

ENGAGE



A Yuletide Pilgrimage of Hope
in Uncertain Times

Professor Anthony Maher



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visiting the ACC&C, 21 March 2000, photo supplied

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AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR
CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE
WISDOM FOR THE COMMON GOOD

A Yuletide Pilgrimage of Hope in Uncertain Times

Professor Anthony Maher

Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture Executive Director



In Sacred Scripture the axiom of hope and liberation is pervasive and a pathway to human flourishing: 'so we hope, so we believe, so we live.'

Love produces hope: 'It is not easy to know how to keep on hoping, and we must all answer this question in our own way. It seems that everything is against hope. But for me at least, where I see there has been a great love, *I see hope being born again*. This is not a rational conclusion. Perhaps it is not even theological. It is simply true: love produces hope, and great hope produces great love.' (Jon Sobrino).

We live in uncertain times: in the shadow of an obstinate COVID-19 Pandemic, recurring climate catastrophes and Russia's barbaric war in Ukraine. Such global realities add to our communal sense of unease at this time. It is important to name our current reality for one can easily allow fear to overtake our lives and to withdraw from the world. At times our society seems to be running on a deficit of hope. It can seem that everything is against hope. We can be forced into isolation and even feel alienation from our neighbour and perhaps, as the latest census may indicate, we can feel alienated from God. Our young people are particularly vulnerable at this time. We need to watch over them with 'great love', perhaps now more than ever before in our history. In times of hardship, the author of the Book of Psalms reminds us, in the form of hope, we can sense God draw closer to us.

Hope then is the foundation of our Christian eschatological horizon. Hope is a precursor to human flourishing in historical (human) and transcendent (God's) time. Hope is a conscious or unconscious awareness of God drawing near. Hope draws us into prayer, a conversation with a friend or a book. Hope can get us out of bed in the morning or to reach eagerly for our cell phone during the day to call a loved one. Ultimately hope propels us on the journey that is love. Hope sustains love. Hope is also an attribute of faith, two sides of the one coin. Hope is the second lingering

glance in the hospital isolation ward, as we say *au revoir*, resisting goodbye. Hope brings the third, fourth or fifth chance in life. Hope has a mystical, triune and transcendent nature. The universally acclaimed cultural anthropologist Gerard A. Arbuckle explained, 'hope grows out of desolation (lamentation), it is literally the experience of God drawing near'.

Through God's grace, hope is eagerly shared, not easily dashed. Hope is an awareness of God in our life, especially in moments of crisis or despair. Eschatological hope is born and nourished in prayer – the Christian faith lives on prayer. St Thomas Aquinas taught that hope is 'infused in us by God alone'. Hope then is a gift from God and, as the liberation theologian Jon Sobrino explained, 'great hope produces great love.'

In Sacred Scripture the axiom of hope and liberation is pervasive and a pathway to human flourishing: 'so we hope, so we believe, so we live.' Christian theologies of realistic hope, see 'God in all things,' and contain within an experience of *metanoia*, a power to transform *our reality*. We recognise that historical reality is unbalanced with what we know of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Injustice too often prevails and we are drawn in hope, often out of our despair, to the movements of the Spirit we experience in our current epoch, such as: 'Me2', 'Youth Climate Coalition' and the 'BLM' protests. People take to the street in the hope that things will get better – that people will get better and move towards the good and the true (Aquinas). In this hope, as Christians, we live.

A Treatise on Hope

Hope is individual, relational, and communal - it is contagious. Hope comes from outside the person; it is a supernatural gift from God. The gift of hope requires 'assent.' Unity with God is considered



Lead kindly light, The Great Cross in many refractions of light, photo by Andrew Cameron.

to be the primary objective of Christian hope. God is believed to guide hope and Revelation. Realistic hope shapes a mature faith. Realistic hope can overcome forces that seek to extinguish our ecclesial hope. It is important that we name those forces and move beyond them. Realistic hope is not about asking God to grant three wishes. Realistic hope brings us beyond sadness, death, loss, hurt of the human condition. Hope strives endlessly for human flourishing. Realistic hope, not idealism, self-deception or foolery is a central attribute of human flourishing. Realistic hope, like all else in matters of faith, is dependent upon our understanding of God.

There can be little flourishing without the graced gift of hope - historical and eschatological hope. (I Cor 13:13). Virtues, such as hope, have God as their object and are infused with unmerited grace; pure gift from God, to which our response is sincere, joyous gratitude. St Paul speaks of "hoping against hope" (Rom 4:18). The Australian theologian, Neil Ormerod writes, '...the Spirit

comes to us in our weakness (Rom 8:27ff), conforming us to the mind of God. As a spirit of consolation, the Holy Spirit fixes us on our ultimate hope, a hope beyond all human expectations, a hope revealed in Jesus' resurrection, that God is at work in human history raising up the lowly and rejected one and making him the Lord of History.' (Ormerod, *Theology and the People of God*).

Hope Born Again: A Yuletide Ray of Hope and the *Magnificat* of Mary

As the Yuletide approaches and the year of 2022 ebbs to a close, we acknowledge we live in uncertain times, uncharted seas. It has been a difficult year. In the light of realistic hope, we turn our attention to the liturgies of advent and the approaching celebration of hope that is the birth of a baby two thousand years ago in Palestine. While Mary was visiting her cousin Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist, the baby jumps within Elizabeth's

womb. Mary responds with the great *Magnificat*, ('my soul magnifies the Lord') the ancient Christian hymn of hope and joy (The Song of Mary, Lk 1:46-55).

There is a radiant light of hope that emanates from the birth of Jesus Christ; it invites all humanity to move out of the shadows of our uncertain times into the 'kindly light' of Jesus (J.H. Newman). Christmas is a time 'when hope is born anew' (Sobrinho). The ancient and holy prayer the *Magnificat* shouts with Mary's joyful invitation, of the hope that is Christmas, let us join in her song...

Lead Kindly Light

From all of us at the ACC&C in Canberra, on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, may this edition of *Engage* bring you hope and joy! And may the kindly light of Christ illumine your Christmastide, bringing blessings upon your family and peace to our troubled world. For this we hope.

A Year in Retrospect: 2022

Professor Renée Leon PSM

Charles Sturt University Vice-Chancellor and President



Welcome to the 11th edition of *Engage*.

As I reflect on my first year as Vice-Chancellor of Charles Sturt University, I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved but also acknowledge that, as one of the country's public teaching and research institutions, there's always more we can be doing

When I started with Charles Sturt, the University had been through 18 months of pandemic disruption. As we all know, the impacts of COVID-19 were felt the world over, having detrimental effects not only on the way we lived and worked, but also on the entire education system.

With travel restrictions and closed borders, Charles Sturt proactively embraced the need to develop new ways of being able to deliver our teaching to our students. I am proud of how Charles Sturt staff and students embraced their new learning environments; from face-to-face teaching models, to online, and hybrid arrangements.

Despite lockdowns during the pandemic, the University has continued to deliver impressive achievements:

- in the past year, nearly 10,000 students have completed their degree, including 245 First Nations students;
- around 3,000 students have benefited from \$3 million in scholarships, prizes and financial support;
- we've produced about 1,300 research publications, with more than 90% of our journal publications in high quality journals;
- the university has signed agreements for dozens of new research projects with a total future value of around \$12 million;
- close to 400 intensive schools were held, managing more than 10,000 placements; and,
- we've delivered over 130 events at our campuses including large summits, industry forums, ministerial visits, openings, academic conferences, thought leadership discussions, community and cultural events, and student and staff activities.

On student experience, teaching quality, and graduate outcomes, Charles Sturt continues to score in the top ranks of Australian universities, as measured by QILT surveys and the Good Universities Guide.

We're proud that for the sixth consecutive year, Charles Sturt University has ranked number one in Australia for graduate employment. Prospective students know that enrolling with Charles Sturt University is a great launching pad for their own impactful and successful careers.

We have also achieved nation-leading outcomes in study areas of agriculture and environment; business and management; humanities; social sciences; law; nursing;



CSU students, photo supplied

social work; and veterinary science.

Our mission is to build skills and knowledge in our regions. We offer choice and flexibility to students and work hand-in-hand with our industries and communities in teaching, research and engagement. Growing from our historical roots, we share our knowledge and expertise as a significant regional export industry, and we bring strength and learning from this back to our regions.

I acknowledge the vision of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture as the go-to place for the interface between Christianity, Australian society and culture - '*Wisdom for the common good*'. The synergy of this vision with Charles Sturt's ethos - *yindymarra winhanganha*: the wisdom of knowing how to live well in a world worth living in - is not lost on me.

As I reflect on our significant achievements, I am proud of how staff and students have drawn on their wisdom every day and inspired our vision for the future.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of *Engage*.

Queen Elizabeth II: *Defender of the Faith*

Bishop George Browning

ACC&C Ambassador



Accidental turns of events, usually in the form of trauma, change personal lives for millions, but none more so than for Elizabeth Alexandria Mary Windsor. Born into a life of extraordinary privilege in 1926, she was destined to turn privilege into a life of service following the abdication of her uncle and early death of her father: service to the people of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, service to the Commonwealth, and service to humanity at large.

Since her death, much has been written about the inequality of inherited wealth, the inappropriateness of dynasty, the cruelty of British colonisation, and the stealth and arrogance of Empire. Embracing truth in this critique is necessary for adjustment and right governance as Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations move forward into the testing global environment of the 21st century.

We are, however, all inheritors of the achievements and failures of the past. We can do nothing to change that. It is what we do with the situation we inherit that matters. Many commentators and critics of monarchy have held Queen Elizabeth accountable for what she inherited. She did indeed inherit a dying Empire, but she changed this structure of dominance, power and imposition into a Commonwealth of Nations with voluntary membership. The value of the Commonwealth to the 54 participating countries varies according to perceived shared values, history, culture, and partnerships. Becoming a republic has no bearing on Commonwealth membership.

She inherited extraordinary wealth, and her life was surrounded by much pomp and pageantry. However, within that environment she is reported to have lived simply (jam sandwiches) and to have abhorred waste. What is not acknowledged sufficiently is that the pomp and pageantry was not for her benefit but for the benefit of the people of Great Britain and their sense of culture and tradition. Charles III will need quickly to make it clear he understands this, for if he implies it is about himself, he will quickly lose the affection of the people.

She inherited the title *Defender of the Faith*. The way this title was conferred on Henry VIII by Pope Leo X for his pamphlet supporting the Pope and critiquing Martin Luther is bizarre. The title was later withdrawn but restored by parliament in 1554 and inherited by every subsequent monarch. Of course, in its conferring, the title had everything to do with Church politics, Reformation struggles, and a desire that Britain remain 'Protestant'.

But what did Elizabeth II do with the title, and why might its retention be vital in an increasingly secular and materialistic world?

The high point of the coronation ceremony, which for Elizabeth II occurred on 2 June 1953, is the anointing of the monarch with holy oil on the head, heart and hands by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Since the coronation of George III the anointing has been followed by a rendition of Handel's *Zadok the Priest*. The lyric begins: *Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anointed Solomon king*.

In the Judaeo/Christian tradition prophet, priest, and king, are mutually interdependent and complementary roles. In the Christian tradition it is understood all three are fully present in Jesus.

