977), member of the English religious of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Her work as a female mission geographer was greatly inspired by the Belgian scholar Pierre Charles SJ (1883-1954).

In the final discussion themes running through most of the papers were identified. Chief among these were: recurring preoccupation with identity, both the maintaining and the modification thereof; the strong desire to integrate and adapt to local culture; the problem of language; the final success or failure of a particular congregation. Among other things it was noted that the Sisters of Charity’s cultural imperialism limited the growth of the congregation since this policy deterred local vocations. The early modern English convents in Europe, however, while maintaining their native identity, flourished since they met the educational needs of the non-English community. Some other factors were raised such as the difference between contemplative versus active orders, and the town-based as opposed to countryside foundations as well as how the religious women acted in male networks.

The participants greatly enjoyed a series of local visits organized by members of KADOC and the extended visit to Bruges on the final day. The morning was spent at the English Convent at Bruges

under the direction of Sister Mary Aline who brought to life many of the ideas under discussion at the conference.

Liesbeth Corens

University of Leuven, Belgium

(The European launch of *Ancient Tradition, New world – Dominican Sisters in Eastern Australia 1867 – 1958*, Rosa MacGinley, took place at this conference. Ed.)

Book Review

David Bollen, *Opening Up: A History of the Institute of Counselling*. (Mulgrave, Vic.: John Garratt Publishing, 2009). Pp. vi + 208.

In this absorbing volume, David Bollen has not only presented a detailed account of the development of the Institute of Counselling, but has situated each aspect of its journey within the relevant historical, philosophical and cultural developments of the Catholic Church. It is, therefore, a study of considerable interest to a wide audience, many of whom may be unaware of the existence and achievements of the Institute. As the author himself notes, the Institute, despite the regard of those who know it, has attracted little public notice. (vi)

The book begins with an interesting historical discussion of the Church's attitude to counselling, concluding that 'it was not until mid-[20th] century would Catholic scholars in any number take close interest in psychology, its bearing on religion and the practical applications.' (10) The Institute of Counselling became one of the numerous agencies of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney in 1969, and while the institutional axis is important, the main axis is personal. It was shaped by lay persons and lay experience, and particularly by women with professional training and careers – an unusual feature of Australian Catholicism at that time. The author provides a vivid portrait of the dynamic and highly skilled Mrs Mary Lewis of the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau. While many significant people are featured in the course of this book, it is the 'independent minded' Mary Lewis to whom the Institute owes its inception, its early credibility, and much of its ultimate success.

As the author traces the progress of the Institute from those early post-Vatican II years to the present time, the narrative often indicates an air of excitement, in spite of the obvious difficulties of funding, staffing and acquisition of premises. The genius of the burgeoning Institute clearly denoted a post-Vatican II repositioning of the Church. The new agency would serve a Church defined as people more than institution. The chosen name indicated a field of work but not a denominational tie. Nevertheless, it drew on Vatican II sanction and on the Council's decrees to affirm the Institute's concern 'to furnish people in caring roles with the insights of psychology and related disciplines, and skills in counselling.' (42)

The Institute, a 'creature of its times,' (50) was a response to accelerated social change. Further education was in vogue, and there were good reasons to re-skill, particularly in the caring professions. The Institute contributed in its own way to an increasing revolt against gender constraints, as women's freedom and empowerment became linked with higher education and professional status. (60) Chapters 7 and 8 provide valuable personal reflections from former staff and students, based on conversations with the author, and told mostly in people's own words. As these individuals relate their

stories, telling us what they did, how they were influenced and by whom, they remind us that ‘history is at base personal.’ Thus, the vivid particularity of experience is not lost, and serves to remind the reader that the Institute was, and is, for and about people. (63)

The second half of the 1990s saw signs of vigour for the Institute, in the form of the new teaching base at Australian Catholic University Strathfield, the graduate status of three of the courses, as well as the achievement of national accreditation. Nevertheless, we approach the final chapter of this book with concern, knowing that from the mid-1990s student numbers fell by more than a third. The author points out, however, that there is good reason for hope – the Institute’s student intake of 58 in 2009 was the largest in ten years, two new specialized courses are on the books for 2010, as well as provision for a year-long internship. David Bollen’s book is indeed a significant contribution in its skilful presentation of the story of the Institute of Counselling, and in ensuring its rightful place in the history of the Catholic Church in Sydney.

