For some time now Whitley College has used the tag line ‘Equipping leaders for a different world’. By this we have not only meant preparing people to engage with a rapidly changing world. Our vision is to enable people to engage with the world for constructive and visionary change.

One aspect of this vision is being-at-home or making a home and helping others also to be at home. This was the theme of a PhD thesis successfully completed this year by Ms Xiaoli Yang. Her work is focused on the poetry of the twentieth century Chinese scholar Haiza. Much of this poetry Xiaoli translated and presented in this thesis.

Haiza was a university law teacher who engaged in a deep and sometimes anguished quest for being-at-home, when so much of traditional Chinese culture was being overwhelmed by industrialization, urbanization and consumerism. Haiza journeyed to his agricultural village home, but found that it had disappeared. His poetry speaks to and of a generation who have experienced these dramatic changes. Xiaoli herself identified with all this and established in her thesis a conversation between these experiences and the ‘journey narrative’ in Luke’s Gospel. Her work is imaginative and powerfully evocative. We congratulate her on this valuable piece of research.

These themes have a strong relevance to so many aspects of our contemporary world. Millions of people are displaced and searching for a place to be at home. The Christian vision of life in the world is grounded in the idea of being at home with God—not in some other world or some place of retreat from the world, but everywhere in this world. This is and would mean ‘a different world’, a community of nations and people at home with the earth and all creation. To be at home with each other and with God is an invitation: and this too is our mission as a College, to live in this way and to share this experience of home.

The story of our fifty years as Whitley College is the story of people finding a home, in a community of academic and cultural diversity and then going on to contribute to the emergence of this ‘different world’.
It has been a memorable 50th Year at Whitley with the three concerts enjoyed by alumni and friends. There have been many highlights from the arrival of 70 new residents for Apoc-O-lyptic Week through to Valedictory Dinner. The girls’ netball team playing in the 4th netball grandfinal put in a strong performance, but were unsuccessful in achieving a fourth championship in a row. The WARTS production of "Bonnie and Clyde" provided much entertainment. Boat Cruise was popular with current and ex-ressies. SPARTS dinner at the Royal Melbourne Hotel was a fitting celebration of Arts and Sports in the life of Whitley. Congratulations to Jack Davis for winning the Spirit Award for his support of all kinds of Whitley events. The Arts Participation Award was presented to Lydia Bell. The Sportswoman of the year was awarded to Emma Collard and Kieran Sait was awarded Sportsman of the year.

Jack Tan joined us at mid-year as Dean of Studies, taking over from Brenda Addie. Brenda has been travelling in Europe and hopes to pursue further studies in Theatre. Jack has settled in quickly and already knows everyone’s names and more importantly the coffee preferences of the RLT members! Our new Tutor Hasan Nasir has participated in many social events and loves to dance whenever he gets the opportunity. We are delighted that he will stay on at Whitley next year. Michael Stuiber married tutor Mayuri Wijayasundara at the start of the year and took up the role as Physics Tutor. Michael has thrown himself into College life, playing soccer and footy and playing his guitar at cafes. Mayuri handed in her PhD recently and is enjoying a well deserved holiday with Michael, visiting Germany and Sri Lanka. Caitlin Overington presented at a conference in NZ and has recently had her first article published.

Valedictory Dinner was a wonderful finale as we farewelled our thirteen Valedictorians, students who have lived at college for three or more years and have been friends, mentors and leaders. They were Matthew Bennett, Abu Bhartia, Clare Browne Emerald Chang, Rey Dayap, Lielo Ho, Tim Lukey, Chang Pham, Brad Spinks, Audrey Stewart-Peterson, Olivia Stocks, Lucy Williams and Emma Zagami. Our Valedictory speaker was Thomas Morgan, former Whitley Resident, Senior Student and Arts Tutor. Thom is working as a Research Fellow at Institute for Economics and Peace. He talked about the importance of being passionate about your work. Thom encouraged all Whitleans to work hard, remain open to other people and experiences and be a ‘dork’ in the fine Whitley way.

Awards were given out to honour those residents who have excelled artistically and academically and served the community with dedication. Congratulations to the Academic Award winners with matching Grade Point averages: Mandy Tsai and Shashank Murali; the Arts Award winner: Ryan Jones and the joint winners of the Community Service Award: Clare Browne and Brad Spinks.