Through the anointing, the monarch is indelibly linked to both priest and prophet. The role of priest is to be a channel of

Accidental turns of events, usually in the form of trauma, change personal lives for millions, but none more so than for Elizabeth Alexandria Mary Windsor.

grace through his/her way of life and where necessary word; to lift people beyond the transient, material, and mundane to an awareness of God and the preciousness of life.

In an extraordinary manner, Elizabeth II has embraced this identity. She was clearly a woman of devout personal faith. It mattered a lot to her. Her Christmas messages were always thoughtfully constructed. The message was inclusive, insightful, focussed on generosity and forgiveness. In her travels she never failed to attend Sunday worship, insisting it be led by the local priest or minister, not a member of the Church's hierarchy.

(continued next page)

She was head of the Church of England with a mandate to appoint all senior positions. But as in politics, she appointed those commended to her. But more importantly, she understood her role to be one of encouragement of faith as a cornerstone element of human life, as it was to her. This became more important with the growth of multi-faith multi-culturalism in Britain and the Commonwealth. She would perhaps have agreed with the Dalai Lama who, when asked which the best religion was, replied: "the one that does you most good"!

The role of prophet is to act for, and speak courageously about, justice and righteousness in human affairs. Because those who act prophetically are perceived to be interfering with politics, this role is awkward for a sovereign. Nevertheless, one can hopefully assume that Elizabeth II adopted this role in her weekly meetings with Prime Ministers. The modernising of the monarchy which she began, and which must continue under Charles III, should be motivated by a desire to exemplify righteousness and justice in personal and private life.

We understand the coronation of Charles III is to be 'modernised'. This is a good thing, but it will be interesting to see how modernising is interpreted. Stripped of its spiritual dimension, monarchy would be hard to justify or sustain.

Britain, the Commonwealth, and the world have every reason to be deeply grateful for the life, service and sacrifice of Elizabeth II. We may indeed not see the like of her again. That she was deeply respected and admired is beyond dispute. Is it too much to ask a secular and materialistic world why? The answer is probably too challenging. It was because she was deeply a woman of faith committed to the role of service which had become her lot.



Lowitja Lois O'Donahue Smart AC, CBE, DSG, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Bishop George Browning at the ACC&C, 21 March 2000, photo supplied



Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Senator Margaret Reid, Governor-General Sir William Deane, Lowitja Lois O'Donahue Smart AC, CBE, DSG, Bishop George Browning, photo supplied



The Funeral of Queen Elizabeth II: The Power of Symbols

Rev Dr Gerald A. Arbuckle, SM, MA (Cambridge)

Co-Director of the Refounding and Pastoral Development Unit, Sydney

One television narrator of the royal funeral sagely said: 'I will not interrupt the ritual by speaking further. I will let the symbols, such as the crown, orb, massed uniforms, silences, of this sacred ritual speak for themselves.' Why was he so wise? Simply because he had grasped the nature and power of symbols. And the symbols *did* speak for themselves.

Why are symbols important?¹ Symbols are as important to us as water is to fish. Without symbols we simply cannot converse with one another. In fact, we are in chaos! Symbols shape what we buy, the television programs we choose to enjoy, our responses to world events, our face-to-face communications, even our sense of identity. As Westerners we may like to think of ourselves as distinctly individualistic. We proudly choose the way we dress, even the car we drive, in order to show our distinctive identity, but however outrageous our efforts society does set symbolic limits to attempts to be unique. We are still expressing ourselves through symbols that are intelligible to society, otherwise we simply could not communicate.²

A symbol then is any reality that by its very dynamism or power leads to (that is, makes one think about, imagine, get into contact with, or reach out to) another deeper (and often mysterious) reality through a sharing in the dynamism that the symbol itself offers (and not merely by verbal or additional explanations).

Qualities

There are three fundamental qualities to any symbol: the meaning, the emotive and the directive. The meaning aspect is its *cognitive* quality; the symbol makes a statement about something that the mind is able to grasp. Second, a symbol has an *emotive* quality because it is able to touch the hearts and imaginations of people evoking positive or negative feelings. The emotive quality of a symbol is thus able to *re-present* the object. At the sight of the coat-of-arms of my Cambridge college I *re-live* the past positive experience of student days. Thirdly, a symbol has a *directive* quality. As a result of its cognitive and emotional impact I am directed to act in certain ways.

There are also other qualities of symbols.³ Symbols are said to be *multivocal*, that is they gather many meanings over time. Take Queen Elizabeth's coffin. It would have evoked a multiplicity of different meanings for people. Another quality is their *timelessness*. I had to think very hard in order to date the year of Elizabeth's coronation but it is still vivid in my memory. Because of their emotive quality, symbols have the ability to command the allegiance of people over a long period. Consider the example of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address. Although it was delivered in 1863, it continues as a symbol of freedom to evoke powerful patriotic reactions among Americans.

A symbol also has the quality of polarity; it is able to evoke opposite meanings at the same time. The royal coffin symbolised the death of the Queen but it also symbolised her life of decades of dedicated service.

Sometimes symbols are described as models *of* and models *for*. The former describes clusters of symbols that convey the way things are, the latter indicates the ways people are expected to behave. Sometimes the same symbols have this twofold function. The men's suits on sale in the shop window symbolise what is stylistically acceptable today, but they are also endeavouring to convey a message to me personally that I must follow today's styles if I am to be socially acceptable.

In summary, the effect of symbolic action is emotionally experienced meaning. Signs are concerned about visible and quantifiable experience, but symbols seek to draw us beyond the observable to a higher experiential, even transcendent level of knowledge.

Interpreting symbols

Symbols possess a density of meaning that words alone often cannot encapsulate. Consider how many people were lost for words when asked to express how they felt about the loss of Queen Elizabeth. Or consider the power of periods of silence during the ritual. It would be quite impossible to put into words alone the layer upon layer of meanings conveyed by the powerful symbols of the funeral.⁴

(continued next page)

1. See Gerald A. Arbuckle, *Culture, Inculturation, and Theologians: A Postmodern Critique* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2010).

2. See Joy Hendry, *An Introduction to Social Anthropology: Sharing our Worlds* (London: Palgrave, 2008), 93-109.

3. See Paul Ricoeur, *The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection*, in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of His Work*, eds. Charles E. Reagan and David Stewart (Boston: Beacon, 1978), 36-58.

4. See Janine Roberts, *Setting the Frame: Definition, Functions, and Typology of Rituals*, in *Rituals in Families and Family Therapy*, eds. Evan Imber-Black, Janine Roberts, and Richard A. Whiting (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), 22-23.

As symbols are cultural constructs, it is rare that any symbol is able to have a universally recognised meaning. A ring, for example, may indicate symbolically steadfast dedication when placed on the finger of a bride in a Western marriage ceremony, but among the Bangwa of the Republic of Cameroon a ring on the ankle of a woman shows that she has been a slave. A symbol, therefore, can only be interpreted when viewed in relation to other symbols that form part of the same culture.⁵

Thus the problems of an interpretation of others' interpretations are immense.⁶ Little wonder that anthropologist Clifford Geertz candidly warns: 'Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape.'⁷ If we want to understand the meanings of other people's symbols we must be prepared to spend significant time listening and questioning. Even then we may misinterpret their meanings.

Saving Democracy

Professor Mark Evans (PhD, FIPPA, FRS)

Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Engagement, CSU

My latest book *Saving Democracy*, a collaboration with [Gerry Stoker](#) from the University of Southampton, has just been published by Bloomsbury Books. We began writing *Saving Democracy* towards the end of 2018 in the context of the lowest reported levels of public trust and satisfaction with Australia and the United Kingdom's democratic arrangements set against a global democratic malaise, the rise of debased semi-democracies, the Brexit debacle and the general confusion associated with the Trump presidency.

We argue that democracy is worth saving for four main reasons. First, as a tool of human empowerment it has been a great success – international measurement of social and economic development in full democracies reveal that over the past three decades we have witnessed the abolition of brute scarcity. Poverty still exists in all its hideous forms, but in relative terms the material conditions of existence have improved considerably. Second, conflict between full democracies, particularly in Europe, has been minimal and supranational collaboration has flourished. Third, as a culture or way of life, democracies based upon popular control and political equality tend to be more inclusive and cohesive societies. Fourth, survey data around the world

continues to show significant levels of public satisfaction with democratic values. In particular, the rule of law, free and fair elections, freedom of speech and assembly, separation of powers and human rights protection.

However, it is the failure of democratic governments to uphold and practice those values that has confounded what Nobel laureate Amarta Sen refers to as the "protective power of democracy" – free and fair elections, formal channels of citizen participation, protection of civil rights (including minority rights) and duties, and keeping governments responsible, accountable and free from corruption. Moreover, global elites have conspired in a culture of complacency and abrogated their responsibility to champion and nurture democracy.

In 2018, democracy was under attack on a global scale and there was a pressing need for a book that provided an understanding of the political dynamics underpinning the pre-pandemic crisis and mapped out potential pathways to renewal. Then COVID-19 hit. Unsurprisingly COVID-19 compelled us to rethink how we approached the book. The intrinsic value of democracy had not diminished but the challenges confronting democracies

5. See Fiona Bowie, *The Anthropology of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 40.

6. See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 18.

7. *Ibid.*, 20.



Professor Mark Evans and HE Armando Vargas Araya, Ambassador of Costa Rica, in the Chapel, ACC&C, photo by Sarah Stitt

appeared starker and how democracy was being practiced began to change as we wrote. We therefore decided to connect-up with everyday citizens through a [Facebook discussion group](#) which posed the question – how can we save democracy in a post-COVID-19 world?

The purpose of this international crowdsourcing experiment was to ensure that we were focusing on appropriate conceptual issues, drawing on the right areas of reform in terms of strengthening democratic practice and identifying credible pathways to reform. Knowledge of stellar international examples of democratic innovation during the pandemic were particularly welcomed.

Over the following 12 months we posted draft chapters, invited comments, synthesised the commentary, and posted a rejoinder on the lessons that we would draw for the subsequent redrafting of the chapter. We were delighted with the feedback we received which has improved the book in at least three ways. It has sharpened our operational understanding of the concepts of ‘democracy’ and ‘politics’; provided for a more nuanced understanding of deliberative, direct and digital democracy; and, introduced us to a broader range of relevant reforms than originally envisaged.

COVID-19 reminded voters that democratic governments are necessary and that with systemic renovation they can be made to work. How then can democracy be saved and the protective power of democracy restored? We offer a simplistic but hopefully helpful system framing for our analysis; dividing reforms between those focused on inputs, throughputs and outputs.

Input reforms refer to responsiveness to citizen concerns and the framing of political demands to enable critical citizenship and voice. The challenge here is that an unequal political community reflects and reproduces social inequality. This is reflected in limited opportunities to exercise citizen voice and the disconnection of the political class from the citizens it serves. So we focus on how we can build participatory governance systems from direct democracy, to citizens’ assemblies and juries to innovations in digital democracy.

