

A PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN VOICE AUSTRALIA

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www.progressivechristians.org.au

Are We Good at Being Equals?

One of the biggest social issues in the Church and society in general is understanding equality and what that means for how we live our lives. When you look at the myriad of contentious issues in our context, most of them can be walked back to fundamental issues of equality and equity. You can see it in social welfare, indigenous and cultural issues, inter-religious dialogue as well as in issues of sexuality and gender. It turns out that we are not very good at egalitarianism. But we strive to get better.

From a progressive Christian perspective these issues are at the forefront of our minds. The Gospels especially from the Markan community has a rich history of turning the ‘insiders’ into ‘outsiders’. Jesus welcomes the ‘outsiders’ who have a better understanding of the love and generosity of God than what most of the ‘insiders’ do. The Gospels preach against a régime that hold themselves as the arbitrators of divine love and forgiveness. Jesus consistently upsets the ‘insiders’ who are desperate to maintain their strong hold on the divine economy.



We ask ourselves 2000 years later, is the Gospel narrative playing out again? Has it ever stopped playing out throughout human history? We look around the world today and in Australia to see discrimination and inequity living deep in attitudes and policies. Pauline Hanson’s recent statements on autism, Islamophobia, gender and marriage Equality are easy to identify, but there are many more. Jesus tells us to shine a light in the dark places, places that justify inequity and inequality are dark indeed.

So we ask ourselves, how can we strive to do better at identifying unjust structures and social attitudes that create insiders and outsiders? And what can we do to bring about change? Hopefully this issue will inspire you.

APCVA Team

Religious Activism Vs Religious Extremism

Management committee member, Len Baglow presented a paper entitled “[How might we differentiate between religious activism and religious extremism](#)” at the recent Radicalized Religion conference at the University of Chichester. The well-received paper used the thought of philosopher Jack Caputo to highlight differences. The [conference](#) itself was important because it

brought together scholars from around the world trying to understand the rise of right wing and fundamentalist religion and in politics.



Theology of Sexuality

Earlier this month it was inspiring to see that the Scottish Episcopalian Church voted to allow same sex weddings. While marriage equality is a debate in the secular world, it is an important conversation to be having within our Churches. When you take a good look at the marriage equality debate, it stems from the issue of validity of sexuality. Can two people of the same gender have a sacramental relationship? What is 'correct' sexuality?

These questions, when not dealt with carefully can lead to creating 'insiders' and 'outsiders'. They can hurt and oppress. How can we do a better job at fully including all of our brothers and sisters regardless of sexuality? God calls all to a life of justice and peace.

Progressive Christian Voice joined the IDAHOT rally in Brisbane protesting against homophobia and hate speech. To make it clear that there are places within Christianity that welcomes everyone. Reverend Dr Peter Catt, President of APCVA joined Equal Voices in [an apology sex and gender diverse community](#).

"Equal Voices is a movement that was born out of frustration. It was born out of determination. But most of all, it was born out of love."

For ways to make your community more inclusive read: '[How to Do Church better.](#)'



National Faith Forum—
[Tasmania Times 2016](#)



IDAHOT—Brisbane

Can a Theology of Gender be Dangerous?

It is hard to believe that gender theology can still be such a contentious issue. One of the reasons that it is a hard topic to talk about is the grief that lives behind it. It is hard to talk about topics that brings sadness and grief in peoples hearts.

But can a theology of Gender be dangerous? When women are treated like 'objects' or 'lesser' can this endanger people's lives? Are there links between conservative theologies that allow violence to go un-

challenged in the home? Recent statements from clergy and synod proceedings shine a light on theology and gender and if there is a link to domestic violence in the home. Click [here](#) to read more.

Challenges Presented by recent Census Findings

[ABC Radio's PM](#) Includes President of APCVA Peter Catt talking on the challenge posed by utilitarianism and the effect of confusing religion with conservative social values.

Uluru Statement From the Heart.

[Australian Progressive Christian Voice](#) is calling on the Prime Minister, other political leaders, the media and all Australian institutions to give strong, compassionate and urgent leadership as the nation processes the Uluru statement and its legitimate proposals. As in the 1967 Constitutional referendum, APCV believe there is widespread goodwill in our nation to be harnessed for this historic journey.

Click [here](#) to read full statement.

Inter-faith Dialogue

Respectful inter-faith dialogue is more important than ever. There is an increasing amount of anecdotal evidence that suggests that the fear of Islam is rising. This fear is subsequently being taken out in verbal and physical abuse, profiling and harassment of people who identify as Muslim. These anecdotes sparked a register for Islamophobia for people to report incidents of abuse, times, locations and trigger points. When you read some of the stories, they

are heart breaking.

