

**St Andrew's Greek Orthodox Theological College**  
(A Member Institution of the Sydney College of Divinity)

# St Andrew's Patristic Symposium 2012

(Our fourth Symposium now organised as a Conference)

## ST ATHANASIUS THE GREAT



# PROGRAM

Friday and Saturday, 28 & 29 September, 2012

## Dismissal Hymn of St Athanasius the Great

Ἔργοις λάμπαντες ὀρθοδοξίας, πᾶσαν σβέσαντες  
κακοδοξίαν, νικηταὶ τροπαιοφόροι γεγονάτε, τῇ εὐσεβείᾳ  
τὰ πάντα πλουτίσαντες, τὴν Ἐκκλησίαν μεγάλως  
κοσμήσαντες, ἀξίως εὐράτε Χριστὸν τὸν Θεὸν ὑμῶν,  
δωρούμενον πᾶσι τό μέγα ἔλεος.

Shining forth with works of Orthodoxy, you quenched every  
false belief and teaching and became trophy-bearers and  
conquerors. And since you made all things rich with true  
piety, greatly adorning the Church with magnificence, you  
justly found Christ God, who through your prayers does grant  
great mercy unto all.

# Keynote Speaker

**Adam G. Cooper**

*Senior Lecturer, John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Melbourne (VIC)*  
STD (Lateran), STL (Lateran), PhD (Durham), Grad Dip Pastoral Ministry (Luther Seminary Adelaide), BTh

## **‘The Gift of Receptivity: St Athanasius on the Security of Salvation’**

### **Other Presenters**

Mark Baddeley, Mario Baghos, Margaret Beirne, Rifaat Ebied, Daniel Fanous,  
Silouan Fotineas, Alan Galt, Jonathan Douglas Hicks, Daniel Madigan, T.  
Mark McConnell, Andrew Mellas, Ian Michie, Glen O’Brien, Anthony  
Papantoniou, Diane Speed

### **Conveners**

Doru Costache and Philip Kariatlis

Friday 28 September, 2012

2:40 – 2:50pm

**OPENING PRAYER**

followed by a reflection by His Grace Bishop Seraphim of Apollonias,  
College Sub-Dean

3:00 – 3:35pm

College Hall

**Glen O'Brien**

*Senior Lecturer in Church History and Head of Humanities, Booth College*  
PhD (La Trobe), MA (Asbury), BTh (Kingsley)

**John Wesley and Athanasius on Salvation in the Context of the Debate  
over Wesley's Debt to Eastern Orthodoxy**

**Abstract:**

Other than John Wesley's description of William Wilberforce in 1791 as *Athanasius contra mundum* and his use of the same Latin phrase in his 1775 sermon *On the Trinity*, there is little discussion of Athanasius on the part of the founder of Methodism. However, the Orthodox tradition to which Athanasius is so central a figure had an important shaping influence on Wesley's theology and there are strong soteriological resonances between Athanasius and Wesley, some of which will be elucidated in this paper. The Methodist ecumenist Albert C. Outler was one of the first, in the 1960s, to alert modern Wesleyans to the need to examine closely their founder's heavy indebtedness to the Ante-Nicene and Nicene Fathers, especially in his doctrine of Christian perfection. More recently, Kenneth J. Collins has disputed the strong connection between Wesley's theology and Orthodox theology and has argued that those who accept Outler's argument have overlooked the significance for Wesley of his own Anglican tradition, in particular the 'holy living' tradition of William Law and Jeremy Taylor. This article will survey recent discussion of this issue among Wesley scholars, caution against too great a dogmatism on the question, and argue that Wesley's practical theology was essentially eclectic.