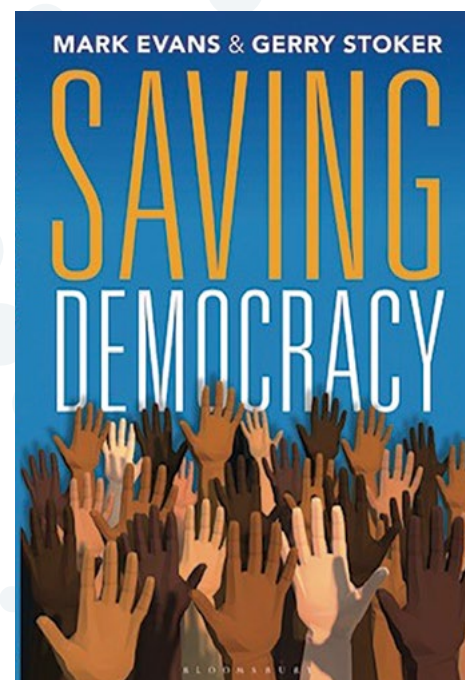
Throughput reforms centre on enhancing the accountability, integrity and efficiency of decision-making processes throughout the democratic system – with chapters on ensuring that assemblies are representative of the people and follow contemporary working practices; the need to clean up politics and political parties and ensure integrity in political leadership; and reforms that focus on how experts and the media can strengthen rather than weaken democratic practice.

Output reforms focus on the capacity of politics to deliver quality services and policy outcomes with chapters on citizen-centred service delivery, crisis management, and how we can future proof our democracies.

We defend the representative role of politicians but think that it requires a serious redesign to address its dysfunctions and contradictions. We do not see sortition as replacing representative democracy rather as a component of a broader participatory governance system where a variety of methods can be used to co-produce solutions to governance problems with citizens and stakeholders and bolster the legitimacy of public policy-making.

We look to historical evidence as the basis of our optimism that democratic institutions can and do change for the better over time. However, we do share the view that although the protective power of democracy remains clear in principle, the challenge is to deliver it more effectively in practice.

Alas, most of the problems of democracy that we encounter in this book stem from the persistence of inequality of one form or another that the political class has conspicuously failed to counter. We must all be more demanding of our politicians to take concerted action and willing to engage in democratic practice as critical citizens. After all, we largely get the democracy that we vote for!





Living on Country: We didn't know what we didn't know – no excuse

Genevieve Jacobs

ACC&C Board Member

I grew up in Western NSW, between West Wyalong and Grenfell, on land that my family have owned for generations. In my childhood, we believed there were no Aboriginal people in the area.

They were long gone, we thought, their presence only a memory from the time of our great grandparents. Most of us believed we'd never met an Aboriginal person. Our history books illustrated a story that began, literally, with Captain Cook.

We never heard the word Wiradjuri – among the largest Aboriginal peoples in NSW. From time to time, local farmers would bring an echidna into our little primary school and we'd be told that Quandialla, the name of our village, meant echidna "in Aboriginal".

This was, in fact, fairly close to the truth. But almost everything else was wrong.

Much later the Sorry Books campaign was held in 1998 as a way for the Australian public to apologise to the Stolen Generations after the Howard government refused to offer a parliamentary apology.

Significant argument ensued in my husband's family. The older generation had grown up with a much-loved Aboriginal woman - a member of the Stolen Generations who came from the Cootamundra Girls Home and worked for them for many years.

What was the problem, some family members asked? She'd always been treated well, with genuine affection and respect. What reason was there to apologise?

I did not grow up in a racist family, nor marry into one. My Catholic childhood was infused with a strong belief in equality and dignity for all and my mother loathed injustice and prejudice.

But we didn't know what we didn't know about Australia's traditional owners. We did not understand what happens when people are torn from lands that are deeply embedded in their culture and spirituality. We did not grasp the consequences of broken families, of language lost and stories hidden.

And therein lies the moral challenge for us all in a Voice to Parliament and the call to reconciliation. Simply put, there's no reconciliation without truth telling, and that will be a hard, long process. Ignorance is no defence. Neither is the discomfort non-indigenous Australians feel when confronted with the dark truths of our past.

When I co-chaired the ACT's first Reconciliation Council, we reflected that discomfort was natural, because we are not, as a nation, reconciled.

Many Australians believe that reconciliation has little to do with them. They don't accept responsibility for wrongs done to Aboriginal people. They think these wrongs are largely in the past. They may believe (almost certainly incorrectly) that they don't know any Aboriginal Australians.

On the matter of personal responsibility, each one of us in this nation benefits from land taken from original inhabitants. Shared equality of citizenship and opportunity between all Australians today does not diminish the weight of historical injustice. The past – and its consequences – remain a powerful force.

Breaking apart families, generation after generation, has fuelled grim outcomes for Aboriginal people affected by violence, abuse and dysfunction. As the somewhat ineffective Closing the Gap process has demonstrated, we can't fix a century of trauma in an electoral cycle or two.

These matters cannot be swept aside to "move on" as a nation. They are profoundly significant matters for generations of people whose stories must be told and understood. They are a responsibility for us all as a nation and in our personal lives.

These stories are a matter of justice, as they were in South Africa, as they have been in Canada, Sierra Leone, Argentina, South Korea and other nations where entrenched prejudice has affected large groups.

The Voice to Parliament is a recognition of that reality. In whatever form it takes, it enshrines a right to be heard on issues that concern the people who nurtured this continent for thousands of generations. A formal voice confers empowerment, dignity and agency. It formalises the understanding that Aboriginal people know their communities, know their people and know how to resolve their own problems.

Much church engagement in the past, however well meant, has stemmed from patriarchal beliefs about a need for Christians to "save" traditional owners. A Voice definitively rejects the notion that Aboriginal culture is inferior, insignificant or an artefact of the past.

Again, this is not a unique proposition. Many other nations recognise that traditional owners and their cultures are an intrinsic part of national identity.

That role is formalised in many ways – for example, specific electoral representation and agreements like the Treaty of Waitangi. Legal consequences flowing from that treaty include financial settlements with the New Zealand government recognising Maori fishing and land rights.

In Norway, the Sámi parliament promotes political initiatives and manages the Sámi Development Fund, with responsibility for the development of the Sámi language, protection of culture and cultural heritage sites.

Coupled with truth telling, the church also has role to play in championing subsidiarity – a concept from Catholic social teaching holding that wherever possible, decisions ought to be made locally, by those affected, in their own best interests. As

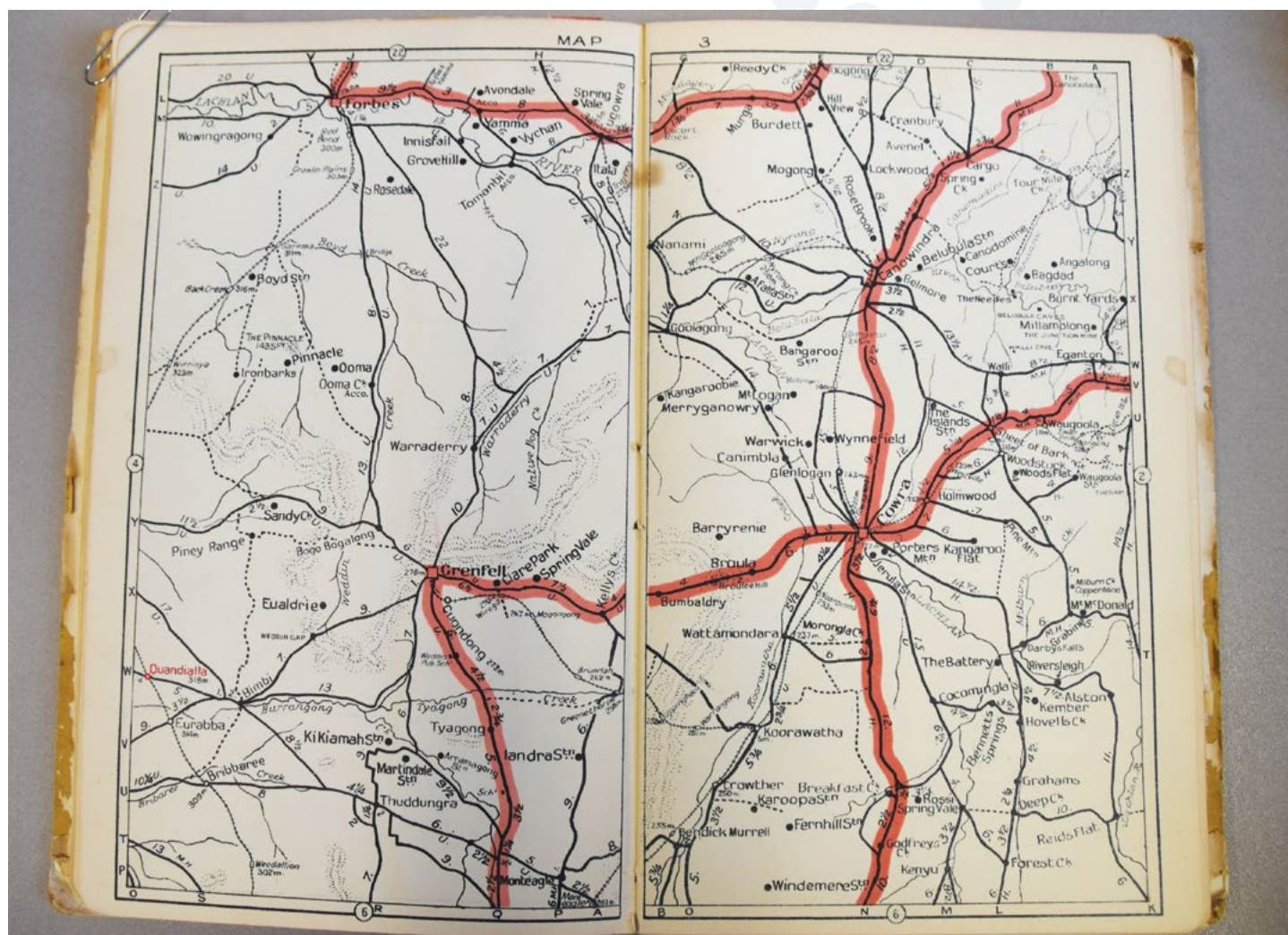
a fundamental value, it should ensure that decisions like the Northern Territory intervention and the imposition of cashless welfare cards don't happen without Aboriginal consultation and agreement.

These are moral matters for Christian Australians because they go to fundamental human dignity. Christ walked with tax collectors and outcasts, with Samaritans, the poor and the disabled. He turned over the merchants' tables in the temple and castigated the "whitened

sepulchres" of the Pharisees. He appeared first to women on Easter Sunday. Throughout the gospel, we see his radical vision of equality, justice and mercy.

The challenges ahead of us as a nation are immense. It's a journey on which the Australian Christian church must walk as a steadfast and wholly committed partner.

Genevieve Jacobs was the inaugural co-chair of the ACT's Reconciliation. She is group editor for Region Media.



Can you find Quandialla?, map from 1927 NSW Mortorists' Road Guide, published by H E C Robinson, Ltd, photo by Sarah Stitt



Referendum on Voice: A Reconciling Moment

Bishop Philip Huggins

Director, Ecumenical Studies, ACC&C

Approaching the referendum on 'voice' in the right spirit, how can this be a moment that is fully reconciling, one of healing and repair? How can we help this to be a moment that is nation-building?

Friends and I recently studied and wrote about the importance of [Forgiveness](#). In this article I would like to share some insights that may be helpful so we are all in the right spirit to ensure the [proposed referendum](#) is wonderfully successful.

Our primary offering and the faith of our encouragement is captured in these words of Henri Nouwen in our *Forgiveness* book (p.63).

"The hard truth is that we all love poorly...
We need to forgive and be forgiven every day, every hour - unceasingly. This is the great work of love among the communion of the weak that is the human family.
The voice that calls us the Beloved is the voice of freedom..."