Dr Kit Smith

Forthcoming Conferences

(Australians are great travelers and it is surprising who indicates an interest in attending overseas conferences. It is also stimulating and challenging to be informed of the initiative and interests of others in the field of women’s history and associated areas of research..)

Early Modern English Nuns, 24-26 March, 2011, Montreal

The conveners of this conference point out that in the last years of the 16th century and throughout the 17th century over twenty convents were established for English and Irish women on the continent. This allowed these women to pursue religious callings that were illegal within Britain itself. In efforts to establish their communities, maintain connections with those at home and other exiles, and negotiate spiritual differences among themselves, the English nuns produced a wide variety of texts. These included but were not limited to devotional meditations, letters, translations, biographies, autobiographies, histories, and poetry.

Proposals are sought for 20 minute papers discussing the literary and creative practices within these convents. Potential topics include: convent coteries; spiritual and/or national politics; reading and/or writing practices; use of print and/or manuscript; convent patronage; connections to Britain and/or other exiles.

More information from: Jaime Goodrich, Wayne State University: goodrija@wayne.edu

Women Religious Conference, Queen Mary, University of London, 23-25 June , 2011

This conference will be held in has the theme “Consecrated Women: Identities, Organizations and Exile” and is co-sponsored by “Who were the Nuns?” Project and the History of Women Religious of Britain and Ireland (H-WRBI). The conference welcomes papers on consecrated women from all historical periods and from different religious traditions. Abstracts of no more than 300 words are welcomed by 30 November. These are to have the title of the paper at the top and at the end, listing name of presenter, institutional affiliation or city, contact information and whether the person concerned is an undergraduate student.

Further details from Dr Caroline Bowden: c.bowden@qmul.ac.uk ; and Dr Carmen Mangion: c.mangion@bbk.ac.uk as well as on the H-WRBI website at <http://www/rhul.ac.uk/bedford-centre/history-women-religious/>

Yorkshire Women's History Network Conference, 25 June 2011

This conference will be held at Leeds Trinity University College and the theme is "Women on Others and Women as Others". This conference is "a first" being organized by a newly formed group in Yorkshire consisting of those interested in women's history of any period. The aim is to hear and discuss current research in the field, provide a resource for postgraduate researchers, and to be a support network in particular for those alone in their research area within their individual institution, or who work outside Higher Education as independent scholars in museums or archives, libraries etc. For more information contact Karen Sayer: k.sayer@leedstrinity.ac.uk

The West of England and South Wales Women's History Network Conference 2 July 2011

This Network has as its 2011 conference theme: "For love or money: historical perspectives on gender and emotional labour." Papers are to have an historical focus but can address any aspect of the theme e.g. familial relations and relationships; paid and unpaid work; vocational work; carer and caring relationship; friendship; philanthropic and charitable work; social action; therapeutic and psychoanalytic relationships.

Abstracts of up to 250 words to be sent to Dr Kath Holden by 31 January, 2011, email: Katherine.Holden@uwe.ac.uk Phone: 0117 328 4395

<http://humanities.uwe.ac.uk/swhisnet/swhisnet.htm>

Australian Historical Association Conference, 4-8 July 2011

This conference will be held at Launceston, Tasmania. and has the provocative title "History at the Edge". The organisers invite potential participants to propose panels and papers that will address methodological and conceptual innovation as well as topics concerned with geographical and cultural peripheries and the transnational circulation of peoples and ideas.

The conference wants to involve and include all historians who undertake historical research and teaching in Australia, not just those who focus on Australian topics. Some suggested areas for panels and papers are:

Transnational history; history and heritage; settler societies; indigenous histories; the history of human rights; Trans-Tasman history; regional histories; teaching and learning standards; National History Curricula; historical archaeology; gender history; religious history; sports history; family history including adoption.

Abstracts and panel suggestions to be sent by 28 February 2011 to Dr Tom Dunning, Convenor, University of Tasmania. Ph 03 6324 3226; Fax 03 8324 3652.

