



A PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN VOICE *AUSTRALIA*

November-December 2018
www.progressivechristians.org.au

Politics and Religion in Australia... Where are we Now?

Australia's political landscape has been an emotional rollercoaster over the past few months. With the change of leadership a number of events have taken place that have astounded a significant proportion of the Australian public such as 'It's OK to be White' from Pauline Hansen and supported by the coalition not to mention Scott Morrison flagging moving the Australian Israeli embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in the foot steps of Donald Trump. Scott Morrison denies that his conservative Christian faith and religion had anything to do with the proposition. However, one must wonder if this is true. Which brings us to the question, how is the state of religion and politics in Australia? Religion and politics have become entwined in peoples lives. What we see in America is a good example of people voting on religious lines. Historically in Australia, Catholics voted for Labor and Anglicans voted for Liberal. This hasn't been the case for some-time now, but are we seeing religion still effecting out vote changing from denominational to social leaning? Causing fractures both in political parties but also within the denominations themselves and in some cases threatening schism.

One of the biggest political and religious issues still happening in Australia today, is the treatment of asylum seekers. The [#kidsoffnauru](https://www.kidsoffnauru.com) movement which called for people to wear blue for Nauru in early November. This movement has brought together people, both religious and secular background, to demand ethical treatment and processing of people seeking asylum especially the children. We have seen Churches and Cathedrals from across denominations join together over the last few months in support of these people. Brisbane's St. John's Cathedral will ring their bells every Friday as a reminder that there are captive and oppressed children and we as Christians are compelled to do something about it. It is also a reminder that we are the captors and the oppressors. We have seen priests, deacons, bishops and lay people from around Australia protesting in the streets and picketing local M.P's offices calling for all people to register with [#kidsoffnauru.com](https://www.kidsoffnauru.com) and to send letters of support to their local M.P's.

We have a fantastic and meaty issue for you for the end of the year. We have articles on the Eastern Orthodox schism; Rev Dr Peter Catt's address for the Progressive Christian Network; the new UCA marriage liturgy; inclusive church movements; Ponderings on Religion; Climate Change Christmas Carols and More. We hope you enjoy this issue.

~APCVA Management Team.

Marriage Equality and UCA Liturgy

After many years of discussion and discernment the 15th Assembly Uniting Church in Australia, in honouring the diversity within the church, moved to hold two statements of belief on marriage, those being; “marriage for Christians is the freely given consent and commitment in public and before God of a man and a woman to live together for life” and “marriage for Christians is the freely given consent and commitment in public and before God of two people to live together for life.” This provides space for those of us who hold to the belief that marriage is a covenant that can be entered into by two consenting adults regardless of gender to celebrate the marriage of a couple.



Following this decision a new liturgy was prepared using language of ‘couples’ rather than ‘man and woman,’ for the declaration of intent and vows using the language of; marriage partner/husband/wife. The remainder of the service remains the same as ever.

While for many this is not full equality, I believe this was a faithful and courageous move by the Uniting Church in Australia in a bid to respect the dignity of humanity and diversity.

All of this said, it is with sadness that there is the possibility that this decision may need to be suspended in November. The reason being, in the Uniting Church Constitution there is a clause 39b, allowing presbyteries to challenge decisions of the Assembly if they deem it to be ‘Vital to the life of the church’ and that, ‘there was adequate consultation prior to the decision.’ No decision has yet been made and many of us remain hopeful and continue to pray for our decision makers and the wider Uniting Church - please join us in that prayer.

Our prayers are also with the LGBTIQ community, their friends and families as once more we navigate another period of uncertainty.

The Reverend Susan Pickering–APCVA Management Team.

A Faith Response to Climate Change

“Faith communities in Australia and around the world are not waiting for reluctant politicians to take decisive action on climate change. They are committing to walking more gently on the earth as part of a global multi-faith [campaign](#) called “Living the Change: faithful choices for flourishing world”.