Aware of the humble love of God for all living beings; aware of how the divine Creator yearns to see us all flourishing together, consideration of the following may be helpful:

All people, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, who call Australia home have a relationship with this place. In a world full of tears, can we make this referendum a time of new beginnings?

We understand God is Creator of all that is. We understand that all we have is a gift. Through meditation and through attention to our breath, we appreciate with each breath the gift of life. Relatedly, and contextually, those of us who are non-Indigenous seek to be truly respectful of First People's Elders, past and present. We

seek, as orientation towards a better future, to extend loving respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples each day. The proposed "Voice" that will result from the referendum is an opportunity to practise and extend our loving respect.

Children teach us that feeling safe is part of being safe. Children teach us how to feel afresh what it is to be loving, understanding and forgiving.

We are invited to feel what it is we seek through the referendum. This may help us to sustain the choice to heal and not to harm; to seek healing around what we have done and what has been done to us. While revenge is deeply ingrained into our primal human psyche so too is kindness and forgiveness.

Desmond Tutu and his daughter Mpho offer us this model as regards breaking the revenge cycle. See fig 1 below (p. 45).

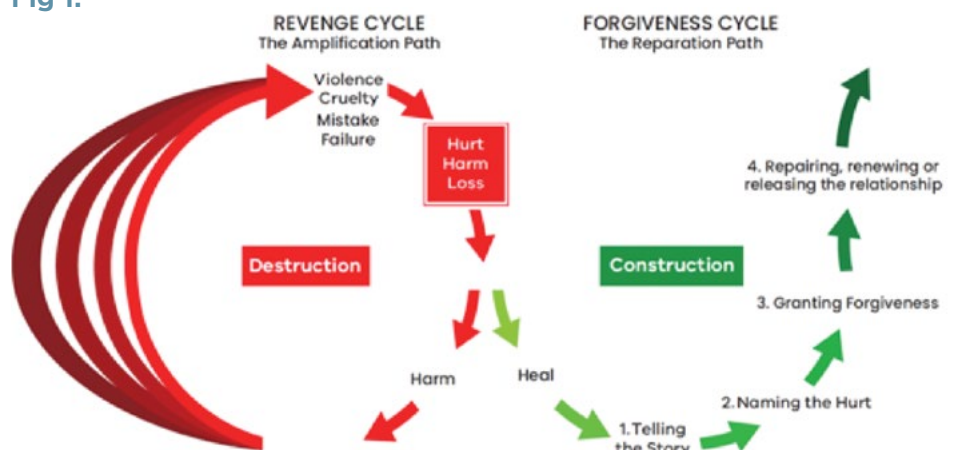
Forgiveness underpins this relationship approach to dealing with mistakes. We make many mistakes. Often there is no intention to harm, and when harm is intended, those involved may have little real understanding of the effects of their harmful actions. This explains some, but not all, of the history that needs healing.

Great leaders of South Africa give us the existential truths which shaped their leadership, amidst the institutional racism of apartheid and the negative effects of colonialism. Nelson Mandela soberly said: "Hating someone is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die!" Whenever we share this wisdom with folk struggling, they get it!

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said: "Until we can forgive, we remain locked in our pain and locked out of the possibility of being at peace". As a disciple of Jesus, he knew this calling from Jesus' clear teachings, like in the prayer Jesus gave those wanting help with their praying, "... forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us..." (Luke 11:1-4). And Desmond's journey took him deep into why Jesus said on the way to the Cross, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). Later, in his leadership of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission after 1996, he saw the vivid complexity of reconciliation as people literally faced what they had done to others.

The quality of a relationship is made of five fundamental elements: trust, forgiveness, integrity, hope and compassion. These elements need to be in mind as we have

Fig 1.



our national conversations ahead of the referendum. Reconciliation requires us to first recognise that we are relational. We are predisposed to relating.

Indigenous 'yarning' is conciliatory because it does not leave any fragments or people out. First Australians can guide us to a society where "real understanding comes in the spaces in between, in the relational forces that connect and move points (the people, the environment, buildings, agencies and organisations)" (Yunkaporta 2020). Traditional Indigenous language does not base itself on a logic of "'I' or 'you' but 'We – two'" (p.34).

The [poem](#) of e. e. cummings conveys "I am through you, so I". We become who we are through each other. Pondering this, we can gain a glimpse as to what the benefits of a successful referendum might be for the quality of relationships in this place now called Australia.

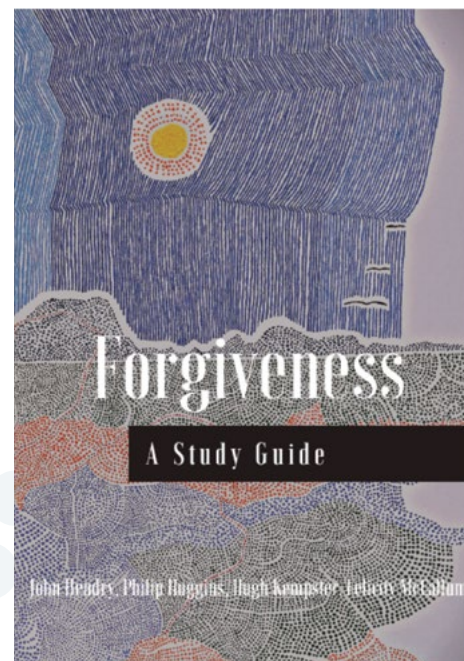
We know there is a [difference](#) when we listen carefully to another's story and see how the world looks to them. We know this requires us to be really present, not distracted. We know how trust and understanding thus evolve and how, together, we can then imagine and plan a better future.

Recommendations

- In preparation for the referendum, we can consider our feelings about it.
- What are they? What experiences help explain them? (This might be something to write in a journal or to draw. It might be something for a searching conversation).
- In further preparation, what can we read or see that will make us better informed?
- From the above and taking account of the necessity of forgiveness, what appropriate advocacy might we offer, including with others?

Conclusion

This referendum is a moment of profound significance for our nation. The nature of media-based public discourse being what it is, there will be an amplifying of the discordant voices. This can be so distracting that the significance of this moment may be diluted, even lost. Our role is not only to prevent this happening but also to help people feel and see how much more wonderful Australia can be, after a successful referendum.



In Appreciation: Lt Gen (ret'd) John Sanderson AC

Clive Rodger

ACC&C Board and Executive

Thank you speech for Lt Gen (ret'd) John Sanderson AC on the occasion of his retirement from the Board of the ACC&C.

For more than a decade Lt Gen (ret'd) John Sanderson AC (John) has made a huge contribution to the life of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture—as Deputy Chair of its Board, member of the Executive and, most importantly, as wise counsel, mentor and friend to Professor James Haire AC, the Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard and more recently Professor Anthony Maher. He has been for many of us a greatly valued colleague and friend. It has been a privilege to serve with him.

John is thoughtful, intellectual, well read, wise, courageous, forthright and profoundly Christian. Some of these characteristics are unusual for military leaders. John's military career was outstanding. He was chosen to head the military component of the UN's rebuilding of Cambodia. He commanded 16,000 troops and for his service was awarded Australia's highest honour, a Companion of the Order of Australia. Gareth Evans recently described John's efforts as "brilliant and outstanding". On returning to Australia, John became Chief of Army.

In 2000 John was appointed the 31st Governor of Western Australia and held that position for five years.

John, on hearing the vision for the Centre, enthusiastically embraced its mission seeing its importance to the Australian community. John's legacy to the Centre is important. Five areas are identified for special mention:

1. John has consistently reminded the Board that to be effective we need a well-funded and resourced Secretariat. No organisation can have impact without back room support. The Centre needs funding for this purpose.
2. Appreciation. Australia needs a clear prophetic voice which is well researched, cogent, principled, respects diversity and is Christian. No doubt John's grounding and formation in the Uniting Church has been very influential in his advocacy for this position.
3. Consistency with the mission. Good generals and military leaders know which fights to engage in and which to let go. The Centre sits on very valuable land. Over the years we have been offered opportunities to develop the land. John has been a clarion voice of considering such proposals only if they advance our mission.
4. John has demonstrated commitment, energy and a deep level of engagement. This has been exemplary, as the Board requires passionate commitment and engagement from its members.
5. Finally, John has given the Board hope. The poet, activist, philosopher and Czech President Vaclav Havel said *Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out.* Thank you, John, for helping us to make sense of so much that has occurred.

John's contribution to the Centre is greatly valued. His role as a Board member will be missed. We are delighted that John has accepted the role as a Centre Ambassador and look forward to John's continuing contribution in that role.

9 August 2022

John is thoughtful, intellectual, well read, wise, courageous, forthright and profoundly Christian. Some of these characteristics are unusual for military leaders.



In Sanderson Park, Phnom Penh, with Mrs Lorraine Sanderson and the Australian Ambassador, HE Mr Pablo Kang and his wife, Mrs Rebecca Kang, photo supplied

Spiritual Reminiscence – an Impressive Workshop

Paul Bragaw

CAPS Spiritual Reminiscence workshop participant

When I received word of a new Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies workshop in Spiritual Reminiscence and realised that I would be back in Australia in time to attend, I was already excited. I had attended an earlier one-day workshop and had found opportunities to apply spiritual reminiscence in my home parish of Christ Church St Laurence in Sydney. Since I divide my time between Sydney, Australia, and Baltimore, Maryland, I cannot always attend such events at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.

In attending the workshop, I hoped to bring myself up-to-date on advances in spiritual reminiscence work so that I might apply it in my current US parish, St Peter's Episcopal Church, Ellicott City, Maryland, among elder parishioners with or without dementia. It was also a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with old friends and make new acquaintances working in the various fields of ageing and pastoral care. The resulting networking promises to be most beneficial.

Being able to speak one-on-one with such people as the Rev'd Prof Elizabeth MacKinlay; Corrinne Trevitt, RN; Elizabeth Pringle, Director of Improvement Matters; and my former classmate and doctoral candidate, Sally Mordike, would by itself have made the workshop worthwhile. But there was so much more on the agenda. The addition of a second day made it possible for more interchange and sharing of experience during the sessions. And not all the attendees were from the aged care industry. For example, I am a volunteer lay parish pastoral carer. Another attendee was not affiliated with aged care but wanted to learn how spiritual reminiscence work might help in assisting those with dementia.

Two highlights of the workshop stood out for me: Elizabeth (Liz) MacKinlay's report on her experiences with spiritual reminiscence work in Japan, and the debut of a video recording of an actual session of spiritual reminiscence work with elder residents of an aged care facility who were living with dementia.

Liz described how elders in a Japanese aged care facility responded to spiritual reminiscence work in much the same way as Australian elders, despite differences in cultural context and language and the need to communicate through translators. She also shared her delight at the enthusiastic and courteous reception from everyone involved in the visit.

The video of a live spiritual reminiscence session with elder Australians who have dementia showcased an invaluable resource for training facilitators in this valuable work. Chris Nelson, who conducted the session, was present to answer questions and to share his expertise and insights with the participants. The plan is to incorporate the video in an expanded instructional package for training new spiritual reminiscence work facilitators.

Do not miss the next opportunity to participate in this valuable workshop when it is scheduled again.



Spiritual Reminiscence Workshop participants, photo by Sarah Stitt



New Kid... at the ACC&C

Patrick McKenna

Director, Strategic Projects (Research), CSU

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce myself as the newest member of George Browning House, and for the warm welcome I have received from the staff, students, board members and other visitors to the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.

