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# The Gippsland Anglican

CELEBRATING 120 YEARS 

Published in Gippsland Diocese since 1904 **AUGUST 2024**

Marion Dewar

## Provincial Archdeacon for Reconciliation collated at St Paul's Melbourne

(L-R) The Rev'd Helen Dwyer, The Rev'd Canon Phyllis Andy, The Ven Glenn Loughrey, The Rev'd Kathy Dalton and The Rev'd Canon Shannon Smith

■ Marion Dewar

The Anglican Province of Victoria has commenced a new Indigenous ministry and reconciliation initiative to strengthen the participation and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people within the Anglican Church.

Wiradjuri Elder and Anglican priest The Rev'd Canon Uncle Glenn Loughrey, who is leading the project, was collated as Archdeacon for Reconciliation, First Nations Recognition, and Treaty at a Provincial Evensong in St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne on 30 June.

The Provincial Choral Evensong is held in St Paul's Cathedral Melbourne each year, usually on the last Sunday

in June – to coincide with the Feast of St Peter and St Paul. Uncle Glenn designed the six glass panels for the narthex screen, or cathedral entrance, installed in 2022, depicting the traditional lands on which the cathedral stands. The Province of Victoria consists of the five Anglican dioceses: Ballarat, Bendigo, Gippsland, Melbourne and Wangaratta.

The first years of my Provincial Choral Evensong attendance were as a member of the augmented choir through my membership of the Royal School of Church Music (Victoria). All cathedral choirs in the Province are invited to take part, as are other choirs and singers.

Continued on page 7



# Celebrating news ministry, and the ministry of our Editor

When I was elected Bishop of Gippsland one of the first phone calls I received was from *TGA* Editor, Jan Down, seeking an interview. Jan's obvious dedication, attention to detail, and openness to the nuances of a story beyond its headline suggested to me that that Gippsland had a real treasure in its flagship publication.

That conviction has only deepened over the last six years as I've worked with Jan, and more recently Sally Woollett, and the Editorial Committee comprising Archdeacons Sue Jacka and Phil Muston (until 2022) and Libby Willems (since 2023).

It is with a heavy heart, therefore, that I must relate to our readers Sally's decision to step down as Editor of *TGA* – a role she has fulfilled with distinction and great generosity since November 2019.

September will be Sally's 54th and final edition as Editor, and in those five years the publication has seen some significant changes in both content and format – some of the latter arising from our enduring partnership with *The Melbourne Anglican*.

Earlier this year, as *TGA* embarked on its 120th year of continuous print publication (with the exception of several editions that were 'online only' during the early months of the COVID-19 lockdowns) the Editorial Committee workshoped a mission statement for the magazine.

*The Gippsland Anglican* seeks to serve God's people within and beyond the region by:

- connecting communities across Gippsland through the sharing of news and views
- building a sense of shared mission between parishes, Anglican schools and other ministry centres of the Diocese
- celebrating and learning from the diversity of service and outreach offered by local clergy and lay people
- strengthening links between the Diocese, the wider Anglican Communion and ecumenical partners
- encouraging faith and discipleship through a breadth of resources on spirituality, theology and Christian living
- examining current social issues through the lens of the gospel.

If we had to sum this up in two words, they would be 'news ministry'.

Within a broader communications strategy that includes a range of platforms – the website, *Ad Clerum* letters and emails, social media (Facebook, Instagram and YouTube), radio (Gippsland Anglicans On Air, with Life FM), 'News for the Pews' adverts, and Tithe.ly/Elvanto Church Management System) – *TGA* offers a particular ministry with respect to longer term news and the ongoing promotion of missional activities, engaging the diverse communities of Gippsland Anglicans across our region so as both to resource and document our journey of faith and discipleship.

The Editorial Committee has invited, welcomed and sought to respond to feedback. We have also been heartened by unsolicited encouragement from within and beyond the Diocese, including these recent comments:

*TGA* arrived in the mail this morning and each month it comes I mean to write and congratulate you and your team on such a good diocesan publication. It covers the diocese with insight and reflects a diocese that works together as well as embracing diversity. There is also a good range of articles and [as] the only diocesan monthly left in the Province [of Victoria] you defy the trend in this online age. Having it in a magazine format and colour makes it a very attractive publication.  
(subscriber from another Diocese)

Thank you again for another cracker edition of *TGA*! I am inspired, encouraged, uplifted and challenged."  
(diocesan reader)

On a recent visit to St Philip's, Cowes, we picked up a copy of the diocesan magazine. It was so interesting and so well set-out that I felt I must compliment you. Congratulations and thank you.  
(visitor from another Diocese)

Such affirmation is a credit to Sally, to our faithful *TGA* parish reps, and to the written and photographic offerings of so many of our regular and occasional contributors.

Sally's predecessor, Jan Down, has kindly agreed to serve as Editor for the final three editions of 2024 (October to December) and has been a familiar and consistent voice throughout this anniversary year with her fascinating 'retrospectives' – thank you Jan, on both counts!

With Bishop-in-Council's blessing, and mindful of the question raised at Synod regarding the rising production and distribution costs associated with being the only monthly print publication in the Province, the Editorial Committee will use the recruitment process for Sally's permanent successor as an opportunity to review *TGA*, and – as always – your input will be appreciated.

That said, like any stipended ministry, news ministry carries a financial commitment. Sally's editorial ministry has been a labour of love, costing the Diocese a fraction of what her professional skills and services would typically attract, and representing a relatively small part of the overall expense in getting the magazine from laptops to layout to letterboxes.

At present the Diocese subsidises *TGA* to the tune of \$90 per reader, per year. Individual subscribers defray the cost of their own copy by \$65 per year – still enjoying a 'discount' on the RRP (\$7.95) on the front cover. Parishes currently pay \$2.25 per copy.

In this 120th year we are aiming to attract 120 subscribers so as to reduce the level of that diocesan subsidy. While still well short of that mark, every subscription counts, and we greatly value your support.

On behalf of Gippsland Anglicans and other readers far and wide I express here our gratitude to Sally, and our admiration for the work she has done with us and for us. We will miss the breadth of her editorial vision, her integrative editorials, and her genuine care for the publication and its readership. Thank you Sally for this chapter of your leading the enduring form of news ministry that is *The Gippsland Anglican*. Long may it serve God's people and be a herald of God's peaceable kingdom.



# New rectors for the parishes of Maffra and Corner Inlet

The Rev'd Dr Tim Gaden has been appointed as the new Rector for the Parish of Maffra.



Tim came to the Diocese in early 2022 as Chaplain to Gippsland Grammar. Since then he has taken on a number of diocesan roles, and been a valued Locum Priest in several parishes, including at Maffra. He brings a wealth of experience to this new position, which will begin at a 0.6 fraction, allowing him to continue his ministry at the Cathedral, and as Ministry Wellbeing and Development (MWD) Coordinator.

With a strong education background, Tim is a gifted teacher in parish, school and university settings. There is also a local connection from 'way back', as Tim explains:

The children of clergy, people say, grow up used to moving from place to place, and sometimes develop a taste for it themselves. That's certainly true in my case. Both my parents were Anglican priests, who served in country NSW, New York, Melbourne, Adelaide and Tasmania. My grandfather, also an Anglican priest, started his ministry in Sheffield in the UK but then came to Gippsland as a 'Ten Pound Pom', and was briefly Vicar of Moe.

I have ministered in Melbourne, London, Ballarat and the Western District, before now happily landing in Gippsland. Over the years, among other things, I have tutored in philosophy at Monash University, held a postdoctoral position at King's College London, been Vicar of Battersea, the Dean (Principal) of the Theological School and College Chaplain at Trinity College in Melbourne,

the Canon Theologian in the Diocese of Ballarat, Rector of Ararat, served on the ethics committees of Austin Health and Federation University, been Senior Chaplain at Ballarat Grammar School, and Chaplain at Gippsland Grammar.

Tim and his wife, Selina, are looking forward to becoming part of the friendly rural community in Maffra and Boisdale, something they very much enjoyed together during their years in Ararat.

Alongside Tim's presence as a locum, the people of St John's Maffra and St George's Boisdale have enjoyed the priestly ministry of Laurie Baker, Heather Cahill, Jim Connelly and Marilyn Obersby, and the liturgical leadership of the parish's Lay Readers. We are grateful also for the capable and dedicated work of the parish's lay leaders, which – among other things – allowed the Clergy Appointments Advisory Board time to explore and recommend this exciting appointment.

Tim was inducted as Rector of the Parish of Maffra on Wednesday 24 July.

The Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes has accepted the invitation to serve as Rector for the Parish for Corner Inlet.



Fran is well known to us as Priest-in-Charge of Korumburra / Poowong since 2017, a time that Fran says has shown her "that God will lead and grow the church as we follow His leading step by step." She will be sorely missed as the leader of that faith community, even as the good people of All Saints' and St Paul's give thanks for her ministry and pray blessings on her onward journey.

Fran was made a Canon of St Paul's

Cathedral, Sale, in 2021, and Anglican Chaplain to Fish Creek Union Church in 2020.

