

THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE

Special Commemorative Issue

in honour of the Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard

ENGAGE



AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR
**CHRISTIANITY
AND CULTURE**
WISDOM FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Stephen, at his best, photo by John Clark

From the Chair of the Board

This commemorative issue of “Engage” has been compiled as a tribute to the Rt Rev’d Professor Stephen Pickard, our outgoing Executive Director.

As these contributions attest, Stephen’s time as Executive Director has been a blessing, as he has offered his formidable intellect, welcoming heart and gentle humour in service to the life of the ACC&C and PaCT.

We are deeply grateful to him for his generosity of spirit and for all that he has achieved.

May he and Jennifer have a joyful and productive retirement!

Rt Rev’d Dr Sarah Macneil



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ENGAGE

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CV-94, Doug Purnell, oil on canvas. See page 28.

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“Leunig and Honoré remind us that the truly enduring values of life and ironically the most efficient way of achieving them is directly related to the development of a slow frame of mind.”

“Nothing can be loved at speed”



The Australian writer Michael Leunig makes this astute observation in his poem, “Another Way of Being” (*The Prayer Tree*, 1991). It has resonated with me for many years; probably an important word for the driven types (myself included). However, Leunig’s comment has far wider significance for a society such as Australia which lives under the thrall of speed where fast usually

is a euphemism for busy, controlling, aggressive, hurried, analytical, stressed, superficial, impatient, active, quantity before quality. The list could go on. Fast usually makes people sick. Fast usually cripples a society eventually. As a people we simply run out of energy because of the speed at which we have to live, to react, to assimilate new information, adapt, pivot, proceed in an alternative direction. The Covid-19 pandemic has reminded us of all these things but in truth they are not recent but endemic in a fast food society.

As a society we need to find a different way of being together. We need a different rhythm and pace of life. So many people have left their employment over the period of covid (some forced by circumstances) while others have simply left in search of a new way of being. This search was epitomised in the 2005 book by Carl Honoré, *In Praise of Slowness*. Leunig and Honoré remind us that the truly enduring values of life and ironically the most efficient way of achieving them is directly related to the development of a slow frame of mind. How else can we as individuals and as a society develop certain habits of the heart and character that breed strength and resilience in the face of adversity; ways of being that nurture the virtues and values that make for freedom and justice? In anxious and uncertain times, the old adage, ‘the one who hesitates is lost’ is a false track; ‘look before you leap’ might be the better order of the day, at least sometimes in our religious, economic, social relationships and political life. Perhaps a slow church in the sense I am referring, may be a radical imperative of the good news of God. Jesus walked over the country taking time (even as he was driven!) to meet, attend, listen, confront, call out bad behaviour, offer a healing hand and word to those he met on the way. The First Peoples of this country we now call Australia

have spent thousands of years walking upon country. They know what it means to belong here and to be shaped by the place and its spirit. How can we learn to love, unless we take the time to walk gently, listen attentively, join in the struggles and stay long enough to experience the joys that so often elude us? Indeed, we need to learn to pace ourselves as a people and culture.

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture has been a slow build over almost a quarter of a century. It has been inspired by the vision of many people seeking a new way together for Australia. It has faced many challenges and been the recipient of great *generosity*, not just from individuals but also from those very institutions that brought the Centre into being. And this has been a remarkable feat given the pressures faced by church and university to deliver quickly on its strategies or else risk abandonment.

The Centre’s continued existence is testimony to the good will of many: supporters, generous donors, volunteers, dedicated staff, scholars, students, participants in so many events and activities from many walks of life; those with religious or no religious convictions; all of whom share their lives and work in the service of a greater wisdom than any possess as individuals. The slow build, the intentional build, the pace that generates energy rather than depletes it; the vision that inspires, strengthens and lifts the eyes to something greater in the midst; all this belongs to Leunig’s words, “nothing can be loved at speed”. It’s the way of the God who raises the dead; not with the click of a finger but via Golgotha, forgiveness and a new start for all in a world beloved of God and imbued with the eternal Spirit. As I conclude my time as Executive Director, I say thank you to all with whom I have journeyed these almost 9 years. I hope it has been enriching for all; it certainly has been for me. Archbishop Francis Carroll’s *Prayer for Centre* (<https://about.csu.edu.au/community/accc/get-involved/pilgrimage>) remains my prayer for the Centre and I trust yours.

Grace and Peace

Stephen

Rt Rev’d Professor Stephen Pickard

Executive Director, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Stephen Pickard: A good and faithful servant

by Paul Bongiorno

Board member, ACC&C

Stephen's departure as executive director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture is for me a sweet sorrow.

Our paths crossed when out of the blue he invited me to join the Board in 2017. I did so with mild trepidation. Christianity means so many different things and many of its manifestations in my own Catholic Church and beyond fill me with horror.

My own appreciation of Christianity and the Church was mightily influenced by my experience as a student in Rome immediately after the Second Vatican Council. That historic "aggiornamento" – the updated openness to the Spirit blowing where it will was liberating for me. I embraced a view of the Church as a pilgrim people seeking to encounter God in the signs of the times and to realise none of us possess all the truth but rather, we seek it. Or to put it another way Truth seeks us in surprising and often shattering ways.

So, the embrace of ecumenism by Pope John XXIII excited me. The prayer of Jesus that "they may be one" began to be applied beyond the sectarian boundaries of the counter reformation.

When the Council speaks of "separated brothers and sisters" it does so not as an empty slogan but as a theological acceptance that in Baptism we are one in Christ and the fracturing of that

oneness is a scandal. Something to be remedied so as not to hinder the mission of witnessing God's inclusive love and forgiveness as incarnated in Jesus Christ.

How inspiring then to meet in this Anglican bishop and theologian a fellow traveler on this journey. One who accepts completely that we encounter this God in the contemporary world. As he said in his sermon at the opening of the parliamentary year in 2020, reflecting on the Lord's Prayer, the prayer here is not some withdrawal "it moves beyond the cerebral and into the actual human experience and our connection with God and the earth".

A mark of the man was those who he had gathered around him. To single anyone out is invidious but I was struck by the depth of wisdom and humanity in our retired chair Lawrie Willett. He with Stephen were a formidable duo. Of course, supported by other wise and impressive elders who shared the broader vision the Centre was founded to foster in our increasingly diverse nation.

Stephen has run the race at the Board but hopefully those who come after him will build on his legacy just as he did on his predecessors. The portents are good.

So, thank you Stephen and may your cup be filled to overflowing as you continue the pilgrimage.

+Stephen Pickard, +George Browning & Paul Bongiorno, photo supplied



In the beginning - The Boss

by Hazel Francis

Centre Manager, ACC&C

Over the last 20 years I have worked with the Boss in different places and times.

I started working for Stephen at St Mark's when my husband and I first moved to Canberra. We had two small girls and my job with Stephen was to reconcile the accounts for St Mark's when it was taking on its own finances. This job, I was promised, would only take 3 -6 weeks to complete—could be done in my own time when the girls were at kindergarten and preschool. Well as they say “the rest is history”, so to speak, and I will not bore you with those stories now, though he did give me a nickname, *the Ferret* - another story!

We worked together at St Mark's for four years until my husband took a job in the UK for 9 months. I could only go, said Stephen, as long as I could find someone who could do the accounting whilst I was away—which I did. I returned to St Mark's 3.5 years later to find he had left and was a bishop in Adelaide.

Our paths, regarding work, crossed again when he was the Executive Director at the ACC&C and I was still at St Mark's. When I finally left St Mark's in 2016 the first phone call I got was “can you drop over when you have time?” “... want a job? 1 day a week? ...” Yup! I fell for that one! I am now the Centre Manager and working a lot more.

What have I discovered whilst working with this very special person whom we call the Boss?

Everything you are going to read in *Engage* plus more. Stephen allows you to be you, his leadership is smooth, his knowledge of theology, of people, of roles is exact and caring. Hospitality is his core, he holds dialogue safely, enabling and enlarging views.

But this does not tell you how he pulls you in with a “How would you like...?” “I have a plan” “It's not big we can do it very easily....” “What do you think about...?” “By the way such and such will be using an office for a while...” “what are your thoughts on...? and can you do a paper on it.?”

Then you are let loose to follow up on the multitude of tasks, people, ideas, to fit the event into a place where others can gather, discuss, debate and other wonderful things. How does this happen? We endeavour to keep calm and unruffled on the surface but are paddling away like crazy underneath. He does give you the opportunity to say what you think or question ideas without the angst of feeling you have nothing to give.

Although the ideas flow and the workload can be complex, our Boss does not leave you stranded - left to wash the dishes, setting up or tidying up. No; he works alongside you, up the ladder or holding it, makes sure you are safe, and always has your back. Always putting others first, being there when no one else is. He is about justice and right for all.

But this does not tell you what has been achieved in the number of years (almost nine) that Stephen Pickard has been at the helm!

To start with the Pillars:

- Art acquisitions and exhibitions – *Seasons of Birth*, *Stations of the Cross*, *Jesus Laughing and Loving* and Icon exhibitions and A Chorus of Women in residence for the past seven years.
- Religious dialogue – many colloquiums and conversations with multi-faith groups.
- Social justice – climate change, refugee marches, work with the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) on peace talks with DFAT, Sorry Day events, enabling of yarning circles.
- Good Friday services, St Patrick's Day services and Commonwealth Day events.
- Book launches for writers, whose research he has enabled, and whose books have arisen individually or from colloquiums and conferences. His latest will be launched at his farewell.
- Collaboration with universities and theologians around the world, from Canberra to Washington, Heidelberg and Indonesia, to name a few.
- Conferences, colloquiums and seminars: Centre for Ageing and Spirituality – first and eighth international conferences, Fifth Ecumenical World Conference.
- Partnering with other groups for wisdom for the common good: ACT Churches Council, Concerned Catholics, Christians for an Ethical Society, Common Grace and others.
- School groups using the Centre for student and staff retreats.

The list goes on...

In all, over 4000 people attended events hosted or sponsored by the Centre each year (up until the arrival of COVID-19).

May God continue to bless you and His Spirit guide you, Stephen, as you carry on your adventures in life – we will miss you. With theological discussions, events, meeting of distinguished persons, loads of laughter along the way your job is complete,

So Stephen, just a question: “What are you going to be doing in the next six months?”

“In an important sense this new development represents the fulfillment of the original vision of the ACC&C to be a place for public engagement and high-quality research to undergird and inspire the practical work of the Centre.”

Centre for Religion, Ethics and Society

by Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard

Executive Director, ACC&C

From 2022, a *Centre for Religion, Ethics and Society* (CRES) has been established at the ACC&C. At a time when Australia is facing major new challenges, there is a need for a research centre that addresses the interrelations between religion, ethics and society. No research centre in Australia currently addresses these interrelations in interdisciplinary ways that are also informed by high-level international involvements and inter-religious partnerships.

This exciting new initiative is the successor to PaCT (Public and Contextual Theology research centre) which formally ceased at the end of 2021 after 15 years operation at CSU. Whereas PaCT was a separate university research centre, CRES is embedded in the ACC&C and will function as a new research pillar. One consequence of this development is that significant university funds have been allocated to the ACC&C for research and publication associated with CRES. The funding has also provided for the establishment of a new position, Director of Research currently occupied by Dr Jonathan Cole, formerly Assistant Director, PaCT. This gives added capacity for raising external funding through grants and other partnerships. One consequence will be a restructure of the ACC&C to incorporate this new research initiative into the operation of the ACC&C.