I joined Charles Sturt University in July this year in my first higher education sector role, which I am finding to be exciting and refreshing. I am surrounded by very smart and inspiring people who make it a joy and learning experience to come to work. That is not to say I didn't enjoy my

There are many great opportunities to partner with government, industry and the community on impactful projects in our local area and beyond.

previous jobs—I have been lucky in a fun and interesting career. I came to Charles Sturt from the Department of Social Services where I worked on the Australian Government's harm-minimisation policy for gambling, and implemented the new National Consumer Protection Framework for Online Wagering. This followed work on the Australian Government Emergency Relief response to COVID-19, including leading the collaborative governance and research activities of the National Coordination Group. I have also worked in strategy and governance roles in the community sector with the St Vincent de Paul Society, and in Finance and General Management roles in the tourism and hospitality sector in Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, and mainland Europe.

As Director of Strategic Projects (Research) at Charles Sturt, I am developing and implementing the Research Strategy 2030 under the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research). The research strategy comprises a programme of strategic projects aligned to four pillars:

1. Building world class research institutes
2. Supporting and delivering excellence in research
3. Establishing enduring partnerships for societal and commercial impact
4. Developing next generation leading scholars and researchers.

One of my early tasks was to ensure our research institutes had consistent and robust strategic plans, which we have now developed for the three research institutes launched in 2022: Gulbali Institute (focusing on biosecurity, food and beverage innovation, environmental stewardship, and water and fisheries), the Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Futures Institute, and the Rural Health Research Institute. With the Board of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture turning its mind to long-term strategic planning, I am hoping I can use my experience to make a helpful contribution. We will also be looking at opportunities for other research institutes focusing on democratic reform, and regional governance and policy.

In terms of supporting and delivering excellence in research, we recently held a Research Services Retreat on Wagga Wagga campus to co-design mission statements and service charters for each of the Research Services teams. This was a productive two days and it was great to meet the people supporting our research in the background.

There are many great opportunities to partner with government, industry and the community on impactful projects in our local area and beyond. The expansion of the AgriPark in Wagga Wagga is a great example—we are working with NSW Government departments, local industry producers and peak bodies, as well as the University of Queensland and Wageningen University in the Netherlands on creating Australia's version of Foodvalley.

Our Higher Degree by Research students are the leading researchers of tomorrow. We are currently reviewing their experience, with five working groups focusing on scholarships, a new Industry PhD program, support services, supervision, and research training. The report will be published early next year and include recommendations to grow our HDR student numbers and completion rates.

I am looking forward to 2023 and beyond as we start to realise the benefits of our strategic planning and implementation work. And I am looking forward to saying hello when you are next in George Browning House.



Although these developments are well-known to scholars, they have had relatively little impact on most Christian theologians, who continue to refer to 'the Christian religion', 'the religion of Israel' and 'Islamic religion', despite the historical errors such usage may involve.

Rethinking Religion and the Secular

Wayne Hudson

Research Professor, ACC&C

Over the last twenty years academics have called into question the idea that there is an essence called 'religion'. They have shown that the term was not used in its modern sense until the Renaissance and that it was wrongly applied in the nineteenth century to spiritual traditions in China, India, Japan and Africa which need to be understood in other, more contextual ways. Related considerations have also prompted a reconsideration of the idea that there are Indigenous 'religions'.

Although these developments are well-known to scholars, they have had relatively little impact on most Christian theologians, who continue to refer to 'the Christian religion', 'the religion of Israel' and 'Islamic religion', despite the historical errors such usage may involve.

The Western notion of 'the secular' may be subject to similar revisions. If 'the

secular' is a problematic concept, however, this has substantial implications for the crisis of Christianity in the West. Popular commentators claim that 'religion' is declining and societies are becoming more 'secularised'. In a very loose sense this may be correct, although it is contested. In rigorous contexts, however, such parlance may do more harm than good. If we accept, instead, that the organisation of human spirituality changes historically and requires careful empirical study, and that 'the secular' is a loose syncretic concept with different applications over time and in different societies, then we should be able to rethink contemporary organisations of spirituality in more insightful terms. This, in turn, has many implications for understanding the present crisis of Christianity in the West and also its non-crisis in contemporary Africa, and Asia and Latin America.

To be specific, examples of the organisation of spirituality need to be studied as such, without presuming that we know in advance what we will find. Equally, alleged cases of 'the secular' need to be studied without assuming notions of possible secular life which imply that social order can avoid projective elements or that human bodies can be anything but concerned about their survival as long as they are alive. Doing so will help us, I think, arrive at new concepts which will be relevant to responding to the crisis of Christianity in the West.

Readers of *Engage* interested in these issues may read my forthcoming book *Beyond Religion and the Secular: Creative Spiritual Movements and their Relevance to Political, Social and Cultural Reform* which will be published by Bloomsbury in December 2022.

UNCOP27: Divine Providence and Presence

Bishop Philip Huggins

Director, Ecumenical Studies, ACC&C

On good days and on perplexing days say one's mantra and follow the light. In recent days I have had an unexpected experience of divine providence and presence. This has been whilst saying my mantra, 'Jesus have mercy', and following where the light seems to lead! It seems an experience both personal and also evidencing the yearning of our humble God for the well-being of all living beings, now and in the future. That is a big statement but here is my explanation.

After having devoted my energies to helping UNCOP27 as best I could, at the last minute I and many others were prevented from attending by Hotels which cancelled our accommodation (already paid for and confirmed), then rebooked these rooms to folk able and willing to pay highly inflated prices. (For me, from Australia, there was no time to know if anything would be available, let alone what might be the profiteering price. Some people I subsequently spoke to paid quadrupled prices).

So it goes. As Fr. Laurence Freeman reminded us later in the week, St. Ignatius of Loyola had a fifteen-minute rule for dealing with disappointments and opposition. "It would take me fifteen minutes to compose myself. Then I'd carry on", he apparently said. So, what happened next?

Along with us, Rabbi Alon Goshen-Gottstein and those organising the "Return to Mt Sinai" Ceremony in Egypt also had local difficulties. Accordingly, with little time, they somehow moved this Ceremony and its preparations from Mt Sinai to London. I was invited to join them and composed myself during the long flight, not quite in St. Ignatius time-frame! Rabbi Alon had many experiences of bounteous providence and many sleepless nights. But, miraculously, he brought our small group together in London on the same day we had expected

to be in St Katherine's monastery on Mt Sinai! The hospitality and enthusiasm of the Jewish community in London also made this possible.

As an aside, being in the Jewish community in North London made me vividly aware of the consequences of antisemitism. Even today, the entrances to some synagogues do not convey whose spiritual home this is, for fear of attacks. Other places have security guards at the gates. Being in that community on the Friday and Saturday of Shabbat, also reminded me of the resilient strength and beauty of Jewish faith and culture.



Faith leaders gathering hosted by the London Jewish community with Rabbi Alon Goshen-Gottstein centre, photo supplied

For three days our small interfaith group worked on 'Ten Principles of Climate Repentance', echoing Moses' encounter with the divine on Mt Sinai. We hope this will be of enduring benefit. We were very mindful, as we worked, of those engaged in demanding negotiations at UNCOP27.

Late on the following Sunday, led by Archbishop Rowan Williams, we walked up Parliament Hill in London chanting as we went, each taking a turn. Then we read the [Ten Principles](#) that we pray will bring more heartfelt commitments to help prevent further catastrophic climate events. Our prayers were and are with those implementing the agenda of this COP and the next in Dubai, November 2023. We pray that this all happens before time runs out.

We pray the containment of global warming to the target 1.5 degrees is achieved.

Our [ceremony](#) received much [publicity](#). As the Ten Principles were read, with silence between each, the crowd that had gathered (and some just happened to be on the hill for recreation) entered into the poignancy and solemnity of the occasion. By the completion there was a deep bond of friendship between us all. Discerning, from our traditions, the wisdom that might help in this time of crisis drew us all closer. More cooperative activity is planned. For me, this was another experience of the unified and unifying consciousness that we share. Contemplative souls and little children intuit this.

My reflection is that God is drawing us ever deeper into cooperation because of God's love for all living beings. One experience of divine providence and presence therefore leads to the next. Hence, an apparent dead-end turns into a new possibility that is life-giving. The famous hymn of John Henry Newman, so loved by Mahatma Gandhi, seems like our song afresh - "Lead kindly light, one step ahead for me". So, the invitation to London then led into an invitation to join a Retreat at the Bonnevaux Centre for the World Community of Christian Meditation, in France. This was an opportunity to prayerfully support those at UNCOP27, much as I had planned to do anyway. That prayerful support, as ever, merged with what solidarity in advocacy was and is possible.

[Hence, for example, all this attached below, as the UNCOP27 came towards its end.](#)

Looking ahead, the theme of the Retreat at Bonnevaux speaks further into our direction. Under the banner, "Our Conversation is in Heaven" Fr. Laurence Freeman explored the importance of contemplation in the shaping of truly civilising conversations.



Metaphorically and in real time, Bonnevaux pictured at the dawn of a new day, photo supplied

Climate Repentance Meet London 13 Nov 2022, photo by David Parry © GNNSJ 2022

I was able to share a little of our work, both with Fr. Laurence and with a young seeker Oliver from England. Oliver liked our book on *Forgiveness* and sent it on a journey that now includes young meditators in Brazil who are convened by Tayna Malaspina, WCCM Director of Meditation for Young People. Tayna also makes olive oil. She carries her fondness for St. Francis and St. Clare into both her labelling and her meditative life.

Those of us who meditate know, as Fr. Laurence said, “silence is the deepest form of conversation”. Within that is, “the silent music of God”, in the beautiful phrase of St. John of the Cross. Equipped by grace and by sustained practice, the interior

silence we acquire through meditation helps us to listen well and enter into conversations with a better awareness of our own motives and projections.

Always there remains the necessity to thereafter make the choice of words and actions which are the truest, kindest and most beautiful. My unexpected days were a renewal in this ‘wisdom for the common good’!

The famous hymn of John Henry Newman, so loved by Mahatma Gandhi, seems like our song afresh – “Lead kindly light, one step ahead for me”.

Living Responsibly in Today's World – Time to Abandon Guilt and Embrace Loving Action

Report by **Katy Nicholls**

Christians for an Ethical Society Committee Member

The CES final Forum for the year looked at how we can live responsibly in the world. The Greens have reshaped our thinking on the environment. Jo Clay spoke about her own philosophy and values with a response from Alison Weeks, who drew on Pope Francis' writings on the environment and what that means to live responsibly.

"What can I do today to help the climate emergency? And how can I look after future generations?" Jo Clay, Greens MLA for Ginninderra, asks herself these questions every day. In a very personal address, Jo told the attendees at a Christians for an Ethical Society forum that she became a Christian long before she joined the Greens, and shared part of her story, guided by those questions, and an enthusiasm for how many options there are now to make a change. The other two key personal features she shared were the variety of experience she has, from entrepreneurship to law, climate activism to counter-terrorism, and the powerful focusing effect of having a baby, who gives a face to future generations.