With over 12 years of experience in ordained ministry – including, for a season, at Corner Inlet – Fran is well placed to work with Anglicans and ecumenical partners in Foster, Hedley, Toora and Fish Creek, as they continue their outreach to these local communities in the Southern Region of our Diocese, with which she has deep connections. As she explains:

I have had a life-long association with South Gippsland, since coming to Sandy Point with my family as a child and teenager for holidays and long university breaks. It was on one of these occasions that I committed my life to following Jesus. Since making an adult Christian commitment in my early university years I have always been involved in local church ministry, through music, leading youth groups and Bible studies. Twenty seven years ago my husband Michael and I moved to Fish Creek with our two daughters, Jessica and Kirra, and we built a mud-brick house on 3.5 acres overlooking Waratah Bay and Wilson's

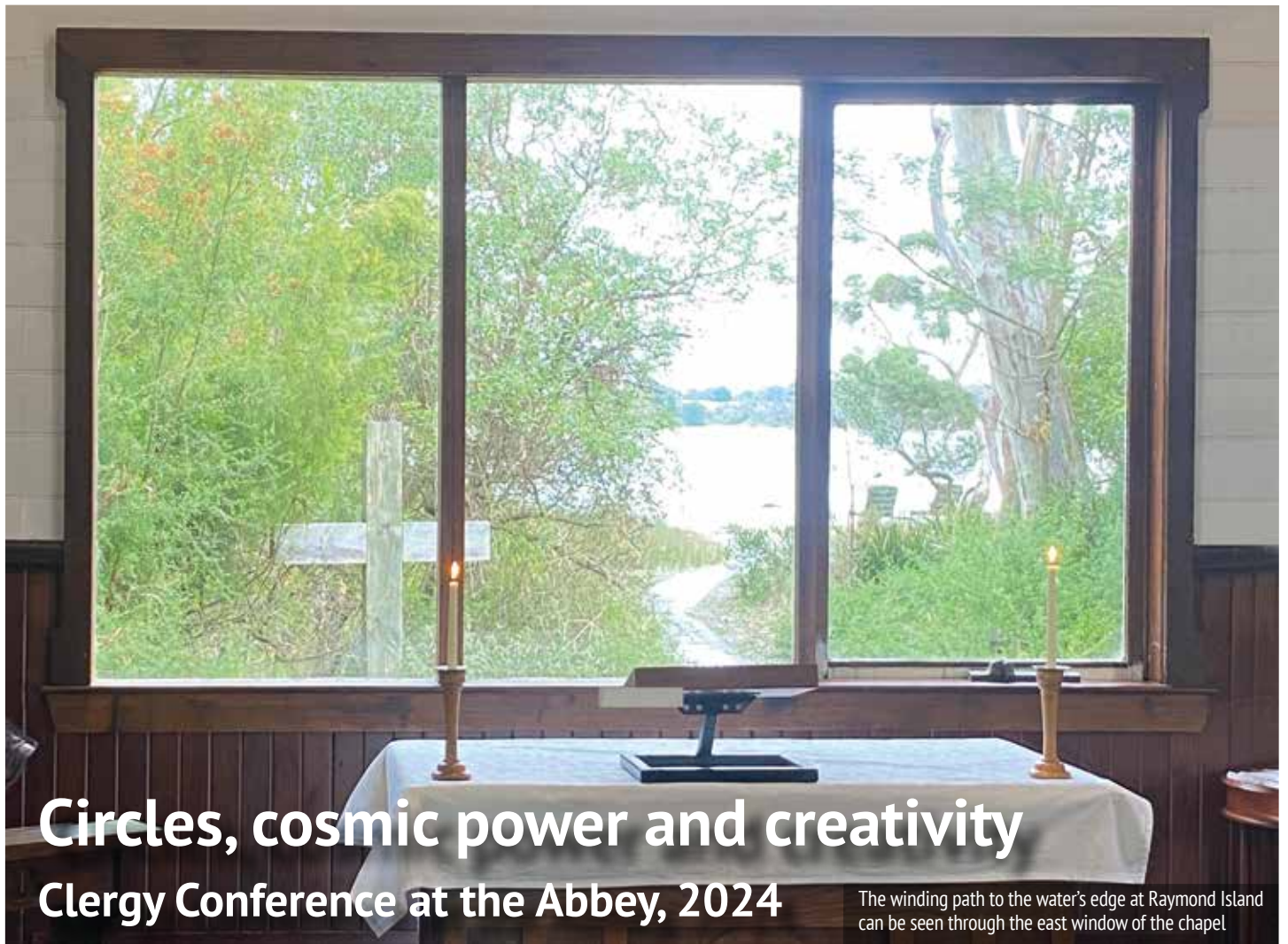
Prom. I worked in general practice for 25 years in Foster, Toora, and Tarwin Lower Medical Centres, and whilst there I began to feel God's call on my life to explore new ministries in the church. This led to me being ordained a deacon in 2012 and a priest in 2014.

Fran says she is "passionate about seeing families and young people coming to know the love of God and be welcomed into the church. I love the local churches of this region and their people, and I see the potential of these communities to bring the love and presence of Jesus into a world in such need of Good News."

Corner Inlet has been beautifully cared for by retired former Incumbent and resident Locum Priest The Rev'd Neil Thompson, and we are deeply grateful to Neil, and Sue, and to Lay Readers and lay leaders of the parish, for their faithful ministries while the Clergy Appointments Advisory Board has been doing its work.

Fran's Induction as Rector of Corner Inlet was held on Tuesday 6 August.

From Bishop Richard's *Ad Clerum*.



# Circles, cosmic power and creativity

## Clergy Conference at the Abbey, 2024

The winding path to the water's edge at Raymond Island can be seen through the east window of the chapel

■ Rev'd Denise Martin

As I arrived on Raymond Island for this year's Clergy Conference, I couldn't help but notice a rainbow, in all its glory, spanning over the island. I took that to be a promise of a fruitful and encouraging few days away, and I was not disappointed. We are so blessed to have a place to go that is set in the natural environment, surrounded by water and with the local wildlife making a regular appearance. This little piece of environmental heaven is open to everyone, a few days away with family and friends to spend time together, a group who want to get together to focus on a topic or to meditate or pray, or even just a place to rest.

As we sat in the chapel for our first evening prayer, I looked out through the large, clear-glass window behind the altar, and it took me back to a time when our parish used to come here for our annual parish camp. This is many years ago now, but it seems like yesterday. My reminiscences included one of a dear lady who used to view our parish camp as the highlight of her whole year. Annie had an intellectual disability and didn't ever go anywhere else for a holiday. When Annie and her brother, Jim Atkins, who also had an intellectual disability, passed away just a

few years ago, they bequeathed their estate to our church. Their legacy has become the foundation funding for the Ministry Development Program for those who sense a call to ministry, either lay or ordained.

During the conference, we were blessed to have an in-depth Bible study led by Sean Winter. An ordained Baptist, Sean has worked in ecumenical theological education for almost 30 years. He has a particular interest in the interpretation of the letters and theology of Paul, with a focus on Philipians and 2 Corinthians.

On this occasion, he chose to shine a light on Romans and in particular Romans 7. Sean talked about Sin (with a capital 'S') as a cosmic power that is expressed in systems and structures that are death-dealing and whose consequences include sin (with a small 's'), understood as the way individuals have

shaped and been shaped by those systems since Adam. The good news of Paul's gospel is liberation from Sin in Christ. As Christians, we all know of the good news of Jesus Christ. Because Christ has been raised and become the 'life-giving Spirit', the Spirit is placed within us here and now, in the present, inside our physical bodies – like sponges plunged into water – making the life and death of Jesus visible in all who are 'in' him. This is true for all Christians who declare Jesus Christ to be their Lord and saviour.

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A 'talking circle' to explore ideas about how we could share worship resources around the diocese

The 'talking circles' sessions were led by Michael Wood, who has been an Anglican Priest for 28 years. Michael now divides his time between being a Community Chaplain in Richmond, Victoria, and working as a professional facilitator and leadership coach, supporting individuals and groups to have respectful and productive conversations about issues they really care about. We were each blessed to receive a copy of Michael's first book: *Practicing Peace: Theology, Contemplation, and Action*.

The 'talking circles' started with a training session on how the process works. After having been given the rules, we passed a wooden egg around the circle. The egg went from person to person, with the person holding the egg being the only person to speak at a time. This sounds simple but it was a really good practice in listening without debate, argument, judgement and without a dominating voice. Each person had an equal opportunity to share. This process isn't necessarily meant to solve problems, but is a method that can be used to share issues on people's hearts. The result of this kind of sharing helps us to see issues from other people's points of view, and improves our listening skills. I felt this process also helps us to feel more connected, as some people felt safe enough to share quite personal things. We all then had the opportunity to choose our own topics to explore. By the end of the day, we had all been in four different groups, listening and sharing.

Thank you, good and faithful servants David and Deb Chambers for your ministry of hospitality. During the course of the conference we were blessed with heaps of comfort food by David and Deb. They now feel the season for catering for them is coming to an end and they would like to pass the baton over to another pair, group or individual. David and Deb have been catering for not just clergy conferences but for several other Abbey residential activities over a period of 16 years. If there is anyone in our parishes who would like to have a go at blessing others with hospitality, the Chambers would love to hear from you (see p. 8). No one has to do every catering job in the future; it could be shared around different groups. David and Deb are willing share their recipes, and to work alongside anyone who needs a bit of help to get going.

At the conclusion of the conference, we all went home feeling encouraged, connected and just a little exhausted from a full-on time away with our peers. I'm sure we all felt positive about coming back next year for another time of learning and connecting together in a peaceful place surrounded by natural beauty.

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# Performing music for praise and joy



The Choral Evensong at St Paul's Warragul on Pentecost Sunday

The service featured Christopher Tye's *O Holy Spirit, Lord of Grace* and Thomas Tallis' *O Lord, Give Thy Holy Spirit*.

We focused on the hope we have that, despite our inability to change ourselves, God can and does change us by grace. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws" (Ezekiel 36:26-27 NIV).

There was interest in these events, with advertising mostly among the congregation and word of mouth. As we learn and host more of these, we would like to advertise more widely. Our hope is that many who enjoy this style of music would come both to listen and to praise the One who made our minds, our ears and our voices.

## ■ Rev'd Daniel Gebert

I was invited to coffee soon after my arrival at Warragul Anglican by one of our organists, Craig Doherty. Over several flat whites, Craig shared his love of music and his desire for our heritage church and organ to be well used, particularly because, as he put it, "as far as I know it's the only pipe organ for miles around" (with the exception of the Wurlitzer Theatre Organ at Wesley of Warragul). While the foundation stone of the building was laid in 1908, the organ is a relatively recent addition. Built by Fincham's in Melbourne in 1960, it was a standard five-rank plus mixture organ for the Presbyterian Church in Kew. In 1978 it was moved to St Paul's Warragul and an extra diapason rank was added.

Craig put forward a plan of events, the only thing required from me being to give it my blessing, which I was very happy to do.

The first event was 'An Afternoon with J.S. Bach' on 25 May. This was a recital by Craig including Bach's *Passacaglia & Fugue in C Minor*, a piece I know well from having performed it in a wind band arrangement at university. The organ

also featured in what he described as the 'infamous' *Toccata & Fugue in D Minor*. In addition, Craig brought in his own harpsichord to perform the *French Suite No. 5*. He shared with the audience the practice of building harpsichords from kits, which makes it possible and affordable to have one in your own home.

The next event was a Choral Evensong for Pentecost Sunday. A small choir was put together from the congregation and led by Craig.



Craig Doherty at the harpsichord

## Celebrating 40 years as an advocate for women in ministry

The next MOW (Movement for the Ordination of Women) conference, 'Lead Like a Woman!', will be held on 28-30 November 2024, celebrating MOW's 40 years as the leading national advocate for women in ministry and in lay leadership in the Anglican Church of Australia. It will be held at St Margaret's Girls' School in Ascot, Brisbane.