Women and Gender in Colonial Contexts: Call for Papers, 19-21 January, 2012

This conference will be held in English and French at Université Paris – 1 Pantheon Sorbonne. The convenors of this conference explained that for decades, colonising was perceived and analysed as a masculine undertaking. This is probably why historians of colonisation (and decolonisation), who were themselves mainly men, paid little attention to the study of women, of gender relations, or of how gender identities and sexualities were constructed in colonial contexts.

Women were seen as negligible actors in colonial wars (both during or after the conquest), even though they were important actors within and victims of such conflicts. Moreover, as primary agents of the European “civilising mission”, whose alleged principles were to “educate, cure, moralise and convert”, women – both colonisers and colonised – took part in the process of national assertion and of colonial domination. Last but not least, the colonial process created was constantly reshaped by tensions as well as new forms of racial or social hierarchies and gender roles. Thus the “colonial making of gender” proved to be a powerful vector of social transformation, both in metropolises and in colonies, as recent stimulating historical research has demonstrated.

This international conference seeks to assess the current state of historical research on this subject from the early 18th and late 19th centuries to the decolonisation of Asia, Africa and the South Sea Islands in the second half of the 20th century. The organisers encourage scholars to submit papers that investigate relevant aspects of politics and policies, work religion, education, health, family, mobilities, sexualities, body/bodies, war, slavery, violence, masculinities. Further information christelle.taraud@wanadoo.fr

Women, Leadership and Democracy in Australia, 1-2 December 2011

This conference is being hosted by the University of Melbourne and the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. Papers are invited from researchers, activists, politicians, community, business and civic leaders, and others interested in the history and future of women’s leadership in Australia.

This national conference aims to bring together a diverse range of people interested in women’s history, indigenous studies, gender studies, political history, political science, democracy, and industrial relations in Australia. The conference is being conducted as part of the ARC Linkage Project, Women and Leadership in a Century of Australian Democracy, and the proceedings will be published as part of the project’s outcomes.

The conference will showcase the diversity of research on women’s leadership in Australia since 1900. It will reveal new understandings of women’s civic and political leadership, from the neighbourhood to the international level, and uncover the experiences of women who performed significant leadership roles at the community level including consumer, political and environmental movements, as well as in indigenous, migrant and rural communities. It will also explore the extent to which Australian women have provided leadership in multicultural organisations concerned with global democracy, such as the League of Nations, the International Labor Organisation and the United Nations, as well as through regional and international advocacy networks.

Abstracts of no more than 500 words, including the title and scope of a 20 minute paper, are invited and to be sent to Dr Mary Tomsic, History Department, University of Melbourne by 5 March 2011.

Of Interest

Religion and Gender: Online Journal for the Systematic Study of Religions and Gender in an Interdisciplinary Perspective <http://www.religionandgender.org>

This journal is the first online international journal for the systematic study of gender and religion in an interdisciplinary perspective. It explores the relation, confrontation and intersection of gender and religion, taking into account the multiple and changing manifestations of religion in diverse social and cultural contexts. It wants to focus particularly on contemporary debates and topics of emerging interest. Although international in scope, this journal takes seriously that it is situated in contemporary Europe. It seeks to reflect on this, particularly from postmodern, postcolonial, and postsecular perspectives.

Women and Religion: Doctrinal, Historical and Social Perspectives

A conference was held at the University of Bristol recently bringing together doctoral researchers and early career academics from a variety of disciplines and fields to explore the role and place of women in religion encouraging research and collaboration at the University of Bristol itself and with other universities both within the UK and abroad.

Behind this move was a strong consciousness that research on women and religion is often divided by religious tradition or academic field, and often occurs at the margins of academic discourse and practice. It is not taken seriously, especially by men researchers. The Bristol interdisciplinary conference was designed to expand the focus of research by sharing approaches and perspectives in different traditions and different academic fields. For more information go to:

<http://www.bris.ac.uk/arts/gradschool/community/conference/women-religion.html>

[This Newsletter is produced by the Golding Centre for Women's History, Theology and Spirituality. Please address all correspondence to the editor Dr Sophie McGrath rsm, Email: sophie.mcgrath@acu.edu.au.]