

The Centre for Ethics Newsletter



Volume 86 | Term 3, 2017



WILLIAM BLAKE

At a recent Senior School Assembly we had our annual acknowledgement of Poetry Week. This always includes an explanation of William Blake's work *Jerusalem*. We then sing this much loved Anglican hymn with its celebration of England's 'green and pleasant land.'

SATANIC MILLS

The boys are reminded that Blake saw the process of industrialisation as the work of the devil. He made it clear in that line about 'satanic mills', mills which he believed were contributing to an unrestrained pollution. According to Blake, scientific progress was to blame.

A HORROR OF MODERNITY

Blake had a horror of modernity and has often been described as being opposed to science. He wrestled with a set of ideas which had gained momentum from the time of the Enlightenment, in particular, the notion that the world could be explained rationally and that the pursuit of rationality would necessarily lead to the displacement of religion.

THE MIND

Blake was not the only romantic artist to criticise scientists. He was part of a movement which saw science as dangerous because of its elevation of the mind. Some artists believed that this inevitably devalued creativity and imagination. These artists felt threatened. Others on the defensive were members of churches.

ON THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES

Two years after the death of William Blake, Charles Darwin published his theory of evolution with its compelling evidence in *On the Origin of the Species*. The disastrous split between science and religion became even more pronounced in the early twentieth century with the creation-evolution controversy in the United States. In many parts of that country, little progress has been made.

DARWIN AND THEOLOGY

It is not often mentioned that Darwin had a religious upbringing and that he attended the University of Cambridge with the aim of becoming an Anglican clergyman. Apart

from studying Anglican theology, he became interested in the natural theology of William Paley who presented the argument from divine design in nature to explain adaptation: God acting through the laws of nature. Eventually, Darwin became highly critical of the Bible as history. He put forward the idea that all religions were equally valid. Though he moved away from faith, he conducted discussions about Christianity with Emma Wedgwood to whom he was married. He was an active member of his local Anglican parish.

A RESPECTFUL CONVERSATION

Over the years, some Anglican clergy have worked hard to overcome the mutual hostility that has marred relations between science and so much of Christianity. One of the leaders in this respectful conversation was the Reverend Canon Arthur Peacocke who lectured in biochemistry at the University of Oxford and then taught Theology at Cambridge.

A SATISFYING ACCOUNT

Far from being threatened by Darwin's ideas, Arthur Peacocke suggested that evolutionary history was a full and satisfying account of God's creativity. He was not at all impressed by scientific creationists and was critical of accounts which include ad hoc special acts of creation. In an essay included in the book *Darwin and Divinity: Essays on Evolution and Religious Belief*, Peacocke considered evolutionary accounts to be "infinitely more Christian than the theory of 'special creation.'" *Darwin and Divinity* came out of a series of papers presented at a gathering sponsored by the British History of Science Society in 1982, marking the centenary of Darwin's death.

JOHN POLKINGHORNE

An Anglican priest to make the case for friendship between science and religion is the theoretical physicist, theologian and writer, the Reverend Canon John Polkinghorne, who was professor of Mathematical Physics at the University of Cambridge before studying for priesthood. He was later the president of Queens' College Cambridge. John Polkinghorne wrote more than twenty books on the relationship between science and religion including *The Quantum World* (1989), *Quantum Physics and Theology: An Unexpected Kinship* (2005) and *Exploring Reality: The Intertwining of Science and Religion* (2007).

ALISTER MCGRATH

Another Anglican priest to engage with these questions is Alister McGrath. McGrath is the Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at Oxford University. He is also the Director of the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion at Oxford and a senior member of the Oxford Faculty of Theology and Religion. His doctorates from Oxford include a DPhil in molecular biophysics for his research on biological membranes; a DD from the Faculty of Theology for his work in systematic and a DLitt from the Division of Humanities for his research in the history of ideas, especially relating to science and religion.

RICHARD DAWKINS

McGrath's interests include notions of rationality and explanations in science and religion; the role of natural sciences in sustaining the ideology of the 'New Atheism', especially in the writings of Richard Dawkins; the concept of natural theology; the notion of scientifically-engaged theology; and the role of theory in both science and Christian theology.