The conference will honour the pioneers of the past and look to the future, bringing women from a range of Christian traditions together to tackle the way in which

theology has been weaponised against women, and to develop measures to strengthen women in leadership and ministry. The committee is currently engaged in programming exciting and challenging speakers from around Australia and New Zealand.

Details, as they are finalised, will be posted at <https://mowatch.com.au> and on Facebook.

## Provincial Archdeacon for Reconciliation collated at St Paul's Melbourne

Continued from page 1

In more recent years I have joined the congregation, partly as a member of the Diocese of Gippsland in my roles of Cathedral Lay Canon and member of Bishop-in-Council.

Service leaders included The Rt Rev'd Kate Prowd (Monomeeth episcopate, Melbourne); representing the Archbishop of Melbourne), The Rt Rev'd Matt Brain (Bishop of Bendigo), The Very Rev'd Dr Andreas Loewe (Dean of Melbourne), The Rev'd Canon Heather Patacca (Precentor of St Paul's Cathedral), and the preacher was our very own Bishop Richard. Representatives of the Aboriginal Council of the Anglican Province of Victoria and the Reconciliation Working Group were in attendance.

The Diocese of Gippsland was represented by Bishop Richard; our Dean, The Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra; and our two Aboriginal clergy, proud Minang and Wotjobaluk woman The Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy and proud Taungurong and Gunaikurnai woman The Rev'd Kathy Dalton.

Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Professor Diane Kerr OAM delivered the Welcome to Country, and the Lessons were read by Gaye Loughrey (2 Corinthians 5:18-21) and Ngarrindjeri Chapter Canon The Rev'd Helen Dwyer (a paraphrase of Matthew 5:1-12 by Uncle Glenn, drawing on Wiradjuri lore).

Sections of *The Statement from the Heart* were read by Aunty Phyllis, the Rev'd Canon Shannon Smith (Diocese of Bendigo) and Gunditjmarra Elder The Rev'd Aunty Janet Turpie-Johnstone (Diocese of Melbourne). The Bishop of Bendigo and the Dean of Melbourne presented Uncle Glenn to Bishop Kate Prowd, to Kerrupmara Gunditjmarra Traditional Owner Travis Lovett (Commissioner of the Yoorook Justice Commission), to Wurundjeri, Boon Wurrung and Yorta Yorta Elder Uncle Shane Charles (First Peoples' Assembly Member) and to Trawlwoolway Elder Aunty Merilyn Duff. Following the

collation, Aunty Merilyn, Travis and Uncle Shane robed the new Archdeacon in the possum cloak/cope, made by Aunty Merilyn. The Ven Canon Uncle Glenn Loughrey was then greeted with thunderous applause.

The sermon was not a light matter, although it did more than touch on the light of Truth-Telling as Bishop Richard spoke of the work of the Yoorook Justice Commission, including his appearance as a witness at the Hearings and the Anglican Church's part in Victoria's colonial history, including (our own) Lake Tyers Mission (now Lake Tyers Aboriginal Trust). Bishop Richard commended the work Archdeacon Uncle Glenn is commencing and sought the prayers and support of the whole province for its growth. Here is a short extract:

In the written submission of Victorian dioceses to the Yoorook Justice Commission, and at the hearing, the emergence of a Provincial Aboriginal Anglican Council was an example of how we are seeking to address historic and systemic injustices, with Indigenous clergy and lay people being supported in key leadership roles ... Today represents an important step forward in that process, and the project Archdeacon Glenn now leads is potentially transformative – if we are open to what First Peoples in our church might ask of Second Peoples in our church, and, indeed, open to the recommendations the Commission will make in due course.

This position signals a new Indigenous ministry and reconciliation initiative to strengthen the participation and leadership of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Reports and advice will be provided to the bishops of the province to support ongoing efforts in recognition, reception, formation and self-determination for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglicans within the church.

The project has received the endorsement of NATSIAC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council). The Anglican Diocese of Bendigo will administer the project, with seed funding from trusts held by the Melbourne and Bendigo dioceses.

Speaking before his collation, Archdeacon-designate Uncle Glenn said, "This is a timely appointment welcomed by First Peoples inside and outside the Anglican Church. It signals serious intent to engage respectfully with us and to heed our voices on issues such as reconciliation, recognition and treaty."

The music during the service was led by the augmented cathedral choir directed by Will Fellows (Acting Director of Music) and accompanied by Siegfried Franke (cathedral organist). Hymns were *Come Down to Earth, Our God of Welcome* (Katherine Firth, 2022/ Christopher Willcock, 2022), *When Will It Be That Sorrow Will End?* (Elizabeth Smith, 2019/SLANE), *All Who Walk the Christian Journey* (Shirley Murray, 2015/ Herbert Howells) and *For the Healing of the Nations* (Fred Kaan, 1965/ALLELUIA DULCE CARMEN).

The psalm was a paraphrase of *Psalms 23*, drawing on Wiradjuri lore (Uncle Glenn Loughrey/John Goss), the canticles (Song of Mary and Song of Simeon) were from the Evening Service in C (Stanford) and the anthem was *Lord of Earth and All Creation* (Michael & Honor Thwaites/ Penelope Thwaites, 2023).

Following the service, dignitaries gathered for photographs, and everyone was invited to a time for 'refreshments and a yarn' in the Barbara Darling Room.

It was a privilege and joy to attend this special service, as a worship offering to God, for a 'great sing' and to stand in solidarity with our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

### SAVE THE DATE!

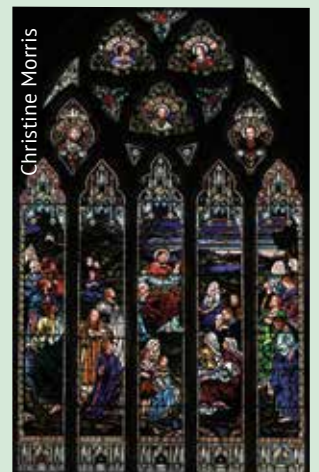
## St Paul's Cathedral 140th in October

St Paul's Cathedral in Sale invites everyone to come and celebrate with us on our 140th anniversary of the opening of the church, at a service on Sunday 13 October, with a festive lunch to follow.

The original St Paul's Church was situated in Raymond St, on the current site of St Anne's campus of Gippsland Grammar School. The land in Cunninghame St was purchased in 1882 and a new church was built by George Wynd. The Rt Rev'd James Moorhouse, Bishop of Melbourne, laid the foundation stone in December 1883. The church was then opened in November 1884, 140 years ago. The Rev'd George Wade Watson was the incumbent at the time.

When Gippsland became a diocese in 1902 the Parish Church of St Paul, Sale, became a pro-cathedral, (a temporary cathedral) for the first Bishop of the Diocese, The Rt Rev'd Arthur Wellesley Pain. After renovations and redecoration, the church was officially dedicated and re-opened as the Cathedral Church of St Paul, Sale, on 1 November 1929.

We praise God for the faithful service of clergy and congregations through generations, and pray for the continuing ministry of St Paul's to the local community as well as the Diocese of Gippsland.



Christine Morris

# Deb and David Chambers – a ministry of hospitality



■ **Cath Connelly**

Attributed to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus is the saying that there is nothing permanent except change. I thought this might not always be the case until Deb and David Chambers, our Abbey cooks for approaching 20 years, announced their retirement as of the end of this year.

What a gift they are. Throughout their time in this role, they have diligently, faithfully, joyfully, at times humorously, offered their ministry of catering for our retreats, conferences and camps. David describes it as “providing for the wellbeing of participants in a quiet and unobtrusive way, catering for dietary requirements and special needs within the framework of good, wholesome food. We use a blend of ‘just like Grandma used to cook’ spiced with simple overseas dishes and modern cooking trends.” One can only imagine just how many meals they have served up in their time, let alone how many potatoes they have

peeled! All this as a love offering, never expecting payment for their work.

David reflects on their time over the years: “When we started cooking for a Cowwarr Reunion Camp some 20 years ago, we had no idea where it was going to lead. Despite the hours of work in planning and preparing for a ‘camp’ and the long hours in the kitchen to provide three meals a day plus extras, Deb and I have found our time enjoyable and rewarding.”

Deb and David, all those who have been the recipients of your meals are most grateful to you. Whilst it is hard to imagine The Abbey without your presence in the kitchen, it is delightful news that you look forward to now being able to attend events that The Abbey hosts.

We begin the search for people who might become our new Abbey cooks. Let’s do it on a roster basis, with an occasional event coming your way. You don’t have to start from scratch – Deb and David gift us with all their recipes and computerised planning information. We have people already stepping forward to be the background workers and I’m still seeking some people who will take leadership for this ministry. Maybe it has your name on it? Please give it some thought.



## Winter Feast 2024



It’s fast coming up to that special time of the year again! The annual Abbey Winter Feast will be held on Saturday 31 August, with the fun and feasting beginning at 12 noon.

This year, members of the Paynesville Parish will be performing their culinary magic to delight the palate, and to add to the occasion the Abbey Director, Cath Connelly, will entertain those present by playing her harp during a break in proceedings. A further special feature this year will be the blessing of The Abbey Prayer Tree by Bishop Richard as a preamble to the launching of the Season of Creation in the Church’s Calendar.

The Winter Feast is the major annual fundraiser in support of the ongoing ministry of The Abbey in its outreach to the wider community. The charge for this sumptuous three-course meal with matching wines has been contained at \$60 pp so please get in early and book a table with Anna at The Abbey on (03) 5156 6580 or [info@theabbey.org.au](mailto:info@theabbey.org.au)

### Save the date



For further information, please contact Anna at the Abbey: (03) 5156 6580, [info@theabbey.org.au](mailto:info@theabbey.org.au)

#### AUGUST

- 8 *Hush Quiet Day*: Spirituality from the Grasslands. Facilitator: Cath Connelly.
- 16–18 Weekend Retreat: Sacred Circle Dance. Facilitator: Robyn Sussems.
- 24 Spiritual Direction Taster Day. Facilitators: Rev’d John Stewart and Cath Connelly.
- 31 Annual Abbey Feast. Hosted by The Abbey in conjunction with St Peter’s Paynesville.

