

ENGAGE

March 2020 Issue 3



SHORT FILM PRIZE

Contents

Call for entries for the 2020 Spiritus Short Film Prize

The renamed biennial national 2020 Spiritus Short Film Prize aims to contribute to a vision of hope and the common good for Australia.

- Expert panel of four judges will award up to six prizes in three categories based on five criteria
- Entries opened Monday 3 February and close Tuesday 30 June, with winners announced in September
- Entries are open for the biennial national 2020 Spiritus Short Film Prize, an initiative of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C) at Charles Sturt University

ACC&C Executive Director Professor Stephen Pickard said, "The biennial prize began in 2015 as the Religious Short Film Prize but was renamed as the Spiritus Short Film Prize in 2020 to better reflect its purpose and aims.

"The Spiritus Short Film Prize initiative is part of the Centre's commitment to promote the lively interaction between the arts, sciences and culture, which is one of the Four Pillars of its work and mission.

Engage is Published by Australian Centre for Christian and Culture

ISSN: 2652-4333

Editor-in-chief: Stephen Pickard | Editor: Katherine Waite

Address: 15 Blackall Street, BARTON ACT 2600

Graphic Design: Justin Huehn | Published: March 2020

Engage is published triannually. For enquiries contact acc-c@csu.edu.au



AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR
CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE

WISDOM FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Seasons of Ash



The Christmas season was marked by fire. People's lives and livelihoods turned to ash. Flora and fauna were wiped out. It was manifestly not a season to be jolly; far from it. In truth it was a season of fear, foreboding and anxiety; for some immense relief and others horror. The birth of Christ was celebrated in the stable of a world alight; at least on the Eastern seaboard

of Australia. Indeed it was a summer in which Australians faced the planetary with eyes wide open to the reality of an earth system that appeared ferocious, intense and unforgiving. So much of the country was left in ashes. Even after weeks of rain and green grass shooting through the blackened earth the ashen remnants of the fires linger on the ground and in lakes and inlets dotted along the coast.

In the last week of February we entered the season of Lent; traditionally a time for prayer and fasting. The symbol for this period is ash. The Ash Wednesday liturgy of Christian communities around the globe has those poignant words 'remember mortal that you are but dust and to dust you shall return'. These words are spoken as the sign of the cross is marked upon the forehead using the ash from the burnt palm cross from the previous year. The ashen cross is a sign of our mortality. We human creatures are groundlings (from the earth). Our lives are marked by finitude and limit. In the dust of our being we are reminded that all life comes as a gift from the giver of life and light. For all our undoubted powers and creativity seasons of ash are a sign of our need for the breath of God's Spirit to vivify and strengthen us.

The sign of ash pervades the beginnings of 2020. Our lives and planet prove to be both powerful and precarious. How then shall we live? What must we let go of? What challenges must we face? Where might wisdom be found for the path ahead? Perhaps the human project is no more and no less than finding answers to such questions. Our searching is best undertaken in the company of others and the pilgrim God who is our beginning and our end. I commend to you this *Engage* newsletter as a small contribution to the answers we seek for the common good.

Grace and Peace

Stephen

Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard

Executive Director

Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Farewell for now

This will be my last editorial for a little while as I'm about to go on maternity leave. My husband and I are delighted to expect our first child soon and are eagerly preparing ourselves for the new addition. The excitement of a new beginning is also mixed with a bit of sadness and anxiety as it inevitably means stepping back and letting go of things (like this role at the ACC&C).

But before I do, I'm glad to say that I've managed to give birth to the 'Spiritus Short Film Prize' which you'll read about in this edition of *Engage*. After the 2018 Religious Short Film Prize we took stock of how it was going and organised a roundtable discussion with film makers, distributors, directors and social researchers. As a result, and after 18 months of work, we've relaunched the prize with the new name, more categories, clear criteria and processes. We are now advertising on Film Freeway and have a relationship with the Canberra Short Film Festival. I am hopeful all these changes will increase recognition of the prize and invite more film makers to contribute.

Entries close end of June and a winner will be announced in September. If you know of someone interested in film making, please let them know about the prize. I'll be keen to see who the winners are and how the prize is received.

While it is goodbye for now, I leave the work at the ACC&C in capable hands under the leadership of Stephen Pickard and Hazel Francis and my colleagues Sarah Stitt and Lauren Bartley. I look forward to keeping in touch with future editions of *Engage*.

Warmly,

Katherine Waite





“The Centre believes that there is wisdom to be found in such an interaction which can contribute to a vision of hope and the common good for Australia.”

Continued from Page 1

There are six prizes in three categories, and entrants can enter their film in more than one category and can receive more than one prize.

The categories are:

- Spiritus Short Film Prize – Regional Australia Prize (open to entries outside an Australian Capital city). Cost to enter \$5
- Spiritus Short Film Prize – School Category (This is open to entries from school students (under 18 years of age) who attend a school in Australia. Cost to enter \$10
- Spiritus Short Film Prize – Open to all. Cost to Enter \$20
- There is \$5000 in cash and prizes available, donated by Clive and Lynlea Rodger. The judges award the prizes, but they do not have to award all prizes:
- Regional Australia Prize for entries outside a capital city - \$500
- School category (for school students only in Australia) for

equipment for school to value of \$1000

- Spiritus Short Film Prize - Winner \$2000
- Spiritus Short Film Prize - Highly Commended \$750
- Spiritus Short Film Prize – Commended \$500
- Spiritus Short Film Prize – People's Choice \$250 (Awarded on the night)

The panel of judges are Ms Genevieve Jacobs, Father Richard Leonard, SJ, Dr James Mairata, and Dr Andrew Pike, OAM.

“The judges provide theological and creative counsel, and represent many decades of experience in media, film, distribution, and directorship,” Professor Pickard said.

“They will assess films on five criteria: high artistic quality, wisdom for the common good, human and planetary flourishing, universal impact, and inventive expression.

“The judges will nominate eight films for The People's Choice Award from any category, and a film may already be a category prize winner.”