In attempting to find her own response to those questions Jo, noting that the average Australian emits about 22 tons of carbon equivalent a year, has developed and documented her [carbon diet](#), reducing her family's carbon footprint by 75 per cent while still enabling them to enjoy what matters in life (including steak on Saturday night); developed a patented recycling company; found new ways to express her hedonism and thrill-seeking with a lower footprint than flying across the world on a whim (ziplining off buildings for charity anyone?); and entered politics where she daily confronts the toxic false dichotomy of 'people or the planet', noting that people will not survive without a planet.

Recent successes for Canberrans she listed were: 7-star ratings for buildings, ensuring they will be well insulated and designed to increase comfort and reduce heating and cooling costs; introducing a 'get off gas' policy; and working on reducing transport emissions, starting with electrifying the government fleet and public transport, and supporting electric vehicles. The Climate Council has rated the ACT as being the most advanced of all states and territories in clean [transport](#).

In response, Alison Weeks, Chair of the Catholic Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Caring for Creation (CFC) movement, reflected on the similarities between the Greens' approach to social justice and ecological sustainability with calls from the Pope to recognise that everything is connected and to embrace the paradigm of integral ecology. She discussed the Catholic Church's response to God's creation, reflecting particularly on the 2015 encyclical from Pope Francis: *Laudato Si – On Care for our Common Home*. Alison noted that Christians brought the unique perspective of placing God at the centre, and that *Genesis* charges humans with an obligation to care for creation. Humans are not at the centre of the universe, but each one of us is one of God's creations. Alison's talk emphasised that there is no difference between the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor – the earth has become one of the poor.

The local CFC movement has learnt that a crucial step to enable change is to educate ourselves to see anew, and then find a common language, which includes respect for difference. Actions the CFC is initiating include solar panels, divesting from fossil fuel investments, and encouraging the use of electric vehicles.



Alison Weeks and Jo Clay MLA, Christians for an Ethical Society Forum, 23 November 2022, photo supplied

What key questions will you use to guide your actions of living in the world with inclusive love?



Chaplain Gayl Mills OAM presenting at the AFP Chaplains Conference, The Chapel, ACC&C. photo supplied

Reconnecting: Bridging the Distance – Australia and NZ Senior Police Chaplains Conference

Chaplain Gayl Mills OAM

Principal Chaplain, People and Culture Command, AFP

The Australia and New Zealand Senior Police Chaplains' Conference was recently hosted by the AFP at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in Barton, Canberra, with the theme 'Reconnecting - Bridging the Distance'.

The inaugural conference was held at the AFP Training College, Barton, in August 2005. Since then the AFP has either hosted or participated in the conference. This year, the conference brought together chaplains from across Australia and New Zealand for the first time since 2017. The AFP's Chaplaincy Network along with chaplains from across Australia (all State & Territory policing jurisdictions) and New Zealand police convened in Canberra. The chaplains also participated in a service at the National Police Memorial and attended the 'Last Post' ceremony at the Australian War Memorial.

The conference provided an opportunity for senior police chaplains from all jurisdictions, including New Zealand, to discuss the manner in which police chaplains provide pastoral and spiritual care and support to police members and their families, network with chaplains from other jurisdictions, discuss topical issues, share lessons learnt, exchange knowledge and experiences, new strategies, and best practice in this crucial side of wellbeing support.

This opportunity is essential to ensure the AFP Chaplaincy Network has connections across the country should they be required.

During the three-day conference, themes covered ranged from 'Caring for the Carers' to 'Moral Injury' and 'Law Enforcement Suicide'.

Chaplains deliver a very important and personal service for our law enforcement community and their families, both in celebrations and during times of crisis.

One of the highlights of the conference was a formal dinner hosted by A/DCO Lesa Gale at the AFP College. The guest speaker at the formal dinner was Professor Anthony Maher, Executive Director, Australian Centre

for Christianity and Culture. Professor Maher gave an inspiring theological speech on 'Hope'.

During the dinner A/DCO Lesa Gale reflected on the essential role of Chaplains in Law Enforcement "As a police officer of more than 30 years... I have seen my fair share of trauma... I have experienced firsthand the value and critical support chaplains provide for our members responding to critical incidents and other traumatic events on and off duty".



AFP Chaplains Conference, photo supplied

A Chorus of Women’s Peace Prize Award

Dr Glenda Cloughley

A Chorus of Women

ACC&C residents, A Chorus of Women, were awarded the Chief Minister’s Rotary Peace Prize for 2022 on the International Day of Peace, 21 September. The Peace Prize is awarded to an individual or group who has contributed to a more peaceful community – locally, nationally and internationally. The 2018 inaugural recipient of the award was presented to Dr Sue Wareham, founding member of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). In 2017 ICAN received the Nobel Peace Prize.

Senior diplomats of 40 countries and representatives of the ACT Chief Minister and the Prime Minister joined Canberrans to witness the award ceremony at the Canberra Rotary Peace Bell in Nara Peace Park, Lennox Gardens.

Japanese Ambassador, Shingo Yamagami, spoke of the origin in Hiroshima of peace bells around the world. There are 22 peace bells with two in Australia, in Cowra and in Canberra. Referring to present threats of nuclear war against Ukraine, he said “It seems that now, more than any other time

in the recent past, the global community must act to ensure that the tragedy that befell Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 – the hundreds of thousands of deaths resulting from the bombs themselves and their lingering radiation - are never, ever repeated”.

Perhaps the most moving of responses to the award was the spontaneous reaction of Iraqi Ambassador, Dr Bassim Altomma. The Ambassador leapt to his feet on hearing that, in 2003, 150 Canberra women sang a lament for his people in the Australian Parliament while the Government was announcing that it was going to war against Iraq. Speaking of his immense gratitude for this first song of the Chorus, he asked to ring the Peace Bell with the women – and then, to ring it again.

The Chorus women were completely surprised to win the award, having gathered – as usual – to sing at the annual ceremony. Photos taken during the citation show, on hearing the announcement, many of the women weeping!

The Chorus was described by the Chief Minister’s representative, Kareena Arthy, as “an incredibly deserving recipient” of the Peace Prize. She said the women had ‘encouraged integrity, compassion, respect and humanity’ on hundreds of public occasions as they performed their original songs and spoken texts.

“Your beautiful advocacy through song has been such an important part of so many key issues in this community,” Alisha Payne MP said. “This is a fantastic and well-deserved award”.

All the speakers recalled A Chorus of Women’s first song, *Lament*.

*“Open the doors of the chambers,
(of your heart)*

Open your minds to our song

*We sing for peace,
through the power of love*

*Hear the wisdom of women,
hear our song”*



ACT Chief Minister’s Rotary Peace Prize presentation ceremony, 21 September 2022, photo supplied

Alicia Payne said: "Throughout history, small acts of courage and conviction have created ripples of hope and changed the world for the better – like ... singing a song,". Writing in [Canberra online newspaper RiotACT](#), Genevieve Jacobs recalled the beginning of Chorus as a "songful act of sabotage".

Responding to the Peace Prize for the Chorus, Glenda Cloughley said the passions that keep impelling Chorus action and music-making are peace, climate change, species extinction, expanding refugee crises and the horrific impacts of war on women and children. "We sing for peace in the world the grandchildren, our grand-daughters will inherit," she said.

Recalling the *Lament* for the people of Iraq, Glenda said, "In our action on 18 March 2003, we discovered we had sung a song that was already in people's hearts, like the longing for peace always is".

"In the cyclical rounds of regeneration mythology, lament is related to lullabies. It's the love song that leads from death to renewal".

The three Chorus songs sung during the ceremony reflect the power of music to connect people - *A Recipe for Peace*, *Heiwa Heiwa Peace* and *Mr Circle*. You can hear the new Chorus recording of [A Recipe for Peace](#) by Glenda Cloughley.

Heiwa Heiwa Peace was being sung at the Berlin Peace Bell in songwriter Elke Bitterhof's hometown as English lyrics by Chorus woman Sue Hoffmann were sung at the Canberra bell.

The Chorus sang Johanna McBride's three-part choral backing for *Mr Circle* with singer-songwriter-diplomat Fred Smith, who won the 2021 Rotary Peace Prize. Written during his diplomatic posting on Bougainville, *Mr Circle* is part of the success story of the world-first unarmed international peace-keeping operation after years of war on the island.

The women gratefully and graciously received the 2022 Chief Minister's Rotary Peace Prize. Their intent is to continue to sing for peace and to give voice to matters at the heart of our communities, weaving integrity, compassion and respect for the Earth into Australian democracy.



The Iraqi Ambassador striking the peace bell with A Chorus of Women, photo supplied



A Chorus of Women acceptance of ACT Chief Minister's 2022 Rotary Peace Prize, photo supplied



National Congress of Women, photo by Hilary Wardhaugh

The Importance of Women's Voices — The National Congress of Women

Dr Janet Salisbury

Founder, Women's Climate Congress

Not long after women first gathered at the ACC&C Chapel in January 2020, and the Women's Climate Congress (WCC) was born, we started to plan a National Congress of Women. Faced by the appalling reality of the bushfires and the potential for further catastrophic climate impacts, we resolved to bring women together to create the space for collaborative, cooperative women's leadership that can create meaningful solutions for the existential threat of climate change. We were inspired by our foremothers who in April 1915 came to the International Congress of Women in the midst of WW1 and whose farsighted resolutions have informed much international human rights reform since that time.

And because COVID-19 prevented us from bringing women to Canberra for a face-to-face gathering in 2020 or 2021, we programmed two one-day online events (*Women Rising!* in November 2021, and *Weaving* in April 2022) as prequels to a two-day in-person National Congress of Women hosted by the WCC in Canberra on 11 & 12 September. The congress theme was *Renewal — How can we save the Earth for ourselves and future generations?*

The opening words of a report by Padmapriya Muralidharan, an attendee at the event, capture the feeling of the National Congress:

"Imagine walking into a room filled with strangers and feeling immediately welcome. The people who are here are keen to share their experiences, learn from each other, connect and grow. The conversations held in this space touch a chord and allow us to create a shared vision."

Judging by comments from other participants, this feeling was shared by many of the 100 or so women who attended in person along with the 50-60 online participants.

Taken together, the three events engaged some 500 women from all over Australia, heard from a raft of women leaders from different levels of community and government, and attracted attention overseas. Along the way, we gathered the 'woman thought' of thousands of other women via webinars, members' circles and activities. We laughed and cried and heard of the solidarity that women feel when they come together – across ages, cultures and political parties. And we heard the burning

ambition for action on climate and other systemic changes women long for, rooted in care for future generations and the Earth. From these activities we have created a 'Women's Charter for Change'. A draft of the charter was a centrepiece of the two-day Canberra event in September and has now been finalised and presented to parliament and the wider community.

As Padmapriya noted in her account:

"Blaming past actions is an expensive distraction that does not change the challenges of the present. Rather than talking about what brought us to this predicament, the conversations in the Congress are about solutions. They explore different avenues for climate action and how women's voices can find place in them. I attended the congress as a migrant, from a country where climate change is a lived experience and where violence against women is a shameful reality. With my lived experience and cultural reality come the knowledge that climate change and its solutions have many faces. Engaging meaningfully in climate action requires representing various perspectives and creating space for a multiplicity of voices."



The group photos of national leaders at the UN Climate Change Conference, COP 27, in Egypt (99 men and 11 women), once again show the vital importance of raising up women's voices locally, nationally and internationally, and from across political parties, cultures and ages. This is the ongoing work of the Women's Climate Congress – to listen to each other, cheer each other on, and together to promote a shared vision for the future.