#### SEPTEMBER

- 12 *Hush Quiet Day*: Shout Out for the Psalms. Facilitator: Michael Fox.
- 17–19 Retreat: The Spiritual Practice of Justice in Contemporary Times. Facilitator: Rev’d Ray Cleary.
- 28 Learn-a-Craft Day

#### OCTOBER

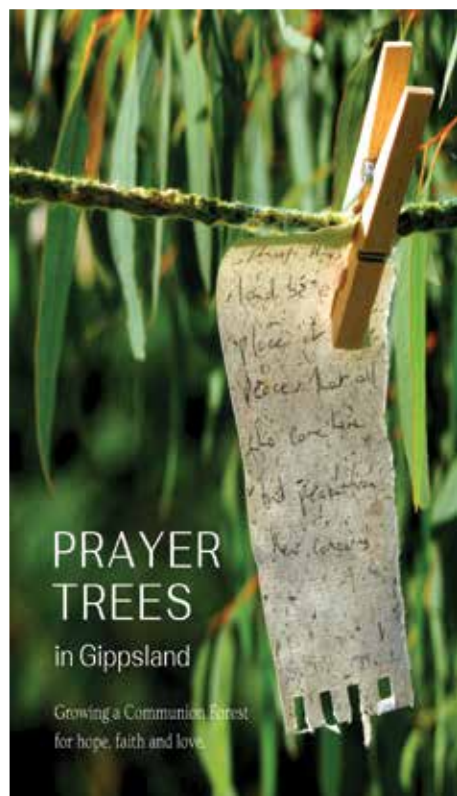
- 5 Blessing of the Pets 2–4 pm.
- 10 *Hush Quiet Day*: The Story of Our Lives. Facilitators: Jenny and Peter Batten.
- 11–13 Weekend Retreat: In Love with Hildegard of Bingen. Facilitator: Cath Connelly.



# Launch of prayer trees to mark beginning of Season of Creation

## ■ Jan Down

Tony Rinaudo, celebrated agronomist and author of *The Forest Underground: Hope for a Planet in Crisis*, will be guest speaker



## PRAYER TREES

in Gippsland

Growing a Communion Forest, for hope, faith and love.

The Prayer Tree booklet

at the launch of the diocesan Prayer Tree initiative to help grow a forest across Gippsland.

The event will be held at St Paul's Cathedral Sale on Sunday 1 September at 3 pm. At the end of the service those gathered locally will be invited to plant a 'Prayer Tree' on site as part of our connection with the global initiative of the Communion Forest.

The idea of the prayer tree is rather like lighting a candle in church – a written prayer pegged to a string on a tree symbolises the prayer continuing on, even when we have gone. Trees across the Diocese – and beyond – will be united through this common desire to hold the prayers and intentions of all who visit these places.

Can't get to St Paul's Cathedral? Join in and view the livestream at [gippslandanglicans.org.au](https://gippslandanglicans.org.au) at your own parish, then plant or dedicate your own significant tree to become part of the Prayer Tree community. You can register your tree with The Abbey at <https://theabbey.org.au>.

The Abbey has a dedicated Prayer Tree that acts as the 'Grandmother tree' for this initiative.

On Saturday 31 August, on the cusp of the Season of Creation, Bishop Richard will commence the Abbey Winter Feast with a blessing of the prayer tree at The Abbey.

A booklet about the Prayer Tree initiative was provided to every parish at Synod in May. An electronic copy can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3Wt9h7p>.

## Reach out to our rural readership

From Nar Nar Goon to the border, *The Gippsland Anglican* is distributed to parishes across our region.

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## Mothers' Union retreat for families who need a break

## ■ Jan Misiurka

Do you know a family who needs a break at no cost to themselves, apart from travel?

This year's Mothers' Union/St Barnabas Annual Family Retreat will run from 30 September to 3 October at Raymond Island.

This is an opportunity for a time of relaxation and rejuvenation for several families who would benefit from a short break, over the school holidays, provided by Gippsland Mothers' Union.

Catered meals! Lovely accommodation! Time to explore the island or just enjoy The Abbey surrounds and wildlife.

Please contact Lindy (0428 838 571) or Jan (0475 067 145) for registration and details.



# Biggest Morning Tea raises funds and awareness

The delicious fare at this year's Biggest Morning Tea hosted by Moe-Newborough Parish

■ Julie Bruce

Moe-Newborough Anglican Church has held a Biggest Morning Tea each May to raise funds for the Cancer Council. Over this time we have raised over \$7000 for cancer research and it has become a community event to

which people look forward each year.

Planning begins a month prior to the event, with prizes for the raffle being gathered and preparations begun for a splendid and delicious morning tea.

The two-hour event is a wonderful opportunity to raise a cup, remember those whom we have loved and lost, and to support a very worthy cause close to all our hearts.

## Six Strong Steps

Tuesday 13 August, 7–8.30 pm  
With Cath Connelly  
Webinar link: <https://bit.ly/3LyRdCk>

ACTinG presents a webinar that tackles grief and anxiety in the context of the crises our world is facing, including climate change.

Cath Connelly, Director of The Abbey, will base her presentation around the six steps that Claire Dunn outlines. Cath explains: 'Claire Dunn addresses the question about what we can do to be enablers of hope. This is her wisdom:

- Know your neighbours.
- Know your place.
- Get skills.
- Grieve.
- Create.
- Celebrate.

Our next ACTinG webinar will delve deeper into the ideas expressed here.





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*Always consult a solicitor when preparing or amending your will.*

# Continuing a vibrant floral tradition in Leongatha



Displays from a previous floral show, a testament to the creativity and dedication of the church congregation

## ■ Joanne Stuchbury and Marion Dewar

It's the daffodil season! The sunny faces of these flowers smile up at us and remind us of God's love and hope in these dark and cold winter months.

As we eagerly await the arrival of spring, the Leongatha Daffodil and Floral Show, a beloved tradition organised by the Horticultural Society and, previously, across the town by the Chambers of Commerce, will hold its 66th event in 2024. It promises a vibrant display of nature's beauty.

St Peter's Leongatha has been eagerly

preparing for the Daffodil Festival each year for the past 65 years, and 2024 will be no exception. The festival is open to the public on the afternoon of Thursday 29 August, and all day Friday and Saturday. We can't wait to share this beautiful event with you.

There are usually three events: Flowers in Praise, which are flower displays in the local churches; a special display; and refreshments.

St Peter's will host refreshments of homemade soup, scones and snacks,

which are always in demand, as well as decorating the church with flowers. The special display this year will be created by the hard-working team of the St Peter's Opportunity Shop next door, which is open Thursdays and Fridays (10 am – 4 pm), and Saturday mornings. There will also be a mammoth book sale in the adjacent hall, with a wide range of books.

Please come along and share the joy and celebration of God's gift to us in flowers and food.



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## Safe Church awareness and refresher workshops

Bookings for all workshops are essential. Visit [gippslandanglicans.org.au](http://gippslandanglicans.org.au) for details.

**13 September** St Paul's Anglican Church, Korumburra

**15 November** Christ Church Drouin



# Donating food for the wider community

St Paul's Traralgon campus students pictured with Bill and Ian from the Rotary Club

■ Amy Bertacco

Embracing the wider community in both Warragul and Traralgon, St Paul's Anglican Grammar School students across both Warragul and Traralgon campuses rallied together to collect ingredients and cans for Frankies Community Kitchen and the Rotary Club, respectively.

Students from the Traralgon campus were able to collect a total of 1471 food

cans for the 2024 Rotary Club of Traralgon's 'Give a Damn Give a Can' appeal, and students from the Warragul Junior School packed their classroom donation boxes to the brim with ingredients for community members to utilise at Frankies Community Kitchen.

When asked about their food drive, Warragul Student Representative Council

captains Isabella Lineham and Eloise Gorton said "it was important because we've impacted so many other people's lives."

Food drives such as these foster a culture of compassion and community involvement for our students, allowing them to gain valuable and practical experience as they learn the significance of giving back to the community.

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# Moments of awe for Gippsland Grammar students



Gippsland Grammar Year 12 students Tara Nichols and Sage Walters are in awe of The Dome

## ■ Zoe Curtis

Scientific evidence has shown that finding moments of awe in our everyday lives makes us happier, healthier, kinder and more connected to each other.

Gippsland Grammar students were lucky to have plenty of awe added to their lessons recently, courtesy of The Dome, a large-scale, portable planetarium that offered students an “immersive educational experience incorporating both traditional and scientific knowledge to tell four Indigenous stories exploring 140,000 years of our history.”

This feature-length, full-dome planetarium show, titled *The Earth Above: A Deep Time View of Australia's Epic History*, was hosted by the Gunaikurnai Land and Waters Aboriginal Corporation (GLaWAC) in collaboration with the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Australian Biodiversity and Heritage (CABAH), Deakin MotionLab and the University of Wollongong's (UOW) 'Science Space'.

Gippsland Grammar students from Years 3, 7, 8 and 9 were given the opportunity to attend the 30-minute show, which explored Australia's past 140,000 years, incorporating traditional and scientific knowledge to tell Australia's epic story and transport viewers to four locations: Girraween Lagoon on Larrakia and Wulna Country outside Darwin in the Northern Territory; Cloggs Cave on Gunaikurnai Country in Gippsland, Victoria; Lake Mungo in NSW on the land of the Barkandji/Paakantyi, Ngyiampaa and Mutthi Mutthi people; and Jiigurru (Lizard Island) on the Great Barrier

Reef, which is sacred to many, including the Dingaal community.

The school's Co-head of Outdoor Education Cass Booth worked closely with GLaWAC to bring the portable dome to Gippsland Grammar's Garnsey Campus, where it was set up in the Chapel of St Anne (one of the few buildings with a roof high enough to accommodate it). She said the experience was incredibly well received by students and staff alike.

“An important aspect of our school's Outdoor Education program is understanding a sense of place,” Ms Booth said. “Which means getting to know our local environment at a deeper level.”

“This planetarium experience gave our students the opportunity for their scene of place to flourish. Though many had been to Buchan and surrounding areas on camps, this show gave them a view never seen before. The Gunaikurnai community as well as CABAH have developed a remarkable immersive experience that will positively impact all those who get the opportunity to view it.”

As for the students' response to seeing these ancient stories come to life? Ms Booth reiterated their cumulative sense of awe.

“They were all filled with awe and astonishment,” she said. “And the words they kept repeating were ‘breathtaking’, ‘fascinating’, ‘amazing’ and ‘beautiful’. To then follow this up with discussions with both GLaWAC and CABAH staff further reinforced their learnings and emphasised the strength of this experience.”

“I can't thank enough those who were involved in creating this experience and I hope that one day we can share this experience to more of our school and local community.”

For GLaWAC RAP Manager Uncle Russell Mullett, the opportunity to share insights about Gunaikurnai culture with the younger generation is immensely important.

“Our people have always been storytellers, it's embedded in our living culture,” he said. “The Dome provides a unique experience to share the stories of our Old Ancestors with our young ones, and to continue to honour and learn about this vast cultural landscape.”

For CABAH CEO Nathan Wright, the opportunity to present the program on Country alongside GLaWAC was a special occasion.