Cathedral Hall

**Philip Kariatlis**

*Lecturer in Theology (Systematic), St Andrew's*  
ThD (SCD, 2010), MTh (SCD, 2001), BA (Sydney, 2000), BTh (SCD, 1995)

**Soteriological Insights in St Athanasius' *On the Incarnation***

**Abstract**

*On the Incarnation* is often interpreted in such a way that sees the event of Christ's condescension as sufficient for salvation. Whilst his well-known apophthegm 'He [the Son] became human so that we might be made God' might easily suggest this, the work as a whole contains a rich tapestry which comprehends salvation achieved only through the entire salvific economy – namely, his Incarnation together with all the saving actions whilst on earth including his death on the cross and his incorruptible resurrection. In attempting to present St Athanasius' multifaceted vision of salvation, the paper hopes to make a contribution on modern understandings of salvation which tend to isolate different moments.

3:40 – 4:05pm

College Hall

**Silouan Fotineas**

*Parish Priest, St Nectarios Monastery (Adelaide), PhD candidate (Flinders University)*  
BTh Hons (Flinders University, 2010), BSocWk (UQ 2004), BTh (SCD 2000)

## **The Correspondence between St Athanasius of Alexandria and St Basil of Caesarea on the Arian Controversy**

### **Abstract:**

Saints Athanasius and Basil maintained a correspondence in support of the orthodox cause despite the imminent threat of persecution from Arian emperors. Some letters in turn were sent to churches that were struggling to survive amongst the Arians, whilst others were sent to console and sustain congregations who had their clergy forcefully removed or exiled. Still others were sent to encourage exiled bishops who were on the brink of despair. The general nature of these letters brought comfort and encouragement to the addressee. To the persecuted they reinvigorated a sense of hope for their trials and instilled in them the perseverance to continue. Whether their letters were addressed to each other, to friends or congregations, they were eventually copied and circulated amongst the faithful and proved instrumental in uniting the orthodox of the East. The following paper will endeavour to demonstrate how the correspondence between Saints Athanasius and Basil proved to be an immense catalyst to overcoming the Arian controversy.

Cathedral Hall

**Anthony Papantoniou**

*Associate Lecturer in Theology (Patristic Studies), St Andrew's*  
PhD candidate in Studies in Religion (Sydney), MTh Hons (SCD 2008), MTh (SCD 2002), BTh (SCD 2001)

## **Features of the Theandric Unity of Christ in St Athanasius' *Letter to Epictetus***

### **Abstract:**

St Athanasius' *Letter to Epictetus* constitutes one of the most significant sources of Patristic Christology. The importance of this letter is witnessed by the fact that the Christological insight embedded within was appropriated by St Cyril of Alexandria in his own Christological elaborations, and was subsequently used as an authoritative text at the Third Ecumenical Council in 431 at Ephesus. This paper will explore features of the Christology of St Athanasius as expressed in the *Letter to Epictetus* maintaining that it contributed towards an important articulation of the theandric unity of the person of Jesus Christ.

4:10 – 4:45pm

College Hall

## Diane Speed

*Dean and CEO of the Sydney College of Divinity; Honorary Associate Department of English, University of Sydney*  
PhD (London, 1970), MTh Hons (Sydney, 1999), MA Hons (Sydney, 1968), BA Hons (Sydney, 1965)

### St Athanasius's *Life of St Anthony* and Hagiographical Tradition

#### Abstract

Athanasius's *Life of St Anthony* is renowned as a seminal text in the history of hagiography. The *Life* itself comes very early in the history of records of saintly heroes of the church and has been reproduced down the centuries in a range of literary contexts, including the ubiquitous medieval compilations *The Lives of the Fathers (Vitae Patrum)* and the *Golden Legend (Legenda Aurea)*, themselves key points for dissemination of information about and appreciation of St Anthony. Beyond this, however, the *Life of St Anthony* is acknowledged as a key textual model for much subsequent hagiographical writing, from that of Athanasius's younger contemporary St Jerome and on into the medieval period, when hagiographical patterns became, arguably, fixed firmly. This paper addresses the textual nature of the *Life* in relation to its own textual sources and its textual influence on the development of the great hagiographical tradition of the church, with particular reference to the Bible, on the one hand, and the great medieval texts referred to above, on the other, to offer a fresh taxonomy of the hagiographical features that make this *Life* the text it is.