INTELLECTUALLY ROBUST CHRISTIANITY

McGrath went up to Wadham College, Oxford, in 1971 and gained First Class Honours in Chemistry in 1975. He then began research in Molecular Biophysics in the Oxford Department of Biochemistry. As an undergraduate he became more interested in religious questions and questioned his own atheism. In his book, *Mere Theology* (2010), he wrote "I was discovering that Christianity was far more intellectually robust than I had ever imagined. I had some major rethinking to do, and by the end of November (1971), my decision was made: I turned my back on one faith and embraced another."

WRITING AND DEBATING

Alister McGrath has turned his considerable intellect and energy into writing and debating about science and religion. Among his best known books are *The Twilight of Atheism*, *The Dawkins Delusion*, *Dawkins' God: Genes, Memes, and the Meaning of Life*, and *A Scientific Theology*.

CHALLENGING QUESTIONS FOR THEOLOGIANS

One of those to ask challenging questions of theologians who make claims about science and religion is Lawrence M. Krauss, a theoretical physicist whose studies and research interests include the early universe, the nature of dark matter, and the origins of consciousness and culture. Lawrence has written hundreds of articles along with 10 popular books, including the international bestseller *The Physics of Star Trek* and *A Universe from Nothing*, which immediately became New York Times

bestseller and has now been translated into 24 different languages. His newest book, *The Greatest Story Ever Told ... So Far*, is the story about how humanity reached its current understanding of the universe, one that is far removed from the realm of everyday experience. To the delight of overflow audiences, Krauss and the Australian astrophysicist Alan Duffy were in conversation at the Sydney Writers Festival in May.

NO IDEA IS SACRED

Krauss is more than ready to confront religious claims. In an article for the *New Yorker* in 2015, he wrote "Because science holds that no idea is sacred, it's inevitable that it draws people away from religion. The more we learn about the workings of the universe, the more purposeless it seems. Scientists have an obligation not to lie about the natural world. Even so, to avoid offense, they sometimes misleadingly imply that today's discoveries exist in easy harmony with pre-existing religious doctrines, or remain silent rather than pointing out contradictions between science and religious doctrine. It's a strange inconsistency, since scientists often happily disagree with other kinds of beliefs. Astronomers have no problem ridiculing the claims of astrologists, even though a significant fraction of the public believe these claims. Doctors have no problem condemning the actions of anti-vaccine activists who endanger children. And yet, for reasons of decorum, many scientists worry that ridiculing certain religious claims alienates the public from science. When they do so, they are being condescending at best and hypocritical at worst." On Radio National some weeks ago, Professor Krauss noted that one of his colleagues at Arizona State University was the English physicist Paul Davies. Some readers will recall that Paul Davies wrote *God and the New Physics*. Close to 30 years ago, Davies spoke in our Chapel about this book. Writing in *The Guardian*, Tim Radford commented "Davies is interested in all the questions raised 3000 years ago by the Pentateuch; and in the increasingly intractable questions of how the universe began, how life began and how we came to be."

CHRIS MULHERIN

And so, with encouragement and discouragement on all sides, there are people who want the dialogue to continue. An interesting development is to be found in the work of Chris Mulherin, an Anglican minister based in Melbourne. Chris's background is in engineering, philosophy and theology, and he recently finished a doctorate at the University of Divinity (CTC). He tutors and lectures in climate change, history of science, philosophy, and theology at various Melbourne universities. Chris has published articles about science and religion in a variety of journals and has produced ABC Radio National programs. He has also blogged on the Global Atheist Convention for ABC Radio National. He currently teaches and tutors in philosophy, history of science, Christian apologetics, and climate change across various universities in Melbourne. Chris's doctorate focussed on scientific and theological ways of knowing.

THE STUDY OF CHRISTIANITY IN AN AGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Chris is a fellow and Executive Director of the Institute for the Study of Christianity in an Age of Science and Technology (ISCAST.org), which is dedicated to exploring the interface between science and Christianity. Its membership is made up of scientists, theologians and professionals with standing in their own fields and a commitment to the Christian faith. In Term 3, Chris will be a guest of the Centre for Ethics. He will address Christ Church staff, speak at a public meeting and lead a Year 12 Philosophy class.



Frank Sheehan

School Chaplain
Director of the Centre for Ethics



Screenagers

Screenagers is about the impact of the digital age on children and how to help families minimise harmful effects and find balance. After seeing the film, people tell us that they feel more confident and better equipped to establish balance around screen time.

A free community screening of *Screenagers* will be held in the Chapel on Monday 14 August.

