

*October Forum with*  
**PROFESSOR BOB DOUGLAS**  
MAINTAINING THE MOMENTUM IN RESPONSE TO GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

**Diary Date - 8th October 2016**

Registrations will be available (cost \$10 per person) through the Effective Living Centre [www.effectiveliving.org/](http://www.effectiveliving.org/) or you can call the ELC office at **8271 0329** or email [office@effectiveliving.org](mailto:office@effectiveliving.org) (see p 2 for more information)

**Diary Date - Networking Day**  
**The Scriptures: Relevance for the 21st Century?**

Exploring ancient text in Post-Modern times

**Saturday 12th November, 10am - 3.30pm**  
**Effective Living Centre, 26 King William Rd ,Wayville**

Speakers: Rev Dr Amelia Koh-Butler, Exec Officer, Mission Resourcing, SA Synod Uniting Church in Australia  
Rev Sean Gilbert, Lecturer in Ministry Practice, Uniting College, Adelaide College of Divinity  
Rev Dr Norm Habel, Professorial Fellow in Biblical Studies, School of Theology, Flinders University  
Dr Tanya Wittwer, faculty member at Uniting College/ACD - supervising post grad students.

The Afternoon Program will be facilitated by Rev Jana Norman and will feature a reflection on Common Dreams 4 from South Australian attenders. There will be time for networking with fellow PCNet members  
Light lunch provided for a small donation

**PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY NETWORK of SA**

**Mail** c/- Effective Living Centre,  
26 King William Rd, Wayville 5034  
**Office** Tues, Wed, Fri 10am-2.30pm  
**Email** [contactpcnetsa@gmail.com](mailto:contactpcnetsa@gmail.com)  
**Phone** 8271 0329  
**Website** [www.pcnetsa.org](http://www.pcnetsa.org)

**Committee Members 2016**

Jonathan Barker	Maureen Howland
Ros Chittleborough	Sue Jarrad
Esmond Dowdy	David McKirdy
Graham Flenley	Val Thomas

## A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH PROFESSOR BOB DOUGLAS

Saturday October 8th, 9.30am to 12 noon at Morialta Uniting Church

This event is jointly sponsored by **PCNet** and the Uniting Church Synod's **Environmental Action Group (EAG)** with the support of the **Urban Mission Network, Pilgrim Pathways, the Morialta Social Justice Team** and the **Effective Living Centre**. The aim is to further the imperative to **MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM TO ACT IN RESPONSE TO GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE**

Professor.. Bob Douglas from Canberra will replicate his highly successful presentation, which he used at a Canberra Region Presbytery meeting in July 2015. At that meeting he focused on Pope Francis's encyclical, "Laudato si" which is directed to all humans and not just to Catholics or Christians. It states that we can, and must urgently transform our relationship to nature and our understanding and care about "the common good". Bob introduced the highly effective **Kitchen Table Conversations** as a tool to engage ordinary people in time - limited discussions about issues that matter to them. He will do this for us as well.



**Who is Professor Bob Douglas?** He is a Visiting Fellow at the Australian National University and was the founding Director of its National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health. His 40-year medical career spanned work as a specialist physician in Papua New Guinea, being Dean of the Medical School at the University of Adelaide and Chair of a Geneva based World Health Advisory Group. Following his retirement, **he established Australia21** with five colleagues from various walks of Australian life. Australia21 asserts that, in addition to greater understanding of the technical aspects of climate change, governments need to build deeper public understanding of the need and scope for changes in policies and behaviour that address the causes and effects of climate change. The challenges of climate change are exacerbated by the lack of understanding in the general community of the different goals of science and risk management, and by the nature of human behaviour and societal institutions and norms.

**Climate change has been described as a diabolical issue because much of what we would like to know in order to manage the risks it presents is uncertain, the issues are complex and, without action, there is a potential for dangerous consequences.**

In a letter to the Editor Canberra Times on Wednesday 25 June 2015, Bob wrote "We urgently need a new Australian story. We have been brainwashed into believing that the modern economic framework is the only one that makes sense. Francis gives the lie to that. The problems facing humanity are dire but soluble. Until we accept those two realities (both dire and soluble) we will stay locked in to the current story."

**Put this date (8<sup>th</sup> October) in your diary.**

Registrations will be available (cost \$10 per person) through the Effective Living Centre

[www.effectiveliving.org/](http://www.effectiveliving.org/)

or you can call the ELC office at **8271 0329**

or email [office@effectiveliving.org](mailto:office@effectiveliving.org)

## THE CHURCH I LOVE

---

*The following article was published in the June 2016 edition of the "Morialta Vision" as part of a series of contributions on the above topic. Intended to be affirming, the sentiments are primarily positive, thus this article falls short of more rigorous critique if written from a progressive perspective. However it occurs to me that the Progressive agenda tends to be mainly to do with Theology. What then would a Progressive Ecclesiology look like? This article may be a starter to such a question! Jonathan Barker*

---

I love the church because it is not perfect! By definition love means loving that which is imperfect. As with all communities we are made up of flawed human beings, of saints and/or sinners! Yet when bound together as the graceful community caring for all in the wider world, we too may evoke the response of those looking on at the early church, "look how these Christians love one another."