On Thursday 22nd October, the Warden and Deputy Warden were privileged to attend the Melbourne Indigenous Australian Graduation Gala Dinner, celebrating over 100 indigenous graduates from 2014 and 2015. Among their number were six Whitley alumni: Lena-Jean Charles-Loffel, graduating with a Masters of Public Health (MPH) this year; Verdhonda (Bonnie) Smith, graduating from her Bachelor of Arts (BA) and completing her first year of the MPH; Elijah Louttit, BA and in the middle of a Fine Arts degree in Screen Writing at the VCA; Codie Collins, graduating with a BA, majoring in Psychology and Brittany Carter, Graduate Diploma in Science. In addition, Bea Smith will graduate with a BA in mid-2016.

Thank you to all the students and staff who have made the Residential College such a special place to live, work and play in 2015. Best wishes to those who are graduating over the coming months and moving on to graduate courses and employment. We hope you will stay in touch and come back to visit, in coming years.
Having recently spent two months with my wife on an 800km pilgrimage across Spain, I have come to value milestones in a new way. Setting out from St-Jean-Pied-de-Port, our perspective of the journey to Santiago de Compostela was framed by particular cities along the path – smaller goals along the road. Reaching each one brought a sense of satisfaction at what had been achieved. The signal moment was reaching the point where only 100km remained. Pausing to mark the moment with a photograph, we marveled at how far we had come. Though we could only take one step at a time, this particular landmark provided a unique moment of perspective.

Two adjacent milestones in the life of Whitley College provide opportunity for a longer-term perspective. This year Whitley College has celebrated 50 years in Parkville – a rich partnership between theological and residential students, the fulfillment of a vision born in previous generations. The year 2016 marks 125 years throughout which the Baptist College of Victoria – Whitley College – has been offering theological education. From humble beginnings in rooms at Collins Street Baptist Church, where six students commenced studies for entry into ordained Baptist Ministry, the College has since served the church, the community and the world well, offering education, training and formation for an increasingly diverse community of people.

This was evident in the wonderful night on December 7 at Ashburton Baptist Church where students from a wide range of backgrounds – in terms of culture, age, academic experience and life settings, to name just a few – joined together to celebrate the life of the College and reflect on the work of all students during the course of 2015. The intersection between theology and the realities of daily experience, together with the commitment to furthering the relationship between the academic endeavours and the formation of students, is evident on a night such as this. A rich tapestry of stories and journeys now marks the life of the College, reflecting not only the students’ histories, but the many places where they live, work and serve today.

The Whitley community is enriched by its diverse student body and the various stories and ministries which are woven together in community. As prizes are awarded we are reminded of some of the names of those who have gone before – whose dream for theological formation has been realised in a breadth greater than they could have imagined. We also look around at the impact that present students are making in their communities and beyond, and in the academic world. We can look back with thanks that the vision which gave birth to the college 125 years ago has impacted so many students, and through them countless others.

I hope that you are able to find some time and space for a personal reflection on the milestones of your journey. To look back with thanks at the grace of God evidenced in our lives through growth and learning, through the richness of community around us, and through dreams and passions which have grown and matured in us can be a wonderful encouragement and a reminder of what is still possible. Marking and celebrating the milestones provides a deeper sense of perspective on the unfolding moments of our lives.

As we prepare for the 2016 year, with its focus on Hope and Mission, the milestones behind us remind us that hope in God bears fruit – often in ways beyond our expectations. And as we journey through this Advent season, we are reminded that God’s vision has both a long-term perspective and patient perseverance in its unfolding. We value sharing the journey with you.
Theological study is a deep and rich reservoir to explore but it can be a little overwhelming at first glance. Whitley College offers a wide variety of starting points to begin this journey of discovery and enrichment. You can begin in a particular area of interest and develop your studies from there. Talk to us about the possibilities, and discover the simplest - and best - starting point for you.

There’s a growing body of students who are studying for their degree online. Enjoy the convenience and flexibility of studying online without feeling isolated. As part of Whitley’s online learning community studying theology and preparing for ministry you make connections with faculty, classmates and resources, no matter where you are situated - in Melbourne, regional Victoria, around Australia, or overseas. Whitley’s high quality theological education, with its commitment to formation, can be yours - right where you are.

The Scriptures are at the heart of the Christian faith: providing wisdom, insight, guidance and understanding for life. Whitley College offers many opportunities to explore the Bible and equip you for further study in your own context. You can gain an overview of scripture on particular issues, or equip yourself with tools for interpreting within your own context, including learning their original languages.

Walk in the places Jesus did with his first followers
14 - 23 November 2016
Led by two experienced New Testament lecturers (Whitley New Testament teachers - Dr Oh-Young Kwon and Dr Keith Dyer)