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## ACU theologians scoop book prize

Two ACU theologians have shared the ATF Literary Trust Theological Book Prize for 2021 for books which make the most significant contribution to theology.

Reverend Associate Professor Ormond Rush received the prize for *The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles*, and Dr [David Newheiser](#) received it for *Hope in a Secular Age*.

The 2021 prize was named in honour of a third ACU theologian, the late Professor Denis Edwards, who won the award in 2006.

The Australasian Theological Forum awards the prize to a single-authored book by an Australian or New Zealand author judged to have made a lasting impact to the field.

The judges said the decision to award the prize to two books was a reflection of the outstanding quality of both books chosen from an excellent and diverse field of entrants for 2021.

The judges said *Vision of Vatican II* was destined to become a major point of reference in Vatican II studies.

“It is difficult to overestimate the magnitude of the achievement of Ormond Rush’s *Vision of Vatican II*. The author offers a remarkable tour de force of the theological and ecclesial principles the author discerns in the documents, background and fundamental vision of Vatican II. Rush does this from the vantage point of half a century of critical engagement, reflection and reception within the wider ecumenical Church. Combining a breadth and depth of scholarship with creativity and insight the author provides a foundational theological resource not simply for students and theologians of Vatican II but for all who would seek to understand some of the great themes that have preoccupied the hearts and minds of Christians in the 20th and 21st century.”

The judges said *Hope in a Secular Age* was a point of reference for future theological inquiry as it charts a way for meaningful dialogue with contemporary philosophical thought whilst addressing the perennial issue of a meaningful vision of the Christian hope in the midst of despair in contemporary Western culture.

“David Newheiser’s *Hope in a Secular Age* tackles a critical issue for contemporary theological discourse; the possibility of Christian language about central ideas of its faith.

In a post structuralist environment in which the meaning of language is dissipated by multi layered critical analysis Newheiser undertakes a defence of the central Christian idea of hope.

“In an informed and sophisticated manner Newheiser interrogates the resources of the rich tradition of Christian mystical thought. The ‘darkness of unknowing’ in the mystical tradition (Dionysius) and in post-modern notions of deferral (Derrida) provides Newheiser with parameters to engage in the meaningful development of Christian language in a contemporary context. This fine exegetical and philosophical study offers a highly original, insightful and persuasive account of a hope that is at once ethical, political and spiritual.”

**Reverend Associate Professor Ormond Rush and Dr [David Newheiser](#) are available for interview.**

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