The ACC&C will present a roadshow to screen the shortlisted films at selected Charles Sturt University campuses in August, with more details to be announced later about roadshow screening dates and times.

Winners will be announced in September 2020 in Canberra at the Chapel, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, and the Award Night will be held during the Canberra Short Film Festival.

The People's Choice award winner is decided by the attendees of the touring festival at the Charles Sturt campuses and award night in Canberra. Attendees will vote on the night and the winner will be announced in Canberra.

Entries for the Spiritus Short Film Prize opened Monday 3 February and close Tuesday 30 June. More information about the 2020 Spiritus Short Film Prize:



About 130 people gathered for the prayer service. Photograph by Dougal Mordike.

Change the Heart Service

By Katherine Rainger, Holy Covenant Anglican Church, Jamison

On 23 January 2020, the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture once again hosted the #changetheheart prayer service. The #changetheheart services, held across Australia, are designed to give people a chance to learn and pray together in the lead up to January 26. Aunty Jean Phillips issues the invitation each year and the services are organised with the support of Brooke Prentis and Common Grace.

About 130 people attended the Canberra service. The theme was “the truth will set

us free.” Participants were encouraged to become truth-tellers about the injustices faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the past and present. The liturgy took us through truth, pain, loss, resistance, solidarity and survival. A Welcome to Country was given by Ngambri Elder Shane Mortimer. The service was led by Gomeroi woman Bianca Manning, with a recorded message from Brooke Prentis (Waka Waka woman and CEO of Common Grace) who was unable to make it to the service due to Canberra airport

being closed because of the bushfires. Pastor Helen Wright and Uncle Johnny Huckle (a Wiradjuri man and well-known Canberran) shared their gifts of music. The #changetheheart prayer services are a chance to lament, learn, pray, stand in solidarity and commit to change. Look out for the opportunity to attend next year.



Gomeroi woman Bianca Manning leads the service. Photo by Dougal Mordike.



Wiradjuri man Uncle Johnny Huckle sings at the service. Photo by Dougal Mordike.



A Welcome to Country was given by Ngambri Elder Shane Mortimer. Photo by Dougal Mordike.



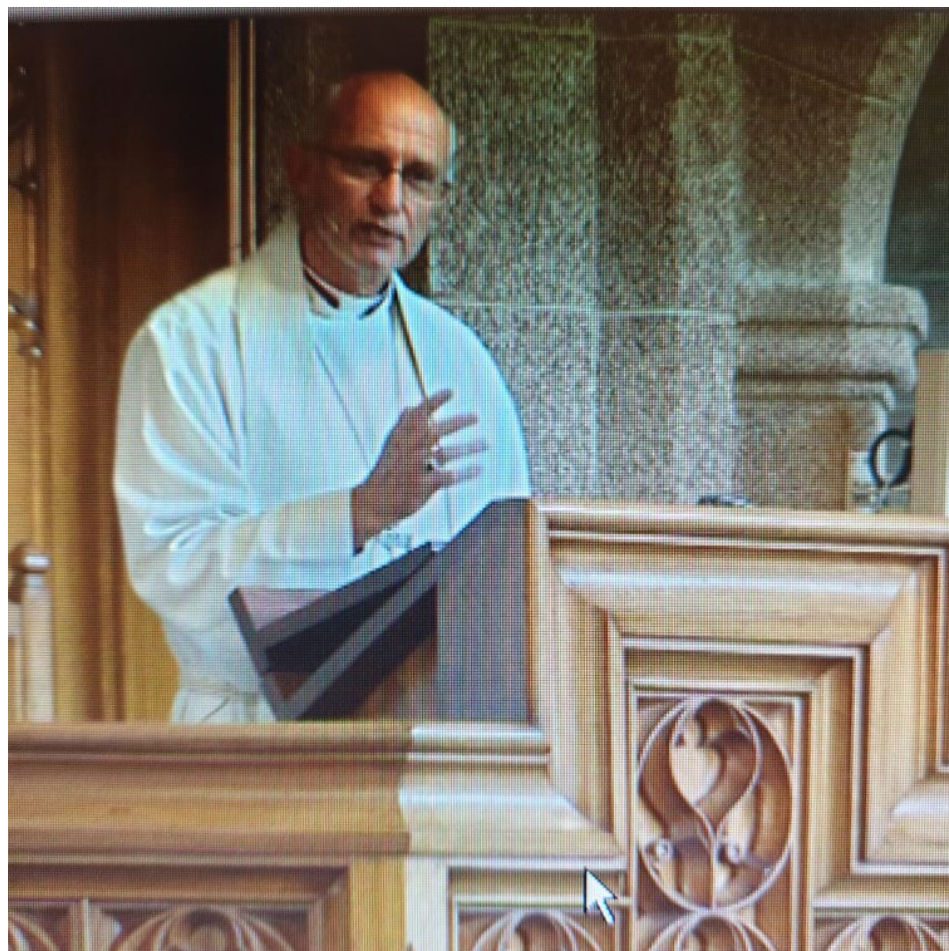
Creative and Justice pastor at Newtown Mission Helen Wright sings with Bianca Manning. Photo by Dougal Mordike.



Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture Stephen Pickard welcomes everyone to the Centre. Photo by Dougal Mordike.

Homily to mark the opening of the 2020 sitting of the Parliament of Australia

Delivered on Tuesday 4 February at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Canberra, ACT, by the Right Reverend Professor Stephen Pickard, Executive Director of the Charles Sturt University Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.



Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard preaches at the service to commemorate the start of the parliamentary year.

"May the words of my lips and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you O God and bring honour to your Holy name."

In early January, having been involved in evacuations on the south coast, finally back at home in Canberra, windows sealed in a vain attempt to keep the smoke from creeping through any crack, air purifier buzzing away, my youngest daughter, Miriam and I were talking about the events of the recent weeks. The heartache, loss, anger, bewilderment at the forces of nature. A cry goes up from the human heart about such things that overwhelm us. We seek a greater wisdom; a remedy and balm for our troubled and anxious spirits. Some may be drawn to pray, perhaps for the first time. What shall we pray? My daughter captured this move well: 'I think about

prayer as a kind of divine poetics. I can't think of anything else that could possibly change the hearts and minds of people ... This is why prayer is so necessary; it moves beyond the cerebral and into the actual human experience and our connection with God and the earth'.