What is the focus for CRES? CRES will situate previous research in theology and religion within an expanded interdisciplinary structure closely aligned with CSU's new research narrative. The research and output of CRES scholars will undergird the public engagements and dialogues of the ACC&C currently organised according to Four Pillars (religions; institutions and leadership; civil society; arts, culture and the sciences). In an important sense this new development represents the fulfillment of the original vision of the ACC&C to be a place for public engagement and

high quality research to undergird and inspire the practical work of the Centre. CRES scholars will be drawn from the significant body of academics associated with the ACC&C and the School of Theology, CSU.

CRES will address three areas of major national importance: (i) *Ageing, Mortality and Meaning*; (ii) *Ethics, Religion and Global Challenges*; and (iii) *Religion and the Secular*. With respect to the ageing focus Professor Elizabeth Mackinlay and a team of academics from other disciplines at CSU are currently engaged in a major project on dementia and meaning in the Australian context. Religion, ethics and society is a large domain though we are fortunate to have a range of scholars with expertise in areas of climate change, politics, security, religious fundamentalism and welfare. Religion and the secular are highly contested and controversial matters that require careful rethinking to help inform practical engagements for a better world which recognises the diverse nature of modern western societies. CSU scholars in theology (both Christian and Muslim), religion, ethics and philosophy have a strong track record of making important contributions in this area. A recent important initiative from the ACC&C has been the establishment of a collaboration between CSU and the Centre for the Study of Islam and Society at the State Islamic University of Jakarta. This is an exciting venture which will bring scholars from different religious backgrounds and cultures together in order to explore matters of common concern e.g. religious freedom in Australia and Indonesia; theology and legitimate political authority; religion and social media. It is this kind of work that provides backbone for the vision of an Interfaith House at the ACC&C.

An island of intellectual discovery

by Professor Clive Hamilton

Public Ethics, Centre for Religion, Ethics and Society (CRES), ACC&C



When I began working at CSU some fifteen years ago, my office was at the ANU because the centre I was attached to was a joint centre with ANU and the University of Melbourne. A series of events soon meant that I shifted to George Browning House, a new building located by Lake Burley Griffin in the beautiful campus of CSU theology.

I did not expect my new colleagues at George Browning House (GBH) would turn out to be far more simpatico with my way of seeing the world than the philosophers who'd surrounded me at ANU. The latter's way of understanding and framing the world was to me alienating in a way similar to that of the economists I used to mix with earlier in my career.

When Stephen arrived at George Browning House, it was soon plain to see that he too, in addition to being a delightful person to have around, was open-minded, undogmatic and interested in the big questions of the world and life.

While I was writing my book *Defiant Earth* in 2016, Stephen, along with colleagues Scott Cowdell and Wayne Hudson, took an interest in what I was arguing about the implications of the new geological epoch known as the Anthropocene. They each read a draft and made thoughtful and, in fact, invaluable comments.

Soon after *Defiant Earth* was published, Stephen saw a book that raised, if not explicitly, some of the biggest problems in theology that need to be confronted today. He proposed a colloquium at which invited theologians would reflect on and perhaps develop the arguments made in the book. He invited a U.S. scholar of religion, Lisa Sideris, to present the opening paper.

To have one's colleagues take one's work seriously enough to organise a colloquium around it is rare and extremely gratifying. The colloquium was for me fascinating and, even more gratifying, it led to two more, each developing the themes further and interrogating, from various theological perspectives, the arguments of the book more deeply. It was all done in a spirit of genuine inquiry aimed at helping us all more fully understand the meaning of the climate crisis and the literally epoch-making arrival of the Anthropocene.

Peter Walker and Jonathan Cole had become closely involved in the colloquia and, under their guidance, with Stephen's encouragement, a volume emerged containing the best of the papers from the three colloquia. It will be published by Lexington Books, an imprint of Rowman & Littlefield, later this year.

Never before has my work received such sustained scholarly reflection. It's been a process both intensely rewarding to my own thinking but also humbling.

And it has all been driven by Stephen.

In my mind, this story illustrates perfectly Stephen's exceptional generosity as well as his willingness to push thinking in new directions, qualities that are rare in today's academic world. It's not that academics have become meaner and more self-focused; it's just that, if they are to keep their heads above water, they must now swim faster towards their own destinations, and do so in an institutional ocean where sharks are ever-present.

“Never before has my work received such sustained scholarly reflection. It's been a process both intensely rewarding to my own thinking but also humbling.”

Stephen, building on the work of his predecessor James Haire, has turned George Browning House into an island of intellectual discovery, one on which we are encouraged to take our thinking wherever it leads.

After years of writing about climate change and the Anthropocene, and becoming more despairing at the inability of nations, including our own, to take the warnings seriously, in 2017 I took a sharp turn and started writing a book about China and the increasingly worrying influence of the Chinese Communist Party.

I had no idea that, when the book was published in February 2018, I would become the target of some pretty sinister forces – “bad actors” as the security forces call them. As a result, a shadow fell over my workplace that affected everyone in George Browning House. With advice from the police, a series of security measures was put in place. GBH went into lockdown two years before anyone had heard of the novel coronavirus. Stephen, along with the ever-reliable Hazel Francis, took my safety very seriously, and I am enormously grateful to them.

I can't imagine a more supportive, more engaging and more agreeable colleague than Stephen (who somewhere along the line also became my supervisor).

As for all of us at George Browning House, his absence will be keenly felt.

Spiritual reminiscence for older people: finding meaning in later life, especially for those experiencing dementia

by Professor Elizabeth MacKinlay

Director, Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies, ACC&C

From 2022 CAPS will revert to its original name from two decades ago, ie: Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies. CAPS joins the newly established Centre for Religion, Ethics and Society (CRES) under the umbrella of the ACC&C, at Charles Sturt University. The first workshop hosted by CAPS for 2022 will be on the topic of spiritual reminiscence as it has been requested by many people. When we last evaluated the program, there were requests for a trainers' component to be included. In this workshop we are doing that, for the first time.

What is spiritual reminiscence?

In *Facilitating Spiritual Reminiscence for People with Dementia: A Learning Guide*, the authors, Corinne Trevitt and Elizabeth MacKinlay, state "Spiritual reminiscence is a way of telling a life story with an emphasis on what gives meaning to life, what has given joy or brought sadness" (MacKinlay & Trevitt 2015, p.46). For nearly two decades they have built up a process of bringing life story and meaning to older people that is affirming and of value to them, individually and in small groups.

While spiritual reminiscence is valuable for people with or without dementia, it is also particularly valuable for those with dementia. The process has been used with people who are growing older and simply wish to explore the meaning of their lives. Being in touch with meaning in our lives is vital for our well-being, especially as we grow older.

This vital work in spiritual reminiscence has been adopted in a number of other countries and cultures. For example this work has been translated into Japanese, Mandarin and now French. This simple but profound process of connecting deeply with our life journey translates across cultures and languages.

If this is something you would like to explore, we encourage you to join the [Spiritual reminiscence workshop, 18 and 19 May 2022, in Canberra.](#)

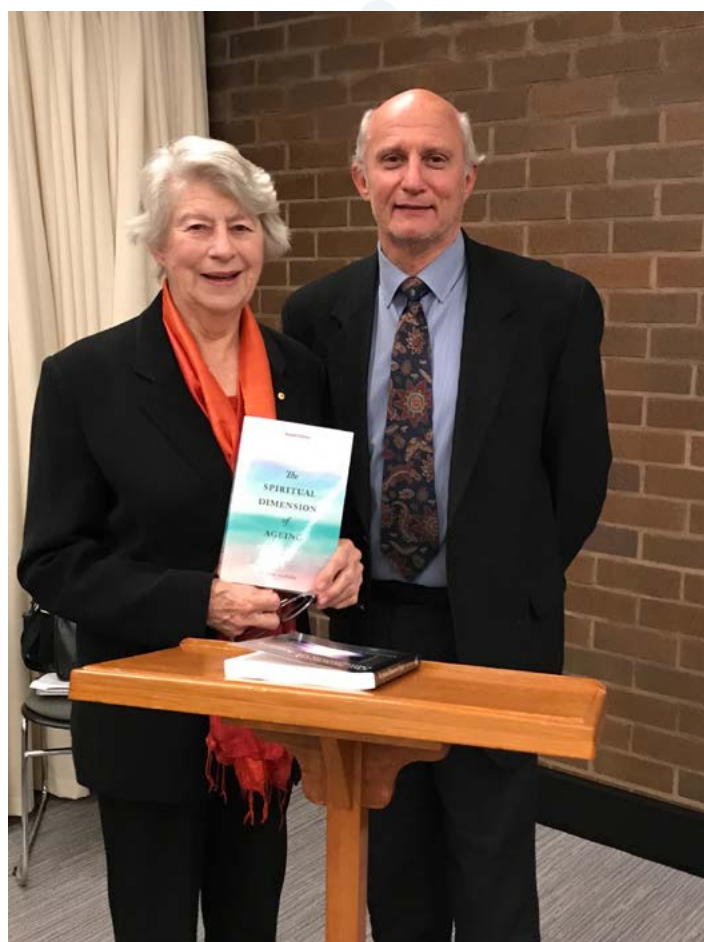
The workshop will be presented by the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies and will be held face-to-face over one or two days to provide interactive experiences in spiritual reminiscence. People may enrol for one or both days. Day 1 is essential for those who have no previous experience in working with spiritual reminiscence.

The workshop will focus on:

Day 1: the basic skills of what it feels like to take part in spiritual reminiscence and how to facilitate small group work in this area.

In the workshop we will include an emphasis on facilitating spiritual reminiscence for people with dementia.