Hope Radio presents a conversation between Rev Dr Peter Catt and Stephen O’Doherty discussing the latest IPCC report on global warming, walking gently on the earth and the faith response of hundreds of people in Australia attending ‘Living the Change’ events around Australia. This has been an ecumenical and inter-faith movement seeing people come together out of faith and concern for the earth. To know more about these events, how you can be involved and to listen to the conversation please go to: goo.gl/1Qg3pB

The Dinner Church of Unlikely Saints

Dinner Church was launched on the Sunshine Coast in September following an Equal Voices meeting which invited LGBTIQ+ Christians, families and allies to gather, ask questions in an affirming environment, and explore what it means to love one another fully in the body of Christ.

Initial conversations gave voice to some alarming accounts of identifying as LGBTIQ+ in faith communities and expressed deep questions of church culture and application of 'belief'. Subsequent meetings discerned the need for these discussions to be framed in the context of prayer, while recognising we are most able to be ourselves in the company of friends.



This desire for convivial, community forming gatherings was the launch pad for Dinner Church: an ecumenical meal to which all are invited, with an intentional focus on safe space for conversations of concern to LGBTIQ+ Christians.

The concept is borrowed from St Lydia's, Brooklyn where community is made around the table that is prepared together. It recalls the early gathering of Christians around the meal, and involves everyone in the work of hospitality – preparing food, setting tables, unpacking scripture, singing, praying, and sharing stories before cleaning up together, and offering each other blessing and peace as we depart.

While still in its early days, initial experiences have been moving. Sharing across the table has been frank and powerful, while some of the most delicate conversations have arisen as we've washed up together. We explore why our faith remains important to us, while going beyond the comfort of our own denominations to make each other welcome.

Our name 'Unlikely Saints' references a prayer used by host church St Mark's in Buderim which calls us back to the 'covenant of life' in which *no face will be forgotten, no body enslaved and no spirit broken*.

In Dinner Church we practice the full inclusion we seek of all who encounter obstacles to living their faith in the image in which they are made. We engage in the enduring Christian tradition of hospitality, and make communion as we share our food, tell our stories, and join each other in song and prayer.

The Reverend Deborah Bird.

Book Review: Preaching as Resistance; Voices of Hope, Justice and Solidarity.

What could be more boring than a book of 30 sermons? Whoa! This book explodes! It is the sort of book which should be chained down somewhere in the Hogwarts library. It is a dangerous book. It shouts, it sighs, it moves around, it whispers, it stings, it grips, it laughs, it cries, it sings. The Spirit moves. Beware. Watch out!

First imagined as a collection of sermons “after Trump”, it is much more. It is a condensation of the best practical progressive American theology today. Each sermon is short. They seem to follow the 9-minute rule, i.e. at 10 minutes the congregation falls asleep. However no one could fall asleep during these sermons.

The quality is so high, that I cannot pick a favourite. However, the contributions from the female preachers are outstanding including but not restricted to Molly Housh Gordon on Beloved Resistance, Erin Wathen on When to Break the Law, Amy Butler on Everything Must Change, Lori Walke on Take A Knee, and Sandhya Jha on Jesus Christ for President.

To help the reader understand the theological context of these sermons, the editor, Phil Snider has written a blistering introduction. It is the best thing I have ever read on the art of giving a sermon.

So dear readers, rush out and buy two copies of this book. It is that good.