In light of this, we look for ways to have respectful dialogue that honours people of faith from every creed. Understanding that other religions are as nuanced as Christianity.

Inter-religious dialogue doesn't have to be hard or overwhelming, but it does have to be done in a spirit of generosity, that doesn't involve conversion. We look for ways that we can learn from each other, and grow to-



Premier's Iftar Dinner NSW 2017

gether as people. Being people of love, is the way to banish fear, violence and hatred.

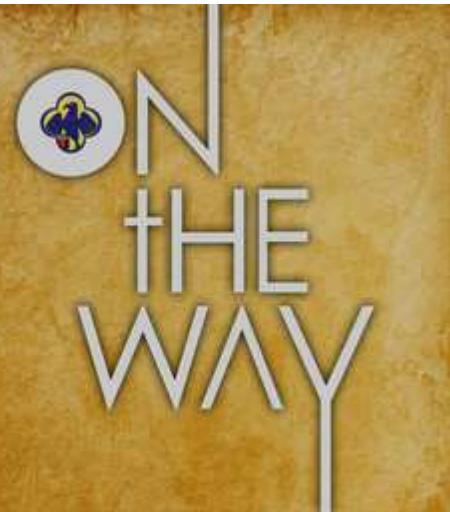
If you or someone you know has experienced Islamophobia please report or to read the stories click [here](#). The more data we collect, the more we know, the more we can change.

Looking for some food for thought 'On the Way?'

On the Way is a series of recorded conversations exploring the deeper mysteries of faith, meaning, and beauty. The podcast invites others into conversation who are also "on the way"; seeking a transformative spirituality and inclusive faith that speaks to real issues of today. Together in dialogue and storytelling we seek to make meaning and articulate a Christianity that expresses the liberating and life-giving message of the Gospel in our time.

The third 'On the Way' podcast is now available. Dom Fay leads the discussion with Peter Catt

and Sue Wilton around issues of gender and spirituality. Does God have a gender? What are the issues for women when so much of our language for God is masculine and exclusive? What does scripture reveal about gender and what have we been missing in our tradition that is life-giving and empowering for women? Explore these questions and many more in the latest episode. It can now be found to download from the iTunes store, or using your preferred podcast App,



(including Android). Search by name "On the Way" or "St John's Cathedral".

What is Your Story?

APCVA is currently looking at including some members stories on the website. What is your story of Faith? Many of our members have powerful stories to share of encounters in life, theology and the Church that lead them to progressive Christianity or to be instigators of change. Please email tiffany.sparks@stpaulsashgrove.org.au your story if you would like to share your experiences

Promoting public awareness of the politically progressive dimensions of Christian opinion

- A Progressive Christian Voice (Australia): understands Christian opinion to be more diverse and broader than that portrayed by the media
- is dedicated to contributing insights from progressive streams of the Christian faith and community
- seeks to minimise the effect that powerful lobby groups have on public discourse
- is therefore concerned with promoting public awareness of the diversity of Christian opinion
- welcomes fresh and challenging contemporary insights into the interpretation of the Christian scriptures and tradition
- does not speak on behalf of any Christian denomination, congregation, community or organisation
- Our members come from a variety of backgrounds and traditions.



**Like us on
Facebook**

Our presence continues to grow on Facebook and Twitter. These platforms are important for letting the press know that we exist. If you haven't done so already please like Facebook or follow on Twitter. Also don't forget to share material that you like or think is important. You can link onto our Facebook or Twitter accounts from the of the webpage. <http://www.progressivechristians.org.au/>

Membership

This year we are hoping to build our membership to 500. We currently have about 120 members. You will shortly get an email suggesting ways you can help in building membership. In the meantime, if you have not renewed your membership below are details about how you can do it. Renewal fee, and any other contribution, can best be processed either by: Direct Debit to: *A Progressive Christian Voice (Australia) Inc.*
BSB: 633000 Account No: 146392212
or posting a cheque made out to: *A Progressive Christian Voice (Australia) Inc.* To Ray Barracough, 25 Buderim Street, Currimundi, Qld 4551

Melbourne meeting of APCVA members and supporters

A meeting of Victorian APCVA members and supporters is planned for Sunday evening July 16. Details are currently being finalised and a separate email will be sent out to Victorian members. The aim of the meeting is to better support Victorian members as well as hear from them issues that they would like taken up. In the meantime, if you have any queries about this meeting, you can contact Len Baglow on lsbaglow@bigpond.com.

In Melbourne or Canberra and Looking to be involved?

Contact Len Baglow to find out how.
lsbaglow@bigpond.com

Looking for Progressive Christian Contacts Around Australia

Every week we are contacted by people asking for progressive Christian communities and community leaders in their local area.

APCVA would like to develop a list of people who would be happy to be contacted to help people find a suitable community near them. Can you help?