Cathedral Hall

## Margaret Beirne

*Senior Lecturer in Biblical Studies, St Andrew's*  
DTheol (MCD, 2000), MEd (UNSW, 1986), BD (MCD, 1984), MA (BC, 1978), BA (UNE, 1973), MACE

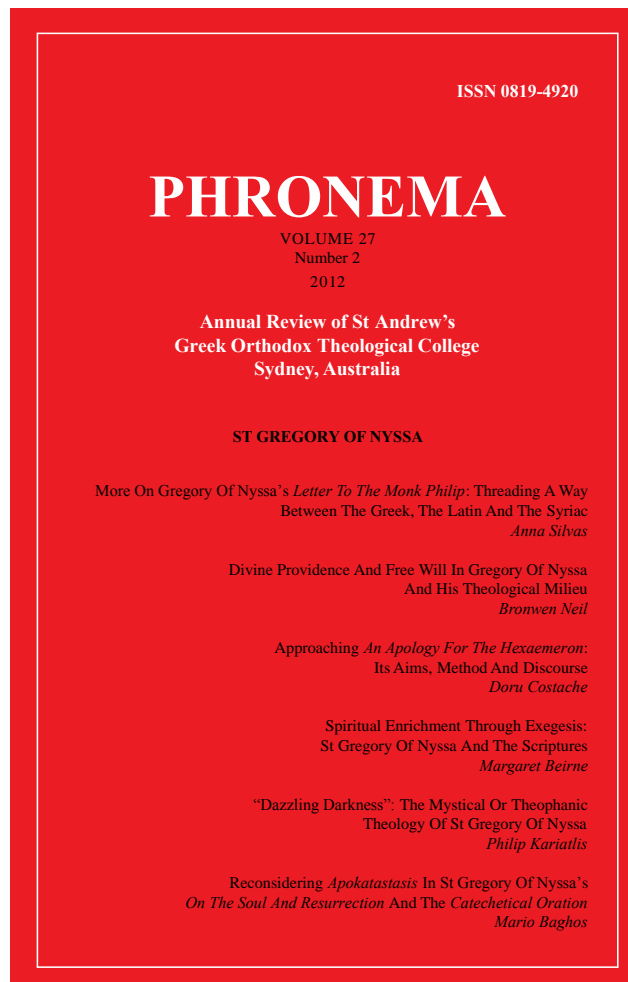
### St Athanasius and the Scriptures, Exemplified in His *Letter to Marcellinus*

#### Abstract

Although Saint Athanasius never wrote a scriptural commentary, nor explicitly drew upon Origen's exegetical principles, all his works demonstrate his command of Scripture and its primacy in addressing specific doctrinal and pastoral questions. As has been said of him, he had 'a biblical mind-set' enabling him to refer spontaneously even to obscure biblical references when appropriate. The nearest he comes to a systematic 'biblical commentary' is his *Letter to Marcellinus on the Interpretation of the Psalms*, an exploration of which will be the focus of the present paper. As might be expected, Athanasius considers, however briefly, each of the psalms, arguing that they encompass the whole of the Old Testament and, in anticipation, the central Christological focus of the New. However, what is refreshing is his classification of the psalms not according to genre, but as they reflect the diverse moods and longings of the human heart. By praying them, preferably in song, the person of faith is enabled to grow into spiritual maturity in a holistic way that is surprisingly modern.

4:45 – 5:00pm  
Afternoon Tea  
College Hall

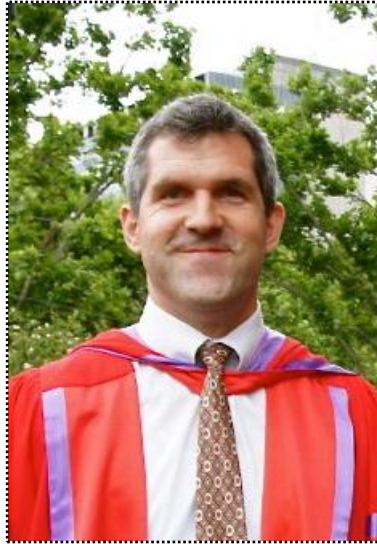
The latest issue of  
**PHRONEMA**  
covering proceedings of last year's Patristic Symposium  
will be available from the Bookstall



