

ENGAGE

August 2019 Issue 1



Glenda Cloughley, Maartje Sevenster and Meg Rigby sing at The People's Passion. Images Peter Hislop, Canberra. – See page 6.

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A New Change... *Engage*

Welcome to *Engage* a quarterly publication from the ACC&C which replaces the ebulletin. Since starting at the ACC&C in September 2016, I've been looking after the Centre's communication and sending out ebulletins, event invitations and updates.

We want more people to know about the great events that are happening on site and our vision for 'Wisdom for the Common Good'. The site is a place of hospitality and conversation and we want to share these stories which are rarely told.

Now is the right time to increase our presence in the community and invite others to seek Wisdom for the Common Good in their contexts.

With that in mind, we've launched *Engage* which is an interactive PDF to make it easier to download, print and share with friends.

We want to double our communication and reach in the next year. Can you forward to a friend and invite to sign-up to receive our communication? Sign up via our website or send us an email acc-c@csu.edu.au

We are going to produce 4 *Engage* issues a year which will be slightly down from our 6 ebulletins a year. We'll continue to send email invitations to events on site that might not fit our publication schedule neatly.

A special thanks to graphic designer, Justin Huehn, who has designed our inaugural *Engage*. We are also glad for the many contributors in this first *Engage*.

Warmly,
Katherine Waite
Editor



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Pillars of Truth and Grace



The one 'who begins by loving Christianity, better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end up loving himself better than all'. These words penned in the 19th century by the remarkable Samuel Taylor Coleridge, are both easily misunderstood and surprisingly pertinent for our 21st century society.

First, the words are easily misunderstood because it might seem as if the truth that is loved is simply nothing more than the truth constructed by the solitary individual. And we have this in spades today. The individual is the centre and judge of all things. It's mantra is shrill: 'my truth is as good as yours'. The logic is 'any truth will do'. So Coleridge simply seems to have baptised the Enlightenment turn to the subject as the basis of human freedom and authority. The result is a failure to achieve true society. All we have are fragments; merely a collection of individuals. The matter resolves itself finally into a question of who has power to determine what truth will rule. Hence it is no surprise that uncompromising authoritarianism and narcissistic leaders are on the rise in all walks of life, including the church! What has happened is that the individual's will to power has displaced the God of grace and truth that we have a genuine glimpse of in the figure of Jesus

Christ. The well-being of society for the most part rests in the hands of those who have the greatest power to exert influence. This spells the death of aspirations for the common good.

However, Coleridge had something else in mind. For a start he reckoned that reason in human beings was a broad and rich category more akin to what today we might refer to as the multiple intelligences involving mind, heart and body. It certainly had little to do with the tight and restricted ideas of reason associated with the term 'rationalism'. Crucially, Coleridge considered reason as that mode which opened up for human apprehension and discernment the deepest truth of the universe and the creator God. In other words, Coleridge perceived that when human reason and will were properly used they became a gateway into the divine reason and will. He spoke of reason as 'the organ of the supersensuous' that took us beyond the wit of human knowing to a far greater truth. In short loving the truth was a way by which human beings participated in the reality of the triune God. Exactly why it was the triune God was a critical

"Coleridge considered reason as that mode which opened up for human apprehension and discernment the deepest truth of the universe and the creator God"

issue for Coleridge but perhaps for another occasion. This notion of an essential correspondence between God and human has been pretty much abandoned in secular society. Of course what is interesting is to observe the ingenious, creative and at times bizarre ways in which this connectivity between the human and divine continues to bubble up from the depths of human longing and hope.

In Coleridge's view when human beings preferred love of something other than truth this signalled a failure to use reason and will properly. And once the rot set in and human beings no longer loved the truth beyond all else then increasingly lesser substitutes would emerge. The downward spiral ended at last in a self-absorbed love.

To follow Coleridge on the journey towards truth provides the resources for a true and flourishing society. How so? When, instead of love for truth, preference is given to some particular kind of society this only breeds more and more particular preferences for certain kinds of societies. For example, love of Christianity breeds sectarianism. Eventually the only thing left, as history shows only too clearly, is the individual loving his/herself. True society has been abandoned.

Perhaps you might be thinking: so what? The matter goes right to the heart of what the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture stands for. To seek a wisdom for the common good presumes a quest for a true and flourishing society. This cannot be achieved via a collection of individuals pursuing their own ends. This ends in loneliness and disconnection. The Centre has four pillars that we hope and pray go into the deepest secret of our life together. In this sense they are pillars of truth and grace. They are worth recalling: *peace through new religious engagements; wisdom for civil society; institutional resilience and ethical leadership; creativity through the arts, sciences and culture.*

These four pillars are not exhaustive but we trust that they reach into the truth beyond all our attempts to manufacture and conjure our own

little, partial and flawed truths.

As you read *Engage* I do hope that you might find glimmers of the truth of the good God in the engagements of the Centre on many fronts both recently and in the coming months. In particular I draw your attention to the information in this *Engage* on the *8th International Conference on Ageing and Spirituality* and its theme: *Changing Cultures of Ageing and Spirituality*.