Conversation panel, National Congress of Women, photo by Hilary Wardhaugh



Dr Janet Salisbury, WCC Founder, at the National Congress of Women, photo by Hilary Wardhaugh

Links

Women's Climate Congress:

www.womensclimatecongress.com

Reports and recordings of the National Congress of Women:

www.nationalcongressofwomen.com/reports--recordings.html

WCC Charter for Change:

www.womensclimatecongress.com/charter



Women in conversation, National Congress of Women, photo by Hilary Wardhaugh

Home is More Than a Roof – it is Where Someone Knows Your Name

Kasy Chambers

Executive Director of Anglicare Australia

report by Katy Nicholls

Christians for an Ethical Society Committee Member

What does home mean to you? And what sort of world do we want? These were the questions that occupied those attending the October CES forum. Chair Clive Rodger opened with a meditation on the meaning of justice in both the Old and New Testaments, reminding us that the Hebrew Bible entreats just behaviour, that it is incumbent on us to treat the poor with justice and generosity.

He then introduced Kasy Chambers, Executive Director of Anglicare Australia, who captivated us with stories from her own life and from Anglicare work and research.

'Home' means so much to those who have had a fractured relationship with it: a place to be you, a foundation for meeting human needs including a place of nurture, learning, belonging, safety and permanence, and so much more. Yet now the key public discourse is of a house being a place to build wealth. The bulk of her talk was an excoriating analysis of how we use our collective wealth (in taxes) ineffectively when it comes to housing everyone.

Kasy discussed the changing scene for those who can't afford to buy a home, and may never be able to; the increasing crunch between income (whether benefits or wages – wages rose about 2.6% in the last year) and rent (rising about 21% in the same time), the tenancy laws still assuming that tenancy is transitory and not supporting long term needs, the drop both in quantity and quality of social and community housing, and the inevitable consequences – people going without food and heating to pay the rent, retired people and single parents unable to afford to rent.

Kasy pointed out that the public dollar is primarily being spent on subsidising private rental – in other words over \$20 billion of Commonwealth funds are spent primarily on negative gearing and capital gains tax concessions (the final quarter is rent assistance). Further modelling on general personal tax concessions noted that of \$135 billion foregone each year, over half went to the richest 20%, and only about 4.5% went to the poorest 20%. How effective is that when (as the last Anglicare rental affordability snapshot shows) out of 60,000+ dwellings, less than 1 place is affordable for a single person on jobseeker.

The story repeats when we consider the costs for older people to age in place in private rental, or the increasing number who are employed in insecure work or on minimum wage. For a wide range of reasons including changing work conditions, underemployment and an inadequate minimum wage there is a new large class of working poor who will never be able to afford to buy a home, and are at risk of homelessness.

How did we become a society where we accept that more and more people, including families and older women, should live in tents and cars? How did we become a society where the risk of economic change and development is borne by the individual? Are we creating a society that honours God and God's creation?

How did we become a society where we accept that more and more people, including families and older women, should live in tents and cars? How did we become a society where the risk of economic change and development is borne by the individual? Are we creating a society that honours God and God's creation?



Kasy Chambers, Executive Director, Anglicare Australia, speaking at CES forum, ACC&C

Kasy called us to reframe our thinking of housing – from wealth accumulation to a human right where people can flourish. She listed various models (such as defence housing) that change the model while reducing the risk for individual landlords.

You are invited to sit with the discomfort of the things we need to do to reframe housing. To talk to your elected officials. To recognise that our comfort is built on the disadvantage of others. Even to consider practical actions such as establishing a collective to buy a home and rent it out at a rate that those on jobseeker can afford.



God's Church for God's World

Dr Monica Short

Adjunct Research Fellow, ACC&C

Lambeth Conference for Bishops and Bishops' Spouses: Personal reflections

We felt tiny – in a helpful and good way. Please, let us describe the scene of the 2022 Lambeth Conference for Bishops and Bishops' Spouses, titled: *God's Church for God's World*. About 650 bishops and 450 spouses from approximately 165 nations attended this Conference. Many people attending were multi-lingual, and it is believed that over 2000 languages were represented at the Conference.

When we opened the door from our room we seemed to step out into a beautiful colour, 3D-picture book on worldwide fashion. People in their gorgeous native dresses and outfits surrounded us – bright and earthy colours and patterns from islands, Africa, Asia, etc. delighted our eyes.

My ears continually chimed with joy to the sounds of different languages, and my mind was captivated by multiple tunes of

people worshipping our God and saviour according to their culture. I was humbled by, and in awe of, everyone who attended the Conference; people were so inspiring. My heart warmed as I watched people from different cultures talk about the Gospel of Jesus and read the Bible together. I watched individuals respond to division with kindness – I observed the fruit of the Spirit on display every moment of the day. I was learning about God, community and engagement from experts from around the world. My presumptions and expectations for this Conference were too small and consequently inaccurate. Thankfully, my miniature understanding of the Anglican Communion and God's beautiful world was and is growing. This world is more complex than I think, and our world needs more of God's justice and help than I realise. I left the Conference feeling naïve and excited to know more. This Conference motivated me to listen more deeply to people, read

more, pray harder, and talk less. My current prayer is that I will reduce my dependency on propaganda and become more engaged with what is actually happening worldwide. This is so that my actions can be helpful to others and not a hindrance. The Conference encouraged me to have hope and a more profound desire to see everyone flourish worldwide.

Bishop Mark Short noted that the Conference is one of the four instruments that keep Anglicans from 160 countries connected. This was the first Conference since 2008, so there was lots of catching up. It certainly was a full program! We gathered for worship, heard about exciting new church plans, and committed to the Communion Forest Initiative¹. We were reminded of our call. This call included making our churches safe and our communities places where the dignity of each person is recognised and valued. The highlights included singing worship songs



Lambeth, photo supplied

in different languages, and studying the Scriptures with Archbishop Justin Welby, bishops from across the globe and their spouses. The Bible expositions were:

- Called into hope & holiness in Christ - 1 Peter 1.1-25 | The Lambeth Conference²
- A holy people following Christ - 1 Peter 2:1-12 | The Lambeth Conference³
- Resistance and Resilience - 1 Peter 2.13-3.22 | The Lambeth Conference⁴
- Suffering in Christ - 1 Peter 4.1-19 | The Lambeth Conference⁵

In one of these expositions, Archbishop Justin Welby explained how the letter 1 Peter contains 'a single calling to the Church, although the application will vary according to context'. This was confirmed and illuminated when we broke into small

groups to explore the letter's themes further. In my small group, I listened to what alienation feels like - such as in places where people are excluded from social and political power, but the church is growing fast. It was challenging to consider holiness in contexts where corruption and graft are the locally, socially accepted and common ways of doing business. It was helpful to contemplate how reconciliation takes place in contexts of warfare or conflict between groups such as farmers and graziers.

For Mark and me, the Lambeth Conference was an indispensable preparation for faithfully engaging with God's diverse world, which includes engaging with and sharing the love and truth of Jesus with others. They warmly thank everyone involved for the opportunity to attend it. We commend Archbishop Justin Welby's keynote talks to you. All three can be viewed on YouTube^{6,7,8}.

This article was originally printed in the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn *Anglican News* August 2022 edition: 'From Lambeth with Love'. The authors are grateful to *Anglican News* for providing permission to reprint the information here.

Links

1. www.comunionforest.org
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eAYRbfUJ_cg
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3iDZSAhKJrw>
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgaFGNm0ma8>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QLw7xvUgnY>
6. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNF9Vns4_es
7. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucVQiVMJfOU>
8. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIXND3YAMRE>



Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, Lambeth, photo supplied



Egisto Colamedici, mayor of Selci, Virginia Miller and Francesca Romana Persichelli, president, Rete tra Imprese della Sabina, photo supplied

The Administration of Hope and the Way of St Francis

Dr Virginia Miller

Adjunct Research Fellow, ACC&C

Pope Francis has chosen the motto “Pilgrims of Hope” for the highly anticipated Jubilee Year, 2025. In view of this millions of pilgrims are expected to travel to Rome for the event. Many of them will decide to journey along the [Via San Francesco](#) (the way of Saint Francis) – a sixteenth century pilgrimage that is growing in popularity¹. In doing so, it is expected that they will be transformed by the journey, which is a spiritual and cultural experience that traverses many ancient Italian villages with spectacular views and their own typical foods, customs and traditions. However, it appears that it is not only the pilgrims who are transformed by the experience, but also the towns themselves. In this article I share the story of one of these towns, Selci, which is nestled in the Sabina hills, famous for its beauty and rich history.

I was most fortunate to discuss the *Via San Francesco* with Egisto Colamedici, the mayor of Selci, and Francesca Romana Persichelli, the president of Rete tra Imprese della Sabina, a body which is concerned with promoting activities in Sabina and the *Via San Francesco*.

Surprisingly, the relatively recent phenomenon of the pilgrimage wasn't created by the community but rather happened to the community. Indeed, it was brought to the attention of the mayor that

thousands of pilgrims were traversing Selci on a regular basis. In response to this, he set about designing an administrative and physical structure to better accommodate the pilgrims. It was important to do this to ensure the safety and comfort of the pilgrims and the harmony of the residents of the town. The first thing the mayor did was obtain official recognition of the existence of the commune as a pilgrim destination. This happened in 2018. Next, he designed the administrative structure that included, among other things, a plan for the maintenance of the paths that lead into the village, given that one of the objectives of the pilgrimage is to stay away from asphalt surfaces as much as possible. Yet, this single task is not as straight-forward as it may seem. For example, there was a question as to the proper administration of the paths. Some of the paths are on public property, others are on private property. Moreover, given the historical nature of pilgrimages in Italy there is no legislation concerning the paths - as the pilgrimage grows legislation is needed.

For Mayor Colamedici, administering the pilgrimage concerns liaising with 28 other municipalities in Rome and in the Sabina area that are all part of *Via San Francesco*. Remarkably, these municipalities have

taken the mantle and agreed to facilitate the pilgrimage. This is an admirable task given that administering the walk is an extra workload for small communes (councils) that are only typically resourced to cater for the day-to-day needs of small villages (indeed Selci is a town of 1,000 inhabitants). Yet, the mayor of Selci tells me that the councils are united in their desire to not only showcase the Sabina area to pilgrims but also to facilitate an experience that is fitting of the pilgrimage. In Selci the most recent contributions to the pilgrimage are murals attesting to Francis – two that strategically greet the pilgrims as they enter into the town after an arduous trek.

There is some excitement about the Jubilee Year and the expected influx of pilgrims in these small villages, and I am told that Selci is ready to accommodate the many pilgrims who are expected to take the way of St Francis in 2025. Moreover, just this week Pope Francis visited one of the towns on the way, Greccio, to sign his Apostolic Letter, *Admirabile signum*, a letter dedicated to outlining the importance of the nativity scene. Greccio is the site where St Francis created the first nativity scene.

In Heavenly Love Abiding – Women Hymnists, an Insight

Rebecca Hilton

PhD student, St Marks and CSU

I love stories celebrating women's involvement in Australian churches in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, in particular stories of Australian Christians influenced by women who wrote hymns. I believe that women hymnists were important, and the way they supported and inspired countless Australian Christians should be further examined.