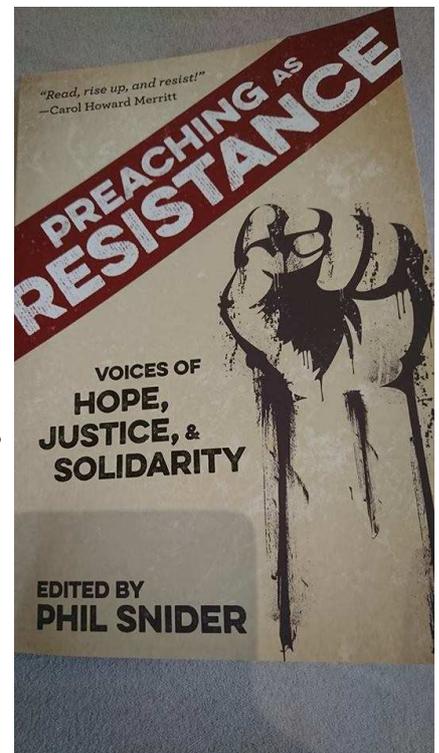
Len Baglow–APCVA Management Team

Get into the Advent Spirit with ‘Carols Against Coal!’

The Australian Religious Response to Climate Change are encouraging people to be involved in raising their voice against coal mining and Adani by singing for the world they want to see. The ARRCC would love to see groups of people around Australia performing a special selection of carols on video to be posted before the 15th of December to be shared while the Labor party national conference takes place.

Gather your friends and make beautiful music together with carols such as ‘Hush, our Solar Panels Sit’, ‘O Come All Ye Miners’, ‘While Politicians Sit and Talk’, ‘Come, O Come Renewables’ and many more! Follow the Link to get your own song book and sheet music to create your own video and ensure our politicians hear your beautiful voices. You will also find a link to how to create your own video so there is nothing stopping you. As you prepare for Advent ‘we wish you a steady climate’.

goo.gl/ZFGBR9



Orthodox Church Schism

October was a month for church Synods around the world. While some disappointed synod members with a lack of progress, others triggered global schisms between churches which had previously been unified for hundreds of years. We saw this with the recent split within the Eastern Orthodox Churches.

What Happened?

On [October 11](#), the Ukrainian Orthodox Church was granted long sought independence and self-governance (or “autocephaly”) by the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople following the Holy and Sacred Synod on October 9-11. Traditionally the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople has held primacy over the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Bartholomew I, Archbishop of Constantinople, granted the Ukrainian Orthodox Church independence by annulling a [1686 transfer](#) which originally granted authority over the Ukrainian Orthodox Church to the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. When he annulled the transfer, the Archbishop also granted the “[tumos](#)” (document) of autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. What this actually means is that out of the three existing branches of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, two of the branches (the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Kiev Patriarchate, and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church) will likely unite to form an [independent nation-wide church](#) in Ukraine. The third and largest branch of the church (the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate, which numbers approximately 12,200 parishes) has historically been loyal to the Russian Orthodox Church.

The prospect of a united Ukrainian Orthodox Church causes difficulties for the Ukrainian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate, as there are no formal rules that govern the process of each parish aligning themselves with one of the three church [branches](#). Because of this, there are very real fears amongst those loyal to Russia that pro-Ukrainian parishes will increase in number following the Archbishop’s announcement. The dwindling of churches loyal to Moscow would be a huge blow to the Russian Orthodox Church’s reach into Ukraine. Given President Putin’s use of [religious significance](#) to help justify the annexation of Crimea, any undermining of the Russian Orthodox Church’s influence will be met with strong condemnation from both orthodox church leaders, as well as from Russia’s political leaders.

We can see an examples of this throughout interviews and news media from Russian leaders. Supposed fears that the newly independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church will seek to use violence as a means of gaining influence and control over houses of worship has already primed Russian religious and secular leaders to [allude](#) to the use of retaliatory force. Russian leaders claim that the threat of force is a means of protecting the interests of pro-Russian followers. It is possible that this could also lay the pretext Russia needs to further increase military intervention in the Crimean conflict.

Following the Archbishop’s move to grant the tumos of autocephaly, the Russian Orthodox Church wasted no time in breaking communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. This divided the Eastern Orthodox Church in half and put more than 150 million Russian Orthodox Christians against the traditional leader of their faith. Given the financial power wielded by the Russian Orthodox Church over smaller churches in the Balkans and Middle East, it is likely that this divide will hold and that many churches will remain loyal to Moscow. This is especially the case when considered in light of the Ecumenical Patriarchate’s much smaller financial endowment. A financial strain that is further complicated by an increasingly tenuous political position regularly undermined by the [Turkish government](#).