5:00 – 6:00pm

College Hall

## Keynote Speaker



### Adam G. Cooper

*Senior Lecturer, John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family, Melbourne (VIC)*  
STD (Lateran), STL (Lateran), PhD (Durham), Grad Dip Pastoral Ministry (Luther Seminary Adelaide), BTh

### **The Gift of Receptivity: St Athanasius on the Security of Salvation**

**Abstract:**

Anxieties about the security of personal salvation are commonly thought to feature mostly in protestant and individualising soteriologies. In such soteriologies, security of salvation is held to be contingent upon various subjective or psychological factors such as sincerity of individual decision or persistence of personal faith. But reflection on the question of salvation's security is not without certain prominence in orthodox Christian tradition. Saint Athanasius was among a number of Fathers who sought to ascertain the conditions for securing human salvation. Given that human beings are essentially prone to defection from divine grace, and that their receptivity to God's deifying gifts is so fickle and irregular, how is the mediation of grace to human beings through Jesus Christ protected from loss? While Saint Athanasius does not overlook the role of human willing, his main answer is to locate the certainty of salvation in the bodily humanity of the Word incarnate. Since that humanity is permanently receptive to grace, so that in Christ grace is 'irrevocable' (*ametameletos*), all who partake in his body share in the stability of its receptivity. By appropriating our mutable physical humanity, the Word has rendered it immutable, thereby securing its freedom and making certain its capacity to attain salvation.

6:00 – 7:00pm

Light Dinner

Cathedral Hall



**Saturday 29 September, 2012**

9:10 – 9:25am

**Prayer Service (*Typica*)**

College Chapel

9:30 – 9:55am

College Hall

**Daniel Madigan**

*Senior Lecturer in Religious Education, Notre Dame University*

PhD candidate (Notre Dame University, Australia). MTh (JP II Institute, Melbourne, 2008), BSc (Sydney, 1987).

**‘Father’ as a Divine and Human Name in St Athanasius and how His Apophatic Method Can Illumine the *Imago Dei***

**Abstract:**

In understanding the name ‘Father’ as applied to God, St Athanasius looks at that which is being negated as much as that which is being affirmed. This is also the case for the terms Son, Word and Image. Such apophasis helps in a ‘descending’ anthropological search for an understanding of the human family as created in the image of the Trinity. Taking the method of Athanasius as a starting point and inspired by the concept of *patria* in Ephesians, the paper will look at attempts to nuance the concept of ‘Father’ so as to gain additional perspectives on our creation, as male and female, in the image of God.

Cathedral Hall

**Mario Baghos**

*Associate Lecturer in Patristic Studies and Church History, St Andrew’s*

PhD candidate in Studies in Religion (Sydney), BTh Hons (SCD, 2010), BTh (SCD, 2009)

***Mundus Contra Athanasium: Portrait of a Saint***

**Abstract:**

‘Athanasius against the world, and the world against Athanasius’ (*Athanasius contra mundum et mundus contra Athanasium*) is rather characteristic of the circumstances surrounding the saint’s life. Frequently harassed, deposed, and exiled, the bishop of Alexandria was often depicted in his immediate context – by early Byzantine historians, Church Fathers, and even emperors – as a champion of Nicene orthodoxy and a godly agent of divine providence. But this portrait of the saint has been criticised in recent times by historians manifesting a bias against the Alexandrine milieu in general. Highlighting his anti-Arian polemics, often evaluated on political rather than theological grounds, contemporary depictions of St Athanasius as both senselessly and stubbornly ‘opposed to the world’ have become commonplace. Timothy D. Barnes’ assertion that the saint must have been “conspicuously lacking in the Christian virtues of meekness and humility” (*Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), 1), reflects this mentality. In contrast to these recent historiographical assessments, this paper will attempt to rehabilitate the traditional representations of the saint found in the works of the Byzantine historians Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret, in order to illustrate the remarkable life and theological landmarks which were, against all odds, achieved by him.