So what kind of resources do we have to help flesh out our prayer, give it some bite, cause us to act? Enter the Lord's Prayer. This prayer has it all; orientates us to the universe; focus for our worship, it identifies our yearnings, needs, failures, fears, hopes; provokes a moral vision, speaks to our fundamental responsibilities. It's a prayer that reaches the deepest caverns of the human heart and at the same time can take root in our national consciousness. It is mobile, powerful, universal, convicting and opens up the heart of God.

The reading today from Matthew's Gospel begins thus: 'Pray in this way'. Just prior to this Jesus says, my paraphrase: 'when you pray don't bang on with empty phrases thinking God will hear you because of your many words'. In other words pray in such a manner and with such intent that you may be drawn deeper into the purposes of God for this world. The remarkable thing is that Jesus doesn't give instructions about how to pray, getting the composure right, having a positive attitude, finding a quiet space, standing up or on your knees. What does Jesus do? He provides a formulae; an unadorned series of five imperatives. In an age like ours that privileges freedom and spontaneity, here is a form of words with content for the training of would be disciples, for apprentices in prayer. Just a few comments on this prayer for an occasion such as this.

Say this: **Our Father in heaven** - Matthew's Gospel was written with the worshipping community in mind. It has a more liturgical rhythm about it. So it is 'Our' not simply 'My'. And it is direct, concrete and familial: 'Father'; abba. The intimate address of a child in the arms of a loving parent. One commentator says of this simple address: God is a motherly father and a fatherly mother.

hallowed be your name - The sanctification of the name is an ancient feature of Jewish prayer. God's holiness is God's radical otherness; depth of divine brightness, precision of wisdom; intensity of love, yet closer than breath itself. The word 'hallowed' is old English; but it still seems to have traction conveying a sense of purity, respect, awe and that something more that lies beyond us mere mortals.

Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven - This is a prayer for an earthly, grounded faith. Does not the human heart long for the kingdoms and rulers of this age to give way to the merciful, loving and wise God; and leaders after God's heart. While many people may believe that you go to heaven when you die, that's not what the early Christians believed. The New Testament

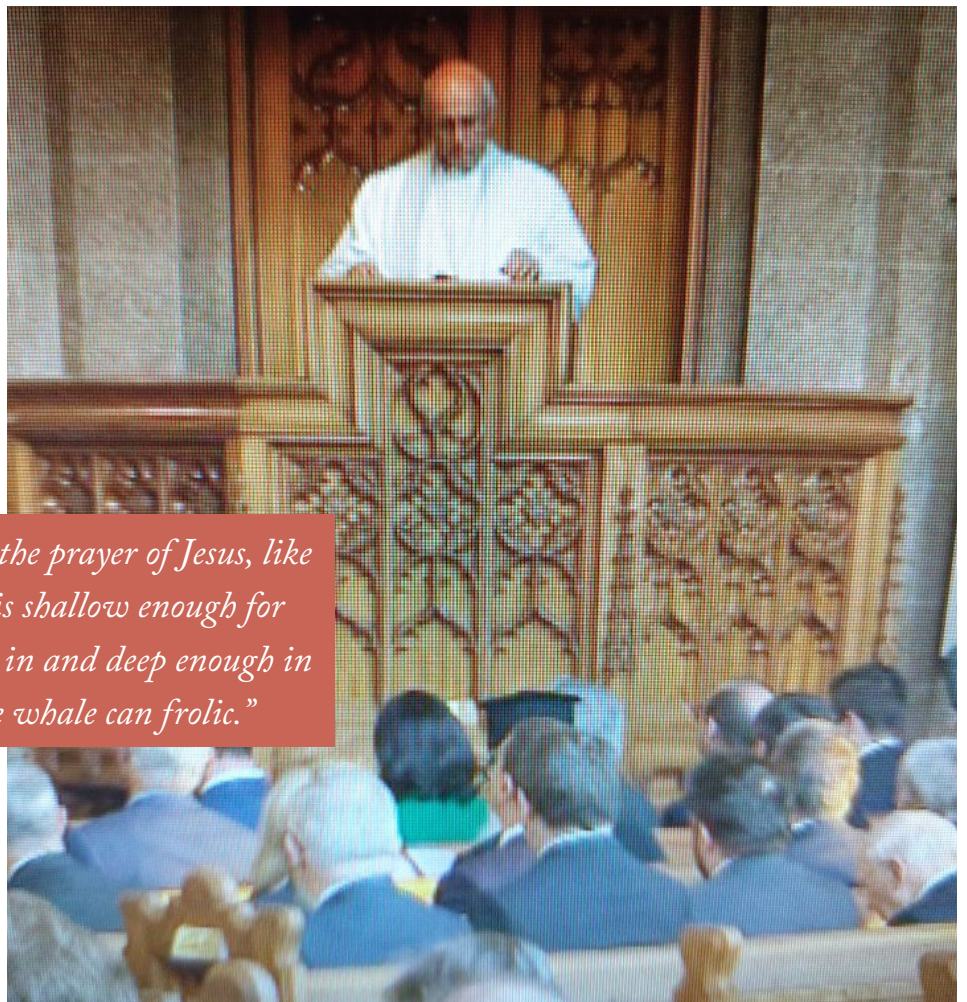
scholar Tom Wright puts it well: 'The point is not for us to go to heaven but for the life of heaven to arrive on earth'. Dietrich Bonhoeffer spoke of a 'worldly Christianity'. 'Your kingdom come' was nothing less than the cry of the community for a faith made real in the everyday of this life on this earth. Maybe as we face the realities of planetary life; as we consider the challenges before us, we might dare to pray for an 'earthly Christianity'; and in so doing pray for ears to hear the cry of this country and its First Peoples; this remarkable place we inhabit as guests for a time and a season.