Grace and Peace

Stephen

Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard
Executive Director
Australian Centre for Christianity
and Culture



Attendees about to depart on the Pilgrimage of justice and peace with our First Nations.

Living and Walking in the Holy Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship

By Emily Evans, Project Officer at NCCA

In the cold but pleasantly sunny surrounds of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture approximately 60 people from 11 member churches came together for the 2019 10th Triennial Forum (21-24 June) through prayer and reflection, dialogue and discernment. They gathered to renew the purpose of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) Council and provide direction on Council activities and issues of focus for the next three years.

Executive Director of the ACC&C Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard officially welcomed the forum members with a brief history of the ACC&C and its vision at the official reception on Friday night. Representatives from the Canberra churches and the ACT Churches' Council were also present.

The overall theme of the NCCA forum was "Living and Walking in the Holy Spirit: Called to Transforming Discipleship." The forum members discussed ideas to deepen the relationships between our churches and Christian faith communities. They looked at common areas of witness, proclamation and service which need to be transformed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The forum heard from international guest speaker Bishop Geevarghese Coorilos on doing mission from the margins. Bishop George, as he prefers to be called, is Bishop of Niranam diocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India and Moderator of the Commission on World

Mission and Evangelism, World Council of Churches (WCC).

On Sunday afternoon, forum members were joined by members of some local churches to walk through paths in the Parliamentary Triangle of Canberra on a pilgrimage of justice and peace with our First Nations. In the chilly late afternoon air, participants walked together around the Parliamentary Zone in Canberra to significant locations related to justice, peace and reconciliation, including the High Court of Australia, Reconciliation Place and the steps of Old Parliament

House. The pilgrimage celebrated the gifts, visited the wounds and continued the process of transforming the injustices.

An ecumenical service, celebrating Australian churches covenanting together, was held at Wesley Uniting Church in Forrest.

Huge thanks to the staff at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C) for their tireless assistance in supporting this event and to the churches in the Canberra region.

Pictures supplied from the National Council of Churches in Australia.



Some of the attendees in the Chapel at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.



Attendees at the Ecumenical Roundtable on 25 June



The Ecumenical Roundtable

By Bishop Philip Huggins, Director Centre for Ecumenical Studies ACC&C

The Chambers Pavilion was packed for the 4th Ecumenics Roundtable on 25 June, led by Bishop Geevarghese Coorilos, Bishop of Niranam Diocese of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India.

Bishop George, as he preferred to be addressed, spoke about "Orthodoxy and Pluralism: Challenges and Opportunities" in the first of his two addresses.

His emphasis was that, while it is said that the Orthodox diaspora often get ghettoised, especially in the first few generations, this should not be the case.

Bishop George conveyed that Orthodoxy, both theologically and existentially, can and should live alongside other traditions in a peaceful, co-operative manner.

Looking back in history, Bishop George reminded us of how, from very early days, Orthodoxy had been in dialogue with other faiths, especially Judaism and Hellenism.

Later, dialogue with Islam became an existential necessity after the conquest of the Byzantine world.

Bishop George reminded us of the recent (2008) commitment of the Primates of the Orthodox Churches to dialogue for peaceful co-existence.

The Primates, with us all, realise the importance of this in order to prevent new forms of religious fanaticism and thus, the suffering of terrorism.

Bishop George reinforced his encouragement to the National Council of Churches in Australia family with a

reminder as to the theological basis of this understanding.

Poetically and biblically, Bishop George spoke out of the Apophatic nature of God; the concept of "Imago Dei" and thus the universal brotherhood and sisterhood of all humanity, each of us having access to salvation; the Trinitarian rootedness of Orthodoxy, the mutual interrelatedness or



L to R: Stephen Pickard, Geevarghese Coorilos and Philip Huggins at the Roundtable on 25 June.

'perichoresis'; the role of the Holy Spirit as Word and Spirit intersect and we are led into all truth (by the Spirit which 'blows where she wills' John 3:8).

Thus, making a bridge to his next address, Bishop George spoke of the balance in Orthodoxy between "head and heart" in dialogue.

In his Second address, Bishop George spoke of "Ecumenism and the many Contemporary Global Challenges."

These challenges are ones we are all familiar with:

The Climate Change crisis and the "sweeping influence of the neo-liberal market economy"; the pervasive ideology of war/ violence as if it is the only way to resolve conflicts; the tides of secularisation; the global phenomena of the "fear of the Other", driven by a culture amplifying racism, casteism, sexism; the "technological colonisation of humanity", noting the serious consequences of these issues for the poor and more vulnerable.

In this bleak context, Bishop George's challenge to us nevertheless also named what he sees as our own ecumenical challenges.

With vivid examples, he spoke of our challenges, naming three:

Moral bankruptcy (of corruption and a lack of accountability); Intellectual bankruptcy (a lack of visionary ideas) and Prophetic bankruptcy (a lack of prophetic courage).

He encouraged our soul-searching so that we renounce all traces of imperial vestiges and remove them from our structures.