Why Does it Matter?

The Russian Orthodox Church is closely [tied](#) to modern Russian politics and has the backing of President Putin. Until the recent split, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople also received significant

financial aid from Russian politicians and oligarchs. Large amounts of Russian money have been funneled into the church through the state-backed [Russian Athos Society](#), a source of revenue that is now likely to be cut off. In addition, because the decades long fight amongst the Eastern Orthodox Churches has always been religious as well as political, the split is likely to provide an opportunity for Russia to further destabilize the Ukrainian government. This is particularly concerning in the lead-up to Ukraine's 2019 parliamentary and [presidential elections](#).

The intertwining of church affairs and state policy seen in the Russian Orthodox Church is not new to the world. We don't often think about the implications of convoluted religion and politics due to Australia's secular government, which largely provides protection to the state from the church, and to the church from the state. But even here, Australian branches of all religions often have close ties to political leaders both domestically and abroad. To take an obvious example, the Church in Britain is interconnected with the British government. Actions by the Church of England have often had ramifications for British politics, such as a recent [trip to Syria](#) by senior clergy including Lord Carey of Clifton, the former Archbishop of Canterbury who has been accused of aiding Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's propaganda. Although the Bishop of Canterbury does not exercise authority in provinces outside of England, the presumed unity between the Australian Anglican Church and the Church of England should cause us to pay attention and reflect on the actions of leaders in the Anglican Communion worldwide.

Our church leaders may soon have to navigate a new era of Christian diplomacy. Already, when the Russian Orthodox Church broke with the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and all Russia also decided to withdraw from the ecumenical Orthodox-Catholic [theological dialogue](#). Other ramifications are likely to be felt across ecumenical efforts worldwide. The stances our church leaders take in such arenas could also have the unintended side effect of demonstrating a pro- or anti-Russian slant that could effect further ramifications in secular politics.

This conclusion is not as far-fetched as it might initially seem. We are already seeing an increased trend in countries like the U.S. and Australia towards voting along religious lines, and politicians are paying attention to the collective efforts of churchgoers to change policy. Controversial issues such as same-sex marriage, abortion and immigration have led to a large conservative-progressive divide within the Anglican church and has nationally split Christian voters. We should be wary of engaging in this conflict and further undermining Australia's secular political system by insisting it pander to views justified and based on Christian faith. Polarization of politics in this way drives forward schisms like the split in the Russian-Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Such schisms don't just have ramifications for religious organizations and structures, but can incite violence, undermine political systems, and dismantle global cooperative and ecumenical efforts.

Church splits might sometimes be justified – the need for an independent church in Ukraine is one that has been felt keenly for decades. But the Russian Orthodox Church's decision to continue its efforts to exercise control over Ukrainian parishes, and propagate Russian foreign policy looks like a political exercise, not a religious one. Hard line stances designed to dictate the decisions, practices and authority of our Anglican Communion and secular society should be closely watched. While we can't keep politics and controversial issues out of religion, we should be careful to ensure that our actions are designed to faithfully protect the rights of all those present in our wider community. The line between protecting our beliefs and controlling others is easy to blur, but it is through protecting this line that we can best support ecumenical efforts, prevent government control over the church, and support our society to progress in its efforts to protect the human rights of us all.

