



AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR  
**CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE**

WISDOM FOR THE COMMON GOOD

**The Elijah Interfaith Institute:  
A Succinct Statement of Spiritual  
Principles for “Returning to Mt.Sinai.”**

**During UNCOP 27 November 8-13 2022**

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1. God is the Creator of all that is, seen and unseen. The first verse of the Bible is : “In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth..”[Genesis 1:1]

Everything is a gift of our Creator. Everything! Our life is a gift. Yes, in this vast universe of divine creation, with stars way beyond Saturn and us here on the ground in the web of life, along with, in my case ,the kookaburras and kangaroos ,the waratahs and wallabies!

This spiritual principle means that our prayers, traditionally, begin with gratitude and thanksgivings. We learn to practice gratitude so as to not take for granted all that God gives us.

In spiritual practice, we learn from meditation masters to focus on our breath. Each breath is a gift in the here and now. One day we will “breathe our last”, in the gift of this life. We will then make our way into the life to come where there will be merciful judgment of how we have lived this gift of embodied life on planet earth.

Meanwhile a prayer of grace is: “All things come from you O’ God and from your own do we give you”. Amen.

2. Disciples of Jesus seek to follow His summary teaching of all the law and the prophets. We are to live the two Great Commandments of love of God and neighbour. [Matthew 22.37-40; Mark 12.30-31.

We are bidden to do this with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We are bidden to “love your neighbour as yourself”.

This life of compassion means we should never do to anyone else, under any circumstances, what we would not want done to ourselves.

We understand our neighbour to be all other living beings of God’s creation.

In the climate change context, we would not want to be rendered extinct as has happened to many species of God’s creation. We would not want our traditional lands to disappear under rising sea levels because of global warming. We would not want to be the children who inherit a world rendered uninhabitable because of the previous generation’s greed and neglect.

These matters and much more bring us to repentance.

In my tradition, the prayer is “we have left undone those things which we should have done. We have done those things we should not have done ...but thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life..” [Book of Common Prayer, Morning Prayers,1662].

Repentance, in the context of UNCOP27, must mean full implementation of the Paris Agreement as a matter of compassion and justice, under God.

Recently some of us wrote studies on the complex matter of Forgiveness. The intention is to repent in such a way that thereafter our choices are always to heal and not to hurt. The practice of Forgiveness is crucial if this choice is to be sustained.

[https://cdn.csu.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/3944378/2-FINAL-Forgiveness-A-Study-Guide-E-book.pdf](https://cdn.csu.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/3944378/2-FINAL-Forgiveness-A-Study-Guide-E-book.pdf)

3. In the beginning, God speaks and there is light and life. [Genesis 1.3 ff]. The life includes all living beings and thus includes us.

“Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image ,according to our likeness.”

The Word of God is life-giving.

In my tradition, in the fullness of time, there is incarnation. “And the Word became flesh and lived among us...full of grace and truth...” ( John 1.1-14).

Jesus, God amongst us, born of Mary.

One profound spiritual principle that evolves from this is awareness that our words can be life - giving.

Hence, spiritual practice is aware of how our thoughts become our words. Our words shape our actions .The pattern of our thoughts, words and actions ,over time ,shapes our character and our destiny.

We do become what we think and say.

Contemplative spiritual practices help us cultivate our gift of self-awareness, our ability to see ourselves as objects of our own awareness, and so then make life-giving choices as to our thoughts and words.

We want to choose the thoughts, words and actions that are truest, kindest and most beautiful.

This spiritual practice has much to convey into the culture of a UNCOP, given nation-state rivalries and adversarial relationships.

My practice, for decades, has been the mantric Prayer of the Heart, the Jesus Prayer.

I teach meditation in many places. Meditation builds community and cultivates relationships of trust. Meditation together changes the atmosphere. That is why, at the Madrid COP and since, my contribution and focus has been on Prayer and Meditation.

[https://cdn.csu.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/4072094/Prayers-and-Meditation-for-COP27.pdf](https://cdn.csu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/4072094/Prayers-and-Meditation-for-COP27.pdf)

There is a unified and unifying consciousness evolving amongst us people of faith globally. I see the initiative of the Elijah Interfaith Institute and the November “Returning to Mt. Sinai” as a beautiful and wonderful example of this. Hence my gratitude for this invitation.

[https://cdn.csu.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0007/4091137/P-Huggins-Unified-Consciousness,-Co-inherence-and-this-Season-of-Creation.-.pdf](https://cdn.csu.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/4091137/P-Huggins-Unified-Consciousness,-Co-inherence-and-this-Season-of-Creation.-.pdf)

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