He encouraged "an Ecumenical Movement from the Margins" (MFM), putting people from the margins of society at the centre as the new leaders.

Bishop George's addresses provoked spirited conversation and those of us present felt blessed to be there.

Symposium to celebrate Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary (1869-2019)

By Satendra Nandan, ACC&C Scholar



Professor Satendra Nandan speaking at the Symposium.

On Tuesday, July 23, an international Gandhi Symposium was held at the Chambers Pavilion, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture in honour of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948). This year marks his 150th birth anniversary celebrated world-wide.

The symposium was chaired by the Rt Rev Professor Stephen Pickard, the Executive Director of the ACC&C.

The central theme of the colloquium was: Gandhi's Religio-political Truths in an Age of Violent Fundamentalisms.

The speakers included the High Commissioner of India, Dr R A Gondone; Professors Stephen Pickard, Sathianathan Clarke of Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C., and Satendra Nandan, a scholar at the ACC&C; Associate Professor William Emilsen from the Centre for Public and Contextual Theology Research; and Mr Peter Walker, Principal, United Theological College, Sydney.

The 21st century has seen a resurgence of 'religious violence' in particular, accompanied by social, cultural, economic upheavals under the guise of a variety of fundamentalisms and illiberal, populist nationalisms. They have found brutal expression in the elections of 'strong leaders' in several democratic elections in countries which affect our lives locally and globally.

Mahatma Gandhi developed a philosophy and strategy to non-violently oppose religious and political fundamentalisms and promote and foster peace and freedom with his complex mantra of Truth is God.

Gandhi showed by his life, work and writings, how we may counter the violence against empires and individuals through the powers of 'ahimsa' and 'satyagraha' embedded in the human spirit of love and faith in God.

Several speakers found his message inspiring with a particular resonance to the current state of affairs prevalent in the world, fraught with nuclear threats and violence in the name of religion, triggered by a 'religious frenzy'.

Professor Pickard showed why Gandhi loved the the 19th century hymn Lead Kindly Light of Truth:

Professor Clarke gave a comprehensive exposition of Gandhi's Religious truths in an age of violent fundamentalisms; and

Professor Nandan attempted to give a meaning and definition to the varied and manifold versions of Gandhi's truth, even as he was wrapped in political coils of the subcontinent.

Stimulating papers were also given on 'Gandhi's Truth, Truthfulness and Terror' and 'Gandhi's perspective on Conversion and Nicolas of Cusa's perspective on God' by Associate Professor Emilsen and Mr Walker respectively.

Lively discussions followed after each presentation.

Professor Nandan's book *Gandhianjali* was launched at the symposium by Professor Pickard with a reading of 'Easter 2019' by his daughter Dr Gitanjali Nandan.

The symposium concluded with a celebratory dinner.

The Symposium was generously sponsored by the ACC&C and as Dr Gondone commented: It was wonderful that the Centre organized such a meeting of minds on the Great Soul, the first of its kind this year at an Australian institution.



The High Commissioner of India, Dr R A Gondone (right) and Executive Director of the ACC&C Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard (left) light a candle at the beginning of the symposium.



A Chorus of Women are led by Johanna McBride who encourages the audience to sing along. Images Peter Hislop, Canberra.

The People's Passion

By Katherine Waite, ACC&C

Canberrans were treated to a night of music, drama and inspiration when A Chorus of Women performed its community oratorio *The People's Passion* at the Chapel at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture on June 28 and 30.

Scheduled to coincide with the centenary of the Treaty of Versailles, the performance—written and composed by Dr Glenda Cloughley—told the story of the women who met during WW1, developed a plan to end the war, set an agenda for human rights and saved the lives of millions of starving children.

During the one and a half hour performance, the audience heard the stories of the women such as Eglantyne Jebb, founder of Save the Children Fund.

Since the beginning of November 2015 Canberra's A Chorus of Women has been meeting in rehearsal and performance spaces in the grounds of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. For more information about A Chorus of Women visit its website www.chorusofwomen.org



The People's Passion featured the Luminescence Children's Choir. Images Peter Hislop, Canberra.



"The People's Passion tells two stories of the world. One story portrays the natural law of harmony: that peace is the nurture of life, and not merely an absence of war. The other story portrays a law of discord and trauma that produces repeated scapegoating, revenge and war when it infects social institutions." Dr Cloughley said.



Dr Glenda Cloughley sings at *The People's Passion*. Images Peter Hislop,



Miriam Pickard narrated *The People's Passion*. Images Peter Hislop, Canberra.

NAIDOC Week in Canberra

By Jenny Rowland

(This is an edited version of an article first published in August 2019 issue of Canberra City Uniting Church's magazine Contact and is republished with permission.)

During NAIDOC Week 2019 Aboriginal Christian leader Brooke Prentis from the Wakka Wakka people of Queensland visited Canberra. She is the Aboriginal spokesperson for Common Grace, a growing movement of over 40,000 Australian Christians who are passionate about social justice.

She is also Coordinator of the Grasstree Gathering, a movement of Aboriginal Christian leaders. At present Brooke is based in Sydney, where she has a Senior Fellowship with Anglican Deaconess Ministries to write resources for Australian churches on how to engage with, build and deepen relationships with Aboriginal Christians and Aboriginal Christian leaders.