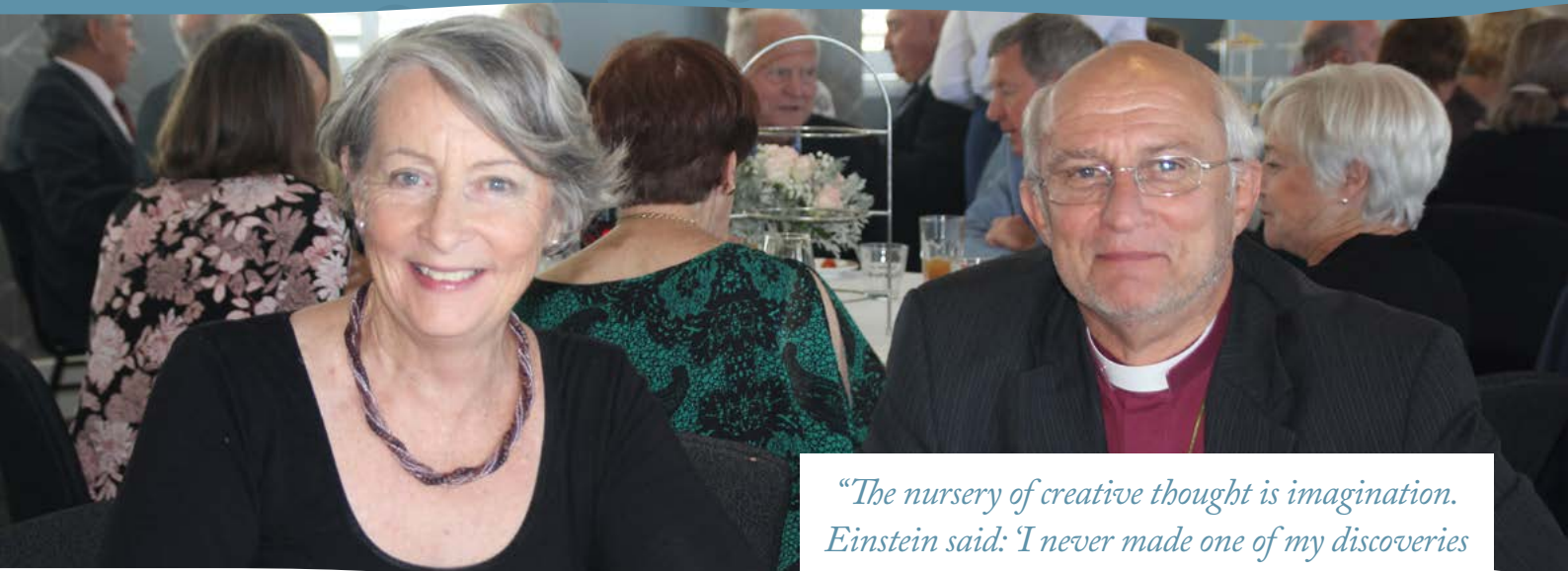
Day 2: the workshop is optional and will focus on setting up small groups of spiritual reminiscence in your local areas, whether these be a parish setting, a community outreach setting, or aged and residential care settings.



Professors Elizabeth MacKinlay and Stephen Pickard, photo supplied

Reference

MacKinlay, E. and Trevitt, C. (2015) *Facilitating Spiritual Reminiscence for People with Dementia: A Learning Guide*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.



Jennifer and Stephen Pickard, photo supplied

Stephen Kim Pickard

by George Victor Browning

Convenor of ACC&C Ambassadors

Can anything good come out of Cessnock?! You might well ask! And yet, come and see, or better, come and listen.

Listening in to the conversation of most Australians the topic is likely to be sport, the weather, one's most recent purchase – or hoped for purchase, money, or the “general state of things”. It is most certainly not going to be theology!

What a shame! Theology, approached with an open spirit and with the right catalyst, is the most deliciously seductive indulgence. Why? Because it is about life, about making sense of life, about how life is to be lived and about lifting a veil on all that is hidden beneath a mound of material aspiration and disappointment. Surely there must be more to life than mortality?

Stephen Kim Pickard has developed an extraordinary skill as a thinker and orator. He has a gift for making theology sound the most basic of all disciplines in its capacity to make sense of everything else. I would like to think the foundations were laid in his first and only curacy in the Parish of Singleton under the tutelage of one George Victor Browning. Sadly, it is not so, for as Stephen often reminds me, he received little if any training! I would like to think however, Stephen's time in Singleton cemented in him a great love of life and its celebration through immersion in the world which God greatly loves.

Stephen's doctoral years in Durham were formative. Like all of us, he has become, who he has become, through intersection with other lives. His Durham mentors were Anglican theologians Stephen Sykes and Dan Hardy. He says of them, they gave him confidence to trust in the validity of discovery through thought. The nursery of creative thought is imagination. Einstein said: “I never made one of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking... The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination... and... the most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious”. In this matter Stephen and Einstein are singing from the same song sheet.

“The nursery of creative thought is imagination. Einstein said: ‘I never made one of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking... The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination... and... the most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious’.”

Speaking of intersecting lives, he was blessed to fall in love with the irrepressible Jennifer Smith. Their partnership of love has formed them both and been a blessing not just to the children but to their multitude of friends and acquaintances.

On their return to Australia, St Mark's Theological Centre was looking for a new Principal. It took considerable effort to convince Stephen that he was exactly the right person to fulfil this role. It appears he was of a mind that having to administer an institution might stymie his primary vocation as a thinker. History shows he was wrong, and I was right. St Mark's, like most institutions, needed a leader who was also a thinker. He led the Centre to a vibrant and creative new sphere of life. I did not tell him beforehand that I was not confident the Centre could survive!

After a relatively short interlude in Adelaide, Stephen was at a crossroads. He could either take a senior leadership role within the institutional Church or take a position that placed him and his considerable skills at the intersection of faith and wider Australian life. Fortunately for us he chose the latter and has led the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture on its continuing path of engagement. Engagement with the nation and its debates and challenges. Engagement ecumenically across the boundaries that unnecessarily diminish and divide. Engagement with people of other faiths and none. Engagement with the culture and spirituality of First Nations peoples. Engagement with the Arts and by no means least, engagement with research and academia through a mutually fulfilling partnership with Charles Sturt University.

So, how can thinking theologically work in a secular and religiously sceptical society? Part of the answer is look for an irrepressible human spirit with a beguiling sense of humour and an unfailing openness and generosity. Like all human beings, Stephen Kim Pickard can have annoying quirks. But loveliness excuses everything!



Iftar Dinner 2019 guest speakers, New Zealand High Commissioner, Her Excellency Dame Annette King and Hannan Assafiri OAM, Activist and Moroccan Soup Bar owner in Melbourne, photo supplied by Bluestar Intercultural Centre

Bishop Stephen Pickard – Tribute

by Emeritus Professor Ingrid Moses AO

Bishop (+)Stephen as Assistant Bishop in our Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn was an *ex-officio* member of Bishop-in-Council (BiC). I had been appointed to BiC as Presiding Member (Chair) of the Anglicare Board in 2011 and during difficult, controversial and potentially divisive discussions on appointments and policies we had been largely in agreement. On BiC and Synod I came to appreciate, value and respect his scholarly and thoughtful, insightful and compassionate observations, interventions and addresses.

Anglicare experienced an existential crisis when in 2012 one of our nursing homes did not meet quality standards and the Department of Health and Ageing imposed sanctions. Later in the year the then CEO took up a position in Adelaide, leaving Anglicare demoralised and uncertain of the future of its aged care facilities. The Board with the Bishop's blessing decided to ask +Stephen to take up the position of half-time Interim CEO in these difficult times with the explicit brief of working with the Anglicare Executive and managing the public and community response to the initial announcement that Anglicare would divest its five residential aged care facilities. A detailed consultancy report had explored options and BiC was involved and supportive for the duration of the process.

+Stephen brought to this position experience with Anglicare in South Australia, management and leadership of an organisation (St Mark's National Theological Centre, School of Theology, Charles Sturt University) and a wealth of thoughtful and practical engagement in leadership. He steered Anglicare in a collaborative way, empowering senior staff to contribute fully. His calmness, humour, pastoral care, integrity and commitment were highly appreciated by the Board and senior staff.

"This is another characteristic of Stephen: being in the public sphere for truth telling."

After serving eleven months, October 2012 to September 2013, +Stephen took up the position of Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture at Charles Sturt University.

As Executive Director of the ACC&C Stephen had many more local, national and international opportunities to promote and exemplify the four pillars on which the ACC&C vision rested:

The Four Pillars are: Wisdom through Civil Society; Peace through new religious engagements; Resilience in institutional life and ethical leadership; Creativity through the Arts, Sciences and Culture. Indeed, it was a perfect fit for +Stephen.

Christians for an Ethical Society of which I have been a committee member for many years and now its President has been welcomed and supported in numerous ways by +Stephen and the ACC&C, our missions somewhat overlapping.

+Stephen has been a committee member and then co-chair of CES and has displayed in these roles the same qualities of wisdom, engagement and good judgement.

The wider public might also know him as one of the very visible supporters of the annual Palm Sunday rally and march through the city. This is another characteristic of Stephen: being in the public sphere for truth telling.

I am personally most grateful for his leadership in many different roles and know the organisations to which he contributed or which he led feel as appreciative.

We have been blessed by his leadership and example. God bless, Stephen.

The Triune Pickard

by Rev Dr Peter Walker

Principal, United Theological College

My three-fold encounter with Stephen as Teacher, Supervisor, and Boss leads me to offer this brief reflection on the Triune Pickard.

I fell in love with theology during my undergraduate studies at United Theological College, where Stephen lectured in Theology. It was the 1990s and there was little hair on his head even then. *'Nothing grows on a busy road'*, he told me. Stephen was always elevating his students with humour (directed at himself) and his ever-apparent love of his calling as a Teacher. Theology was praise for Stephen, and his joy was infectious. I caught the disease.

I went on to doctoral study and Stephen was my supervisor. He knows lots about theology, which helped, yet it was here that I saw how much Stephen knows about *people*. I could see he knew more about me than I thought, for example. He knew how to guide me up my doctoral mountain, just as he had climbed his own, and guided many others on theirs. I suspect it will never be possible to calculate Stephen's impact on the generation following him: the theologians, teachers, and church leaders he has mentored. He was a masterly Supervisor, knowing when to push and when to pull back.

As if the good fortune of two encounters were not enough, I also found myself deputy director to Stephen at the Centre for Public and Contextual Theology. They were the happiest years of my working life, overwhelmingly due to the sheer fun of working with Stephen. He loves exploring ideas. And loves gathering people around a table to talk theology and science, or economics, or climate. The list goes on. I have never learned so much (or laughed so much) as in those four years when Stephen was my Boss.

And so to the Triune Pickard, Teacher, Supervisor, and Boss, I offer grateful thanks, and even more gratitude to the One who placed Stephen in the middle of my road around 1996.



The Preacher, photo supplied

“...it will never be possible to calculate Stephen's impact on the generation following him: the theologians, teachers, and church leaders he has mentored.”



The ACC&C team, Katherine Waite, Hazel Francis, Lauren Bartley and Sarah Stitt, photo supplied

And the journey continues

by Sarah Stitt

Corporate Services and Events, ACC&C

Well, what a wonderful organisation in which to work. So many Canberrans do not know about the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. For many years I did not either. I would drive past the mound on Kings Avenue and wonder, what is that? Then in 2014, a couple of women from the group of women with whom I sing met Miriam and Miriam introduced us to the Centre. Her father was the Executive Director. In November 2014 A Chorus of Women was given the wonderful opportunity to host our work in progress performance of "A Passion for Peace" in the Chapel. A little time passed and at the end of 2015 the Chorus women were offered a residency at the Centre, which they have held ever since, with much gratitude.

In 2017 an opportunity to work at the Centre came my way. I applied, was interviewed and offered the position in a job-share arrangement. Life at the Centre is never dull. If not assisting people, helping with events, then, it is holding the place together in every way. With 7 hectares and several buildings to manage there is always something, everyday bringing new challenges and surprises. It is some of what makes the job really enjoyable.

Being onsite has given me the opportunity to get to know the many different personalities of the people who both work in and visit the Centre. We are diverse. Many quiet, some a little more outgoing.

The people who skilfully interact between us all are Stephen and Hazel. I call them, not to their faces of course, my big boss and my little boss. They are a great team, and together we are all a team. As the saying goes, we are only as strong as the weakest link, and as a team, we have been strong.