10:00 – 10:35am

College Hall

**Rifaat Ebied**

*FAHA, Foundation Professor of Semitic Studies, the University of Sydney*

## **Quotations from the Works of St Athanasius the Great in Peter of Callinicus's Magnum Opus, *Contra Damianum***

### **Abstract:**

Everybody, or at least everybody who is interested in reading about the controversy between Peter of Callinicus the 'miaphysite' patriarch of Antioch (581-591) and Damian (578-605) his counterpart and spiritual superior of Alexandria, will know that they fell out over the doctrine of the Trinity. Damian accused his critic (Peter) of Tritheist sympathies. Peter, in turn, put together his *magnum opus: Contra Damianum* in which he rebuts the thesis defended by Damian in his refutation of the Tritheists, that the characteristic properties of the divine persons, i.e. fatherhood, sonship and procession are the hypostases themselves. A critical edition of this important work was prepared by Ebied, Van Roey and Wickham and was published by Brepols in the "Corpus Christianorum: Series Graeca", vols. 29, 32, 35 and 54 (1994-2003). In his *magnum opus*, Peter rebuts his opponent, Damian, by appealing to patristic proof-texts, patristic theology in order to advance his arguments and augment his thesis. To this end, he employs a large number of patristic quotations. What this work reveals is that the patristic doctrine of the Trinity inherited by Peter and Damian alike was, if not actually inconsistent, at least expressed in various and genuinely puzzling ways. The purpose of this paper is to identify, enlist and reproduce (together with an English translation and commentary) the numerous seminal quotations, in their Syriac dressing, from the various works of St Athanasius the Great, which are contained in Peter's *magnum opus*.

Cathedral Hall

**Mark Baddeley**

*Lecturer in Doctrine and Church History, Queensland Theological College*

PhD candidate (Christchurch College, Oxford University), MLitt in Patristics (Oxford University), BDiv (Moore Theological College), BA in History and Classics (University of Queensland)

## **The Multivalent Scripture: Reflections on Athanasius' Readings of Gen 1-3 as an Example of Theological Interpretation of the Bible**

### **Abstract:**

Recently Leithart has argued that for Athanasius, "Christ is the substance of Scripture and the criterion of correct interpretation" (Peter J. Leithart *Athanasius*. 2011. p39). Global assessments of this kind are best calibrated by attention to examples of the actual practice of interpreting specific Scriptural texts. Accordingly, this paper will discuss several examples of Athanasius' reading of Genesis 1-3 from various works within his corpus. In the process some of the distinctive differences and commonalities in Athanasius' readings of the Bible will be highlighted. From this it should become apparent that one of the characteristics of Athanasius' interpretive approach is its diversity; that Athanasius' confidence in Scripture is reflected in the wide-ranging techniques he utilises in bringing Scripture to bear on the questions of the day. This does not overturn, but rather complements, the idea of a Christological centre in descriptions of Athanasius' hermeneutical approach.

**10:35 – 10:50am**  
**Morning Tea**  
College Hall

**10.55 – 11.20am**

College Hall

**Ian Michie**

*PhD candidate in Ancient History (Macquarie)*

MA Th (St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, 2007), MA Hist (Macquarie, 2003), Grad. Dip. Ed. (ACU, 2001), BA (Sydney, 1989)

## **At the Beginnings of Christian Hagiography: St Athanasius of Alexandria and *The Life of Antony***

### **Abstract:**

St Athanasius of Alexandria wrote an account of the life of St Antony the Great, and, in doing so, he contributed to the creation of the Christian literary genre known as hagiography. *The Life of Antony* rapidly became a 'best seller' of the ancient world. This paper will endeavour to answer to a number of questions. Why was this book about a solitary Egyptian monk so popular in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, and why has it continued to capture the imagination of later readers? What spiritual, theological or political factors caused St Athanasius to set pen to papyrus? Was the *Life of Antony* intended to be merely an edifying biography of its subject, or was it also a polemic, written in order to defend the Nicene theological cause against the claims of the Arian heretics, and to promote the Christian monastic life? Finally, what spiritual insights can this book provide for the modern reader?