In Canberra Brooke preached at services of worship at the Canberra Baptist Church, Kingston and Holy Covenant Anglican Church, Cook on Sunday, 7 July 2019. She was interviewed for ABC Radio National's "Religion and Ethics" program broadcast initially on Wednesday 10 July. Among other meetings she had a conversation run by the ACT Churches' Council with a dozen Christians at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C), Barton on Tuesday 9 July. The Uniting Church was well-represented on that occasion.

Topics Brooke raised in these contexts covered many issues important to Indigenous people, especially Christians. She considered the establishment of a truth-telling commission to be more important than Constitutional recognition. A clarification was that Treaties can be made solely with sovereign states. States or Territories of Australia or other regions may make Agreements.

Brooke spoke of the conflicted history of Aborigines and Christianity; the ongoing significance of earlier Aboriginal Elders; the importance of the current NAIDOC Week theme of "Voice, Treaty, Truth" and how critical truth-telling is. The Australian Church has a long way to go in telling the truth about atrocities it and missions committed in the past, including complicity in stolen wages, stolen land and stolen generations. Consequently some Aborigines have difficulty in going into a church.

Close to Brooke's heart was knowing that Aboriginal people are still excluded from different elements of Australian society in 2019, as they were in the Population Census until the Referendum of 1967. She emphasised the importance of relationships, such as those with people at the Tent Embassy in Canberra.

The basics of love and respect need to be shown, as expressed in the greatest command to love God with all our heart and our neighbour as ourself.

Brooke noted the success of the Grasstree Gathering envisaged by Elder Aunty Jean Phillips to bring together a network of over 200 Aboriginal Christian leaders who had not previously known each other. These leaders are significant in the ecumenical movement, because they have had to struggle. Brooke outlined the continuing importance of the Church for Aboriginal people. It should be a place of love, with the message of Jesus bringing healing and hope. In difficult times Indigenous people therefore cling tightly to Jesus.

As a follow-up to Brooke Prentis' visit to Canberra, the ACT Churches Council will look into how local churches and also the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship can walk together with Indigenous peoples.



Brooke Prentis in conversation at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.
Photo by Jenny Rowland

8th International Conference for Ageing & Spirituality

By Katherine Waite, ACC&C

In less than 3 months the 8th International Conference on Ageing and Spirituality will start in Canberra. The conference, 27 - 30 October, is hosted by The Colloquium for Ageing Perspectives and Spirituality (previously the Centre for Ageing and Pastoral Studies) at the ACC&C.

The full program for the conference has just been released.

There are Pre-Conference workshops at the ACC&C on Sunday 27 October before the official conference program starts on Monday 28 October. The conference features 5 keynote presentations, 2 concurrent paper sessions featuring 21 papers, two concurrent workshop sessions with 8 workshops, plenaries and an interfaith panel discussion.

The inaugural spirituality and ageing conference was held in the National Capital in January 2000 and convened by Professor Elizabeth MacKinlay. Now in its 8th iteration, the national and international profile of the conference has grown significantly. It attracts people from across the globe who are at the forefront of ageing and spirituality; an area that has only recently begun to be recognised as vital to the well-being and care of older people.

Registrations for the conference close 14 October 2019. Sunday Pre-Conference workshops \$250. Conference Registration: \$725 full, \$550 Concession/Student; \$300 Single Day; \$100 Monday night dinner.



Call for Volunteers

Pre-conference Workshops will be held on-site at the Centre on Sunday 27 from 9am – 5pm, followed in the evening, 5.30 – 7pm, with a reception. We are looking for volunteers to help set up morning and afternoon tea at the 3 workshops and also people to help with hospitality at the welcome reception.

The Conference is being held at Old Parliament House all day Monday 28 and Tuesday 29, finishing at lunch time on Wednesday 30. We will need volunteers with sound computer skills to help keynotes, plenaries, and paper session presenters during their sessions to operate computers and troubleshoot any potential problems. We also need volunteers for meeting, greeting and directing attendees to respective sessions.

If you think you can assist with the IT and/or hospitality either for the entire pre-conference workshop day, and/or for the conference, or part thereof, please contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Sarah Stitt by email: sstitt@csu.edu.au by the end of September 2019.

Before the event we will organise a time for everyone to meet and to go through the logistics of what will be needed.

Thank you in advance for volunteering your time and assistance. We will look forward to hearing from you.



Executive Director of the ACC&C welcomes guests to the annual Iftar



Hannan Assafiri OAM, Activist and owner of the Moroccan Soup Bar in Melbourne gave the Keynote Address.



Her Excellency Dame Annette King, New Zealand High Commissioner to Australia reflected on her government's response to the Christchurch attacks.

Iftar dinner at ACC&C in Canberra

By Katherine Waite, ACC&C

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C) was the venue for the annual Iftar dinner in Canberra on Tuesday 14 May as part of Ramadan.