Whilst we have endured many physical storms - hail, torrential rain, erosion of the site, and now the pandemic, we have been guided calmly and skilfully through. I do believe however, that the pandemic has brought Stephen to the realisation that he is ready for retirement. And so, for those who have worked closely with him, we were a little blindsided by his announcement. Stephen, who has been the stalwart of our organisation. Stephen, who is always approachable and very good at making you feel at ease (I can be a bit nervous). Stephen, who takes the time to touch base to check in and see how you are with your work, with your health, showing concern and helping out when needed. Stephen, who invited me to apply for my job. Stephen is going! But, Stephen has prepared us for the way ahead. He is not leaving us stranded. He has put in place the scaffolding we will need to step safely across the void of the unknown into our future. We will be ok, and he will be missed, but we are ready, and so is he.

Best wishes for the journey ahead.

PILLAR 1

PEACE THROUGH NEW RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENTS



Sudanese roundtable, photo by Katherine Waite

A story in gratitude for dear Bishop Stephen Pickard

by Bishop Philip Huggins

Director, Centre for Ecumenical Studies, ACC&C

These past years of mine at the ACC&C have further deepened my respect and affection for Stephen. His leadership of this splendid Centre has been poised and full of good purpose. His scholarship and pastoral sensitivity mean that he actually embodies “wisdom for the common good”.

I could elaborate this in relation to many activities, even of these recent years. Everything from “Receptive Ecumenism”; to discussions for UNCOPs on climate change; to Roundtables with recent refugee leaders from Africa; to Roundtables with the Iranian Ambassador and then much else. Stephen's leadership, as I observe gratefully, actually has and does embody what the ACC&C pursues - wisdom for the common good!

But rather than elaborate this further, I would like to share a story which points to a wider horizon of appreciation. There was a Conference in Melbourne a few years back and Stephen was the key speaker. As I recall, a number of Church Agencies put this together to give some encouragement in the eternal Gospel. A main hope was that folk might find a theology of some authenticity. Anyway, as then one of Melbourne's regional bishops, I went along to support the organising team.

For the opening session I found a spot in a large lecture theatre and noticed that nearby was a young person with whom I had conversed at some depth. She was wrestling with the feeling that she might have a vocation to holy orders. She was wrestling because much of her cultural and philosophical orientation did not find this prospect particularly attractive. As Stephen walked to the lectern my instinct was that his words and spirit would be pivotal to this person listening.

Stephen spoke with warmth and passion. He told a story against himself which brought forth waves of laughter. It was also a story of deep insight. Stephen gave this important conference just the

start it needed. People poured out of the lecture theatre, buzzing. The one for whom I had that anxious concern saw me and said as she left, “that was great, wasn't it!” She was on her way, as she later confirmed. Much else followed and if it takes a village to raise a child, there's probably a village of people who helped her vocation flourish.

Stephen's contribution that day was pivotal. I know that, but Stephen wouldn't even know about whom I write.

And that is the point of my story. This occasion is one for wonderful tributes from those who have known and loved dear Stephen and Jen over many years, Liz and myself included. But, as well, there are those very many whom he has encouraged and guided, inspired and comforted. That is the wider horizon of our appreciation. Perhaps they can be represented, at least in part, by my story of this young person and of Stephen's wonderful influence at a pivotal moment of decision in her life.



Sudanese women roundtable ACC&C, photo supplied



National Day of Unity Launch 13 Oct 2015, photo supplied

Humility and hospitality - an inter-faith perspective

Harry Oppermann

Hon Life Member/former Vice-Chair

To have been a guest of Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, has been an honour; it has been rewarding; it has been inclusive, warming, a learning experience and inspirational.

In farewelling Stephen on his retirement, we also fondly remember Rev'd Professor James Haire, his predecessor, and welcome his successor Dr Anthony Maher.

Ever polite, attentive and receptive to ideas and new faith members of the community, Stephen always welcomed and included the Canberra Interfaith Forum (CIF), responding positively to every request over many years, and graciously assisting in incorporating the CIF vice chair's substantial interfaith library into the ACC&C collection. Stephen has not only been truly successful in bringing together the very many diverse individuals and organisations which constitute community, he has carefully navigated the sensitivities of public and political life in Canberra and developed the ACC&C into a meeting place of Faith and Culture (a meeting place within the indigenous meaning of the word Canberra).

To quote from the late Rabbi Professor Sachs, whom Stephen heard speak at the Lambeth conference:

"We find G-d in community. We develop virtues, strength of character and a commitment to the common good in community. Morality lives in communities as do the traditions which sustain them."

Dean Sahu Khan

Chair Canberra Interfaith Forum

It is in this role, that Stephen has succeeded in integrating the Divine message of "Love of Neighbour and Love of Stranger" into this Centre and the Canberra community. How has Stephen achieved that? The late Rabbi Professor Sachs, extrapolating from [Numbers 4:21–7:89](#), explained the Teaching well:

"Honour everyone equally. Pay special attention to potentially disaffected groups. Make each feel valued. Give everyone a moment in the limelight if only in a ceremonial way. Set a personal example of humility. Make it clear to all that leadership is service, not a form of status. Find ways in which those with a particular passion can express it, and ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute."

What a marvellous contribution the Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard has made!

Our sincere wishes to Stephen and Jennifer, for a healthy, joyful and productive retirement!



Theology from down-under

by The Very Rev'd Professor Martyn Percy

Dean of Christ Church, University of Oxford, UK

Does culture “shape” theology? The short answer to this complex question is “yes”. Indeed, one could go further, and say that no theology or religious belief lacks a cultural or social reference point and shape. The extent to which a theology or belief is culturally-related or culturally-relative (note, these are not quite the same things) is a fair question. But it should be obvious (and frankly logical) that there is no “pure” religion, belief, revelation or doctrine. Everything we say, think, do, believe and practise about God is mediated through social or cultural agents. These can be artefact, language, music, art, social patterns of polity, celebration or lament, humour or seriousness – all are mediated through material or social agents that are encountered, experienced and processed.

Stephen Pickard stands as a colossus in contemporary theological thinking. His work is sensitive to pastoral, organisational and contextual factors. He is an astute interpreter of culture. He reads the “signs of the times” with a literacy and depth that few can match. He does so critically, but always kindly and with generosity. He models an ecclesial, spiritual and theological outlook that is unmistakably Anglican, yet also the fruit of his benevolent “generous orthodoxy”. He is attentive to other faiths, and those with none. He understands those who believe nothing – and even those who are inclined to believe anything. (In my view, one would be wiser to be wary of the latter).

Stephen’s theological orbit draws on Richard Hooker, Walter Hilton, F. D. Maurice and more recently Daniel Hardy. These post-Reformation “Anglican Divines” help us understand the present Anglican Divine that is Stephen – a man immersed in generous theological outlooks: hesitant, peaceable, convicted, wise, measured, fearless, Anglican, spiritual...and contemplative.

Stephen knows that culture and theology are indivisible, just as Jesus, the Body Language of God (“the Verb of God Made Flesh”) is fully divine and fully human. Wherever you live – Canberra or Cardiff, Australia or the Arctic – God is knowable, visible and experienced in all specific times, spaces and places. God chooses to be available in precisely such ways. God is not confined to one tribe, nation or group. God is God, not a cultic idol.

Stephen’s legacy, as one of the great Australian theologians to have emerged, is to announce that God does not communicate with us without using some kind of social, cultural or natural agent. A burning bush requires fire, and some shrubbery. Not

every burning bush speaks about God. Actually, very few do. So religion and belief, and our theology, are, like maps: fundamentally, *interpretative* exercises. Theologians and believers may well want to argue about the division between what is description and ascription in relation to God. They may want to debate what is revelation from God, and what is mere (human) projection. The Bible will offer all of these, incidentally – as the Psalms amply testify.

All revelation is socially or materially mediated. So the theologian stands within a complex nexus of issues, contexts, concerns, narrative streams and socio-cultural situations. As Rowan Williams remarks, “the theologian is always beginning in the middle of things...there is a practice of common life and language already there”. Theologians do not and cannot start with a blank page, or one pure moment of revelation. All theologians have to work with, and work on, is mediated.

Indeed, this one central tenet of Christianity is: God amongst us, taking our flesh. Jesus is Jewish, Galilean and Palestinian. He was born and raised at a specific time and ministers in specific locations. Jesus is a dweller in occupied territories. He is an educated Rabbi.

So Jesus is the “field and terms of interpretive enterprise” engaging in prescient deconstructions of the religious and social practices he was immersed within. But that was then and this is now. Moreover, Jesus was (and is) a person too, who in his incarnation ate, spoke (more than one language), engaged with others, took action, walked, wandered and wondered – so he can *also* be subject to *some* interpretative deconstruction. This is no bad thing. After all, God likes to be understood. That’s why the burning bush has to be *interpreted* to Moses.

That is also why Stephen Pickard has been such an exceptional leader in his field. He has helped us to understand God and Christianity in Australia. And he has helped Australians to understand that, no matter how far they might be from Jerusalem, Rome or Canterbury, God has always drawn nearer to the shores of Australasia.

“Stephen Pickard stands as a colossus in contemporary theological thinking. His work is sensitive to pastoral, organisational and contextual factors. He is an astute interpreter of culture. He reads the ‘signs of the times’ with a literacy and depth that few can match.”

PILLAR 2

WISDOM FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Stephen Pickard - an appreciation

by John Warhurst

Chair, Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn

Concerned Catholics Canberra Goulburn owes a considerable debt to Professor Stephen Pickard for his role in supporting our emergence in 2017. Since then, he has been a valued friend and supporter and he never lets us down. His role will be fondly remembered, and we are grateful for the opportunity to publicly thank him.