~ Ruth Sparks MIR (Master of International Relations)

Why I seek to be a Spiritual Progressive

The Purpose and Drive of Religion and Spirituality

The Absence by R S Thomas

*It is this great absence
that is like a presence, that compels
me to address it without hope
of a reply. It is a room I enter
from which someone has just
gone, the vestibule for the arrival
of one who has not yet come.
I modernise the anachronism
of my language, but he is no more here
than before. Genes and molecules
have no more power to call
him up than the incense of the Hebrews
at their altars. My equations fail
as my words do. What resources have I
other than the emptiness without him of my whole
being, a vacuum he may not abhor?*

The purpose and drive for religion/spirituality is to honour and be shaped by that which Thomas alludes to, that which is just out of reach. The Celtic tradition speaks of places where one encounters this 'presence-absence' as Thin places. Once encountered, one develops a sense that this close-but-ungraspable 'presence-absence' is something that speaks to our depths and has the capacity/desire/longing to transform us. We even say that it is loving.

The Underbelly of Spirituality and Religion

Mystery is something that we cannot control.

This unsettles us. So, we have tendency to define, reduce and contain. The challenge as I see it, is not to give in to this urge, but to stay in the liminal space, the place of encounter and, hence, of transformation. So, we need to find ways to avoid concretising the metaphors and turn our images, which seek to describe the indescribable, into statues.

The problem with fundamentalism is that it locks down that which should remain a mystery, and so it loses the elusiveness. And so the power that the presence-absence has to transform. It replaces the creative and transformative with certainty and predictability. Dynamism replaced by fossilisation. And unjust practices follow.

We need to remind ourselves that the opposite of faith is not doubt but certainty. I reflect on my own tradition's reaction to the idea of the feminine as it relates to the Divine.

It has become the unusable metaphor because the male has been concretised.

So we need to find ways to hold to the liminality and marginality so that we remain open to that which is becoming; respond rather than defend. Otherwise we repeat the Galileo controversy, or find ourselves in an indefensible wonderland, such as that occupied by Creationism. In recent times we have found ourselves stumbling into that territory as religious people have resisted rather than promoted the ministry of women and have alienated themselves from the wider community over Human sexuality. As some of our Buddhist friends say, 'If we Meet the Buddha on the road we need to kill him'. But fundamentalism is not the only challenge we face. Secularism also seeks, through denial of its existence, to neuter the transformative capacity of mystery, of the presence-absence. This means that as Spiritual Progressives we are called to walk between two extremes. To walk, what Anglicans call the *via media*

Jonas Atlas describes it like this:

For modernist secularized minds, religion is something inherently problematic. For conservative fundamentalists, on the other hand, religion is the complete solution to their problems. The former wants to get rid of it as much as possible; the latter wants more of it. Yet the underlying vision on religion is essentially the same: religion is portrayed as a boxed package of rules, customs and convictions that legitimize patriarchal aggression. The various more flexible, undefined, spiritual and mystical aspects are placed outside of it—even though they've been the norm for centuries.

It is what Atlas describes as the 'more flexible, undefined, spiritual and mystical aspects' that Spiritual Progressives try to honour.

Inter-faith Dialogue

This is why I find inter-faith dialogue so helpful. It keeps us dialogical. It prevents us from concretising. It ensures that we stay agile and so respond.

The life and work of Bede Griffiths has helped me a lot. Griffiths was born in England in 1906. While studying at Oxford he met C. S. Lewis. They explored the faith together. They both became Anglicans, but later Griffiths joined The Roman Catholic Church and took vows as a Benedictine monk. In 1955 he moved to India and developed the determination to live 'a life as close to that of a traditional Hindu sannyasi or monk as it is possible for a Christian monk to live'.

Throughout his life he held 'an admiration for a type of nature-mysticism which enabled him to catch glimpses of the divine'. Griffiths used the human hand as a metaphor for the way religions relate to each other and to what Thomas refers to as:

[The] *great absence*
that is like a presence, that compels
me to address it without hope
of a reply.

Griffiths wrote:

... the fingers represent Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and [the thumb represents] Christianity. Buddhism is miles from Christianity, and each has its own position. If you try to mix them, taking a bit of Hinduism or Buddhism and adding it to Christianity, that is syncretism. But if you go deeply into any one tradition, you converge on a centre, and there you see how we all come forth from a common root.