Executive Director of the ACC&C Rt Reverend Professor Stephen Pickard said, "The ACC&C and Bluestar Intercultural Centre co-host a 'friendship and dialogue' Iftar each year," he said.

"The ACC&C has been collaborating with our Muslim colleagues at Bluestar Intercultural Centre for over a decade to foster understanding and friendship in our increasingly pluralistic society.

"The theme for this year's dinner was 'Faith and Friendship Today', and the evening featured fine food, conversation, music and bonding," he said.

This year Her Excellency Dame Annette King, New Zealand High Commissioner to Australia reflected on her government's response to the Christchurch attacks.

Hannan Assafiri OAM, Activist and owner of the Moroccan Soup Bar in Melbourne gave the Keynote Address.

You can watch both of these addresses via the ACC&C website story



Guests shared a banquet meal.



Music performed by Christopher Latham (violin), Donald Nordblom (oud) and Edward Neeman (piano).



From left to right: Bryce Hutchesson – the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ambassador for People Smuggling and Human Trafficking, Par Liljert – IOM Chief of Mission in Australia and Coordinator for the Pacific, Emmanuel Murwisi – IOM Australia Project Development Office, Mr. Christopher Woodthorpe – Director of the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC), Canberra, David Mikhael – IOM Australia Resource Management Officer, Stephen Pickard – Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.

IOM and Australian Partners Mark World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

Hilary Vanderwey, International Organization of Migration

The International Organization of Migration (IOM), in partnership with the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) for Australia and in collaboration with the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C), marked the 2019 World Day against Trafficking in Persons on Monday 5 August with an event attended by 45 officials from the government of Australia and representatives from diplomatic missions.

Rt Reverend Professor Stephen Pickard, the Executive Director of the ACC&C welcomed participants and opening remarks were made by Par Liljert, IOM Chief of Mission in Australia and Coordinator for the Pacific and Bryce Hutchesson, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ambassador for People Smuggling and Human Trafficking.

Professor Pickard opened with a reminder that human trafficking is one of the oldest crimes in the world, one which endures, even here in Australia.

The event highlighted the partnerships between IOM and governments in the Pacific with regards to efforts being undertaken to ensure that trafficking in persons to, from and within the Pacific is being addressed and prevented.

IOM is working with governments, civil society and the private sector in the Pacific to ensure the rights of migrants are upheld and to ensure that policies are being maintained and created to enhance opportunities for migrants.

“Migration continues to be a coping mechanism for those affected by conflict, natural disasters and climate change, and these human mobility dynamics people also pose risks for international crime syndicates to take advantage of men, women and children,” Mr Liljert said.

“IOM therefore stands ready to work with governments to strengthen prevention mechanisms, including through improved border management policies and practices and establishing protection systems for identified victims,” he said.

World Day Against Trafficking serves as a reminder that it is time to end the trafficking of men, women and children across the globe.



António Vitorino IOM Director



The Labyrinth, an ancient symbol of journey into wisdom, with a 2.8 billion year old rock from the Hamersley Ranges at the centre.

Welcome 2 new ACC&C Scholars

Rev Dr Tim Watson



Tim Watson is an English Anglican priest who moved to Canberra in 2019 to become Rector of Holy Cross Hackett. He has a DPhil in French

Renaissance & Reformation Studies, and was formerly a Lecturer in History at the Universities of Oxford and Newcastle upon Tyne. He then spent ten years in France as a member of the Chemin Neuf Community, a French Roman Catholic ecumenical new religious community, and studied theology at the Université Catholique de Lyon prior to his ordination in 2011. Tim served as a curate at Liverpool Cathedral and a church planter for Brighton, and for five years was a member of the Church of England's Advisory Council on Relations between Bishops and Religious Communities. He has extensive experience as a musician working across a wide variety of genres. Tim's interests include ecclesiology (particularly the renewal of religious life), mission-shaped ecumenism, sacred art, and high-quality popular theological education that bridges the gap between the academy and the pew.

Dr Keith Mascord



Keith Mascord is currently employed as Chaplaincy Coordinator with Corrective Services, NSW. He oversees the State's multi-faith

prison chaplaincy service. In his spare time, he works to promote the cause of Equal Voices, a cross-denominational movement of LGBTIA+ Christians and their allies. As its co-founder, he is passionate to see Australian churches respecting, utilising and celebrating the gifts of all people, regardless of sexuality, gender identity or intersex status.

Keith is Canadian born, but has lived in Australia for most of his life. He began his professional life as a high school teacher, then trained at Moore Theological College to become an Anglican priest, ministering initially in Tamworth and Wee Waa before returning to Moore College, joining the faculty and majoring in the teaching philosophy and pastoral theology, becoming head of the ministry department before returning to pastoral ministry in the Parish of South Sydney. He next became National Chaplain of Mission Australia, after which he became a parole officer before taking up his current role.