“It has been an incredible journey with GLaWAC in developing this program and the research that underpins it, and it was a great experience to be able to stand alongside GLaWAC and show the finished video on Gunaikurnai Country.”

“The film will be available in planetariums around the country, but the beauty of the portable dome is that it allows us to reach regional areas, especially those communities we have been lucky enough to work with. We are very thankful to Gippsland Grammar and all the schools who hosted us and allowed us to share these stories with the students.”



# First birthday for the Drouin Opportunity Shop

Bishop Richard, op shop coordinator Lee-Anne Croucher and The Rev'd John Webster cutting the Drouin Opportunity Shop first birthday cake

## ■ Pauline Davies

It was an honour to have Bishop Richard visit the Drouin Opportunity Shop on the celebration of its first birthday in May. Morning tea, including a birthday cake, was provided for guests at this celebration.

The first Drouin Anglican Church op shop was started by four keen parishioners – Rosemary Blackley, Pat Biggs, Nell Hawker and Jean Lockwood – in 1996. The energy and selfless dedication they brought continues today with our wonderful band of volunteers.

The op shop was a rented premises for 25 years, but always had a vision to purchase a shop. A suitable premises in the main street of Drouin became available at the end of 2022, and after Parish Council discussion a purchase was made in 2023.

At the Drouin Opportunity Shop warehouse in Roberts Court, Drouin, items are sorted and donations are accepted. When you shop at or donate to an op shop you can find a great bargain and contribute to a good cause. Since the shop opened, thousands of dollars have been donated to those in need and to non-profit organisations in the community.

As Bishop Richard mentioned at the birthday celebration, reusing items also helps to reduce the amount of material going to landfills. He also spoke of the camaraderie between volunteers and of their connection with the community, reading out a poem to bless the shop and its volunteers. He offered a delightful prayer to uplift and encourage our dedicated team as they continue to make a positive impact in our communities.



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# What is money good for?

State Bank of Victoria advertisement in the Gippsland Church News, 1940

## ■ Jan Down

How many advertisements do you see each day? “It has been estimated that the average urban Australian sees between 800–3000 pieces of advertising every day.” So says Jonathan Cornford in his book *Coming Home. Discipleship, Ecology and Everyday Economics*.

Cornford observes that, “At the deepest level, we have become a consumer society. No longer is the purpose of the economy to produce things for the good of the people; rather, the purpose of people is to consume things for the good of the economy.”

The 1940 bank advert (pictured) in the Gippsland Anglican *Church News* seems to have a simplicity and almost naivety about it today. No colourful photos of cars, houses or holidays; just some simple text about what your money is good for, and a slogan that contrasts with our ‘buy now, pay later’ world: “Systematic Saving is the proved formula for Satisfied Spending.”

So what is our money good for? Looking for a Christian perspective, I asked The Rev’d Dr Tim Gaden, theologian and newly appointed Rector of Maffra, for his thoughts on this advertisement and money in general. He commented:

On the one hand, money and other material possessions are created by God as good gifts for the flourishing of all creation. On the other hand, after human

sin entered the world (pretty early on in the Bible!), money can be used as a tool for selfish ambition and power that harms oneself and others. As Paul warns in the well-known verse 1 Timothy 6:10, “the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”

Scripture teaches us time and time again, in the story of the rich young ruler (Matt 19:13-30), in the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:13-21) and elsewhere that the best safeguard against the wrong use of wealth is to be generous in giving it away. In this way, our stewardship of money and other material possessions can be the true test of our spiritual life and maturity. As 1 John 3:17-18 puts it, “if anyone has this world’s goods and sees a brother or sister in need, yet closes their heart against them, how does God’s love abide in that person? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”

Viewed in this light the advertisement from the state bank does a good job of capturing the positive aspects of money which can support our life in the present and provide security for the future.

It is silent, however, about the dangers that money can represent; there is no suggestion here that accumulating more

money than you need leads to spiritual sickness. And it is silent, too, about the good things that can be achieved by giving our money away, for our own spiritual health and for the benefit of those causes dear to our own hearts (and God’s) that we choose to support through our charitable giving.

In a similar vein, when it comes to giving, Jonathan Cornford notes that, despite the fact that real incomes have trebled since the 1950s, “growing wealth has not been matched by growing generosity.” The average proportion of income given away has remained steady at 0.9%, although Christians tend to give a little more. Figures were not available for Australia, but American Christians give 2.5%.

Cornford argues that the world needs us to find ways to consume less, and “the surest way to consume less is to begin to constrain your means.” One of several ways he suggests for doing this is through giving.

He describes limiting our means as “sheer madness as far as our culture is concerned and yet it rings true to the counter-intuitive gospel preached by Jesus.”

I wonder how today’s banks would respond to the idea?



## WCC general secretary addresses National Council of Churches in Australia

WCC general secretary Rev'd Professor Dr Jerry Pillay's keynote address at the 11th Forum of National Council of Churches in Australia

On 21 June, World Council of Churches general secretary The Rev'd Professor Dr Jerry Pillay addressed the 11th Forum of National Council of Churches in Australia, reflecting on the theme of the forum, 'Christianity Matters'.

"This occasion is especially meaningful for me as you deliberate on how best, in true ecumenical spirit, to convey messages of genuine, realistic hope in these seemingly hope-starved times," said Pillay. "Further, you seek to envision ecumenical, collaborative ways and means of nurturing that hope in your communities of faith and among the larger public."

We live in a time when faith is in crisis, Pillay noted.

"We are so wrong when we think that young people are not interested in God," Pillay said. "I look at my own children and see a depth of spirituality that I did not have even though I went to church every Sunday and most weekdays."

Pillay named five immense issues of today: accelerating climate change, increasing economic inequality, a worldwide recession from the long-held consensus about human rights, a crisis of governance, and outbreaks of violence within countries and war between them.

"These global trends, each of which engenders incalculable human suffering, are the broadest context in which Christians and Christian churches are living their ecumenical fellowship today," he said. "Their scale is global, their peril imminent, their solutions uncertain."

The cry for freedom and justice is loud for many in the world today, Pillay continued, asking where is justice for

***"We are so wrong when we think that young people are not interested in God," Pillay said. "I look at my own children and see a depth of spirituality that I did not have even though I went to church every Sunday and most weekdays."***

those who are starving or denied access to humanitarian aid.

The God of justice and mercy calls us to stand up for justice, he urged. "Christians need to stand up for justice and we need to stand together. In unity is our strength."

Christianity matters because it is a gospel of love and reconciliation, Pillay continued.

"With all the suffering and pain in the world today, what the world needs is love," he said. "Properly understood and if practiced well the Christian faith is the message of love."

Asking how we work towards healing, forgiveness and reconciliation, Pillay said that "Crucially, we can mobilize the world into seeing there are other ways. At its core, ours is a global crisis in spiritual values, but ours is also an age of deep spiritual longing."

Letting us know that Christianity matters, he concluded. "Let us rely on the

presence and power of the Holy Spirit to encourage our faith and make a difference in the world so that the world may know the grace and love of Christ."

World Council of Churches



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# Can chatbots write inspirational and wise sermons?

## ■ Joanne M. Pierce

When several hundred Lutherans in Bavaria, Germany, attended a service on 9 June 2023, designed by ChatGPT, the program not only selected hymns and prayers, but also composed and delivered a sermon, delivered by an avatar on a big screen.

Indeed, programs like ChatGPT, that can produce a sermon in seconds, might seem attractive to busy clergy. But several religious leaders, including rabbis serving Jewish congregations as well as Christian Protestant pastors, have conflicting feelings about utilising chatbots in preparing sermons.

There may be several reasons for being cautious. From my perspective, as a specialist in Catholic liturgy and ritual, the most important critique has to do with true intent of preaching – to offer insight and inspiration on the human experience of faith.

### Historical practice

In the early centuries of Christianity, preaching was largely reserved for bishops, considered to be the successors to Jesus' apostles. During the Middle Ages, priests were also allowed to preach, although their chief responsibility was to say the Mass – ritually consecrating the offerings of bread and wine – especially on Sundays.

In some religious orders, priests became famous travelling preachers, although much of the time they were preaching in other settings, not during Mass. The Franciscan and Dominican orders, for example, would send priests to preach on the streets and in city centres, travelling from town to town in fulfillment of this ministry.

During the next few centuries, preaching brief sermons or homilies became increasingly important during the

celebration of Sunday Mass. The Second Vatican Council, convened in 1962, took a fresh look at all the church's rituals and stressed the role of preaching at worship, especially at Mass.

These principles have been reaffirmed in more recent documents that guide Catholic preachers when writing a sermon. In essence, preaching was always believed to be a human activity grounded in faith.

### Insight and inspiration

Preaching as a human activity has a special meaning for Catholics – and most Christians – because they believe that Jesus Christ is the incarnate Son of God, who came into human life to save all of humanity from their sins and gave his apostles the commandment to preach the gospel about this “good news” to people of all nations.

In the decades since Vatican II ended in 1965, preaching in the Catholic tradition has been emphasised as a “primary duty” of all priests.

The sermon is meant to inspire people in their ordinary lives of faith. The preacher must spend time in preparing the sermon, but this does not just mean compiling theological quotes or doing research on the history of the Bible.

A good sermon is not just a classroom lecture. In fact, several contemporary popes have stressed that the language of sermons should avoid technical or obscure terminology. In 1975, Pope Paul VI wrote that the language of preaching should be “simple, clear, direct, well-adapted” for the congregation in the pews. And in 2013, Pope Francis echoed these same words in his observation that “simplicity has to do with the language we use.”

But preaching is not just about offering

pious mottoes or generic religious formulas. The preacher's experience, insights and emotions all come into play when composing the homiletic text.

The preacher is not simply offering good advice, but speaking out of personal reflection in a way that will inspire the members of the congregation, not just please them. It must also be shaped by an awareness of the needs and lived experience of the worshipping community in the pews.

### Use with caution

In practice, chatbots might help clergy save time by finding sources and compiling relevant facts, but the results would need to be checked for errors. Chatbots have been known to make some factual blunders or invent sources completely.

Above all, I believe chatbots, as of now, are not capable of preparing a text suitable for being offered as a sermon. From what we know about chatbots, they cannot know what it means to be human, to experience love or be inspired by a sacred text.

Perhaps Baptist pastor Hershael York, Dean of the School of Theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has put it best. He has noted that the ultimate failure of a chatbot's sermon lies in the fact that it “lacks a soul.” Without that empathetic consciousness, a chatbot-composed sermon cannot include genuine insights based on personal spiritual experience. And without that essential element of embodied human awareness, true preaching is simply not possible.