How poignant to pray this prayer as the earth of this country is turned black; peoples' lives overturned, grief abounds and the human spirit stretched to its limits. Is this indeed what the good God desires for this earth? 'May your kingdom come' is not a recipe for head in the sand on the pretext that God will sort it out. Nor does the prayer map out a blueprint for a social and political program or a four point government policy plan. But it does call us to faith and action for the common good. So I wondered what might a Government policy look like that offered a glimpse, however fleeting, of heaven upon earth?

Give us each day our daily bread - The sense is 'day by day', keep giving us; and even more the sense: give us today what we shall need for tomorrow.

For those with an abundance of resources (i.e. food, material things, wealth and power) born of an acquisitive and voracious spirit, it is easy to become smug and self-satisfied and forget the giver of the gift. And what of those with not enough sustenance for mind, body and spirit. They lack daily bread: security, food, dwelling, community, purpose, voice, rights, representation. It generates frustration and anger and arises out of a sense of being ignored. 'Give us this day our daily bread' is a prayer for sustenance for our lives, care for each other, care for the earth and its climate, care for this country and its people who have come here from the four corners of the earth. The gift of daily bread. We see this in the remarkable generosity of people during the recent bushfires helping one another; and the thankfulness of receiving sufficient unto the day. In a time of growing

"Suffice it to say the prayer of Jesus, like John's Gospel, is shallow enough for toddlers to wade in and deep enough in which a blue whale can frolic."



inequalities across the world and 71 million refugees wandering the planet this prayer is a call to action; now is the time to prepare for tomorrow's needs; not simply the day after the next, but prepare for the needs of the tomorrows of future generations. Prepare today for our grandchildren's children.

There is so much more to this prayer. Perhaps when Parliament resumes today you might ponder the words of this prayer as they ring in your ears and you can fill in the blanks as the Spirit leads. Suffice it to say the prayer of Jesus, like John's Gospel, is shallow enough for toddlers to wade in and deep enough in which a blue whale can frolic. It's a prayer which is deeply personal with a universal orientation; it covers the bases of our life and planet; it inspires and provokes us to pursue the things that make for peace and justice in our personal and national life. This prayer has an inescapable political and pragmatic edge to it. It offers non-negotiable guidelines for our life and aspirations. It is an uncomfortable prayer to pray in our times. A political poetics from the lips of Jesus. It is nothing less than a fundamental spiritual resource. It's a prayer

that draws us heavenward and at the same time plunges us into the things of the earth. May the prayer of Jesus take root in our lives and inform the deliberations of this new session of Parliament. And as you begin your work for this year know that you do so with the prayers of many Australians. And may God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Amen

Lecture: Next Steps for Climate Change Policy for a Future Australia

By Bishop Philip Huggins, Centre for Ecumenical Studies

As we all know, the smoke, fires and suffering of this summer have led to more concern about climate change.

Accordingly, a large crowd gathered for our discussion with Australia's Ambassador for the Environment, Mr Jamie Isbister, on Thursday 6 February 2020 in the Chapel at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C).

After the Executive Director of the ACC&C Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard gave a welcome, I told those gathered how I had gone to the Madrid UN Conference of the Parties to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNCOP25 of the UNFCCC) in response to a request from overseas faith leaders who had been attending these UNFCCC COP's for some years.

Their expressed concern was that many of the diplomats, the UN Staff and Ministers are quite stressed and need loving pastoral care.

The stress comes from having precise knowledge about what is happening to our planet as it warms, juxtaposed with knowledge that international agreement to prevent catastrophic climate change is proceeding far too slowly.

With this awareness we put together a retreat and other pastoral initiatives for those at the UNCOP25 (and plan to do more of the same this November at COP26).

I told those present, how I had learned much more about the UNFCCC COP process and its importance for our future.

Coming back from Madrid, fostering a more informed public discussion seemed a helpful way to ensure Australia makes its

best contribution to the Paris Agreement, so as to contain any rise in global temperatures to one and a half degrees above that of the pre-industrial era.

2020 is the crucial year for nations to bring their best contributions together in this "bottom-up" process.

Ambassador Jamie described it as such as he gave us the kind of contextual briefing we need for a more intelligent and less divisive national conversation.

He spoke to his powerpoint and detailed both the history of climate change negotiations as well as current issues, problems and opportunities.

The Q and A that followed showed the intensity of peoples' concern to be better informed for effective advocacy and action.

Ambassador Jamie conveyed that he came to this position having seen the effect of climate change in his previous work with Australia's Humanitarian Relief Programs, including after extreme weather events like cyclones.

His vocational commitment blends now with his gifts and experience.

Listening to participants later, it was clear that people had been encouraged by his evident leadership. There is comfort in knowing that the right kind of person is in this position at this time.

Ambassador Jamie specifically encouraged church members and all people of faith to contribute in the accessible ways of, for example, using energy efficient appliances and better insulation; using more renewables and making life-style changes to the ways we travel and purchase.

He also encouraged us to keep facilitating a national conversation which is attentive to the real fears people have about their adaption and resilience.

This is quite a challenge, given the loud voices we still hear of folk with narrow and vested interests who fail to recognise how late is the hour and how crucial it is to make every possible cut to greenhouse gas emissions.

Whilst our seminar had this quality of gracious and attentive conversation, there is also the recognition that "not a day can be wasted".

Ambassador Jamie has agreed to return to the ACC&C for an update seminar in coming months.

We gave him a copy of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lenten book *Saying Yes to Life* and a bottle of wine to drink as he reads it!



Attendees at the Next Steps for Climate Change Policy for a Future Australia. Photo by Sarah Stitt.



Australia's Ambassador for the Environment, Mr Jamie Isbister addresses the Next Steps for Climate Change Policy for a Future Australia forum on 6 February 2020. Photo by Sarah Stitt.

