

# MEDIA RELEASE

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## Foundation Chair of Theology announced

Dr John McDowell, former Cambridge researcher and current senior lecturer at the University of Edinburgh, has been appointed the Foundation Morpeth Chair of Theology at the University of Newcastle.

With funding support from the Anglican Diocese, the professorial position will strengthen the knowledge base in the University's theology discipline and provide fresh leadership for the degree program.

Dr McDowell's specialist interest is in modern theology and he is particularly interested in theology as a discipline that can interact with other disciplines.

He currently coordinates the undergraduate program at Edinburgh, one of the world's most renowned faculties of theology and a leading centre for the study of religion.

His doctoral research at Cambridge focussed on the work of Swiss theologian Karl Barth and his current research continues to probe the same fundamental questions that Barth raised about the nature of hope, evil, the church and the future of the world.

Anglican Bishop of Newcastle, Dr Brian Farran, said he was delighted and excited by Dr McDowell's appointment.

"Newcastle could not have hoped for a more creative and energetic Foundational Chair who brings with him a wealth of experience," Dr Farran said. "Dr McDowell's appointment will be the catalyst for Newcastle becoming a renowned centre for theological learning and research."

Pro Vice-Chancellor of the University's Faculty of Education and Arts, Professor Terry Lovat, said the establishment of theology at the University was attracting significant interest from across the world.

"The Bachelor of Theology was introduced in 2007 to meet the educational needs of the scholarly, religious and broader community," Professor Lovat said.

"The University warmly welcomes Dr McDowell to the position and looks forward to his contribution in building the University's reputation in theology and enhancing understanding of the place of religious thought."

Dr McDowell takes up his position as Chair and Professor of Theology on 1 January 2009.

**Bishop Brian Farran is available for interview by contacting Elizabeth Keevers on 0425 324 974. Professor Terry Lovat is available for interview by contacting Blythe Hamilton on 02 4921 6856.**

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