Joanne M. Pierce is Professor Emerita of Religious Studies, College of the Holy Cross. First published at [www.theconversation.com](http://www.theconversation.com)

# The tragic, unnecessary war between science and religion

## ■ Carolyn King

In most western countries, young children absorb traditional stories from both cultural and biblical sources. These stories are expressed in metaphorical terms, but small children understand them as literally true. Adults tend to regard with amusement a child's belief in animals queuing up to enter Noah's ark, alongside their acceptance of more recent characters such as Father Christmas and the tooth fairy. Hence the critical groundwork of our children's earliest understanding of reality is laid on a series of recognised, tolerated falsehoods told to them in all seriousness by the people they trust.

When those same children get older, they meet the teaching of science in schools and universities, presented as the only true foundation of understanding the natural world. Rarely does any child get help, early enough or at all, to understand the important difference between literal and metaphorical truth.

When challenged, one easy response is to put the two sets of ideas into separate boxes. More commonly, students feel pressured into making an apparently simple decision to believe only one or the other of two apparently mutually exclusive sources of authority. Some reject science, and thereby limit their future intellectual horizons; others reject Genesis as a cultural myth irrelevant to modern thinking, and thereby limit their spiritual connections (CM King, 'Genesis 1–3 as a resource for twenty-first century faith', *Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology*, 2022, New Series 1: 1–27). This is an especially difficult problem for teachers in multicultural societies striving to introduce western science to children from many different traditional backgrounds.

At times, the contemporary version of the so-called 'war between science and religion' can descend into a die-in-the-ditch battle between what the two sides take as non-negotiable eternal truths. A more

helpful approach is to see it as a sad and unnecessary consequence of mutual suspicion and misinformation. It has complicated historical roots, and can be the topic of extensive and often polarising public debate on matters of moral and social significance, such as the ethical implications of genetic modification, sexual identity and the difficulties of teaching evolutionary biology in faith-based schools.

### What can we do about this problem?

Surely, the key consideration must be the value and importance of respectful engagement with both sides of the debate, in which both evolutionary science and cultural traditions attempt to understand themselves and the other in their own terms and as non-competitors. A calm, well-informed evaluation of the literature, historical roots and present significances of these ideas could help us move beyond the needless and painful disputes about the important matters with which they are both concerned. Failure to do this leads to a very serious mistake, that of confusing science with religion and vice-versa.

Both are widely misrepresented in the media, because the loudest proponents of both rely on combative propaganda rather than on respectful engagement with the other's serious literature. Ultimately, we all have freedom to choose which side of the coin makes sense to us, each of us in relation to our own experience in and knowledge of the real world, so as to avoid making a decision without understanding the real issues.

The simplest explanation for the longstanding confusion between science and theology (one of many) is that western readers have lost contact with the ancient philosophical basis of knowledge. They never encounter it, because the long-continued fireworks are fuelled by the failure of modern education to introduce students to the basic ideas of the philosophy of reasoning, not even the philosophy of science that underlies the daily work of all scien-

tists. So they are completely ignorant of the fundamental architecture of reasoning, as explored by Aristotelean realism (E Feser, *The Last Superstition: A Refutation of the New Atheism*, 2008). In that system, the two levels of reality recognised in contemporary thought are only the first and lower levels of a four-level hierarchy of knowledge.

### Levels 1 and 2: Physical and codical realities

Material or physical reality is the ground level of our daily experience – measurable, touchable, temporary, and variable between measurements. The DNA molecule is a material reality, and subject to mutation, but is equivalent only to the paper on which a message is written, not the message itself.

At level 2, genetic information (code) is as real as is DNA, but differs in being invisible, and relatively permanent down a given lineage. It is the order of the bases along the DNA strand that contributes to the formulation of a gene, the information passed on the cellular machinery, not the separate material reality of the DNA molecule itself. Just as in written language, the order of the letters provides the sense (DOG means something different from GOD). The message is conveyed in triplets, three-letter 'words' in molecular code, which can be changed by mutations in the way the words of a document on screen can be edited. The code is the message, and after editing it carries a slightly different piece of information on the same strand of DNA. But our understanding of genetic information is variable and makes sense only in human minds; it did not exist before us and will be lost when we have all gone.

Most genetic messages are long-lived, but occasional mutations, which are rare, especially in those controlling bodily functions necessary for life, like breathing. Mutational changes are interpreted and actioned by the cell, like a revised message can be printed out on a fresh paper. Richard Dawkins himself pointed out these vital distinctions ('Replicators and vehicles', *Current Problems in Sociobiology*, 1982: 45–64). He perceived that the two

forms of reality interact in physical space, but are radically different in one crucial respect: replicators (genes) can be copied, but vehicles (bodies) cannot. Rather, every physical body must be reconstructed afresh every generation, from the information held in the fertilised egg, copied from the parents. Only the body is a material, short-lived object. All bodies die, however successful. Their inheritance consists only of information held in genes, which is copied and re-copied down the generations indefinitely. Natural selection determines the differential success of variable individuals in returning copies of their genes to the species pool.

### Levels 3 and 4: Universal realities

Grasping the critical differences between the first two levels of reality is essential to understand how physical evolution works. Indeed, together they are enormously satisfying sources of explanation of the world at the sensory level, especially when allied to sophisticated mathematical models. Materialists do not see that any more needs to be said. But they use numerical analyses without asking where numbers came from, or why mathematics is so extraordinarily successful in explaining the workings of the universe. This, as Einstein commented, is a central mystery: Why is the universe so intelligible?

We could answer this question better by reconsidering the discredited ideas of the classical philosophical tradition that underlie all western thought from Plato and Aristotle to the Enlightenment: that the material world reflects a higher reality, that things have immutable essences whose source is the foundation of morality, and that all this is knowable through the rigorous application of *reason*.

At level 3, universal realities are those that existed before any human mind, remain real and invariable whether they are ever observed or not, and (in contrast to ordinary information) will still remain after the last humans have died out. They include realities that all scientists have to take for granted in their normal work. Numbers

have existed and been true before humans evolved and will remain true after they have all gone; the spectrum of wavelengths produced rainbows, and the speed of light was the same, when only dinosaurs had eyes to see them; the cosmological constants controlling the strength of gravity and of intermolecular forces set within the first few minutes of the Big Bang have remained the same ever since. These realities are therefore not the product of human intelligence or observation. But science cannot work without them, and most scientists since the 1600s have been able to use these immutable universals only by confusing them with the quite different and variable reality of statistical (second-level) information. They ignore the bigger question 'Where did universal realities come from?'

Level 4, ultimate reality, is far above the sensory world. It can be known only to the intellect, but in the classical view it explains the origins of all the other levels, and supplies their standards of reference. It is the originator of all life and purpose, giving us an objective measure by which to judge the experiences and behaviour of ourselves and of everything around us. It is the ultimate source of morality and faith, both grasped objectively rather than through the variable input from our senses and any statistical analysis of our social environment.

### The tree of knowledge

An image might help translate what sound like strange words into a more familiar picture. Imagine a tree, a giant of the forest, standing proud in a clearing, a symbol of the four levels of reality.

The roots represent level 1, drawing material sustenance from the soil.

The flow of water up the trunk represents level 2, the non-material information derived from observation of the health and functioning of the roots, interpreted though a scientific model. Other trees draw data from the same soil but interpret them differently, which is why we can observe different species of trees growing together in the same forests.

The canopy represents level 3, the leaves and fruit derived from human analyses using the essential and respectful combination of variable information with invariable universal realities such as mathematics. Materialists do not recognise the vital difference between temporary information and universal realities, so cannot see a fruitful canopy, only bare branches leading to pointless polemics like the historical war between science and religion.

The sun above the forest represents level 4, the source of life and energy for all forest trees and all other living beings, and explains where all the lower levels of reality come from. It is the rational answer to Einstein's question about why the universe is so intelligible. Materialists cannot see it through a cloud of prejudice against any sort of supernatural entity.

### A new way of seeing

If more rational people could step outside their normal rejection of ideas that sound so ancient and irrelevant as these, we might be better equipped to see why the so-called 'war' is not between science and religion per se, but between the classical world view and modern naturalism. By rejecting all notions of purpose stemming from level 4, naturalism undermines the classical four-level view of reason and morality. Secularists can only remain in the pointless world views that they falsely attribute to religion.

If we remove the blinkers so much beloved of the New Atheists, we might find it no bad thing to be in the company of the giants of early science on whose shoulders we stand, such as Royal Society Fellows Robert Boyle, Christopher Wren, John Ray, Isaac Newton and others. Better still, wider recognition of the reality that evolutionary biology and religion have grown from the same roots – and so offer complementary, not competitive, views of life – would be a huge relief.

Carolyn King is Emeritus Professor, University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.



How will you science this National Science Week?

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# What the fork?



## ■ Rev'd Daniel Lowe

Working in a school and being surrounded by teenagers, I hear plenty of ripe language (although the language of even the most potty-mouthed of school students is tame compared with some I have encountered in other contexts). Hearing people swear is an everyday occurrence for me. But being identified as a 'religious person' has strange effects on people. One of these is a heightened consciousness of language – in particular, swearing. People will apologise for swearing near me; people will make comments about not swearing anymore if I enter a room or join a conversation; people get very embarrassed if they swear in my hearing then realise what they have just said. Somehow swearing becomes a moral and spiritual issue – at least momentarily.

Some people take a very moralistic view of swearing and view its pervasiveness as a clear symptom of the collapse of civility in modern society. Others take a more practical view, arguing that the ubiquity of four-letter words actually makes it less of a concern. There are one or two genuinely taboo words, but the rest of this language has gotten so ordinary that it's not profane, merely colourful, if it's not used at inappropriate times.

So why do we swear in the first place?

Melanie Burns, in her paper 'Why we swear: the functions of offensive

language' (*Monash University Linguistics Papers* 2008, 6(1): 61–69), argues that swearing serves two social functions. First, it is a physiological release of energy – in this sense, swearing is a socially sanctioned way to express aggression. Second, swearing is a sociolinguistic marker. It helps people to express their belonging to special cultures and subcultures.