“Voices and Values in the Public Sphere” delivered by Hon Dr Ken Crispin QC

By Clive Rodger, CES Committee Member

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C) and Christians for an Ethical Society (CES) work closely together and have for the last four years.

The recently retired Chair of CES, Rt Rev Dr George Browning, was key in founding the ACC&C and coordinates its Ambassadors. Rt Rev Professor Stephen Pickard is Executive Director of the ACC&C and is on the CES Executive Committee as is

Clive Rodger who is an ACC&C Board and Executive member.

This year CES has chosen the theme: Voices and Values in the Public Sphere. On 19 February about 60 people heard Hon Dr Ken Crispin QC deliver a stimulating,

wide ranging address in the Chapel at the ACC&C. Dr Crispin is a member of the ACC&C Board. He is currently Commissioner for Standards for The ACT Legislative Assembly and formerly DPP, a Supreme Court Judge, President of the Court of Appeal, and Chair of ACT Law Reform Commission.

The role of law in shaping our society was well traversed by Dr Crispin. The controversial role of the public face of Christianity was also canvassed. That face has not always been helpful. In essence love, respect, being merciful, acting with compassion, walking humbly and living by faith should undergird all we do. Respecting the rights of others was key to developing good laws. The influence of John Rawls “veil of ignorance” was discussed as was “the golden rule”

Dr Crispin noted that increasingly some Australian laws are influenced by populism and government defensiveness. This has created injustices highlighted by such efforts as “the war on drugs”.

To read the full address go to the CES website.



The role of law in shaping our society was well traversed by Dr Crispin. The controversial role of the public face of Christianity was also canvassed.

L to R: CES President Professor John Warhurst AO, Hon Dr Ken Crispin QC and Chair of CES Executive Committee Dr David Hunter, photo by Clive Rodger.



L to R: Professor Wayne Hudson, Dr Michael Gladwin, Professor Seumas Miller, Dr Virginia Miller, Rebecca Hilton, Dr Andrew Errington, Right Rev Philip Huggins, Right Rev Professor Stephen Pickard, Emeritus Professor Ross Chambers, Professor Ulrike Link-Wieczorek, Professor Jo-Anne Reid, Rev Dr Ray Williamson and Dr Jonathan Cole attend Professor Ross Chambers' seminar. Photo by Katherine Waite.

University education and character formation in contemporary pluralist societies: the role of academic values and the place of theology.

By Emeritus Professor Ross Chambers AM

As an Ambassador of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C), formerly the DVC (Academic) at Charles Sturt University and chair of the Board of the ACC&C from 2000 to 2013, I presented a paper at a seminar at the Centre on Thursday 27 February. The paper forms part of a larger international project coordinated by the University of Heidelberg, in which the Centre is participating.

Scholarly values which form a central element in the heritage of Western universities (such as truthfulness; respect; authenticity; magnanimity; critical questioning; autonomy) remain highly relevant to the future of the university in contemporary pluralist societies and need to be at the heart of conversations about that future. Academic work is grounded in the autonomy of the scholar but this autonomy is properly exercised always in the context of "thinking together", in exchange and discussion with others. Scholarly values always have an "other facing orientation" in addition to being a standard for the individual scholar.

These values also have the capacity to play a key role in the formation of the values and attitudes of graduates. University education for undergraduates and those preparing to enter a profession can be thought of as inducting students into the discourse of a field of study, a discipline or a profession. Students should acquire not only advanced

knowledge but also the values and habits on which the field is based and which underpin its practice, including not only values and habits specific to a field but also the shared values on which scholarship is based.

"It is better to think of universities as shared spaces in which scholarly values form the framework for sharing thinking together for people from diverse religious and non-religious positions."

Magnanimity, especially as explored by Jon Nixon (in *Towards the Virtuous University. The Moral Bases of Academic Practice*, London, 2008) is particularly relevant to academic work in contemporary pluralist societies such as Australia. It involves the willingness to engage with new forms of understanding in a spirit of hospitality and generosity, respecting the autonomy of others whilst valuing one's own autonomy. There are many factors in a contemporary university which may make formation in scholarly values challenging. These include time pressures faced by students and academics; finding appropriate spaces for discourse, especially in the context

of off campus and on-line teaching and learning; changes in the way academic work is organised which make it hard to expose students to the modelling of academic values by scholars. There is also an important argument that some modern practices, including the ways universities market themselves; the impact of audit cultures) erode the trust between teacher and student which is essential for induction into academic practice. (See Paul Gibbs, "Trust in the University" in Barnett & Peters, *The Idea of the University. Contemporary Perspectives*, Vol 2, NY 2018).

Theological learning and teaching, as well as research and other forms of scholarship, should be happy to promote and work within the context of scholarly values. They are highly consonant with Christian values and, indeed, developed from the Christian values which inspired the medieval university. It is a mistake to think of the contemporary public university as an inherently "secular" space founded on "secularist" values and frameworks. It is better to think of universities as shared spaces in which scholarly values form the framework for sharing thinking together for people from diverse religious and non-religious positions. It is important for theology to speak from within its own scholarly traditions into this space and to model magnanimous discourse.



His Excellency General David Hurley, Governor-General of Australia, (sixth from left) with dignitaries, performers and committee members of the Commonwealth Day Celebration Canberra. Photo by Terry Walls.



The Canberra Men's Choir and A Chorus of Women sing together at the Commonwealth Day Celebration. Photo by Terry Walls.

Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard's Address

Climate Action and the Commonwealth

The recent fires have shaken us up. They have been like a wake-up call from the alarm clock. This planet and all life is a gift from God. How can we avoid the moral imperative to act; to work for something better for the earth. The call to action for the climate does not come from the top down; it begins in the depths of human hearts; it happens when we recognise that we humans have a special responsibility to live a new way; to tread lightly upon this earth. And we are not alone in this matter. The family of the Commonwealth, all 54 countries, has a long and positive track record with respect to climate action. The Commonwealth Langkawi Declaration on the Environment

in 1989 (Malaysia) stated "The Heads of the Commonwealth, representing a quarter of the world's population and a broad cross section of global interests, are deeply concerned at the serious deterioration in the environment and the threat that this poses to the well-being of present and future generations. Any delay in taking action to halt this progressive deterioration will result in permanent and irreversible damage." In 2008 the theme for Commonwealth Day was *The Environment – Our Future*. Secretary-General Rt Hon Don McKinnon said in his Commonwealth Day message "The science is clear: our current exploitation of this planet's environment is unsustainable. We can't move away from the problems we have created, or wish them away." 2008 also saw what has become known as the Garnaut Report to the Federal government where, among other things, it stated that projection of future fire seasons "will start

earlier, end slightly earlier and generally be more intense. The effect increases over time, but should be directly observable by 2020." And thus it was so. There is a world-wide momentum for climate action. It extends across the Commonwealth of Nations. It embraces all races, languages, creeds and religions. Climate action springs from local places. It begins in the hearts, minds, passions and prayers of people. It gathers momentum and begins to swarm across the globe. As a small yet important symbol of our commitment to climate action the Commonwealth Day Celebration Committee has issued an appeal to raise funds for the Indigenous Bushfire Recovery effort on our beautiful South Coast of New South Wales which has been so harshly ravished by recent fires. On this Commonwealth Day Multi-faith Celebration we are truly grateful for all those who lead the way on a pilgrimage of care for the earth.

New Director and Associate Director appointed at Colloquium for Ageing Perspectives and Spirituality

By Katherine Waite, ACC&C

Congratulations to Reverend Professor Elizabeth MacKinlay AM and Professor Ann Harrington who have been appointed as the new Director and Associate Director respectively for the Colloquium for Ageing Perspectives and Spirituality (CAPS) at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C).

The Colloquium for Ageing Perspectives and Spirituality was founded in 2001 as the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies and has been part of the ACC&C since 2017.

Professor MacKinlay was instrumental in setting up CAPS and was its first director until the end of 2012 when Dr Jane Foulcher was appointed. Most recently Reverend Professor Bruce Stevens was the Director of CAPS until he concluded his role at the end of 2019 to pursue private practice work and research.

Professor Harrington comes to CSU with a background in nursing practice and nursing research. She has been employed in the tertiary sector for 36 years and continues to hold Academic Status with Flinders University in South Australia.

Both Professor MacKinlay's and Professor Harrington's appointments are for two years and the board of the ACC&C is

very pleased to see CAPS continue under their leadership, especially in new projects in the area of dementia.

The working title of the CAPS project is called 'Dementia in

the Australian community: challenging and changing the culture, empowering people with dementia and their families to live meaningful lives.'

Professor MacKinlay said the project will develop innovative care models to

improve health and wellbeing of older people, including quality of life for those with dementia living in the community and their families. It seeks to move beyond the accepted biomedical perspective to consider cultural, psychosocial and spiritual perspectives, and includes knowledge and beliefs about dementia, resources and opportunities open to this population.

CAPS supports research, education and policy development in ageing, pastoral studies and related ethical issues. It is multidisciplinary, catering to the needs of health professionals, ministers of religion, pastoral workers and older people, and seeks to examine the process of ageing within the context of meaning in life and well-being. It operates within a Christian ethos in an ecumenical setting. CAPS hosted the 2019 International Conference on Ageing and Spirituality held in Canberra.

CAPS supports research, education and policy development in ageing, pastoral studies and related ethical issues.



Reverend Professor Elizabeth MacKinlay AM

Elizabeth is both a registered nurse and a priest in the Anglican Church of Australia. She was the inaugural Director of the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies at St Mark's National Theological Centre, Canberra 2001

to 2012. Professor MacKinlay researches issues of ageing and spirituality, including well-ageing, frailty and dementia. The book: *Finding meaning in the experience of dementia*. (MacKinlay and Trevitt) was awarded the 2013 Australasian Journal of Ageing book prize. A companion book 2015 is titled: *Facilitating spiritual reminiscence for people with dementia: A learning guide*. A second edition of Elizabeth's book: *The Spiritual Dimension of Ageing* was published in 2017.



Professor Ann Harrington

Ann comes to CSU with a background in nursing practice and nursing research. She has been employed in the tertiary sector for 36 years and continues to hold Academic Status with Flinders University in South Australia. She has supervised 20

Honours, Masters and PhD students to successful completion and is currently primary supervisor for four PhD students. She has obtained research grants that include funding from ARC, Health Workforce Australia, Department of Health (previously DSS) and industry partners. Her contributions to teaching include expertise in palliative care, spirituality, nursing care of the older person, qualitative research and research design. She has a major in curriculum planning and has undertaken curriculum development for post and undergraduate nursing students. Her publications include refereed reports, book chapters, book reviews and numerous conference presentations at national and international levels. She is a Fellow of Australian College of Nursing and foundation member of Australian Hartford Consortium of Gerontology Nursing Excellence.



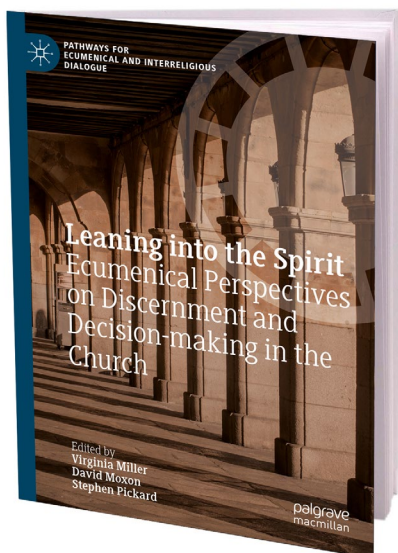
L to R: The Most Rev'd Sir David Moxon, The Most Rev'd Dr Christopher Prowse, Dr Virginia Miller and ACC&C Executive Director Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard with the book. Photo by Hazel Francis.



Dr Virginia Miller at the book launch. Photo by Hazel Francis.