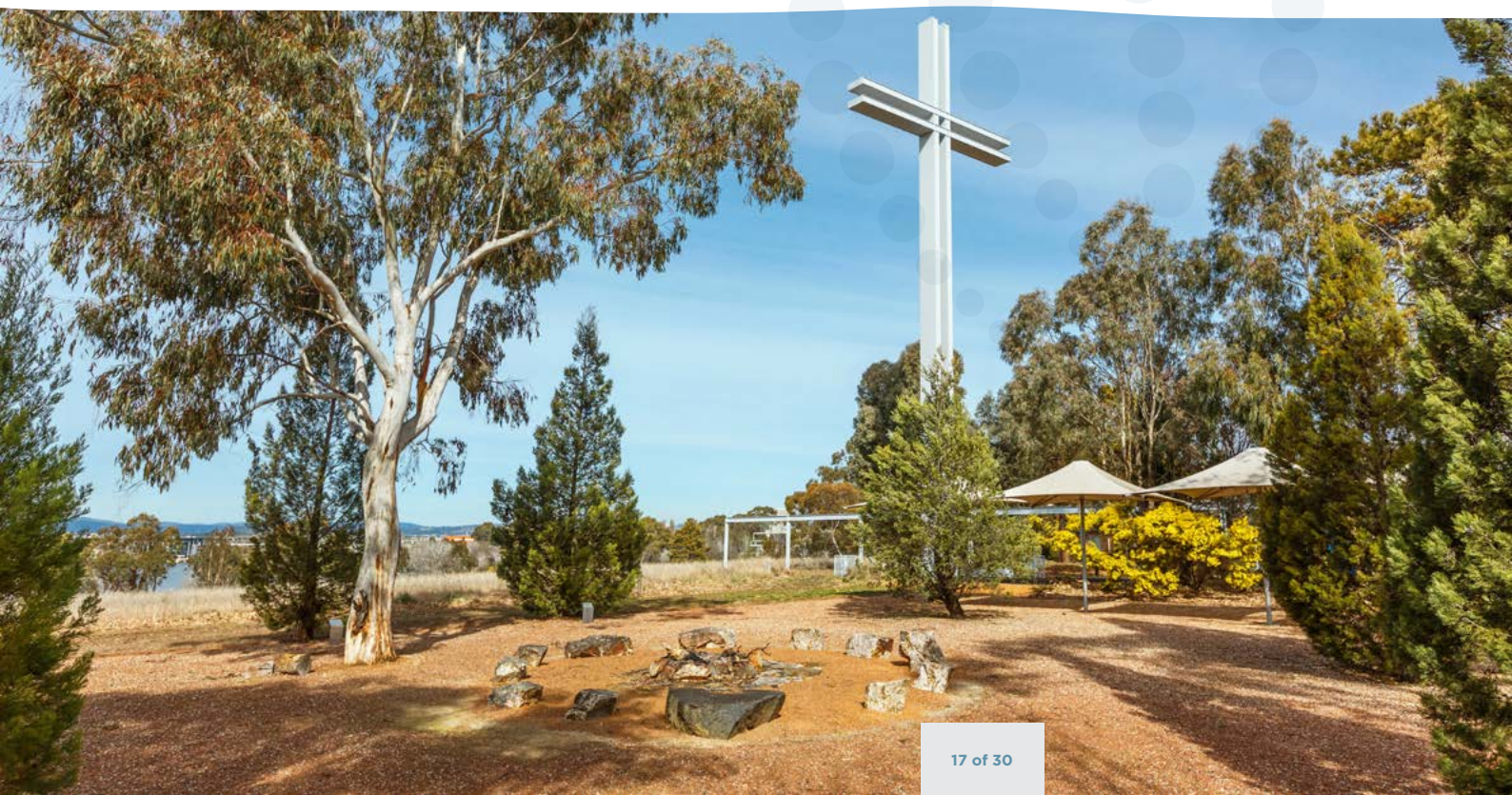
Stephen's many admirable qualities include self-effacing and brave Christian leadership. He leads without drawing attention to himself and throws himself into the practicalities of running events. His own deep learning and natural spirituality makes for an environment in which matters of faith can easily be discussed. He creates safe spaces for wide-ranging dialogue and education. His progressive stance encourages those who want to challenge powerful institutions and established ways of doing things. He is a genuinely nice bloke and always a friendly face.

These qualities meant that when we were looking for a venue in Canberra to launch our new group the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture was a natural fit for us. The Centre, under Stephen's leadership, offered a well-known site, not identified with a particular church. This meant that Catholics, former Catholics, and anyone else from other faiths or none, would know that they were on 'neutral' territory.

When we approached Stephen and explained what we were trying to do he was instantly enthusiastic and encouraging. Nothing was too much trouble; no matter how big or small. His welcoming presence added weight to the gathering. He was attentive to our needs. He stretched the limits of the ACC&C Chapel to accommodate more than two hundred attendees. He attended to our practical needs for seating, microphones, music, visuals, and a place for refreshments. He made it financially possible for us by offering a generous rate for use of the premises. We were, and remain, extremely grateful.

For several years we held successful public meetings regularly in the Chapel, attracting big crowds, before Covid intervened and we had to move to Zoom. The Centre also hosted, with Stephen's support, a meeting in 2018 of our national network, the Australasian Catholic Coalition for Church Reform.

Thanks again Stephen. We are looking forward to working with you in years to come.



Truth telling and Makarrata

by Lynlea Rodger

Christians for an Ethical Society

Many years ago, on key corners in Australian cities, young boys would stand as town criers with their unique lingo *Extra! Extra! Read all about it!* Recently on a street corner site abutting the Parliamentary Triangle in Canberra a group gathered at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture to hear from two of Australia's significant town and nation's criers. The subject was [Makarrata, truth telling and justice for First Peoples: is there a way ahead?](#)

Makarrata is an indigenous word meaning a coming together after a struggle. It encompasses the processes of conflict resolution, negotiation, peace making and justice. It is part of a contemporary songline of healing, acknowledging something has been done wrong and it seeks to make things right. It is the new lingo of the biggest story of our day in this land, shared between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

The speakers were Professor Asmi Wood, a proud West Torres Strait Islander man. He is a multi-awarded teacher and Professor of Law at the ANU and lecturer at the ANU College of Law with expertise in legal ethics, constitutional law and the treatment of indigenous peoples within legal frameworks other than their own normative systems.

Professor Wood began with the reminder about a legal fiction and a lie. The fiction and the lie are that the land at the time of white settlement in Australia was unoccupied, empty, and that its inhabitants were few and sub-human. This legal fiction was articulated and upheld by the British Privy Council in 1870, part of a long process of perpetuation of the legal and on the ground fiction that Aboriginal people never owned land and therefore could not bestow it on another. From indigenous perspectives sovereignty was inalienable to its indigenous owners and written in the law and in the land and within the hearts and flesh of its people. It has never been, and could never be ceded. Makarrata, he said, is a framework for creating justice and is comparable in law, scope and impact to the Magna Carta.

His remarks were in respectful interaction and response with Felicity McCallum from Charles Sturt University. She is an Awabakal woman (Newcastle NSW region) who is currently researching Indigenous-British engagement and reconciliation in Australia for her PhD.

She described Makarrata and the *Uluru Statement from the Heart* of May 2017 as "an international transcendent arc" which opens our eyes to a new transmission of crucial knowledge. Makarrata is offered to us all, and to our ancestors, for the purpose of creating a peaceable Australia. It is an Aboriginal understanding and framework of law and land. It models, she said, "a new form of diplomacy and is a way of addressing present wrongs. It opens a way to breathe for Aboriginal people".

In the interaction with the audience-participants that followed, it was noted by the speakers that where there is high rivalry and tension in a combustible, unbalanced situation the reaction can be madness, (think, accusations of the *Statement from the Heart* being an attempt to create a third Parliamentary chamber).

For aboriginal people sovereignty was never ceded. This raises for all of us wrongs that are uncomfortable and questions about how they may be made right.

The solutions are legal and within standards of international law as well as Australian law. Deep questions are raised by treaty, compensation for losses, free and unforced ways forward. This, Professor Wood predicted, would not be a quick process. It is, he said, a matter of time and of preparing Aboriginal people, community by community. He likened the protracted (and conflicted) process to that of the six states federating, and the need for fairness, time, skill and imagination. Being upset is part of the story. Part of the way forward is to feel the pain and not run away from it. To tell the story.

And so, for those privileged to be present the town crier's story belongs to all of us, with Makarrata the new lingo, calling us all—in relationship—to create a new way.



Felicity McCallum, Professor Asmi Wood and Emeritus Professor Ingrid Moses, photo by Clive Rodger



Palm Sunday Refugee Rally, 2019, photo supplied

What would Jesus do?

by Emeritus Professor John Minns

Refugee Action Campaign

I met Stephen Pickard through the campaign for a more just, humane and, as I'm sure he would argue, Christian policy toward refugees and those seeking asylum in Australia.

At the time, the organisation I was, and am, a part of – the Refugee Action Campaign (RAC) – was trying to set up a group of people of faith who could draw in others of a similar mind and try to change these policies. Someone suggested I talk to Stephen. We had a first meeting in his office. He immediately offered support.

We called a public meeting with a panel of speakers – including Stephen – and he offered the chapel at the ACC&C as the venue. The meeting was somewhat provocatively titled, *Refugees: What Would Jesus Do?* It exceeded all of our expectations – around 300 people turned up that night – some had to sit outside the large windows. This was the real beginning of the Faith-based Working Group of RAC, which, since then, has become a critical part of the campaign in Canberra. It is hard to see that we would have been able to get it off the ground in this way without Stephen's reputation, and physical support.

Since then, Stephen has spoken with great feeling on many of our platforms – at rallies and public meetings. He has led marches through the streets of Canberra on more than one occasion. At least a few times now, he has appeared in videos we have used to promote our rallies. The ACC&C under his leadership has become a regular venue for many of our organising meetings.

I think that taking the position which Stephen has is not easy for people in the church. The churches are as divided as any other section of the community on the question of refugees. There has certainly been internal resistance to churches playing a public role in criticising government policy.

Along the way, Sophie and I have become good friends with Stephen and Jennifer – a friendship which I am certain will continue long after his retirement.

Thank you, Stephen, for your integrity, support and friendship.

Stephen, the climate justice advocate

by Thea Ormerod

President, ARRCC

It's a genuine pleasure to write down a few memories of the Right Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard. Stephen (as I know him) has been a keen supporter of the multi-faith Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) since he took the reins at the ACC&C in 2013.

ARRCC has had the benefit of his passion for climate justice and his sharp intellect combined with his humble, warm, generous personal disposition. He has always been very approachable, responsive and dedicated to our cause.

At various times, the ACC&C has been a home for religious leaders and lay people from a wide range of faiths to meet and prepare for whatever work we were planning. The Centre hosted conversations among diverse faith leaders before a press conference regarding the release of *Laudato Si'* in 2015, and before meetings with forty MPs and Senators in Parliament House in 2014. Stephen himself also participated in these events.

We paused the meetings in Parliament House for a multi-faith prayer vigil outside the office of the Minerals Council of Australia HQ. Stephen was one of three people to peacefully enter the building and personally deliver a letter to the then CEO of the MCA, Brendan Pearson. The letter politely but firmly challenged the organization to stop its support for the mining of fossil fuels and instead throw its considerable weight behind renewables.

In the media release, Stephen said, "It is no longer morally acceptable to advance the interests of enterprises which are destroying the planet's ecosystems. No short-term profits can justify it, no advantage on the stock markets, no matter how great, can make it alright".

We had found during the meetings with elected representatives that many continue to hold the "dominion" understanding of humanity's role in the create order, rather than the "stewardship" view. Stephen wrote an eloquent 2-page theological piece intended to challenge the "dominion" understanding. It was sent to all Christian MPs and Senators.

Stephen has signed every open letter ARRCC has published since 2013, and could always be relied upon to take the role of a media spokesperson. He went out his way to join us for a multi-faith press conference in Brisbane when the G20 meetings were hosted by Australia in late 2014.

Finally, Stephen offered the ACC&C as a venue for ARRCC's inaugural national conference, indeed he offered some limited sponsorship for it (provided that some of the papers were delivered by academics). The Centre was the perfect home for the conference, to which 120 supporters came from various parts of Australia and one even attended from Aotearoa/New Zealand. The Chapel was a comfortable size for our plenary meetings and, with a modicum of access to rooms in St Mark's, there were enough smaller rooms for workshops. The grounds were popular with our spiritually-oriented supporters, particularly the labyrinth.