Links to Scholars' articles

Centre scholar Toni Hassan has published three articles online in the last couple of months. She wrote about the Victoria School Phone Ban in *The Canberra Times* article on July 1:

Ms Hassan also wrote two articles for *The Melbourne Anglican* about modern slavery. Her first piece was called:

and her second piece was called:

Dr Douglas Hynd also had an article published in the latest edition of the *Uniting Church Studies* Vol. 22, No 1., June 2019 called "The Impact of Neoliberalism on Church-related Welfare Agencies: Possibilities and Limits of Resistance."



Vale Auntie Flo'

Katherine Waite, ACC&C

Wiradjuri elder Auntie Flo' Grant passed away peacefully on August 6 on Wiradjuri country in Wagga Wagga surrounded by family and friends.

Auntie Flo' was a close friend of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, and between 1997 and 2017 organised the Wongamaa Lectures which celebrated the work of Pastor Cec Grant and his wife Laurel as well as the witness and life of independent indigenous churches and the engagement of indigenous cultures and Christianity. All but three of these lectures were held at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.

Professor Ross Chambers AM who is a Centre Ambassador and close friend of Auntie Flo', was writing a book with Auntie Flo' which is based on the lectures as well as interviews with her and other indigenous Christian leaders.

"Auntie Flo' was a keen supporter of the Centre and very much valued its presence and witness in the national capital and its commitment to the engagement of Christianity with indigenous spirituality and culture," he said.

"Her work with the Centre brought together the two commitments which shaped her life and contribution to the community: a deep Christian commitment and relationship with God marked by wisdom, joy and a profound honesty; and, a deep commitment to "nation building" for the Wiradjuri nation, which included the revival of the work of the Council of Elders (which she chaired for many years); strong

"Auntie Flo' had a strong sense that God and His Spirit were always present in this land as creator and sustainer."

support for education, especially higher education; and very successful language and heritage maintenance and recovery programs.

"In addition to the Wongamaa lectures the Centre hosted, thanks to Auntie Flo', a gathering of leaders of independent indigenous churches, especially those linked to the Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship, undertook the recording of the experiences of these leaders. In addition,

the Centre hosted for many years one of the annual residential schools of CSU's Wiradjuri language program.

"Auntie Flo' had a strong sense that God and His Spirit were always present in this land as creator and sustainer. At the same time, she had a deep faith that the Gospel had "come through the Heads" (to use her words) despite its being accompanied by disease and destruction and dispossession," she said.

CSU Vice-Chancellor Andrew Vann said Auntie Flo' will forever be remembered for her role in Wiradjuri nation building and in particular for the partnership she built with Charles Sturt University.

"In June, 2019, the University celebrated Auntie Flo's life and success by awarding Auntie Flo an Order of the Companion of the University," he said.

Flags at CSU Wagga Wagga Campus were lowered to half-mast on August 7 and 8 in honour of her life and work.

Upcoming Events

Quiet Day: Energised with Divine Love

9:30am – 3:00pm, 17 August 2019
Chambers Pavilion, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Heather Thomson, former Senior Lecturer in Theology at St Mark's National Theological Centre and a member of Benedictus Contemplative Church, will lead this Quiet Day. The day will include Ignatian spiritual exercises, which tune us into a 'deep listening' that discerns the energies we draw on as we live our lives. These exercises encourage us to live from God's life-giving energies in order to be more fully ourselves and to serve others more generously.

Order of Australia Multi-Faith Observance

2-3pm, 18 August 2019
Chapel Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

The Observance will be moderated by the Executive Director of the Centre, Rt Reverend Professor Stephen Pickard, and will feature inspirational speakers from a number of faiths. The theme for this year is *Together in Friendship*. Members, families and guests are all welcome. At the conclusion of the Observance, a light afternoon tea will be served and there will be an opportunity to tour the Centre's beautiful grounds.

World Humanitarian Day 2019

4:00 – 5:30pm 19 August 2019
Chapel, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

World Humanitarian Day is held on 19 August every year to pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service, to promote the protection of humanitarian workers under international law, and to generate support for people affected by crises.

This World Humanitarian Day 2019 we honour women humanitarians – their work, experiences and stories. We acknowledge their tireless work as frontline responders, organisational and community leaders, advocates for women's and girl's rights in crises, peacebuilders, and drivers of effective humanitarian action.

Our event will commence with readings at the Humanitarian Workers Memorial, followed by a panel discussion in the Chapel at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. Light refreshments will be provided following the event.

Altruists Without Borders: The Concept of Service in Contemporary Society

5:30 – 7:00pm 29 August 2019
Chambers Pavilion, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture and Bluestar Intercultural Centre invite you to this Abrahamic Panel discussion. As part of his book launch on controversial Muslim scholar Fethullah Gulen, Religious Historian Prof Jon Pahl from the United Lutheran Seminary together with members of Canberra's Interfaith Community will discuss what serving communities look like today.

Dr Ken Crispin QC's Book Launch: A Skeptic's Guide to Belief

6:30pm, 4 September 2019
Chambers Pavilion, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Dr Ken Crispin QC is a distinguished Australian lawyer and former Supreme Court Judge and President of the ACT Court of Appeals. He is currently the Commissioner for Standards for the Australian Capital Territory and a member of the board of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture. His other books include *The Quest for Justice* (2010). *A Skeptic's Guide to Belief* will be launched by Centre Ambassador, The Reverend Professor Emeritus James Haire AC.

The Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter

11-13 September 2019
Chapel, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Training in The Art of Hosting and Harvesting Conversations that Matter (also known as the Art of Participatory Leadership) offers simple and powerful participatory practices, patterns and processes to host generative conversations. These approaches have been used effectively in diverse contexts worldwide to harness collective wisdom, encourage compassionate leadership, and create better social and environmental outcomes.

PNG Independence Day Service

11:30am, 8 September 2019

Chapel, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

PNG Canberra and Queanbeyan community members warmly invite all friends of PNG to join us for the Independence Anniversary Ecumenical Service to celebrate the 44th anniversary. All welcome. POT LUCK LUNCH For further information, contact: Deveni Temu on 0452 408835 or email deveni.temu@gmail.com

School of Ecumenism “Journey Together Towards Unity”

30 September – 4 October 2019
Dunedin, New Zealand

The Centre for Ecumenical Studies at ACC&C and the National Dialogue for Christian Unity Aotearoa New Zealand welcomes students seeking accreditation towards a theology/ministry degree and non-students wishing to participate as auditors. For full details about the school including objectives, outcomes, content, schedule, presenters, costs and assessments:

ARRCC National Conference

8 – 10 November 2019

Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

The Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) warmly invites you to participate in their inaugural national Conference: *Faith in Action: A religious response to the climate emergency*. The ACC&C is an official sponsor of this conference.

The ARRCC is also in need of help at its conference and is looking for support such as setting up, putting up signs, ushers, washing-up, tech support, registration table and so on. Although an organising group and participants will be rostered, they are needing local volunteers who are there specifically to support the event and don't mind missing out on session time. In exchange for their support, volunteers will be welcome to participate for free when they can. If you'd like to help, contact Thea Ormerod at info@arrcc.org.au or 02 9150 9713.

Voices for Justice

30 November – 3 December 2019

Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture

Voices for Justice is Micah Australia's flagship event, and a unique opportunity for you to gather with like-minded Christians to lobby your MP and state Senators on the issue of global poverty. By inspiring, training and equipping Christians to speak with federal politicians about global poverty, *Voices for Justice* has provided a catalyst for building long-term relationships between Australian Christians and their local MPs, and set the stage for major aid announcements and breakthroughs in previous years.

Hire the Centre

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

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

Sarah Stitt

Lauren Bartley





What's been happening in the Bible Garden

Winter moves slowly in the Bible Garden

By Justin Aquilina, Bible Gardener

In Canberra's chilly mid-winter months when all the leaves have fallen off the deciduous trees and the icy wind whips across frost bitten ground, it might seem as though there is not much growing in the garden. Indeed, in these cold winter months most trees are dormant as they wait for the warmer weather to blossom and fruit. While the growth and flowering of most plants does slow down during this time there is still much happening under the surface and also much to do to ensure that new life will flourish to its fullest once Spring awakens.

The last few months in the Bible Garden have been quite busy for me, with lots of timely pruning to open up the fruit trees so air and sunlight can flow through, minimizing disease and creating the best opportunity for a greater harvest. The Eucalyptus trees in the north-west corner have been thinned also to allow more light to shine through during these shorter winter days when the sun is at its lowest.

The path leading into the garden has been revamped with rocks and is now hopefully more inviting. If you look you may notice that there are smaller rocks through the centre of the path and larger ones towards the outer edge to allow water to flow through without causing erosion along the way. This also serves another purpose in these dry times as any excess runoff is diverted down the slope to slow, sink and store water so it can be utilized further down the landscape. I'm excited to witness the results of this important background work as we head into warmer weather and spring starts to unfurl throughout the garden. I encourage you to take a wander down the path or simply sit and breathe in this beautiful landscape and see what life you notice moving slowly.





Bible Garden Plant Feature: Bay Leaf

By Katherine Waite, ACC&C

Bay leaves, also called laurel leaves, grow on an evergreen plant. It can grow up to 15-20 metres and the one featured in the Bible Garden at the ACC&C is about 3 metres tall. The leaves are dark green, tough and aromatic. According to Jackie French, once the Bay Tree is established, nothing 'the weather can fling at them is likely to kill them'¹ and Bible Gardener Justin Aquilina said the tree is very drought tolerant. He also said it's a great indoor plant if its near a window for ventilation. Male and female flowers grow on different trees but they are both greenish yellow in colour and the female flowers once fertilised develop into purple berries.² The berries can be cultivated for use in laurel oil or laurel butter.³

Bay leaves can be used fresh or dried in cooking. (See our recipe suggestion overleaf from the beautiful *Tea and Threads* book). Others recommend bay leaves to repel ants⁴ and moths and bugs from cereals and flours (by placing in food container).⁵ Put between a page of a book to repel silverfish too.⁶