The church I love is first of all the **HISTORIC CHURCH** – its denominational expression. Born into the Congregational stream, I still cherish its dissenting, democratic and liberal traditions! But now I love the Uniting Church with its conciliar polity and its emphasis on mission by becoming a leavening presence "in Australia". Having always advocated participatory contemporary worship and music, I still retain a love for the best of classical church music and hymnody with its rich theological poetry (although it requires decoding for present sensibilities!). I love the other "core" activities : reinterpreting the Biblical witness; being a caring fellowship of faith, hope and love; living the commission to bring reconciliation into the world. Yet there is always a tension - between those wanting to hang on to tradition and be "ministered unto" AND those who give priority to "ministering to others" and advocate change. While there is a legitimate conserving of traditions there is often an undue emphasis on preserving the past, which only hinders the call to care for those who live beyond the borders of the church's own membership.

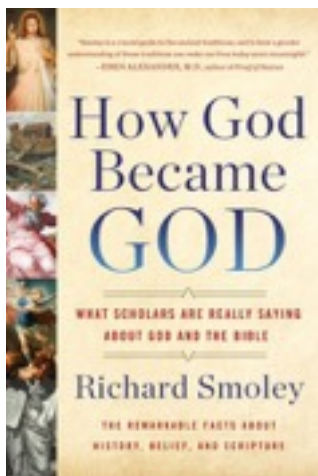
Another expression of the church I love, I call **THE MOVEMENTAL CHURCH** representing those who passionately desire the church to be in the forefront of social change to fulfil its calling. These are those who live beyond personal fulfilment. They often have difficulties with the formal "structures". I experienced this expression when Janeen and I were members of the Order Ecumenical. Then we reworked the vows of poverty (i.e. detachment), chastity (i.e. living intentionally) and obedience (i.e. not to a superior but to the common mission) – all for the sake of social justice and the transformation of communities. While I cherish those days and have internalised much the wisdom, loving this expression is also "in spite of" its flaws and unrealistic expectations.

The third expression of the church I love is **THE LATENT CHURCH**. While I have some misgivings naming this expression "church" and "latent", it is meant to include all "those who genuinely care" irrespective of creed and vested interests. Many may reflect a manifest Christlikeness although they may not profess faith in Jesus as the Christ. These "colleagues" take form when they identify with marginalised people and address causes of inequality and injustice. I cherish the times when this expression has been part of my experience: the Jewish community (including Auschwitz survivors) and others who supported our ministry with homeless and impoverished people in Bondi Beach; many I have worked with in the Aboriginal Reconciliation movement; people not of our church who are active with programs of the Effective Living Centre. There are moments when all three expressions have come together. I remember the Palm Sunday Peace rallies when churches marched with political activists and people of other faiths for a common cause. Yet experience tells me that each expression can be positively challenging to the others: the movemental church needling the institutional church to live in the present; the latent church reminding all that visions of a new world can transcend boundaries; the historic church retelling the story of the man from Nazareth as a living example of how God is alive and well in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## BOOK REVIEW: Richard Smoley

### HOW GOD BECAME GOD: What Scholars are Really Saying About God And the Bible

*Extract from a review by John Shirley*



*How God Became God* takes on the daunting subject of the evolution of Western religion. While Smoley recognizes threads of historicity in portions of the Old Testament, he never hesitates to point up the prominence of legend in the Bible. Literal-mindedness doesn't serve the seeker delving into the Pentateuch. But applying scholarly consensus and common sense, delving the known history of the Judaic peoples and their contiguous cultures, Smoley leads us through the wilderness of the Old Testament, and into the New; he interrogates the legend about Moses and our assumptions about Paul. He points out, with telling evidence, that most of the tale of Exodus could not have happened—though there may be some small kernel of history—and that archaeology has failed to find any proof of David and Solomon; that Jesus' early followers did not believe he was divine; that the original biblical texts are lost, and what has come down to us is a bit of a shambles.

Smoley meticulously shows how our concepts of the Hebrew and Christian God, including Christ himself, are an assemblage of ideas that were altered, argued over, and edited--until their canonization. This process, to a large degree, gave Western civilization its consensus view of God. But these conclusions are not cause for nihilism or disbelief. Rather, beneath the metaphorical figures and mythical historicism of Scripture appears an extraordinary, truly transcendent theology born from the most sacred and fully realized spiritual and human insights of the antique Eastern world. Far from being "untrue," the Bible is remarkably, extraordinarily true as it connects us to the sublime insights of our ancient ancestors and points to a unifying ethic behind many of the world's faiths.

*John Shirley is the author of novels such as Doyle After Death (HarperCollins/Witness) and The Other End. The full version of this review can be sourced in Parabola, a magazine of the New York Insight Meditation Center. <http://parabola.org/2016/04/28/god-became-god-scholars-really-saying-god-bible/>.*

### *Journey to Iona...and back.*

**Jana Norman and Paul Turley tell the story of how they came to live for a year with the Iona community at the island conference centre in the inner Hebrides in Scotland and how that time has shaped their spiritual journeys since.**

***Friday 19th August, 7pm,***

***Church of the Trinity, 318 Goodwood Rd, Clarence Park***

**The Pilgrim Pathways Group from Pilgrim Uniting Church in the city, is hosting a special evening with guest presenters Rev Jana Norman, one of the Ministers at Pilgrim Uniting Church and her husband Rev Paul Turley, Minister at Clayton Wesley Uniting Church.**

***All welcome. Bring your Friends 7pm - Coffee and Cake 7.30pm- Presentation***



#### KEEPING IN TOUCH...

Would you like to be listed on the PCNet database to receive the newsletter electronically or would you like to update your details? Do you know of anyone who might like to receive the PCNet newsletter? Phone the Effective Living Centre, 8271 0329 Tues, Wed or Fri, 10am-3pm or email [contactpcnetsa@gmail.com](mailto:contactpcnetsa@gmail.com) with your contact details.