ARRCC has been blessed to be able to count on the support of the Right Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard in his role at the ACC&C. We hope we may continue our association with him as a friend.



Bishop Pickard at G20 press conference, photo supplied



ARRCC Multi-faith vigil outside Minerals Council of Australia, 2014, photo supplied

PILLAR 3

CREATIVITY THROUGH THE ARTS, SCIENCES AND CULTURE

The Singing Hill

for Stephen Pickard from A Chorus of Women

A Chorus of Women's residency at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture is now in its seventh year. The 2015 Memorandum of Understanding we signed with Executive Director Stephen Pickard welcomes our "skilled use of the arts to engage the community in public policy dilemmas by portraying the ethical dimensions of issues and foretelling the human consequences of decisions".

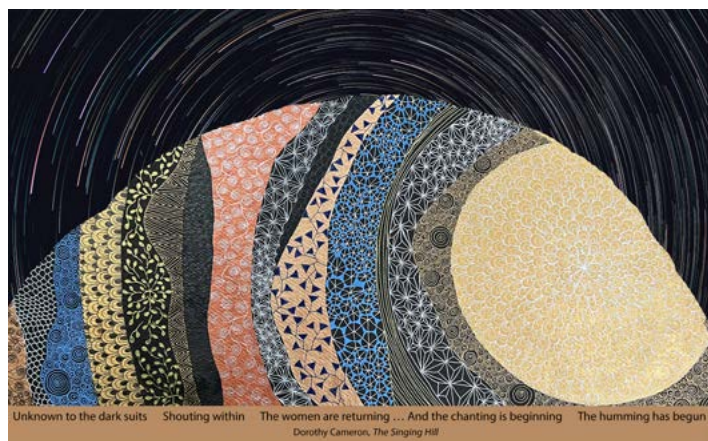
In A Chorus of Women we can't imagine a better way than the beauty and truth of a wise story-song about people and Earth to say thanks and praise and fare thee well to our friend Stephen Pickard.

The Singing Hill is a story of wisdom for the common good -- the longing and commitment we Chorus women share with Stephen and the people of "the Centre", as we call our home in the ACC&C. Set down the road on Kurrajong or Capital Hill where the Australian Parliament stands in Ngunnawal-Ngambri country, The Singing Hill is a thoroughly ecumenical, prophetic, hopeful kind of story.

Aunty Matilda House of the Ngunnawal-Ngambri people has confirmed that Kurrajong Hill is a women's place.

Some 25 years ago, the story of The Singing Hill was given to Glenda Cloughley by her friend and mentor Dorothy Cameron of Canberra (1917-2002), an elder whose work as an artist, prehistorian and occasional poet was steeped in the most ancient lineages of European wisdom.

The November 2021 online national conference program of the Women's Climate Congress was the occasion that inspired Glenda to pass on the story of Dorothy's poem "The Singing Hill" and write new music for the Chorus. Broadcast immediately after Aunty Matilda's Welcome to Country, the 11-minute video drew an immediate flood of appreciation and has since become popular on YouTube.



The Singing Hill, Sally Blake, digital image

Glenda is the Storyteller and A Chorus of Women is directed by Johanna McBride. Australia's first Greens Senator Jo Vallentine reads "The Singing Hill" poem, as she did in her valedictory address to The Senate in December 1991. Canberra visual artist [Sally Blake](#) made the beautiful original images and produced the video. Danny Pratt made the recordings, mixed the natural soundscape and worked his audio engineering magic. We are so glad and grateful that the choral singing could be recorded Covid-safe in the wonderful acoustic of the ACC&C Chapel.

In the quiet Covid years of 2020 and 2021, the Chorus women have drawn joyous comfort revisiting the many occasions when we have filled the Chapel with our stories and songs. You can click the following live links to go to our [Highlights Page](#) or visit specific reports for performances of [The People's Passion](#) by Glenda, directed by Johanna in 2018 and 2019, and our 2016 [Mission Climate!](#) fundraiser for the Climate Council.

Our fare thee well to Stephen include thanks from the [Women's Climate Congress](#) which long-time Chorus woman, science communicator and public-conversation facilitator Dr Janet Salisbury and friends have grown into a national organisation amid the pandemic. The lively webs of connection that made this possible include collaborations with A Chorus of Women and practical support from the Centre, numerous conversations on dialogue between Janet and Stephen, and Chorus-led Wisdom Conversations on Climate Change hosted by the Centre.



The Chapel, full house for A Chorus of Women's performance, *The People's Passion* by Glenda Cloughley, centennial Remembrance Day, 11 November 2018, photo by John Mitchell, The Eastlaker

A meeting of like minds

by John Frohlich

Director, Canberra Short Film Festival

I first met Stephen after a mutual friend, Andrew Pike, suggested there might be benefits to both our organisations in a collaboration.

At our first meeting it was clear to me that Stephen was someone with a clear vision. He could see the potential for film, as a communication medium, to promote spiritual and humanistic values.

He understood that young people and other groups, such as First Nations people, within our community could be empowered through cinematic storytelling. He told me he was particularly interested in connecting with young people on their level and via their preferred medium.

Stephen recognised the power of communication to promote fellowship, sharing and therefore deeper understanding between people of our common humanity. He deeply understood the power film and storytelling has for contributing to social justice, for arousing empathy and compassion, for facilitating spiritual and ethical discussion and for, in some cases, being a catalyst for change.

Working with Stephen was a wonderful experience. Stephen was always upbeat, positive, good humoured and constructive. His passion and enthusiasm was unwavering. During our time working together Stephen was very supportive and flexible which allowed the partnership to blossom and flower. I know his team respected his leadership, vision for the Centre, and his personal guidance.

Stephen is someone who understands and champions the Arts which to me indicates his intellectual breadth and depth. When he spoke at our awards' presentation Stephen was warm, generous and sincere in his praise for the film maker's work.

He has been a loyal and supportive partner to our festival, and a small part of his legacy is that the partnership he established is set to continue.

It was a great privilege to meet and work with Stephen. We at the festival all wish him the very best in his new life and hope he finds joy and fulfillment in whatever comes next.



Canberra Short Film Festival 2021 Awards, Stephen speaking, with John Frohlich, photo courtesy of David McClenaghan



"He understood that young people and other groups, such as First Nations people, within our community could be empowered through cinematic storytelling. He told me he was particularly interested in connecting with young people on their level and via their preferred medium."



PILLAR 4

RESILIENCE IN INSTITUTIONAL LIFE AND ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

Being in Stephen's orbit

by Christine Ledger

Adjunct Research Fellow and Friend, ACC&C

Two of many legacies that Stephen Pickard leaves for the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture are his passion for theological enquiry into the nature of Christian community and the practising of leadership that enhances such loving community.

It is close to thirty years ago that I first met Stephen. He was a lecturer at the United Theological College (UTC) in Parramatta. I thoroughly enjoyed Stephen's lectures especially in regards to the theology of creation. I was at UTC only a short time but it was long enough for me to appreciate Stephen's teaching skills and his encouragement of students. We found common interests in ecumenism, God's creation and the life of community.

From 1999 to 2004, I was privileged to have Stephen as my PhD supervisor at St Mark's National Theological Centre. Mine was an interdisciplinary topic and Stephen's guidance helped me to identify my blind spots and the places where I needed to push my boundaries. I remember his pointing out to me the particular sentence I had drafted that had within it the essence of my thesis. His load as Director of St Mark's and Head of the CSU School of Theology never got in the way of finding time to read my work carefully, critically and constructively.

Stephen indicated and sometimes helped to open doors for me. This included employment, academic workshops and conferences, and even an opportunity to be a Visiting Fellow in Edinburgh. In all these ways, Stephen took an interest in, and enriched, my vocation, with a good dose of pastoral care along the way.

The community spirit was strong at St Mark's under Stephen's leadership. It was buoyed along by the camaraderie and relaxed academic interchange of the staff morning teas and student lunches. Humour nights were a great highlight.

Given his pastoral, intellectual and leadership gifts, it was not surprising when Stephen was called to be a bishop. Following his move to Adelaide, our paths did not cross much for a while. Certainly, there was gladness in town when he and Jennifer returned to Canberra and even more so when Stephen returned to the Barton campus.

So Stephen carried his gift and his experience for community building, which has been informed and shaped by his love for the church and for academic life, into his roles as Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture and Director for Public and Contextual Theology (PaCT) at CSU. His contribution has been diverse and included a lot of networking (interfaith, ecumenical and academic), event organisation, diplomacy, administration, buildings' management and more. When chairs needed shifting and artwork hung, Stephen found time for that too. As an occupant of George Browning House, I

have witnessed and enjoyed the collegiality and warm friendship fostered by Stephen in that space.

Of course, I am just one of the many people who have benefitted from being in Stephen's orbit over the years. Only God knows just how many have been touched by his ministry, which will surely continue.

Thank you, Stephen. May your retirement years be full of fun, community and creativity.



Chris in Stephen's orbit, photo courtesy of Bob Arthur

In theological conversation and interdisciplinary cooperation with Stephen Pickard

by Michael Welker

In November 2017, I came to Australia for the first time. I had accepted an invitation from Stephen Pickard and his predecessor, James Haire, to participate in a large ecumenical conference in Canberra and to give two lectures and some further lectures in academic and church circles. Before the start of these events, Stephen Pickard took me on several tours around beautiful Canberra and to some of its impressive museums.

We used this time to discuss our theological work and our research goals. Very fast, a strong theological and personal relationship developed. Stephen appreciated my efforts to connect Christology and pneumatology.¹ He shared my interests in the reality of the resurrection and in the continuity and discontinuity of the earthly Jesus with the risen Christ, as well as my enthusiasm for the outpouring of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ and the multimodal and polyphonic work of the divine Spirit on those overcome and seized by that Spirit.

He also agreed with the systematic theologian Daniel Migliore, Princeton, and with me that we should orient the doctrine of a threefold radiance of Jesus Christ to the continued activity of his pre-Easter existence, to his cross and his resurrection. In order to do so, we argued, a new interpretation of his "threefold ministry," namely the kingly, the prophetic, and the priestly, was needed. Stephen also went along with my proposal to expand the doctrine of the threefold office of Christ to a doctrine of "the threefold Gestalt of the reign of God," based on the outpouring of the Spirit and the impact on those who consciously or unconsciously follow Jesus Christ.

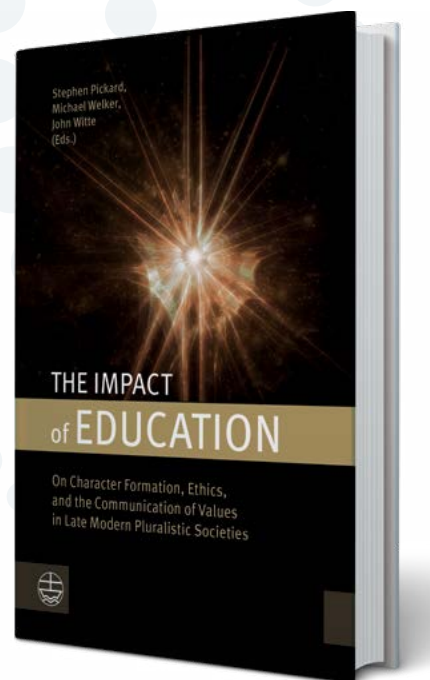
In turn, Stephen opened up to me his ecclesiological concerns and ecumenical insights.² His proposals for a "collaborative ministry" convinced me immediately. I also took very seriously his warnings that a pneumatologically oriented ecclesiology easily runs the risk of creating fluid, open and porous ecclesiastical boundaries, thus failing to adequately orient the visible unity of the church in its formal structures, and its church-leading responsibilities and tasks.³

Moreover, we shared the conviction that both in theology and in the church, we need a more differentiated perception and appreciation of the pluralistic structures of our late modern liberal societies. I was very happy to win him for a joint multi-year international and interdisciplinary research project that John Witte, Jr., (Emory), and I had conceived: *Character Formation, Ethical Education, and the Communication of Values in Late Modern Pluralistic Societies*.