Ron Banks



Ron is the former Arts Editor at The West Australian where he held the position for 15 years. He was previously a freelance journalist in Darwin and Canberra, Media Manager at Charles Darwin University, a writer for Resident Magazine Darwin, Senior Media Officer for the Local Government reform program in the Northern Territory, Media Officer at the Department of Education (Canberra), Department of Transport (Canberra) and the Economic Development Unit (Canberra).

Ron has conducted volunteer media work for the Schools Volunteer program and the Council for the Ageing (WA). He was a regular contributor to the arts pages of *The West Australian* and a contributor to the arts pages of the *Canberra Times*.

Ron Banks will speak to the community on Wednesday 26 July.

In Your Head



Dr Arne Rubenstein

Dr Rubenstein is a part-time emergency response doctor, the author of *The Making of Men*, founder of Uplifting Australia, and is recognised as an expert in adolescent development. He has spent over 30 years developing camps, programs and presentations focused on modern 'Rites of Passage' to support youths around the world.

Matthew Pavlich

Matthew has been one of the AFL's most valued players and undoubtedly one of Western Australia's most loved. Matthew is no stranger to the pressures and

stresses of the professional athlete. He has powerful leadership qualities and is an inspiration to young fans, teammates and supporters.

Amy Coombe

Amy is a National Inspirational Speaker, Master of Ceremonies (MC), and a nationally accredited Life and MBIT Coaching Practitioner. Amy is passionate about making a difference to the lives of others, especially in relation to mental health, wellbeing and body image.

Annika Rose

Annika is a Happiness Scientist and Mindfulness Teacher. She founded the Wellbeing Collective to positively impact the wellbeing of as many people as possible. Annika is passionate about mind health and wants to redefine what it means to live well using evidence-based offerings to spark positive transformation.

Dr Arne Rubenstein, Matthew Pavlich, Amy Coombe and Annika Rose will speak to the community on Thursday 7 September. For enquiries, please contact Teresa Scott at tscott@ccgs.wa.edu.au or phone 9442 1705.



Maggie Dent

As an author, educator, parenting and resilience specialist with a particular interest in the early years and adolescence, Maggie Dent is a passionate advocate for the healthy, common-sense raising of children in order to strengthen families and communities. Maggie has a wide background of experience that informs her work including teaching, counselling, and working in the palliative care and funeral industries. She is a sought-after media commentator who appears regularly on TV, commercial radio around the country and writes pieces regularly for parenting and education blogs and magazines. She is the author of seven books and a prolific creator of resources for parents.

Maggie will speak to the community on Wednesday 9 August.

Ross Ashton

"I can't remember seeing an Indigenous person during the first 21 years of my life in middle-class comfort of Sydney's upper north shore. Those terrible seeds were planted in 1972 on my arrival in the Western Australian town of Kalgoorlie with my bride of one week where Aboriginal fringe dwellers inhabited mine dumps adjacent to our accommodation. The seeds germinated and flourished in the next 5 years. Working as a geologist in the eastern goldfields plus living and working in Zambia, apartheid South Africa and Ghana for the next 20 years, provided a better understanding of cultures other than my own. My prejudice faltered."

"Exposure to ancient Aboriginal rock art in the Kimberley during the year 2000 was the epiphany and the catalyst for writing the book *Ochre - I want to paint* which is now self-published and in my hands. I ask myself the question ... why did I write this book? I allowed myself a hint when I acknowledged in the book 'This is my journey' but that was not the truth. *Ochre - I want to paint* is my journey through prejudice. The Ashton Family Indigenous Scholarship was created as part of the Christ Church Grammar School Indigenous Scholarship Program. Perhaps my journey is not over. What is next?"

Ross Ashton will be at the *Ochre - I want to paint* book launch being held on Wednesday 16 August.

All proceeds from the sale of *Ochre - I want to paint* will be donated to the Christ Church Grammar School Indigenous Scholarship Program.



OCHRE
I WANT TO PAINT

Rev Tim Costello AO



Rev Tim Costello is one of Australia's best known community leaders and a sought after voice on social justice issues, leadership and ethics.

Rev Tim Costello is one of Australia's best known community leaders and a sought after voice on social justice issues, leadership and ethics. For 13 years until October 2016, Tim was Chief Executive of World Vision Australia, placing the challenges of global poverty on the national agenda. In his current role as Chief Advocate, Tim continues to use his public profile to affect change.