Book Launch: *Leaning into the Spirit: Ecumenical Perspectives on Discernment and Decision-making in the Church*

By Katherine Waite, ACC&C



Conference proceeding from the 4th International Conference on Receptive Ecumenism have recently been released with the book *Leaning into the Spirit: Ecumenical Perspectives on Discernment and Decision-making in the Church*.

The book was officially launched on 27 February 2020 at the Chambers Pavilion by the Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn Christopher Prowse.

The Centre for Ecumenical Studies as part of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, together with The Australian Catholic University's Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry and the Centre for Public and Contextual Theology (CSU) hosted the 4th International Conference on

Receptive Ecumenism, 6-7 November 2017 in Canberra.

The book features 16 contributions with an introduction from editors The Most Rev'd Sir David Moxon and Dr Virginia Miller. The other editor is the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture's Executive Director Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard.

It contains fresh insights into ecumenism and, notwithstanding claims of an "ecumenical winter," affirms the view that we are actually moving into a "new ecumenical spring."

It offers new theological insights in the areas of Christology, Pneumatology and Trinitarian theology, and discusses developments in ecumenism in the USA, UK, Australia, India, and Africa, as well as in ecumenical institutions such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC).

Speaking at the launch, Dr Miller said although many of the contributions suggest that Receptive Ecumenism is an invaluable ecumenical model, particularly in regard to the local level of the Church, some contributors put the method of Receptive Ecumenism to the test, which is what sets the book apart.

"For instance, one of the reviewers commented '...the book is definitely no 'publicity tour' on Receptive Ecumenism. On the contrary one of the originalities of the book is that some of the authors express

their hesitation about the novelty and originality of this method and in so doing stimulate ecumenical research," she said.

"The Rt Rev'd Dr Peter Carnley, one of the ambassadors of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, is one such contributor. In essence, Dr Carnley argues that Receptive Ecumenism became the default methodology in Anglican/Roman Catholic dialogues when full visible communion was no longer an imminent reality," she said.

"Dr Carnley argues that Receptive Ecumenism is useful in as much as it keeps the dialogue alive. However, he argues that ultimately ecumenists must work on the hard, seemingly intractable, issues with a view to finding agreement.

"Rev Dr Ray Williamson, who is a past director of the Centre for Ecumenical Studies, contribution, also puts pressure on Receptive Ecumenism.

"Dr Williamson argues that the Receptive Ecumenism model is not new. Indeed, he says, the primary methodological premise of Receptive Ecumenism—that of receiving from the other in love—was already stressed at Lund and Vatican II.

"Nevertheless, unlike Dr Carnley, Dr Williamson argues that Receptive Ecumenism is timely and a valuable contribution to ecumenism. In particular, he argues that Receptive Ecumenism is an important tool in a suite of tools for achieving ecumenical unity," Dr Miller said.

Upcoming Events

Music to Awaken and to Heal

7:30pm, 14 March 2020, Chapel, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Combined choristers of Canberra, together with professional soloists and small orchestra, directed by Judith Clingan AM, will present a sequence of Australian choral and vocal compositions which look at the historical and present realities of climate change, fires and environmental crisis. Cost is \$30 Full, \$20 Concession and \$10 High Schoolers.

Christians for an Ethical Society Forum

25 March 2020, Chapel, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

The forum will discuss the topic "Alexander Maconochie Centre: A Broken Dream? Time for something different?" with Julie Tongs OAM who is the CEO of nationally significant Winnunga Nimitjiah Aboriginal Health and Community Services located in Narrabundah and Jon Stanhope, Chief Minister of the Australian Capital Territory from 2001 to 2011.

ANSD Reflective Workshop: The Poetics of Contemplation

9.30am - 3pm, 28 March 2020, Chambers Pavilion, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

The leading Canberra poet John Foulcher and Rev Dr Jane Foulcher, Deputy Director of St Mark's Theological Centre, are offering a reflective workshop on the role of creativity in the spiritual life. A day of nourishing input for anyone interested in the spiritual journey. Information and registration by 20 March to

ansdact@gmail.com

Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn Forum

7:30pm, 2 April 2020, Chapel, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

The forum is to inform Concerned Catholics of Canberra Goulburn on the processes and outcomes, including the Pope's response, of the Amazon Synod. A specific focus will be to draw out reflections and learnings relevant to the Australian Plenary Council process. Speakers include Br Mark O'Connor, Paul Nicoll, Agnes Dodds and Terry Fewtrell.

Book Launch: Bonhoeffer's Religionless Christianity in Its Christological Context

6pm, 21 April 2020, Chambers Pavilion, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Join us to celebrate the launch of Peter Hooton's book, Bonhoeffer's Religionless Christianity in Its Christological Context. Peter Hooton is the head of the Research Secretariat at the ACC&C. The German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer understood Western civilization to be "approaching a completely religionless age" to which Christians must respond and adapt. This book explores Bonhoeffer's own response to this challenge—his concept of a religionless Christianity—and its place in his broader theology. The book will be launched by Ockert Meyer.

Natural Movement Dance Workshops: Therapeutic Movement for the Body, Soul and Spirit

10:00 - 4:30pm, 25-26 April 2020, Chambers Pavilion, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Natural Movement Dance is a dance style which works with the body's natural movements. Margaret Jack will lead the workshops with demonstrations by Patricia Sherwood. Suitable for all ages and levels. Free to attend. Please bring a plate for a shared vegan lunch. Drinks and snacks provided. Please RSVP to Clare Ede: clareede@gmail.com Tel. 02 8197 7011

Ancient Futures: the Renewal of Religious Life in the Australian Church

5 - 7 November 2020, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

The "Ancient Futures" conference will bring together ecumenical representatives from a wide range of traditional, new and emerging communities across Australia, in order to:

- Reflect on the distinctive role played by religious communities during the first two centuries of Christianity in Australia
- Assess the history of new communities in Australia over the past 50 years: founding charisms, missions, relationships with church hierarchies, sustainability over time
- Consider how God may be calling 21st century Australians to various forms of religious life, and what ecclesial conditions (e.g. vision-casting, theology, resourcing, oversight, ecumenical collaboration) are now required to enable what the Holy Spirit is doing.