The plan was to have ten consultations in order to explore ten social systems with regard to this project. The resulting volumes were or will be published by Evangelische Verlagsanstalt (EVA) in Leipzig, Germany: *The Impact of Religion on Character Formation, Ethical Education, and the Communication of Values in Late Modern Pluralistic Societies* (main editor: M. Welker, 2020); *The Impact of the Market on Character Formation ...* (main editor: J. von Hagen, 2020); *The Impact of the Law ...* (main editor: J. Witte, Jr., 2021); *The Impact of Academic Research ...* (main editor: W. Schweiker, 2021); *The Impact of the Family ...* (main editor: John Witte, Jr., 2022); *The Impact of Education ...* (main editor: S. Pickard, 2022).

Further volumes on the Media (eds. M. Welker and J. von Hagen), the Military (ed. S. Pickard), Politics (ed. P. Naudé) and Health Care are on the way or in the planning process.

This project will keep our joyful and successful collaboration alive in the years to come and is something to enjoy and to be looking forward to.



1. M. Welker, *God the Revealed: Christology* (transl. Douglas Stott), Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013; (ed.), *The Work of the Spirit: Pneumatology and Pentecostalism*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006.

2. S. Pickard, *In-Between God: Theology, community and discipleship*, Adelaide: AFT Press, 2011; *Seeking the Church: An Introduction to Ecclesiology*, London: SCM, 2012.

3. S. Pickard, "Theological Horizons for an Ecumenical Future: A Response to Michael Welker," in: V. Miller, D. Moxon and S. Pickard (eds.), *Leaning into the Spirit: Ecumenical Perspectives on Discernment and Decision-making in the Church*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, Springer Nature Switzerland, 2019, 39-45.

The academic Bishop

by Tom Frame

The Right Reverend Professor Stephen Pickard stands in a long line of Australian Anglican scholar-bishops but his service to both Church and academy has been unique. Unlike Christian scholars who became bishops when their academic careers had reached a plateau, and bishops who became scholars when the demands of episcopal ministry became overwhelming, Stephen managed to merge these vocations in manner that enriched them both.

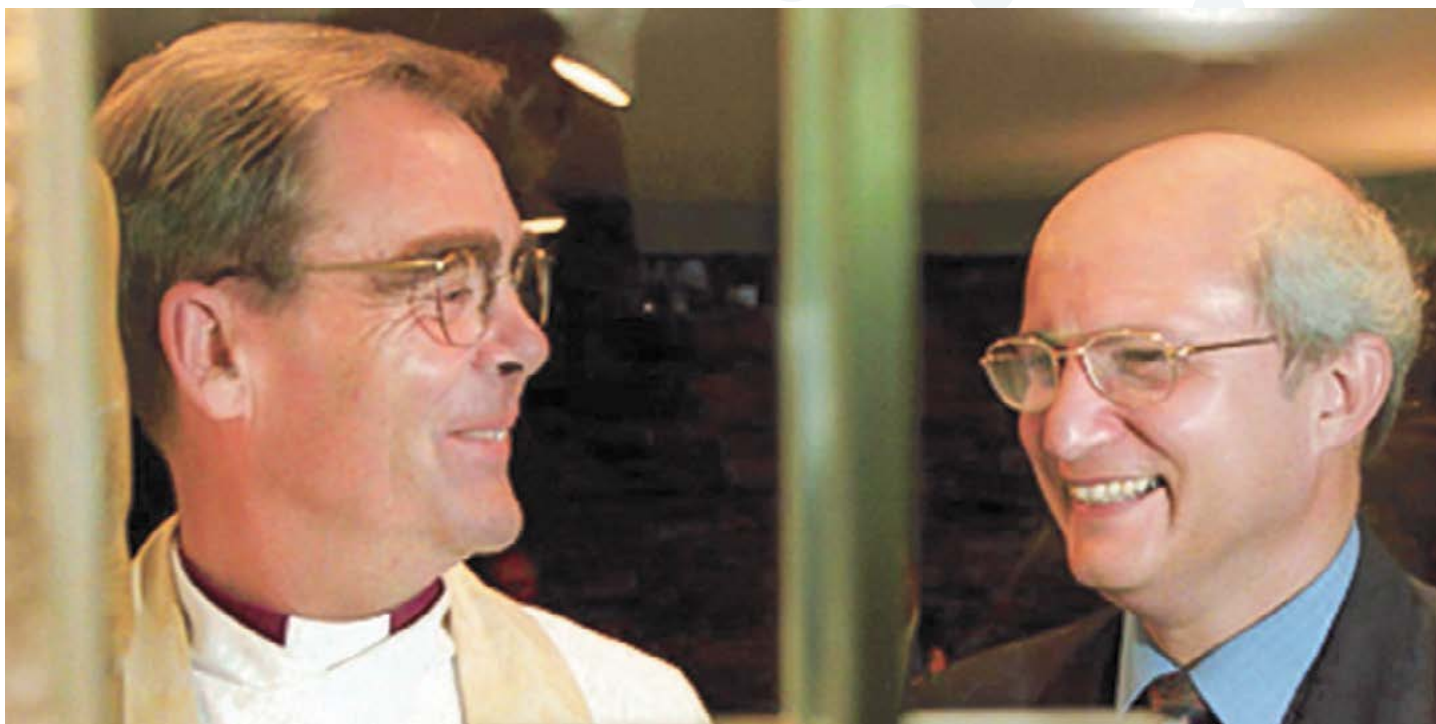
As a scholar, he exercised considerable episcopate with consistently insightful contributions to the practice of ministry, and obliged secular scholars to consider the claims of the Christian gospel and unconscious reliance on Christian precepts in a range of intellectual disciplines.

As a bishop, he lifted the standard of theological discourse and ensured that pastors and religious apologists were conscious of, and attentive to, objections to Christian doctrine and its expression beyond the churches.

There was no sense in which Stephen was speaking as a bishop or as an academic; he spoke with one voice that was ever conscious of two audiences and the need for scholarship to inform his episcopal leadership and discipleship to shape his participation in the life of the University. He stood apart from those who mistakenly thought the possession of a post-graduate qualification improved an otherwise poor argument or possession of a purple clergy shirt entitled pedestrian views to respectability. The ability to display intellectual toughness and pastoral sensitivity has defined the service of Stephen Pickard to the Australian nation and provided a role model that I hope and pray others might seek to emulate.

As an inspiring leader, an engaging writer and an evocative speaker, I am sure that those who follow him in the Church and academy will be drawn to his approach to the things of the mind and of the spirit. The debt owed to Stephen for his creativity, conviction and compassion is unlikely to be repaid.

“...he spoke with one voice that was ever conscious of two audiences and the need for scholarship to inform his episcopal leadership and discipleship to shape his participation in the life of the University.”



+George Browning and +Stephen Pickard at the dedication of St Mark's Chapel doors 2007, photo supplied

Returning language to the people: 'So we pray, so we believe, so we live'

by Professor Anthony Maher

Theological language is no longer fulfilling its philosophical and cultural purpose. In a post-foundational context, this reality prevents or inhibits our innate anthropological desires to engage in existential thought and to communicate our thinking and feelings to others. Such essential engagement with other people enables us to test patterns of meaning and truth, in order to build loving relationships and sustainable faith communities.

Theology and the People of God, St Paul's Publications, with contributions from nineteen leading theologians, from diverse theological disciplines, is an invitation to the people of God to re-engage and contribute to theological dialogue with regard the great issues of mutual concern for all humanity. Written in language accessible for teachers, students and clergy, this book offers an open door into the theological academy, through which readers can walk to deepen their faith and contribute to theological knowledge.

Structured in three parts, informally guided by the ancient flow of the *Lex Orandi* Axiom, 'so we pray, so we believe, so we live', the book makes a contribution to the retrieval of Mission memory and future hope-filled imaginings of ecclesial possibilities. Through theological exposition of scripture, philosophy, history and pastoral ministry, the book creates meaningful theological language that fosters discernment, builds consensus and creates patterns of truth, identity and belonging. In a loving relationship with God, all of the above processes are essential for the attainment of human dignity and flourishing.

While editing this work at Campion Hall, a Jesuit friend explained his purpose for being in Oxford. He was engaged in an ambitious project to return a language to a community in a remote part of Northern India. The ancient language had almost vanished and with support from the United Nations, he intended to open a school in the region and reintroduce the language back to the people. He was in the process of writing the first dictionary to advance this important endeavour. He explained that the people of the region were not only losing their language, but also their religion, spirituality, customs, rituals and traditions. In short, identity and belonging derive from a shared language and in a remote part of Northern India, for example, it was evaporating into the Himalayan mist. The most significant aspect of the restorative work was

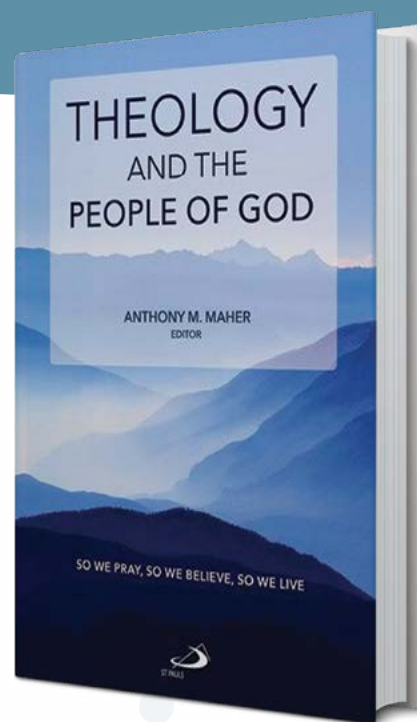
giving the people back their language in which they could speak meaningfully about their daily life, relationships, ancestors, and in particular, their unique cultural affinity with God as spirit.

The significance of the linguistic endeavours in India reminded me of similar projects in Australia to save local indigenous languages from extinction. I couldn't help further reflect upon the dramatic decline in adherence to Christianity within broader western society and the subsequent loss of meaningful theological language within my own family and community. So the purpose for *Theology and the People of God* became apparent, to return the language of God to the people of God, to invigorate and strengthen our relationship with God and our neighbour.

In a post-foundational context, we recognise such endeavour requires the refounding of the language of faith and that to give it back to the people of God is a considerable undertaking. Secularising earth-bound language based upon scientific materialism (atheism), dominates our culture and erodes the ability to articulate transcendence. We are losing both our Christian memory and the theological language which stirs our individual and collective memory.

