

# ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE OF DISTANCE THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

## ANNUAL REPORT

2010 - 2011

### **Students:**

In 2010 EIDTS had 109 students enrolled for 181 courses within the L.Th programme. This compared to 2009 where we had 111 students for 176 courses and 2008 when we had 119 students for 185 courses. As at the end of March in 2011 we have 93 students enrolled for 154 courses compared to the 101 students enrolled for 145 courses at the same time in 2010. These figures have been fairly constant over recent years but it is interesting to note that whilst there has been a decrease in the number of students enrolled the number of courses studied has remained fairly constant.

Despite these fluctuations there is a continuing trend towards students enrolling for particular subjects rather than for the full L.Th diploma. This may be because our constituent churches are intentionally directing their students towards certain “required” subjects rather than to the complete L.Th Diploma, or because the 15 courses required for an L.Th seems to be a daunting programme of study. The Academic Committee and Board continue to monitor this situation and have given consideration to the possibility of introducing a qualification with fewer courses.

### **Graduates:**

Two students completed the requirements for the L.Th in 2010, both with honours, and will graduate in April 2011 with one further student completing an Associate Diploma.

### **Residential Schools:**

Four Residential Schools were held in 2010 and three will be held in 2011. These schools allow students to meet together for an intensive interactive period of study at the commencement of each course. They also allowed for students to meet personally with the course tutor which in turn leads to an easier interaction throughout the rest of the year. All the students who attended a Residential School gave them a high rating in terms of content, relevance and helpfulness to them in their study.

The “Introduction to Biblical Studies” school is aimed at students commencing their studies in Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament. As these courses are taken by most students at the commencement of their studies with EIDTS it also gives an introduction as to what that study will entail. The Residential School “Introduction to Theology” likewise gives students who will be commencing their studies in this area a chance to get an overview of the requirements for that study. The schools in “Homiletics” and “Pastoral Theology” provide for those subjects that require some “personal interaction” to take place. In this way the Residential Schools offer an opportunity for the students to get a head start in these subject areas.

We acknowledge the annual grant that we receive from the St John’s College Trust that assists with the funding for these schools.

**Course Review:**

EIDTS continues its policy of reviewing its course material on a regular basis. In 2010 the course material for CHC207 "History of Christian Spirituality" was re-written while the material for CHC2051 "Anglican Studies" was updated.

In 2011 CHC101 "History of Christianity 0-500" will be re-written with a new textbook and the "Romans" and "Matthew" course material will be re-written.

**Tutors and Moderators:**

Our staff of Tutors and Moderators has remained stable over recent years. In 2011 Dr Kathleen Rushton will be on leave which will include a time as the Cardinal Hume Scholar at the Margaret Beaufort College, Cambridge, study at the University of Leuven and some lecturing in Dublin. In her absence Dr Susan Smith will be tutoring "Introduction to New Testament".

Dr Lynne Baab will also be on leave in 2011 and the Rev Don Fergus will be moderating "Introduction to Pastoral Theology".

At the end of 2010 the Rev Dr Geoff King asked to be relieved of his role as Moderator for "Church and Society" and we thank Geoff for his time in this role as well as his earlier service as a member of the Board. Dr Susan Thompson will take over from Geoff as Moderator for "Church and Society".

**Compliance:**

As a tertiary education provider EIDTS is required to demonstrate its contribution to the Government's Strategic Priorities for tertiary education. Over the years this has meant that we have had to show compliance with various designated goals. In the last year the emphasis has been on course and qualification completions. Whilst we have good rates of completions for our courses each year we do have more difficulty meeting the standards set for completion of the full qualification. Some of this has been referred to above where often students are only registering for particular courses rather than for the full diploma. Further, with adult students undertaking their studies part-time alongside work, parish and family commitments completion of the qualification becomes a longer term objective and fails to meet the completion requirements within the designated time-frames. The Board and Academic Committee are considering how we might address this.

**Future Role:**

With a trend developing both within our constituent churches and within the wider community for a qualification at degree level in preference to the diploma EIDTS often provides an entry for adult students, many of whom later transfer to a theological degree. Recent discussions have been held with the School of Theology at Auckland University to update our agreement regarding cross-crediting of EIDTS subjects to an Auckland degree and similar discussions are planned with Otago University. In this way students are able to access their study with EIDTS and to gain the benefit of that when moving on to a degree. Along with this EIDTS will continue to offer quality courses to equip and enable parish members to fulfil their ministries within their own locations and circumstances. It is this commitment that underlies all that we do and motivates us for our on-going work.

Bruce Hansen  
EIDTS Director  
29 April, 2011