Cathedral Hall

**Andrew Mellas**

*PhD candidate in Modern Greek Studies (University of Sydney)*

LLB Hons (Sydney, 2003), BA (Hons) (Sydney, 2001)

## **The Eremitic Citizen as An-chora-ite in St Athanasius' *Life of St Antony***

### **Abstract:**

Revisiting St Athanasius' seminal hagiographical text in the wake of Jacques Derrida's interpretation of Plato's concept of *chora*, this paper will explore the potential interplay between desert, demons and the abyss of *chora*. Plato's *Timaeus* and Derrida's *On the Name* will serve as points of departure in analysing Athanasian demonology and St Antony's interaction with the landscape that becomes the *topos* of his withdrawal. However, in withdrawing from the world (anchorite) St Antony does not escape from it but enters its darkest recesses (an-chora-ite) where the encounter with demons becomes a metaphor for the ascetic life, the wholly other and the world inside us. I will argue that in the Athanasian rendition St Antony can be presented as someone who becomes a kind of *chora tou achoretou* (land of the uncontainable). Having tamed the vast array of demons, Antony's personal transformation, which is manifested in his sublimated body, also engenders a transfiguration of the desert; the wilderness is given shape and form, it is reclaimed and shown forth as a new *polis*.

**11:25 – 11:50am**

**College Hall**

**Jonathan Douglas Hicks**

*PhD candidate in Theology (University of Otago)*

MDiv (Beeson Divinity School, Samford University, 2011), BA (Wheaton College, IL, 2005)

**‘Flesh of my Flesh’: Didymus’ Trinitarian Reflections on the Creation of the Church at Golgotha**

**Abstract:**

This paper examines Didymus the Blind’s reading of the Passion narrative in *De Trinitate* II.13-14 and its implications for understanding the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Son, in an epistemological and soteriological perspective. He reads the pattern of divine activity in the latter stages of John’s Gospel as precisely analogous to the types announced in Genesis 1-3: image, rib, flesh and tree of life, thus suggesting that the creation at the end corresponds to the one in the beginning. Situating Didymus between the Trinitarian concerns of Basil and Athanasius, I argue that for Didymus the identity of the Holy Spirit is determined by his relationship to the Father with and through the Son: this relationship being revealed by a consistent pattern of divine activity. The paper aims to contribute to a growing body of literature arguing for a recovery of patristic habits of interpretation for the furtherance of ecclesial unity, doxology and theological orthodoxy.

**Cathedral Hall**

**Daniel Fanous**

*Independent Researcher*

MTh (University of Newcastle), MBBS (University of Sydney), BE (University of New South Wales)

**‘To Whom Was the Blood of God Offered – to Satan or to the Father?’  
St Athanasius on the Mystery of Atonement**

**Abstract:**

By examining the thought of the great Alexandrine saint, Athanasius, this paper attempts to address the theme of atonement, taking as a pretext a question raised by St Gregory the Theologian. This question of what ‘actually’ happened on the cross, in other words the nature of the atonement, is crucial to any Christian deliberation. Was the blood of Christ offered to Satan or to the Father? To whom was the ransom paid? And daringly, who indeed was responsible for Christ’s affliction? Did God punish God? This paper will seek to return to an earlier and authentically Christian understanding of redemption, and thus will categorically reject the ‘colourless anthropomorphisms’ of penal sacrifice or satisfaction, and at once insist forcefully upon a multi-paradigmatic perception of the incarnational mystery. Specifically, this paper will argue for a self-giving participative and transformative understanding of the redemptive narrative. The key texts will be the *On the Incarnation* and the Letters of St Athanasius.