Theology and the people of God then is a practical guide to support Christian prayer, belief and daily life. The work is intended to energise imagination and inspire investigation, so that together, we may soar to truth on the wings of language. The work concludes that theological language embodies us as Church; it enables us as an inclusive Church to reflect more clearly the Incarnation and to speak more meaningfully about contemporary faith and life. To learn a language is to walk into a new reality, to star gaze at a bigger universe, it is worth the effort.

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New Publications

The Anglican Eucharist in Australia: The History, Theology and Liturgy of the Eucharist in the Anglican Church of Australia

The Rev'd Professor Brian Douglas

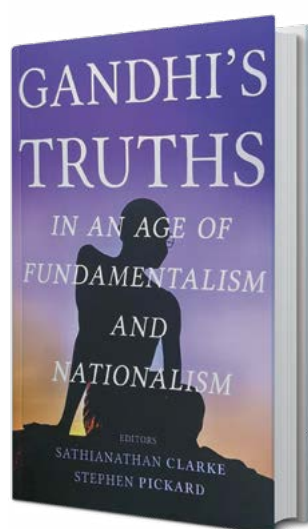
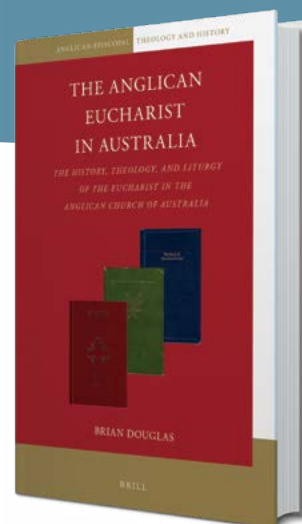
Research Professor, ACC&C

Brian Douglas, an adjunct Research Professor at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture has recently published a new book entitled [*The Anglican Eucharist in Australia: The History, Theology and Liturgy of the Eucharist in the Anglican Church of Australia* \(Brill, 2022\)](#). The book begins with the first white settlement in 1788 and continues to the present day. The three eucharistic liturgies used in the Anglican Church of Australia (ACA), and the debates that led to them, are examined in depth: *The Book of Common Prayer* (1662); *An Australian Prayer Book* (1978); and *A Prayer Book for Australia* (1995). The deep sacramentality of the Aboriginal people is acknowledged and modern issues such as liturgical development, lay presidency and virtual Eucharists are also explored. The book concludes with some suggestions for the further development of eucharistic liturgies within the ACA.

The Executive Director of the ACC&C, The Right Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard endorsed the book saying: "The history, theology and liturgy of the Eucharist in the Anglican Church of Australia has

never been written until Dr Douglas' present book. In a sustained and well researched manner, the author brings to light the details, controversies and underlying theological and philosophical concerns that have imprinted themselves on the subject. He is to be congratulated on undertaking this task in such a masterful manner." Bruce Kaye, a research professor at CSU has commented that: "The significance of the book is its combination of history, ecclesiology, and the careful analysis of specific liturgical texts in this framework and the impact of the dynamics of decision making in a synodical church. It is also useful as a substantial exposition of an important aspect of Anglicanism in Australia from its beginnings as a British military colony for exiled convicts. The book will be of interest to liturgical scholars and clergy around the world and also those interested in a vital aspect of Anglicanism in Australia, which has not hitherto been available, to a wider reading public. It should figure on reading lists in seminaries around the world."

[Purchase Online](#)



Ghandhi's Truths: In an Age of Fundamentalism and Nationalism

**Edited by Professor Sathianathan Clarke
and Professor Stephen Pickard
Fortress Press, 2022**

[Purchase online](#)



Community Engagement after Christendom Douglas G Hynd

Cascade Books, 2022

[Purchase online](#)



The Desert Keep, Paul Miller, triptych, oil on canvas

The Desert Keep

by Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard

Executive Director, ACC&C

Paul Miller is a Canadian born Australian artist. Over four decades his art has been the subject of many solo and group exhibitions in Australia and Canada. He is a highly respected contemporary artist; the recipient of numerous awards and residences over the course of his painting career. His art can be found in collections across Australia (including the National Gallery of Australia), Europe and North America.

Paul has donated his large triptych, *The Desert Keep*, to the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. The subject matter is about the Spirit, land and home. Paul notes that the work was done between 2004 – 2006. Paul states that “in the early part of the 2000's I was working with the idea of enclosures and barracks and sanctuaries. For me they were spiritual places. Places of safety and contemplation. This big work shows two fences in a darkened desert. A light is coming from between them, what separates them is a table. I see this table as the place where you are born, the place where you eat and give thanks and this table is where you are prepared for burial. Above the table is a glowing bird, the spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, the essence of the divine. This is an important work for me it helped bridge the space with my art and my coming to terms with being a migrant in a new land”.

Australian artist, Rev'd Dr Rod Pattenden states “It is a visionary and striking work and would make an excellent addition to the ACC&C collection and be an amazing visual statement in the Centre”.

Paul says that being able to work slowly is important. “One of the joys of going really slowly with a work is that I feel like a Renaissance craftsman; everything is carefully crafted, carefully thought through, it is a discipline that involves digging deeper into yourself, and, you do something with paint that reaches into the heart and is deeply moving. A painting works when a little bit of magic emerges that strikes the right note. The magic comes only as a result of being consistent in the studio, hitting the right note when the opportunity comes, and working with passion and discipline”. Paul is very clear: “Painting is not about the money; what you are doing is working to show how the paint and the materials can take the viewer much deeper than the surface they are looking at. It is the capacity to communicate beauty and grace... a transcendent type of beauty, that ‘takes the viewer somewhere’”.

14 years ago, Paul was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. He states that “It doesn't describe all of me, just a small part of me”. Quite remarkably when he paints his hand remains perfectly steady.

CV-94

by Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard

Executive Director, ACC&C

Douglas Purnell is an Australian artist, theologian, educator and Uniting Church minister. Among his many projects and artistic work Doug has for over a decade curated an annual *Stations of the Cross* exhibition with contributions from leading Australian artists. The ACC&C was fortunate to host two exhibitions in recent years.

Doug has had three residencies at the Henry Luce III Centre for Arts and Religion at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington DC. USA (1994, 1998, and 2008) and another residency at Andover Newton Theological School in Boston, Ma. USA (2002). He has exhibited work in Australia and the US and is represented in public and private collections in both countries.

Doug writes: "I have been painting all my adult life. I am a retired minister in the Uniting Church and have continually worked to find connections between art and faith. That included 17 years as a director of the Blake Society. Early, I was influenced by working in the studio of landscape painter David Mercy in Carlton (Vic). Later, I spent time as a visiting fellow at Princeton Theological Seminary in the US. There I met major US artist, Thomas George who became a teacher, friend, and mentor for 30 years. Tom had exhibited with Betty Parsons Gallery in New York for 12 years and had a solo show of his work in the Museum of American Art in Washington DC. In the early 90's I completed a doctorate, the dissertation was titled 'Doing Theology through Expressive Art: A series of paintings informed by the theology of Paul Tillich'. The thesis continues to shape and form my work".



CV-94, Doug Purnell, oil on canvas.

Recently Doug gifted a beautiful acrylic on canvas painting to the ACC&C. He states regarding the work: "It is a painting in which the drips evoke a sense of gravity, which I hope grounds the viewer... it is human scaled, the painting is not of 'something', it is to be attended to and experienced by the viewer, and this is done when the viewer engages and is engaged by the scale of the work, 'face to face'. The colour red has lots of symbolism... blood, life, anger, rage, sex, energy, passion, etc. My hope is that a viewer will stand and look and 'not know', and find themselves remembering events, experiences, and bringing them to speech in new and fresh ways.

My sense, at the moment, is that the language of the faith, the language of theology, is collapsing. In our very secular culture, the word 'God' has been changed to 'god', and for most people has a denigrated meaning. My 'call' at this stage in my life is to push into the space of mystery, into the space of what we cannot easily name, and make paintings that encourage viewers to enter that space with me, and to find fresh speech. The paintings I am making, are my way of naming the divine mystery, the sense of otherness, what has in the past been named, 'God'. I am, at my core, a theist. My paintings are about that. Only I do not want to impose a name on the reality, simply to open it as a space for conversation. I am about the ineffable; that which cannot be described in words.

My gift to the Centre is also an expression of my gratitude for the joy I have received by being in ministry for fifty plus years. I hope it adds something to the life of your community".

UPCOMING EVENTS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Palm Sunday Refugee Rally

Sunday 10 April

1pm, Garema Place, Civic,
Canberra

JUSTICE FOR REFUGEES Palm Sunday

1pm 10 April Garema Place

RECITAL

According to Mark

James Scott, Honest Puck
Theatre

Thursday 14 April

7.30pm, Chapel

Honest Puck Theatre presents *According to Mark*, a dramatic recitation of the entire Gospel of St Mark performed by Canberra actor, James Scott. You will be amazed to hear the complete story of the life of Jesus in just an hour-and-a-half. Filled with beautiful artwork, as well as hot cross buns cooked live on stage while the story is told by a professional performer, this is a very different and theatrical way to commemorate Easter, and one you can bring friends to.

Additional performances at the Perform Australia Theatre on 15 and 17 April.

EASTER CELEBRATION

Ecumenical Way of the Cross – Good Friday

Friday 15 April

11am, Chapel and grounds of
the ACC&C

The Good Friday Ecumenical Way of the Cross liturgy will begin in the Chapel and progress outside around the site to the Pilgrim Poles with the final act taking place at the Great Cross.

CANBERRA INTERNATIONAL MUSIC FESTIVAL



CANBERRA
INTERNATIONAL
MUSIC
FESTIVAL

29 April – 8 May, Chapel

The Canberra International Music festival will be holding some performances in the ACC&C Chapel between 29 April to 8 May. The 2022 festival will explore the relationships between music and science, music and mathematics as well as the time and motion equation.

NATIONAL CONGRESS OF WOMEN

Weaving - How can we work together across difference to restore climate balance?

Thursday 28 April 2022

ONLINE Seminar

This seminar will respond to women's calls for action. Considering our responsibilities to the Earth and future generations, we will start to weave a 'Women's Charter for Change' and leave with ideas of how to create change in our own communities.

CENTRE FOR AGEING AND PASTORAL STUDIES

Spiritual reminiscence workshop

18 and 19 May

Chambers Pavilion

ACC&C NEW DIRECTOR ANNOUNCEMENT

New Executive Director commissioning

20 May 6pm, Chapel

More details soon.

EXHIBITION

Sacred Geometry: Painting in stones

Florentine mosaics by Anatoly
Golobokava

26 May – 5 June, 10.30–3.30
Chapel

The works are made using the Florentine mosaic technique from pieces of semiprecious stones such as agate, coloured jasper, tiger's eye, quartz, tiger iron, serpentine and others. The Florentine mosaic method was founded by Italian craftsmen in the late Renaissance at the end of the 16th century and was called *pietre dure* (hard stones).



Trinity. Three-dimensional space, photo

FILM PRIZE

Spiritus Short Film Prize

Now receiving submissions at

www.acc-c.org.au

Spiritus
SHORT FILM PRIZE