

ANTONY F. CAMPBELL, SJ (1934–2020): A TRIBUTE

Tony Campbell, a New Zealander by birth (1934), was educated by the Marist Fathers at Silverstream, Upper Hutt. In 1953 he crossed the Tasman Sea to enter the Australian Jesuits province at Loyola College, Watsonia, Victoria. After studying philosophy, he began his path in biblical studies by taking a combined Greek and Hebrew major in his BA (Hons) degree at the University of Melbourne. Following a year's teaching at St. Aloysius' (secondary) College, Milsons Point, Sydney, Tony studied theology at the *Seminaire des Missions*, Lyon-Fourvière, with ordination to the priesthood in July 1967. The competence in biblical languages gained already in Melbourne enabled him to complete an STL at the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome in a single year and then proceed to doctoral studies at Claremont School of Theology, California, under the direction of Rolf Knierim. Here a fascination with biblical narrative—its genesis, its evolution, its ability to communicate meaning—was nurtured and honed into a strict scholarly method, to become a life-long avocation.

His Claremont doctorate gained (and in due course published in the SBL Monograph series as *The Ark Narrative* [1975]), Tony returned to Australia in 1975 to take up the academic position at Jesuit Theological College, Parkville, within the United Faculty of Theology and the wider ambit of the Melbourne College of Divinity, in which he remained until retirement in 2010. Immediately on joining the faculty Tony became Dean of JTC, a position he held for many years. With clarity of vision, capacity for organization, and concern to see prescription include due allowance for individual need and exception, Tony devised a pattern of structures that endured up to the closure of the college in 2015.

Besides administration, first as Dean and later as Principal of Jesuit Theological College (at times holding both offices simultaneously), Tony's main contribution was as Professor of Older Testament (his preferred designation!). From the start, students in his classes, both introductory and higher level, found themselves in the hands of a gifted and exciting teacher, effectively relating texts from a faraway past to current human concerns and challenges.

For many years, along with his former doctoral student Mark O'Brien, OP, Tony ran a research seminar of legendary repute on biblical narrative. The results of this cooperation emerged in a series of scholarly publications authored in collaboration with O'Brien: the monumental study of source criticism, *Sources of the Pentateuch* (Fortress: 1993) and its later companion, *Unfolding the Deuteronomistic History* (Fortress: 2000); *Rethinking the Pentateuch: Prolegomena to the Theology of Ancient Israel* (Westminster John Knox: 2005). Campbell contributed a commentary on 1 Samuel to the *New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (1990) (a commentary on 2 Samuel prepared for the forthcoming new edition during the onset of his final illness has been completed with final editing by O'Brien). Earlier, he had contributed a chapter, "The Pentateuch," to the *Paulist Biblical Commentary* (2018). His final major work was *Genesis Beyond Sources: A New Approach* (ATF Press: 2018). A Festschrift, co-edited by Mark A. O'Brien and Howard N. Wallace, *Seeing Signals, Reading Signs: the Art of Exegesis: Studies in Honour of Antony F. Campbell, SJ for his Seventieth Birthday*, was published by Continuum (T&T Clark) in 2004, followed by a collection of articles, *Opening the Bible: Selected Writings of Antony Campbell, SJ* (ATF Press, 2014).

In recognition both of his scholarly attainment and the esteem in which he is held by his peers the Melbourne College of Divinity (now University of Divinity) conferred upon him in 1994 its highest award, the Doctorate of Divinity.

Along with these scholarly publications, Campbell constantly sought to make his scholarship available to a wider audience. An interest in psychology led him to work for many years on an inter-disciplinary basis with Professor Edmond Chiu of Melbourne University Department of Psychiatry. Later, he brought biblical insights to the area of grief-counselling. A work that gained widespread popularity, *God first loved us: the challenge of unconditional love* (Paulist: 2000) draws on a keen perception of human experience to communicate in engaging and accessible terms something in which he passionately believed: God's unconditional love. Many have found the book transforming.

Behind what was at times a formidable front—particularly if stirred early in the day—Tony Campbell possessed a deeply compassionate heart. Many are those who approached him—often in the dead of night or wee hours of morning—with some deep burden and came away feeling welcomed, heard, understood, wisely counselled. While long committed to teaching and working on an ecumenical basis, his priestly loyalty to the Catholic tradition and to the Society of Jesus within that tradition was ever patent. It has been a privilege to pen this tribute to Tony as colleague, teacher, friend, and pastor—and altogether memorable human being.

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August 13, 2020.