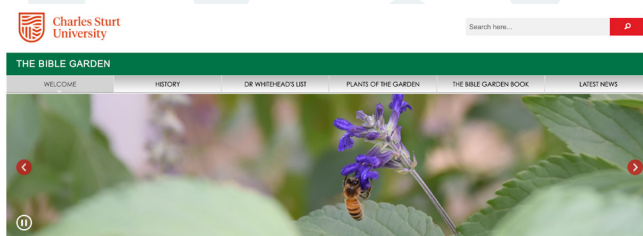
The plants held a special place in ancient Rome and it was custom for emperors, athletes, and poets to be crowned with laurel leaves as a sign of victory, glory and peace. According to Blaire Montague-Drake in *A Biblical Herbal*, Paul was referring to the bay leaf in 1 Corinthians 9:25 when he spoke of athletes who were honoured with a corruptible crown, as distinct from the incorruptible crown of Christianity.⁷ The popular expression, 'To rest on one's laurels' alludes to the practice of a person achieving success and content to settle for no more.⁸



Bible Garden Website revamp

The Bible Garden website has recently been restyled. The restyle fits with Charles Sturt University's web templates. The home page of the website now features a rotating banner with images from the Bible Garden which will be updated.

The Plants of the Garden page underwent the most significant change with "cards" created for each Plant of the Bible Garden and an easy to use menu to navigate the page quickly. A new blog has also been added to the website where updates from the Gardener will be posted along with features of the garden. Thank you to the CSU web team for restyling the website for the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture.



About

The Garden is located within the precincts of the Australian Centre of Christianity and Culture on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin in Canberra, Australia's national capital.

The Bible Garden was established with a benevolent grant from The Bible Garden Trust, a perpetual trust established by the late Mr Gerald Hercules Robinson. The purpose of the trust was to create and maintain gardens that featured the botany that is described in the Holy Bible, and through this activity to educate Christians particularly young Christians in the Scriptures.

The shape of the garden resembles the The Monorah which is said to represent the burning bush where Moses saw the Angel who told him to lead the Israelites to the land of milk and honey. Construction of the Garden commenced in 2007.

The Bible Garden was officially opened at a ceremony at the Garden on Sunday 3 August 2008. Speakers included Sir William Deane, Reverend Professor James Haile and members of the Robinson family.

Contact

Location

The Bible Garden
Pilgrims Walk
15 Blackall Street
BARTON
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Contact

Tel: (02) 6272 6201
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Email: acc-c@csu.edu.au
Web: www.acc-c.org.au

Social media

Explore our YouTube channel
 Find us on Facebook
 Follow us on twitter

1. French, J (2012, August 19) "Go for Gold: growing bays" Sydney Morning Herald

<https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/go-for-gold-growing-bays-20120815-248k0.html>

2. Woodward, P (2017, February 10) "Virtuous Bay" Organic Gardener

<https://www.organicgardener.com.au/blogs/virtuous-bay>

3. Cook, S (2010) "Grow a Bay Tree" Warm Earth (92) p14.

4. Ibid.

5. Woodward, "Virtuous Bay".

6. Ibid.

7. Montague-Drake, B (1997) *A Biblical Herbal* Earth Images p30.

8. Ibid.



Here is a recipe which features bay leaves which is republished with permission from *Tea and Thread: portraits of middle eastern women far from home* published by Grace Abounding Books. To find where you can purchase a copy...



Tashreeb

(Stewed Lamb Shanks)

This delicious stew contains a favourite ingredient in Middle Eastern cooking, noomi (dried lime), which gives this dish a distinctive taste. Speaking of distinctive tastes, Shahinez is not a fan of garlic even though many Middle Eastern dishes are packed with it. Usually, one cooks tashreeb with garlic, but you may prefer to omit it.

SERVES: 6

INGREDIENTS:

- 6 lamb shanks
- 250g (1 lb 2 oz or 1 cup) dried chickpeas, soaked overnight, then drained*
- 2 noomi (dried limes) pierced twice, or thinly peeled rind of 1/2 lemon
- 1 garlic bulb, left whole, but washed and peeled of outer layer
- 60ml (2 fl oz or 1/4 cup) oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 500g (1 lb 2 oz or 2 cups) chopped, peeled tomatoes
- 60g (2 oz or 1/4 cup) tomato paste (concentrated purée)
- 1 teaspoon baharat spice blend, optional
- 3-4 bay leaves
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to season
- 2 large flat breads

METHOD:

Place the lamb shanks and chickpeas in a large saucepan and cover with cold water. Add the dried limes or lemon rind and the whole garlic bulb. Bring to a boil and simmer slowly, skimming the fat as required.

Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan and gently fry the onion for 2-5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, tomato paste, baharat and bay leaves.

When the lamb is well-skimmed and simmering, add the tomato mixture and season with salt and pepper. Cover and simmer gently for 2 - 2 1/2 hours, or until the lamb is tender.

Remove the limes or rind, bay leaves and the garlic bulb and discard. Remove the lamb from the pan. Strip the meat from the bones and shred or cut into pieces, then return the meat to the pan.

Cut the bread into pieces and place at the bottom of each bowl or deep plate. Ladle the stew on top of the bread and serve.

*You may use a can of chickpeas instead, adding them 15 minutes before the end of the cooking time.

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

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