Having analysed the contribution of women to Australian Protestant hymnbooks, it became apparent that between five and twenty-five per cent of hymns in nineteenth and twentieth century hymnals,

Charlotte Elliot's brother, a Church of England Minister, wrote in the 1850s that: "I hope to have been permitted to see some fruit of my labours; but I feel far more has been done by a single hymn of my sister's."

were written by women. Hymnals for non-conformist denominations had a higher percentage of women's hymns compared to Anglican hymnals. So many wonderful old hymns were written by women who have been able to speak to congregations around the world through their beautiful lyrics.

The history of women hymnists is extensive. In the scriptures Miriam sings after escaping Egypt; Deborah sings for peace in Judges; Hannah sings for joy in Samuel; and Mary sings in praise in Luke's *Magnificat*.

Twelfth century German abbess Hildegard of Bingen is one of the first identifiable composers of Western music. Her contribution was ignored until the late twentieth century, on the basis that her

music could not definitely be attributed to her (this was not a statement made of early men). A 1985 recording of Hildegard's music, *A Feather on the Breath of God*, became an unexpected bestseller.

From the eighteenth-century women hymnists were common. Many of the women hymnists knew what it meant to own nothing and to feel that they had nothing and no way to contribute. Their hymns reflect their anguish and frustrations, along with their willingness to devote their lives to God. This included Englishwoman Charlotte Elliot who wrote over 100 hymns, the most famous of which was *Just as I am*. Billy Graham used this hymn in almost every one of his crusades from 1947 to 2005. Charlotte Elliot's brother, a Church of England Minister, wrote in the 1850s that: "I hope to have been permitted to see some fruit of my labours; but I feel far more has been done by a single hymn of my sister's." My own experiences show how this is true. A few weeks ago, after church, although the sermon was good, I walked out singing, *Christ has no body now but yours*. The words are a paraphrase from the sixteenth century mystic Teresa of Avila, whose contemplative poetry has been set to music.

Two important nineteenth century women hymnists were Frances Ridley Havergal and Frances Crosby. Both had significant health issues which possibly contributed to the stereotype of women writing hymns on their sickbeds! These women knew what it was to suffer and to be in pain. Havergal's hymn *Take my life and let it be*, shows willingness to devote everything to God. Crosby was blind from six weeks old but her hymns *Blessed Assurance* and *To God be the Glory* were among the favourite hymns of many twentieth century Australian Christians.

Most women hymnists were active in the community and devoted to church work. Missionary Adelaide Pollard wrote the hymn: *Have Thine own way, Lord!* after being inspired by words from another woman at a prayer meeting. Pollard wrote over 100 other songs, but some of those were anonymous as she seldom signed them, not desiring the credit. Anonymity was potentially another feature of women hymnists.

It is fascinating to look through the old hymnbooks to see how many hymns and songs there are written by women. I love the irony of women writing influential words at a time when the church otherwise restricted women's role. Check out your favourite hymns, and let me know!

A 1985 recording of Hildegard's music, A Feather on the Breath of God, became an unexpected bestseller.



Hymnals, photo by Rebecca Hilton

Provocateur: A Life of Ideas in Action

by Clive Hamilton, published by Hardie Grant Books, 2022

review by Sarah Stitt

Corporate Services and Events Officer, ACC&C

Having closed the book after reading the final word whilst holidaying on Hamilton Island in the Whitsundays, what went through my mind was, wow, what a national treasure, and, also, a rip-roaring read. I was not able to put the book down. It certainly saved me from the tedium of a four hour stop-over in Brisbane.

Clive Hamilton's memoir, *Provocateur: A life of ideas in action* is one man's crusade to shake Australians, and at times the world, out of our complacency, and wake us up to reality. The name Clive Hamilton has become synonymous with deep, provocative, objective, research reporting on many concerning topics. He was the instigator of the centrist think tank, The Australia Institute, its CEO for almost one and a half decades, has written several books on climate change, and most recently on the Chinese Communist Party.

Almost a decade ago when I read *Requiem for a Species* I shared this book with anyone who would listen. I felt it to be a must-read for all and sundry. Yes, it was confronting, yes, it was devastating, however, it screamed, wake up, wake up, the house is on fire and why were we not listening? In *Provocateur* Clive describes criticism of *Requiem* as a book too frightening to read and as making us feel helpless. My own reaction was invigorating and the book urged me to act. If you saw someone about to step in front of a bus, would you not try to prevent a tragedy?

The altruistic work to which Clive Hamilton has devoted his life defines compassion, deep awareness and sensitivity, someone who cares, and who has taken the responsibility of Cassandra.

In *Engage 7* Clive described life as a public intellectual as having "an ear to the ground like a dead wombat". I was amused by this simile. *Provocateur* reads otherwise. Clive

has been privileged with uncanny insights, building upon his inner moral strength, availing his attribute as an introvert to reach the depths of intelligence, to alert us to the 'evil' at play, generously giving of himself for the wisdom of the common good. He has also had a bird's eye view through living and working so close to the seat of 'power'. Thank you, Clive, for sharing these insights. In my mind, *Provocateur* is a history of 40 years of one man's activism, a book which needs to be read by all.

The name Clive Hamilton has become synonymous with deep, provocative, objective, research reporting on many concerning topics.



Hamilton on Hamilton Island, photo by Sarah Stitt

Recent Publications

Click on a book cover below to go to publisher to purchase.

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by **Wayne Hudson**

Published by Bloomsbury

Provocateur – A life of ideas in action

by **Clive Hamilton**

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Church Matters: Essays and Addresses on Ecclesial Belonging

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Published by St Pauls Publications Australia

The *Spiritus* Short Film Prize

Sarah Stitt

Corporate Services and Events Officer, ACC&C



Saturday 19 November saw the *Spiritus* Short Film Prize sponsors, Clive and Lynlea Rodger, along with one of the *Spiritus* judges, Maximo Gowland, friends of the ACC&C, and me attend the 27th Canberra Short Film Festival (CSFF) Award evening at the Dendy in Canberra. Since 2020 the ACC&C has been in discussion with John Frohlich, Festival Director, and Adi Watters, Festival Event Manager, about *Spiritus* and the short film awards creating a partnership. Last year, and again this year, the *Spiritus* Short Film Prize was awarded amongst the many CSFF awards. COVID-19 has changed the landscape of film presentations. 2020 was the last time *Spiritus* was screened at the Centre, and now the viewing of the films takes place in a state-of-the-art cinema which can give full due to the film makers' vision.

The Centre further shows its support of the arts in the form of exhibitions, musical performances, the residency of A Chorus of Women and book launches amongst other events. Important to acknowledge is the art of film-making incorporates many art forms and media. It begins with creativity in the form of a story, which morphs into a visual form incorporating script writing, acting, sometimes dance, composition, music, cinematography, photography, directing, producing and many more creative skills.

Clive Rodger presented three prizes within the six *Spiritus* categories. He gave an introduction conveying to the audience that the "Centre has always placed a significant emphasis on culture. It is through culture and the arts that we can address the numinous and luminous aspects of life. Art and culture involve imagination, creativity, playfulness and innovation. Culture is part of the eloquence of life and a key characteristic of what makes us human. It is through culture and art that we can express what is often mystical and spiritual

in our lives. It can transform who we are. It manifests experiences we cannot express in other forms. Through artists we see things differently. They have a prophetic quality. Artists are both in history and transcend history. In viewing art in its many forms, we are engaging a transcendent space: we engage with the spirit of the intangible, moving beyond words - things that move the soul. Art is an expression of the incarnational spirituality, hence Andre Gide's aphorism 'art is a collaboration with God'".

Clive presented the awards for the *Spiritus* winner and for highly commended in the open category. The winner was *The Sanctuary* directed by Tim Brown and Michael Portway: *Mourning Country* directed by Andrew Kainerd was highly commended. Unfortunately, these filmmakers were not present on the evening. The Regional Australia prize was presented to Marlon Denning for his film *The Rock Pool Waltz*. Marlon and his parents were in the audience to receive his award. He is a young man of 15 who made

his film during the COVID-19 lockdowns. In his words "visiting the rockpools near his home was the start of a very special lockdown friendship".

The three judges, Genevieve Jacobs AO, Professor (ret'd) Greg Battye and Maximo Gowland (Argentine Ambassador) were unanimous in their choice of award recipients.

Clive finished with "the *Spiritus* Prize's purpose is to encourage the production of short films which give expression to the transcendent and portray spiritual realities consistent with the Centre's mission 'wisdom for the coming good'. Short film creation combines so many of the arts and it is through this medium we wish to challenge ourselves to think more deeply about the meaning of life and how we live".

The ACC&C and the Spiritus sponsors wish to thank the judges for their willingness to be involved with the Spiritus Short Film Prize.



Marlon Denning and Clive Rodger, presentation of The Spiritus Short Film Prize 2022, photo Sarah Stitt

Upcoming events

Spiritus Short Film Prize

Receiving submissions from 1 January 2023 at acc-c.org.au



Change the Heart Prayer Service

7:30pm AEDT Wednesday
25 January



The Threshold

4pm and 8pm Saturday 4 March
11am Sunday 5 March
The Chapel

An artist's musings on AGEING and THE END OF LIFE, from the point of view of women

Judith Clingan AM

[enquires: judithclingan@me.com](mailto:enquires:judithclingan@me.com)

The Threshold

St Patrick's Day service

Friends of Ireland
Saturday 11 March
The Chapel

Commonwealth Day Service

Monday 13 March
The Chapel

Exhibition – Florentine mosaics by Anatoly Golobokov (dates to be advised)

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).

Ecumenical Way of the Cross Good Friday

7 April
The Chapel and grounds of the ACC&C



Canberra International Music Festival performances

<https://cimf.org.au/canberra-international-music-festival/>



C16 Dunera Mass

2.30 – 3.45pm Sat 6 May 2023
The Chapel

<https://cimf.org.au/shows/c16-dunera-mass/>

Ticketed event



B4 French Breakfast #4 with Golden Gate Brass

8.30 – 10am Fri 5 May 2023
The Chapel

<https://cimf.org.au/shows/b4-french-for-breakfast-4/>

Ticketed event



Hire the Centre

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

The Centre's facilities include an indoor chapel which (in according with social distancing guidelines) can seat up to 60 people or the Chambers Pavilion which can seat up to 17 people. We welcome inquiries from groups that run events that are consistent with the vision of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. Contact the Events' Team (Sarah Stitt and Lauren Bartley) for more information on acc-c@csu.edu.au



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



Charles Sturt
University

www.acc-c.org.au

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

Prayer for the Centre

*God, powerful and gentle,
You love this southern land
And all its peoples, old and new.*

*As the cross shines in the heavens
So may Christ bring light to our nation,
As the waves encircle our shores
So may your mercy enfold us.*

*May the God who formed our southern land
Be for us a rock and strength.
May the God who rules our southern seas
Keep us safe from every storm.
May the God who made the southern skies turn
Our darkness into light.*

*As Canberra is a meeting place
Central to the Government of Australia,
So may this Centre be a true meeting place
Where all God's people may gather in a spirit of prayer,
A spirit of unity of minds and hearts; and
Where we may share in the very Communion of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
We make our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Archbishop Francis Carroll



Annunciation: The Heavens, Florentine Mosaic, mixed unique and semi precious stones - Ural jasper, Australian tiger iron, jasper and prasem, tourmaline and citrine faceting, by Anatoly Golobokov (68x53cm)



AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR
CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE
WISDOM FOR THE COMMON GOOD