There were a number of 'Christian Principles' that he held as central that were expanded and enhanced through his interaction with Hinduism. These were:

Christo-centrism

Griffiths gives the source of all that is the name Christ. This includes, but is more than Jesus. For Griffiths Christ is the 'Golden String', that runs through the essence of the world and all religion. Griffiths writes, 'Where is the Golden String to be found? The Golden String is Christ; he is the clue to the centre.' Griffiths therefore sees all spiritual questing as forms of Anonymous Christianity. He reflects John 1 - Light that enlightens everyone. I note that this is a Christian framing interreligious dialogue, so it is not absolute framing, but a way of framing.

God as Mother

Through Hinduism Griffiths reconnected with this lost part of his tradition. He concluded that the west needs to rediscover the feminine in order to survive. See my previous comments about the feminine.

The Trinity

God as communion. The presence-absence is essentially relational.

*In the ultimate reality there is revealed not merely an identity,
but a communion. The final Christian revelation is that the
Godhead itself, the ultimate reality, is a communion of persons, a communion of persons in love,
and that gives a further dimension to our understanding of reality.*

A sacramental cosmos

This points to God-human communion. The cosmos is a place of encounter. Teilhard de Chardin's Mystical experience. Evolution as a Divine unfolding. Cosmogeneis and Christogenesis.

Spirituality is Political

The incarnation combined with the idea of a sacramental universe means that matter matters. Life is therefore political.

This leads to the idea that fruits of behaviours and structures matter. The test of 'godliness' then is seen as not following laws, precepts or practices but looking for: Flourishing, Shalom, Participation And Theosis - becoming like God - Transformation

Aristotle Papanikolaou argues that a 'theology grounded in the principle of divine-human communion must be one that unequivocally endorses a political community that is democratic in a way that structures itself around the modern liberal principles of freedom of religion, the protection of human rights, and church-state separation' His overtly theological approach shows that the basic principles of liberal democracy are not tied exclusively to the language and categories of Enlightenment philosophy and, so, are not inherently secular.

Rev Dr Peter Catt, On the occasion of the 'Launch of the Network of Spiritual Progressives', themed 'How can we heal the world'. 10th November, Griffith University, Multifait Centre, Nathan Campus.



The poster features a central illustration of a tree with a human figure inside its branches, surrounded by various symbols like hearts, squares, and a crescent moon. The text is overlaid on this image.

**LAUNCH FOR THE
NETWORK OF
SPIRITUAL
PROGRESSIVES**

'How can we heal our
world?'

**SATURDAY, 10TH NOVEMBER
9:00AM FOR 9:30AM START
MULTI-FAITH CENTRE, N35, NATHAN CAMPUS,
GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY
FREE ENTRY • MORNING TEA PROVIDED
RSVP TO ICD@GRIFFITH.EDU.AU**

Ponderings on What it Means to be Religious in Australia

Recently I was in Brisbane and popped into the Queensland Art Gallery to visit their Fairweather collection. I was bemused to see on the wall a note to say that Fairweather was not a religious painter. This echoed a comment I had heard about another of my favourite painters Arthur Boyd. Pride of place that day in the Queensland Art Gallery was one of Fairweather's most famous works, 'Gethsemane'.

Also on display were his works 'Epiphany' and 'Palm Sunday'. Fairweather is also well known for his series on the 'Drunken Buddha'. As it happens, on display that day was Boyd's painting, Baptism.

Anyone familiar with Boyd's work knows that it is filled with religious themes and iconography. Perhaps the most striking is the breath-taking series of huge [tapestries](#) that he designed on the life of St Francis of Assisi.

So how is it that these two eminent Australian painters can be described so often as non-religious? I suspect there are several interlocking reasons. One is the deep-rooted suspicion many educated Australians have for religion. Religion in their minds is associated with the narrow minded, the dull witted, the bigoted, the uncreative. How could great Australian artists be religious? They couldn't possibly be religious, despite the iconography of their paintings.