Draft programme:

- **Thurs 5 Nov 2020 (pm):** opening keynote, worship & fellowship
- **Fri 6 Nov (am & pm):** a day for practitioners – lectures, workshops, worship & fellowship
- **Sat 7 Nov (am & pm):** an open conference on the theology and practice of religious life
- **Sat 7 Nov (am & pm):** an open conference on the theology and practice of religious life

Registrations are now open. Cost to attend is \$250.



The Chapel.



The Chambers Pavilion.

Hire the Centre

Are you interested in hiring the Centre's facilities for your next event?

The Centre's facilities include an indoor chapel which can seat up to 200 people or the Chambers Pavilion which can seat 23-25 people around table or 50 in a theatre set up. We welcome inquiries from groups that run events that are consistent with the vision of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. Contact the Events' Team (Sarah Stitt and Lauren Bartley) for more information on acc-c@csu.edu.au



Art Exhibition: Jesus Laughing and Loving

By Sarah Stitt, ACC&C

In 2019 the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture became the permanent home to an important collection of paintings bequeathed by the late Harry Wallace, and presented by his family. The works all have one theme in common – we at the Centre lovingly know them as – the laughing Jesus paintings.

The collection was commissioned by Pat and Harry Wallace and Sir Maxwell Macleod inviting artists from around the world to contribute. The paintings' can be considered eclectic with 34 artists from 17 countries across four continents represented. The curators' inspiration was to depict Jesus from the perspective of his everyday life and his relationship with the community, young and old. In this way Jesus is not depicted in the usual manner of sombre, harsh, tortured and suffering. He is instead showing a lightness of spirit, enjoying all around him in a joyful embracing manner.

For me, thinking about this exhibition theme, I am constantly reminded of the Dalai Lama, who is famously known for his laughter and smiling face.

In the reasoning for their works many artists expressed how difficult it was to envision Jesus laughing. One said that nowhere in the Bible is it written that he laughs; another wrote that in all the iconic portrayals of Jesus there is only sombreness and torture; many others said that as Jesus was human and lived for 33 years amongst us that there must have been many moments of joy. They have all used their imaginations to portray this joy. Alone in the titles of their works we are introduced to these joyous emotions.

Several of the artists found their inspiration from the occasion when Jesus spent a happy, loving time with children on the way to Jerusalem. The disciples scolded

the parents for bringing them. Jesus's response was:

*"Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."*¹

Reverend Tim Costello AO wrote: "This exhibition is a step towards liberating

the person of Jesus from the traditional other-worldly image so that his power and relevance for modern living might be rediscovered and enjoyed."

In 2012 the collection was exhibited at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Later this year the Centre is planning another exhibition for these works. We look forward to sharing with you the joy we are experiencing having them in our presence.



The Labourer, acrylic on canvas, 61cm x 45cm by Mairi Karl Feeger.

1. Mathew 19: 13-15

The Bible Garden February 2020

**By Justin Aquilina,
Bible Gardener**

Over the last few months in the Bible Garden there has been great growth despite it having been one of our driest summers to date. Some of the fruit trees in the outer gardens really started to show signs of heat stress from the dryness and warm winds. A new dripper system was installed to help them survive this summer where there has not been the need for much assistance in the past. With a smoky haze sitting heavily on the garden (and the rest of Canberra) throughout most of January and then the hail storm, the garden suffered and lost much of its summer growth. The damage was severe with hail stones the size of tennis balls and winds over 100kph, pretty much everything took some kind of hit. This is by far the worst hail storm I've seen in Canberra in the last 35 years and carved a path of destruction though the heart of the ACT. However, in the last couple of weeks with all the rain and cooler temperatures, the garden has started to recover and new growth is once again beginning to emerge as nature heals itself and the cycle of life continues.



The Bible Garden walkways are filled with water after the hail storm on 20 January 2020. Photo by Katherine Waite.



The Labyrinth outside the Bible Garden is full of hail. Photo by Katherine Waite.



The hail destroys a cover in the Bible Garden. Photo by Justin Aquilina.

Summer at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

As a result of the fires across New South Wales, Canberra experienced hazardous smoke over the summer months. On new year's day Canberra had recorded air quality which was 22 times the hazardous rating (the air quality at Monash was 4,650 which is 23 times the hazardous level of 200). Then on 20 January Canberra had a sudden hail storm during lunchtime. There was much debris around the grounds of the ACC&C and some hail damage done to the roof at George Browning House. A few days later there was a dust storm that swept through the capital.



Smoke haze in Canberra on 20 December 2019.
Photo by Katherine Waite.



Looking across to Lake Burley Griffin from the Humanitarian Aid Workers' Memorial near the Bible Garden on 20 December 2019. Photo by Katherine Waite.



Debris and hail fills the walkways near the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. George Browning House is in the background. Photo by Katherine Waite.



ACC&C staff Sarah Stitt and Hazel Francis clean the Reflection Pool on 30 January 2020. Photo by Katherine Waite.



The Great Cross is seen in the reflection of the Reflection Pool on 30 January.
Photo by Sarah Stitt.



The apricot tree at the Bible Garden is laden with fruit on 31 December 2019.
Photo by Sarah Stitt



Leaves fill the Reflection Pool at the base of the The Great Cross.
Photo by Sarah Stitt.



The grass outside the Chambers Pavilion is full of hail. Photo by Katherine Waite.



The lillies at the Garden. Photo by Sarah Stitt.

The Centre is unique in Australia. It began in 1998 as an ecumenical venture for engagement with Australian culture and the issues of the day. It was established through a partnership between Charles Sturt University and the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn. It is situated at the eastern edge of the Parliamentary Triangle in Canberra on a 99 year lease to the University which currently provides the major source of its funding.



Charles Sturt
University

www.acc-c.org.au

<https://www.facebook.com/acccfourpillars/>