Neuroscientific research suggests that swearing might be located in different parts of the brain from other speech regions. Specifically, it might activate parts of the limbic system (including parts known as the basal ganglia and the amygdala). These deep structures are involved in aspects of memory and emotion processing that are instinctive and difficult to inhibit. This might explain why swearing can remain intact in people who have had brain damage and struggle to speak as a result. It may also explain why teenagers, whose brains are still developing, are often more prone to swearing than many adults. Laboratory-based experiments also show cognitive effects. We know that swear words command more attention and are better remembered than other words. But they also interfere with the cognitive processing of other words/stimuli – so it seems swearing can sometimes get in the way of thinking, too. Swearing arouses the emotions. This can be

measured in autonomic responses such as increased sweating and sometimes increased heart rate. These changes suggest that swearing can trigger the 'fight or flight' function. Again, this fits with the adolescent experience. Because the prefrontal cortex is still developing, teenagers might rely on the amygdala to make decisions and solve problems more than adults do. Apparently, swearing is right at home in this part of the brain.

So, what about Christians? Is swearing a spiritual issue? Christians are certainly encouraged to be mindful of their speech. For example, "Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear" (Ephesians 4:29) or "Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone" (Colossians 4:6). But there is no list of words that a Christian shouldn't say. In fact, what is considered a swear word is very culturally dependent and has changed many times over the course of history. During the Renaissance, terms that had simply been direct or descriptive during the Middle Ages and that could once be found in medical treatises describing anatomy began to take over as the new swear words. In the Victorian era, even now-banal words like 'leg' and 'trouser' were seen as taboo. Just to cloud the matter further, the Bible contains a lot of cursing as devotion. Think especially of the Psalms. There are some Psalms called imprecatory; that means they invoke judgement, calamity, or curses, upon one's enemies or those perceived as the enemies of God. Take this excerpt from Psalm 109:

Let his life be cut short,  
and let someone else take over his work.  
Let his children become orphans  
and his wife a widow.  
Make his children wander around  
as beggars,  
forced from homes that lie in ruins.  
Let the people he owes take everything  
he owns.  
Let strangers get everything  
he worked for.  
Let no one be kind to him.  
Let no one show mercy to his children.

(Psalm 109:8-12 Easy-to-Read Version)

Where does this leave us? I would suggest that, when it comes to swearing, context is everything. Swearing in

response to sudden intense pain is a helpful psychological coping mechanism. If a student jams their finger in their locker door and swears, surely my concern is for the wellbeing of the finger rather than the student's choice of language in the moment – especially when swearing may actually be helping them cope with the pain.

Swearing at someone else, particularly in anger and with intent to wound, is a different matter. But the problem is still not necessarily the choice of words so much as the attitude and intent behind them. Telling someone that “you can't stand them, and you wish they would get lost” seems just as hurtful as telling them to “get forked” (as they say in the fantasy-comedy series *The Good Place*), and neither option has much redemptive value. “Who are you swearing at, and why?” will almost always be a more relevant

question than “What was the swear word you used?” Any sort of verbal abuse is unacceptable, regardless of whether it involves swear words, and I would be quick to challenge any student that spoke to someone in such a way.

But what about swearing as a response to injustice? Why would harsh words be considered more disgusting than real-life tragedies? Isn't strong emotion an appropriate response to tragedy and injustice? In their study of the Book of Amos, our Year 10 students discover a God who is unimpressed by pious religious displays and absolutely damning of any act of injustice by the Israelite people. It would not surprise me if the Old Testament prophets dropped a swear word or two in their time.

The swearing that bothers me the most, particularly in a school context, is swearing as a habitual or compulsive

response to things. We want to help teenagers develop their reasoning and decision-making abilities and moving their language out of the realm of the amygdala and into the prefrontal cortex. Discouraging them from habitual swearing may well assist them with this.

In the end, if I was particularly sensitive to swearing then I might want to think twice about working with teenagers. And if the presence of a 'religious person' causes others to think for a moment about their language then I suppose that is a good thing. As for me, I will take my cue from the prayer of David: “Let my words and my thoughts be pleasing to you, Lord, because you are my mighty rock and my protector” (Psalm 19:14).

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Rev'd Daniel Lowe is Senior Chaplain at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School.

## From the editor



I was delighted to learn recently that two former St Paul's Anglican Grammar School science teachers have secured a federal grant to run their STEM Zone Experiment at Lardner Park on the opening day of National Science Week this year (10–18 August). Young people and their families will be able to chat to local scientists about their careers, and to explore ideas and technologies in virtual reality, environmental science, robotics, chemistry, photography and physics.

Having a science background myself, I am so very pleased that local STEM Zone educators Carissa and Julia are sharing their love and knowledge of science in Gippsland, and that the interest for science in the region has enabled their outreach to flourish.

The National Science Week theme for 2024 is 'Species Survival – More than just sustainability', and a teacher resource book and student journal are available at [www.scienceweek.net.au/schools](http://www.scienceweek.net.au/schools). As the Season of Creation approaches (see p. 9), students can investigate topics such as clean water, photosynthesis, genetic screening and microplastics.

## Embracing science and religion

The theme of Science and Faith was on the agenda at the 2022 Lambeth Conference, held about once every 10 years. Anglican bishops from around the globe discussed 10 Lambeth Calls, which are “offered as gifts, to the Anglican Communion. They are intended to be explored by churches and communities and taken forwards in a way that is applicable to local settings.”

For the Lambeth Call on the Science and Faith theme, and other themes, which were updated last year, visit <https://www.lambethconference.org/phase-3/the-lambeth-calls>.

In this issue of *TGA* (p. 18), Emeritus Professor Carolyn King from the University of Waikato, in Hamilton, New Zealand discusses the so-called ‘war’ between science and religion – its origins, why it's so persistent and what we might do about it.

“If more rational people could step outside their normal rejection of ideas that sound so ancient and irrelevant as these,” she says, “we might be better equipped to see why the so-called ‘war’ is not between science and religion per se, but between the classical world view and modern naturalism.”

A more detailed article on this topic by Emeritus Professor King was published in *Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology*, a journal published by ISCAST (Institute for the Study of Christianity in an Age of Science and Technology). Their National Science Week event will be held (belatedly) in September (see the next issue for details).

As Bishop Richard announced on page 2 (thank you for your kind words!), my time with *The Gippsland Anglican* will conclude with the September issue, after which I will be taking more time to focus on my health and my family.

I couldn't have wished for a more good natured, devoted, encouraging and supportive team to work with, and I feel very fortunate to have had this time with you all.



# Magisteria: The Entangled Histories of Science and Religion

by Nicholas Spencer

Oneworld Publications, 2023

■ D. Gareth Jones

*Magisteria* is a tour de force; an academic treatment of a vast array of issues at the interface of science and religion, written in a remarkably accessible manner. The reader, no matter what their background, will get much out of it if they are prepared to commit themselves to a tome of around 400 pages. And yet it is the very detail that makes it what it is, as author Nicholas Spencer, a Senior Fellow at Theos (a Christian think-tank in the UK), untangles the many entangled currents at the intersection of science and religion. True, there are assumptions here, such as what constitutes science, let alone religion, his preference being the science with which we are familiar in the western world and the Christian religion more than other religions (although Islamic science is seriously considered at various junctures).

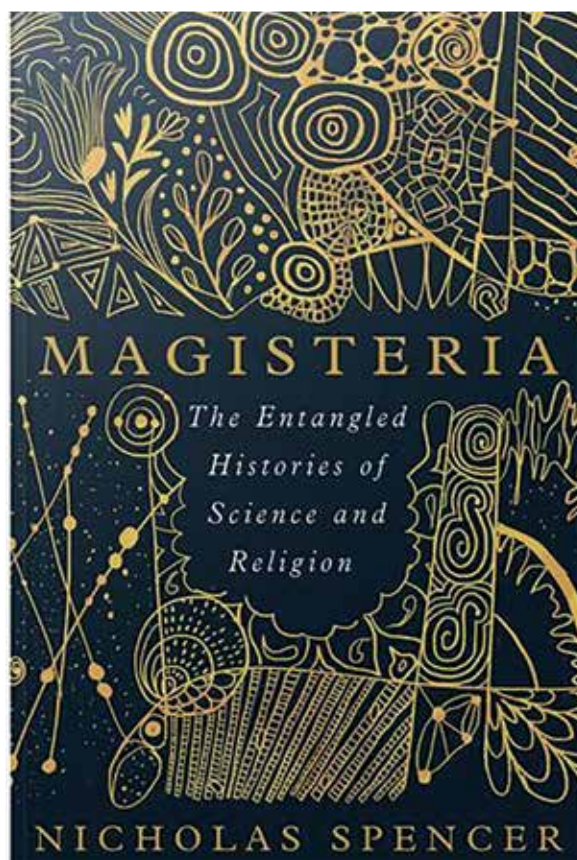
Whatever anyone takes from this book, the one crucial message is summed up by the word 'entangled.' As someone who writes repeatedly on bioethical matters, I have to remind people of the messiness of ethics at the intersections of scientific advances and Christian belief. It is no different in the broader reaches of the science–religion debates that Spencer deals with. Those seeking simple answers will be disappointed, but those looking for enlightenment will be largely satisfied.

There are four major sections: Part 1: Science and religion before science or religion; Part 2: Genesis; Part 3: Exodus; Part 4: The ongoing, entangled histories of science and religion. Some of the subtitles are fascinating, for example: "1543 and all that"; "How one goes to heaven and not how heaven goes"; "A barren Golgotha: the case of the brain"; "Breathtaking inanity: anti-evolutionism 2.0." Part 1 encompasses the story from the classical world to 1600, when neither science nor religion had acquired their modern identities. Part 2 looks at the period in which modern science developed in the 17th and 18th centuries, during which European religion helped conceive and nurture the new philosophy. Part 3 deals with the 19th century, the

time when science began to drift away from its religious roots and saw the emergence of the conflict myth. It was during this period that some believers balked at the increasing authority of science, while various scientists for their part overstepped their legitimate authority.

Part 4 brings us to the world of today with its ongoing debates centering on Freud, evolutionary biologists and genetic contributions to human nature, neuroscientists exploring brain–mind interactions, and technopians with their visions of possible future trajectories for human beings. Unfortunately, this last part is the least satisfactory since the detail that characterises the earlier parts is missing. The book is long enough without more detail, but it does mean that the contribution of religious thinking to current debates is largely missing. This is a shame since it would have demonstrated the way applied theological thinking is needed to restrain extremely powerful technologies with the potential to alter human function and undermine human relationships.

Underlying the relationship between science and religion is the question of authority, namely, who has the right to pronounce on nature, the cosmos, and reality? Is it self-proclaimed representatives of the church, or is it those with scientific expertise over aspects of the natural world? Illustrations emerge in one era after another: Baconian and Aristotelian scientists in the early modern period, creationist Protestants and eugenicist Darwinians in the Deep South, Galileo's view of the natural world against the Vatican's theological assertions, professional scientists like Huxley and old-school natural philosophers like Wilberforce. And yet, as Spencer carefully points out in case after case, the well-known take-home messages are rarely



as clear-cut as regularly portrayed. Frequently, there are subtleties and murky complexities that do not fit into neat science versus religion messaging.