At a deeper level there is I think a misunderstanding of the nature of religion itself. Back at the turn of the century, Jack Caputo made the point, "*Religion,*" in the singular, as just one thing, is nowhere to be found; it is too maddeningly polyvalent and too uncontainably diverse for us to fit it all under one roof. There are Western religions, Eastern religions, ancient religions, modern religions, polytheistic religions, and even slightly atheistic religions; too many to count, too many to master, in too many languages to learn. I am not complaining or making excuses. Indeed the uncontainable diversity of "religion" is itself a great religious truth and a marker of the uncontainability of what religion is all about. (On Religion, p.1)

In Australia, religion has most often been associated with either the established (and therefore elite) church of the Anglicans, the clannish and controlling church of the Roman Catholics, or the puritanical and rule bound Presbyterians or Methodists (no drinking, no smoking, no dancing). Most recently the public persona of religion has been taken over by the extreme right of the Australian Christian Lobby and certain Bishops of the Anglican and Catholic communions. In this public understanding of religion, religion is perceived as religious denominations who claim an exclusive understanding of what Caputo would call the "uncontainable".

Of course, this dead husk of a persona, is not what religion is really about. Within the Anglican, Catholic and Uniting churches there are flickering flames of love that glimpse the uncontainable and respond with a commitment to justice and compassion for humans and all of creation. And this religious flame ignites elsewhere; in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander religions, in Islam, in Buddhism, in Hinduism, in Judaism, with the Quakers, and even at Hillsong.

Much art also points to this flame, sometimes with religious or spiritual iconography and sometimes without. We know such art because it doesn't just entertain or distract but takes us beyond ourselves. We glimpse something "other" which is real but inexpressible.

This flame exists in nature but is not contained by it. The Australian novelist Kylie Tennant has described well both its ordinariness and its ineffability.

His voice flowed on. Bessie lent her head against the hard surface of a gum tree; she put her arms around it, feeling the cold solidity like a stone. Maurice might talk of environment, heredity; but they were only words. The thing that mattered was this mixture of pain and peace, the feeling of exquisite recognition of a strange place, the grasping of a meaning in life bigger than the usual worries and wants. (Time Enough Later, p.127)

Maybe the challenge for progressive Christians today is not to try and contain the inexpressible in new creeds or dogmas or forms, but to find common ground with all who sense the inexpressible wonder and beauty of life, and who want to follow it, commit to it and share it in a spirit of gratitude, of justice and compassion. Maybe then, the art experts will come to realise just how "religious" are two of my favourite artists, Ian Fairweather and Arthur Boyd.

For as Jack Caputo has put it, *Religion is for lovers, for men and women of passion, for real people with a passion for something other than taking profits, people who believe in something, who hope like mad in something, who love something with a love that surpasses understanding. (On Religion, p.2)*

Len Baglow, Management Committee of APCVA

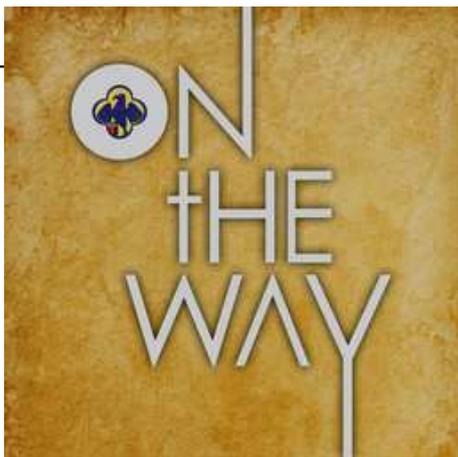


Baptism—left
Gethsemane—
Right



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.



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Membership

This year we are hoping to build our membership to 500. We currently have about 158 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 Barraclough, 25 Buderim Street, Currimundi, Qld 4551

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