

Shaping the Future of Theological Education: A Call for Graduates to Share Their Voice

The relationship between Christian faith and the environment has become one of the most significant theological and pastoral conversations of the twenty-first century. As churches across Australia and the world wrestle with issues such as climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss, and humanity's responsibility toward creation, an important question emerges: How well are theological institutions preparing graduates to engage with these challenges?

A new PhD research project at Alphacrucis University College seeks to answer this question by exploring the role of ecotheology in Australian theological higher education. The study examines how theological colleges and universities have incorporated ecological themes into the formation of pastors, ministers, chaplains, and Christian leaders, and how graduates perceive the value and importance of this learning. The research, supervised by Dr Johannes Luetz and Dr Martin Hodson, aims to make a significant contribution to the future direction of theological education in Australia.

Ecotheology explores the intersection of theology and ecology, examining the relationship among God, humanity, and the wider created order. It asks important questions about how Christians interpret biblical teachings on creation, stewardship, and human responsibility towards the earth. It also invites renewed reflection on theological traditions, contemporary environmental challenges, and the practical implications of Christian faith for caring for all forms of life.

While theologians and educators have increasingly discussed these issues, the voices of graduates themselves remain essential. Graduates of theological studies are uniquely positioned to reflect on the education they received, the topics that shaped them, and the areas where theological training could be strengthened. This research therefore seeks to understand graduates' experiences, expectations, and perspectives on the presence—or absence—of ecotheological concepts in formal ministry training.

The findings have the potential to deliver meaningful benefits for Australian theological institutions, denominations, churches, and future students. By clarifying how graduates understand the relationship between theology and environmental stewardship, the research will help institutions better understand student expectations and consider how curricula might respond to emerging pastoral and societal challenges. The project will also provide recommendations for curriculum development, stronger partnerships between theological institutions and the denominations they serve, and directions for future scholarship.

Importantly, this study is not seeking “right” or “wrong” answers. It is interested in the rich diversity of experiences and perspectives among graduates across Australia's theological landscape. Whether your theological education included extensive engagement with ecological themes, touched on them briefly, or did not address them at all, your experience is valuable. Every response helps build a more accurate picture of the current state of

theological education and contributes to a broader conversation about how Christian formation can faithfully address the challenges of the contemporary world.

If you are over 18 and have graduated from an Australian theological higher education institution with a qualification in Theology, Ministry, Chaplaincy, Divinity, Philosophy, or Biblical Studies at AQF Levels 4–10, you are invited to participate. The online survey takes about 10–12 minutes to complete, and all information provided will remain confidential. The study has been approved by the Alphacrucis Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC No. 137; NHMRC No. EC00466).

The future of theological education is shaped not only by academics and institutions but also by graduates who carry that education into churches, communities, and ministries across Australia. Your insights can help theological educators understand what has been done well, identify opportunities for growth, and ensure that future generations of Christian leaders are equipped to engage faithfully and thoughtfully with the ecological questions of our age.

Your experience matters. Your voice can help shape the future of theological education in Australia.

If you are eligible, we warmly invite you to take 10–12 minutes to complete the survey by scanning the QR code or following the survey link provided. Your participation will make a valuable contribution to this important research.



Access the Survey here: <https://forms.gle/ESRxWfFB3azAAnUr9>

For more information, email the researcher at Timothy.Healy@ac.edu.au