**11:55am – 12:20pm**

**College Hall**

**Rifaat Ebied**

*FAHA, Foundation Professor of Semitic Studies, the University of Sydney*

**A Short Version in Syriac and Arabic of the *Gloria in Excelsis* with Additions by St Athanasius the Great**

**Abstract:**

The rich collection of the Mingana Syriac and Christian Arabic manuscripts, preserved in the University of Birmingham Library (England), contains numerous valuable, and in some cases unique, works. Vol. I of the *Catalogue* in particular contains a number of seminal works on a variety of Syriac and Arabic patristic subjects. Two of these manuscripts, Mingana Syr. MS 83 and 155, contain, *inter alia*, an interesting short piece in Syriac and Arabic (Garshuni) of the text of the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo* (the Greater Doxology) followed by additions by St Athanasius the Great in both languages respectively. The purpose of this paper is to present the texts of this piece as well as to provide a comparison with the Latin text of the *Gloria* and an English translation and comments of St Athanasius's additions.

**Cathedral Hall**

**Alan Galt**

*Lecturer in Pastoral Theology and Practice, St Andrew's*

Acting Level 3 Supervisor of CPE (2003), MA (Macquarie, 1980), BA (University of Sydney)

**Why did Athanasius Take on the World? 'Integrity' and its Importance for Pastoral Ministry Today**

**Abstract**

History records that Athanasius was right in refusing to water down his insistence that the Son and the Father are of one substance. But what motivated his lifelong determination to stand up to the demands for co-operation from a succession of pro-Arian Emperors and the unrelenting attacks by the Arians on his integrity? This paper looks mainly at excerpts from the writings of Athanasius himself – particularly, *Against the Arians*, *On the Decrees*, and *Letters to Serapion* – in an attempt to tease out the basis of his inner strength. In so doing it will highlight the importance of recovering this quality for modern day pastoral ministry.

**12:25 – 1:00pm**

**College Hall**

**T. Mark McConnell**

*Lecturer, School of Theology, Mission and Ministry, Laidlaw College*  
PhD, MDiv, MEd, LLB, BSc

## **Why Evangelicals Need to (More Carefully) Read Athanasius**

**Abstract:**

With a resurgence of interest in the Church Fathers, Athanasius is generally regarded by conservative evangelicals as a hero of the faith. Even one of the ‘popes’ of evangelicalism, John Piper, has written recently extolling the virtues and theology of Athanasius. Despite this esteem, Athanasius provides a necessary challenge to evangelicals in terms of current issues faced by the evangelical community. This challenge has hitherto not been addressed. These issues include: the importance and definition of evangelical identity; the work of Christ in relation to humanity and creation; the interpretation and authority of Scripture; the nature of salvation and the gospel; and the final destiny of unbelievers. This paper will explore how Athanasius might speak into the evangelical community with regard to these issues and suggest that Athanasius’ voice is one that needs to be heard particularly as evangelicalism faces the challenges of the cultural shift from modernity to postmodernity.

**Cathedral Hall**

**Doru Costache**

*Senior Lecturer in Theology (Patristic Studies), St Andrew’s*  
ThD (Bucharest, 2000), BTh (Bucharest, 1993)

## **The Cosmos as Scripture in Clement the Alexandrian and St Athanasius the Great**

**Abstract:**

Motivated by the fairly recent essays gathered in the first of the multi-volume work *Nature and Scripture in the Abrahamic Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), where only a small place is reserved for St Athanasius, this paper undertakes to explore in more detail the Great Alexandrian’s diptych on creation and salvation. Thus, the two works, *Against the Pagans* and *On the Incarnation*, will be considered from the viewpoint of the Athanasian understanding of the cosmos as another Scripture that conveys the knowledge of God to those seeking it. To place St Athanasius’ understanding within its proper context, the paper will also briefly address a few relevant passages from the earlier Alexandrine teacher, Clement, whose ideas had an impact upon the saint’s views on the topic. In so doing, the paper will likewise undertake to correct the argument of Khaled Anatolios that Athanasian cosmology draws primarily on the teachings of St Irenaeus and Origen.

**1:00 – 1:30pm**

**Lunch**

**Cathedral Hall**

# NOTES