The title *Magisteria* comes from the American palaeontologist Stephen Jay Gould, who claimed that science and religion are "non-overlapping magisteria." For him, they are distinct fields that are to be accepted on their own merits. He was seeking to provide space for religion within a culture where religion in the form of anti-evolutionary fundamentalism was pitted against science expressed as evolutionary humanism. This was conflict at its most bitter, something that disturbed a scientific humanist like Gould. While appreciating Gould's intentions as a description of how science and religion should interact, Spencer concludes that, when it comes to history, "the magisteria of science and religion are indistinct, sprawling, untidy and endlessly and fascinatingly entangled" (p. 11). This comes through repeatedly over the years, as the following examples indicate. The riches of this book cannot be covered in a review like this. Hence, some highlights follow.

Spencer is at pains to argue that the Middle Ages (AD 500–1500) were not simply a time between the glories of antiquity and their resurrection at the Renaissance. To make his point he references Robert Grosseteste, who combined scientific work with his ecclesiastical career. Interestingly, in recent years, the late Tom McLeish established the ‘Ordered Universe’ project based on an interdisciplinary study of Grosseteste’s scientific papers. Back in the latter part of the 13th century Roger Bacon was one of Grosseteste’s disciples and made tentative steps towards experimental science in his work on optics.

The year 1543 stands out as a pivotal year for the emergence of science. Spencer does not agree that it signifies the birth of modern science, even though he does admit that it marked a paradigm shift in two areas. These were cosmology and anatomy, the domains of Nicolaus Copernicus and Andreas Vesalius, respectively. Neither, however, shook religious belief to its core. For some, heliocentrism was not of great concern, even if other theologians thought differently by attempting to side-step controversy with the suggestion that heliocentrism was simply a theory with no claim to reality. This was a way of avoiding a hostile literalism reaction, one that Spencer has no sympathy with. But these were dangerous times for heretics, and Giordano Bruno, who came after Copernicus, went much further with his speculations, entering dubious theological territory. His end was martyrdom, although he was probably a martyr for magic rather than for science.

As an anatomist I am fascinated by the lack of Christian interest in Vesalius, who revolutionised our understanding of human anatomical structure by dissecting dead human bodies rather than relying on concepts popularised by Galen of Pergamum (who had not dissected human bodies) in the second century. Somehow this does not seem to be regarded as an issue for science and faith, even as it raised the hackles of theologians and church authorities at the time. Spencer does not take up this issue. This surprises me because Vesalius and others in the 16th century demonstrated a true scientific approach with their insistence on actual dissection and direct observation of the human body, over concepts emanating from Aristotle and Galen.

As a neuroanatomist I have long been fascinated by phrenology, considered a means of detecting important elements of an individual’s personality and

***Underlying the relationship between science and religion is the question of authority, namely, who has the right to pronounce on nature, the cosmos, and reality? Is it self-proclaimed representatives of the church, or is it those with scientific expertise over aspects of the natural world?***

cognitive capacities by examining the surface of their skull. This approach, now recognised as quackery, gained great popularity in the 19th century, when it was seen as a new scientific breakthrough. Spencer is helpful in following the influence of phrenology as a “scientifically” based approach to personal and social flourishing, which could help shed light on wider social and global issues. Phrenology, not religion, was thought to provide the true scientific picture of human character, intelligence and morality. Religion was simply to affirm the moral lessons discerned from nature. Discussions of phrenology today rarely point to its materialistic associations or its grand vistas, nor to the religious antipathy to it in the 19th century. This was a science–faith conflict in which the science was seriously misleading, and the Christian concerns were entirely justified.

Spencer’s analyses of globalisation are revealing because they paint a picture of early Protestant missionary activity and its relationship to science. For those missionaries, the more the mind is enlarged and strengthened by scientific pursuits, the better they were equipped to defend the truths of the Bible. The idea of a division, let alone a war, between science and missionary religion was anathema. For instance, William Carey the Baptist missionary to India, was a keen botanist and, when threatened with having funds withheld unless he focused solely on saving souls, responded indignantly that he had never heard anything “more illiberal.” In the same vein, the many medical missionaries displayed this close relationship between their religious and scientific vocations. One danger with this, as Spencer points

out, is that science could be displayed as a badge of European intellectual and moral superiority. Science could also be used as a means of undermining indigenous religious beliefs. In other words, as in so many other instances throughout history, the relationship between science and religion must be treated with care and circumspection.

The conflict hypothesis of the latter part of the 19th century has assumed enormous prominence in the science–religion debates, owing much to Andrew Dickson White’s *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*. However, as Spencer delves into a litany of other figures involved in these debates, it emerges that it was an Irish physicist, John Tyndall, who was instrumental in establishing the conflict metaphor by pillorying religion’s historic involvement in science. TH Huxley, long known as Darwin’s bulldog, was not actually known by this epithet during his lifetime and may not have been as rabidly anti-religious as frequently thought. What he did object to was unremitting theological dogma, dogmatic authoritarianism and papal authority, and their opposition to the notion of methodological naturalism. For Spencer, the last years of the 19th century have been reduced to a single narrative of uniform conflict rather than what they were: “the complex, colourful, ambiguous and hopelessly entangled histories of science and religion” (p. 313).

Spencer is a noted Christian communicator and yet he does not push his Christian stance in these pages. It is there if the reader knows what to look for. The notable feature of the book, however, is his even-handed way of covering the tensions as they come into sight throughout the centuries. He has not set out to fly any particular flag, but he has, in my estimation, attempted something more important, namely, a fair examination of the numerous forces at work around each of the science–faith debates. By approaching them in this manner he has been able to quash many of the simplistic messages touting an ingrained conflict between science and faith – an interpretation urgently needed in some of our churches. Science is a God-ordained means of understanding our world and it is the privilege and responsibility of Christians to use it for his glory and the betterment of his creation.

# Call to pray for scientists

The psalmist wrote, “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?” (Psalms 8: 3-4)

We thank you God for your infinite wisdom, the unfathomable depth of your knowledge, and your boundless creativity. You created things into being that had never existed before. Your knowledge knows no end.

We pray for the men and women of science who are also men and women of faith. We know that scientists discover, you reveal, and all are blessed. We ask, Lord, that you would give them wisdom, discernment, and a fortified faith that allows them to remain in awe of the things you have created.

Lord, we pray that as our days and weeks and months and years unfold before us that you would provide your people with great minds eager to learn about your creation and share their findings with a watching world.

God we pray that cures for illnesses be discovered in your time, that advances would be made in health that give life to all. We pray that the work of scientists be rooted in an ethic that values life and the betterment of humanity.

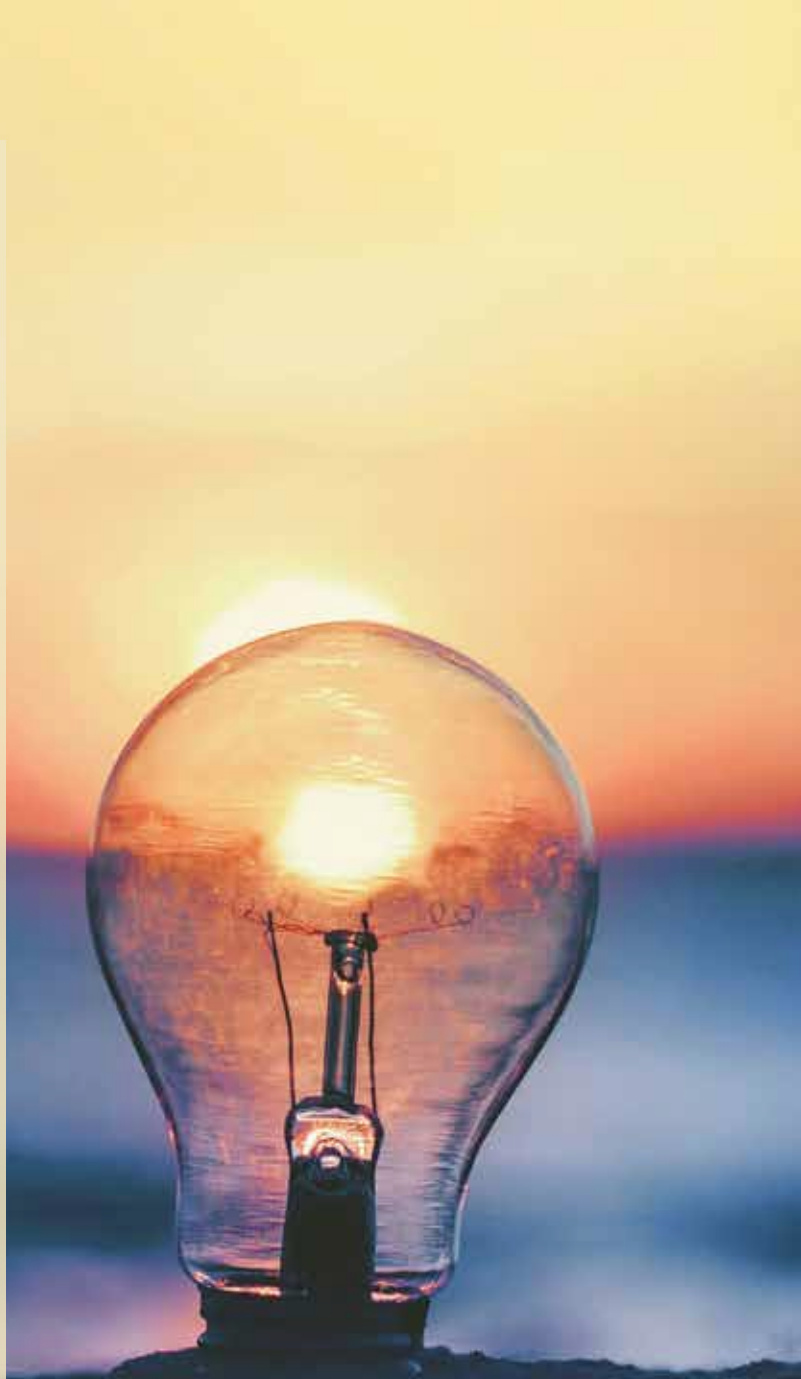
Lord, let those you gifted with a curious mind, a steady hand, and an unwavering faith be strengthened by you. Let them remember that “Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.” (Psalms 124: 8)

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

**Dr David Anderson**

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First published at <https://biologos.org/post/praying-for-scientists-and-the-science-of-prayer>



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