In addition to this role, Tim chairs the Community Council for Australia and is a member of the Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee of the EU-Australia Leadership Forum, Australian National Development Index, Concern Australia Advisory Group and the Campaign for Australian Aid. Tim is also founding board member and spokesperson for the Alliance for Gambling Reform, which campaigns for law reform to prevent harm from poker machine gambling.

Previously, Tim was National President of the Baptist Union of Australia and Mayor of St Kilda. He has been Baptist Minister at St Kilda Baptist and Collins Street Baptist in Melbourne, as well as Executive Director of Urban Seed. In these roles, he spearheaded public debate on problem gambling, urban poverty, homelessness, reconciliation and substance abuse.

Initially Tim studied law and education at Monash University, followed by Theology at the International Baptist Seminary in Rueschlikon, Switzerland. He also received a Masters Degree in Theology from the Melbourne College of Divinity.

“Initially Tim studied law and education at Monash University, followed by Theology at the International Baptist Seminary in Rueschlikon, Switzerland.”

During 2006 Tim was named Victoria's Australian of the Year. Other recognitions include being made an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2005; being named Victorian of the Year in 2004; and in 1997 being named as one of Australia's 100 National Living Treasures.

Tim is a Founding Director of the Community Council for Australia (CCA) and has served as Chair since inception in 2011.

Rev Tim Costello will speak to students on Monday 31 July.



Robert Drewe

Robert Drewe was born in Melbourne and was brought up in Western Australia.

At Hale School he was captain of the school swimming team and editor of the school magazine, *The Cygnet*. Swimming and publishing have remained interests all his life. On his 18th birthday he joined *The West Australian* as a cadet reporter. Three years later he was recruited by *The Age* in Melbourne, and was made chief of that newspaper's Sydney bureau a year later.

Robert became a well-known columnist, features editor, literary editor and special writer on *The Australian* and *The Bulletin*. During this time he travelled widely throughout Asia and North America, won two Walkley Awards for journalism and was awarded a Leader Grant travel scholarship by the United States Government.

More recently, he has published a second memoir, *Montebello*, and two books of humorous sketches, *The Local Wildlife* and *Swimming to the Moon*. His new novel, *Whipbird* will be published in 2017.

Robert Drewe will speak to the community on Monday 14 August.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS - TERM 3 2017

DATE	EVENT AND TOPIC	SPEAKER	TIME	LOCATION
Every Thursday	Christ Church Credo	Matt Smith	1.00pm	Q Block Level 1
5 to 7 July	Camp Zero Sport	Ashley Nelson Greg Hire Damian Martin Courtney Bruce RSVP	Day	RSVP Tom Scollay Tom Scollay 9442 1705
10 to 14 July		Mental Health Leadership	Day	RSVP 9442 1705
17 July	Science and Religion	Chris Mulherin	8.30am	Chapel
17 July	Can Science and Religion be friends?	Chris Mulherin	5.30pm	Senior School Staff Room
18 to 28 July	Social Impact Festival		Day	RSVP 9442 1705
19 July	Making No Excuses	Brant Garvey	Day	Classroom
26 July	Book launch by Paul Murray - former editor of <i>The West Australian</i> <i>Other Times: life, journalism and the arts</i>	Ron Banks	5.30pm	RSVP ron.banks@inet.net.au Tel: 0478619326
31 July	Global Perspectives	Tim Costello	Day	Classroom
31 July	Inequality and Poverty	Tim Costello	Day	Classroom
9 August	The Importance of Calmness, Silence and Stillness in Children's Lives	Maggie Dent	7.30pm	RSVP www.trybooking.com/QNSW
14 August	Screenagers		7.00pm	RSVP www.trybooking.com/QTPD
14 August	Whipbird book event	Robert Drewe	7.30pm	Tickets via Lane Bookshop Tel: 9384 4423
16 August	Book launch for <i>Ochre - I want to paint</i>	Ross Ashton	7.30pm	RSVP tscott@ccg.wa.edu.au 9442 1705
30 August	Weaving Tapestries	Tim Muirhead	Day	Classroom
31 August	Ethics Book Club	Frank Sheehan	7.30pm	RSVP 9442 1705
1 to 3 September	Headspace		Day	RSVP 9442 1705
7 September	In Your Head	Matthew Pavlich Amy Coombe Dr Arne Rubenstein Annika Rose	Day	RSVP 9442 1705
20 and 21 September	Year 11 Leadership	Susie Ascott Father Peter Boyland Frank Sheehan	Day	