



SEMINARY of the 3rd Age

2022

THEME: FAITH AND RELIGION RELATING TO THE PRESENT AGE

**The theme for OCTOBER Sessions:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH and GLOBAL CONCERNS**

OCTOBER 6TH BRIAN PHILLIPS

Hope in a time of impending catastrophe

OCTOBER 13TH RICK SARRE

Freedom in the context of a global pandemic

OCTOBER 20TH ESMOND DOWDY

Worship for postmodern times

OCTOBER 27TH HELEN PHILLIPS

The significance of the interior life to global concerns

2021/22 Archive

Video podcasts of Sem3A presentations can be found on the ELC website at
<https://effectiveliving.ucasa.org.au/podcasts/>

PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIANITY NETWORK of SA

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Committee 2022

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Norm Habel

Maureen Howland
Fergus McGinley
David McKirdy
Don Sinnott

What the Queen meant to Christians



Queen Elizabeth II (1926 – 2022) was the world's most prominent Christian leader, and perhaps the most faithful person to lead a nation. More than the pope — her reign saw seven of them — she was a constant presence in Christian life in Britain, at Church and in prayer. She showed by example, leading ceremonies of national remembrance and addressing the nation and the Commonwealth at Christmas. We all also knew her to be a regular churchgoer. Her death leaves an enormous void for believers everywhere.

Miles Pattenden Posted on the ABC Religion and Ethics page, Friday Sept 9th 2022

https://www.abc.net.au/religion/what-the-queen-meant-to-christians-miles-pattenden/14048600?utm_source=sfmc&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=abc_specialist_religion_sfmc_20220912&utm_term=&utm_id=1940719&sfmc_id=256661397

Seminary of the 3rd Age

AN INVITATION TO ATTEND THE October 2022 SERIES

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH and GLOBAL CONCERNS

In spite of the colder weather, we continued to have good attendances for the Seminary of the 3rd Age series in AUGUST on the relationship between Faith's Past and the Present. Previous sessions are available to view on the Effective Living Centre website (<https://effectiveliving.ucasa.org.au/podcasts/>) in case you were unable to attend, or live stream at the time.

We invite you to attend the October series which begins on Thursday 6th October commencing at 7 pm. When registering for the first session you can also book for all four sessions. Cost is \$15 per session, \$12 concession, \$5 livestream. Friends of ELC 30% discount on general admission. Booking all four sessions 25% discount on general admission

We would appreciate you registering prior to the event. You can visit the [Seminary of the 3rd Age web page](#) and click on the booking links, or telephone the ELC office on (08) 8271 0329 during its opening hours to pay by credit card. The office is open from 10am to 2pm from Tuesday to Friday. If you telephone outside of these hours, please leave a message clearly indicating which session(s) you will attend - you may pay by credit card on the night.

A New Initiative?

Over the May and August sessions of the 2022 Seminary of the Third Age it has become apparent that some regular participants have opted not to attend in person. This is because they are reluctant to travel alone at night, which is particularly an issue for those who live well outside the metropolitan area and have to travel long distances to return home in the evening after 8.30pm.

A possible solution to this problem is a car-pooling register housed at the Effective Living Centre, Christ Church, Wayville. This register would contain the name, address, and contact details of:

- 1) those willing to provide transport for potential attendees resident in their local area; and
- 2) those wishing to make use of this service.

If you are interested in participating in this initiative for the October sessions, either as a driver or a passenger, please telephone Judi Maschmedt at the ELC office on (08) 8271 0329 during its opening hours (10 am – 2 pm) on Tuesday to Friday.

David McKirdy
PCNet Chairperson



Happy Birthday Norm!

Indefatigable writer of books and limericks, theologian par excellence, Lutheran alumnus, and Uncle Norm to First Nations people, Norman Habel celebrated his 90th birthday on
7th September 2022

It was Norm who first brought the idea of Seminary of the 3rd Age into being, and who has since been among its most ardent supporters.

So he brought a magnum of very good champagne to the last PCNet meeting, and we all raised a glass to 90 years well spent. We hope to be still together to celebrate his century in 2032!

I Recant

In the light of years of being criticised by the faithful, at 100, I will return to 1976 when I was asked by the Church authorities to withdraw ALL I had written, (including The Purple Puzzle Tree), and recant. So, if I were to recant, I would formulate my word in Limerick Lutheran.

I hereby revoke even the slightest suggestion,
That Jesus was anything other than Lutheran!
By his Deutsche demeanour
And his *publica doctrina*,
He would feel quite at home at a Synod convention.

I reject any claim that the Bible has errors,
That Hell may be less than endless cruel terrors!
Yes, the earth is quite flat!
In addition to that
I can resolve contradictions with the use of old mirrors.

I will hunt down old heresies, as I did in my youth,
Proving Baptists are mired in pietistical soup.
That a very smart whale
Can swallow a male
And women can never preach truth.

I renounce any process that veers from the formal,
Like praying with Catholics! I'm staying confessional.
And to keep our faith clean
I won't speak with the greens!
God be praised. I'm now perfectly Normal!



Signed: The Rev Prof Dr Normal Habel

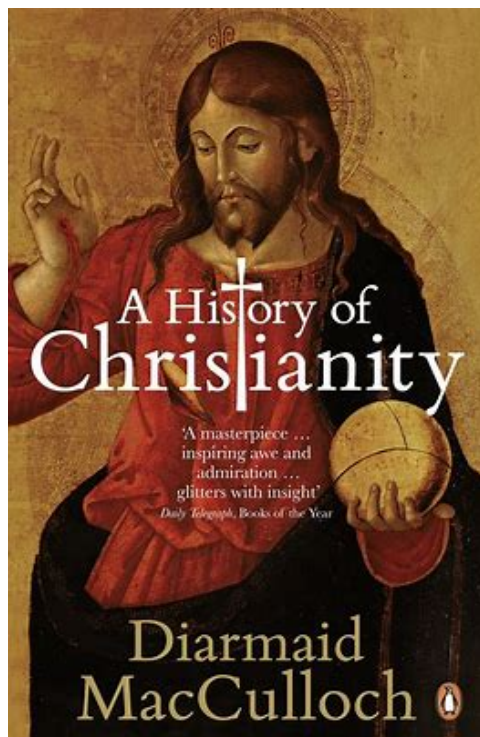
Selected limerick from his self-published book

90 Four Score Years and Ten: Laughable Limericks By and About 'Normal' Habel

The History of Christianity by Diarmaid MacCulloch

(sub-heading: 'The first three thousand years')

Not a review, but a recommendation



It requires a significant commitment of time to read this book and I cannot claim to have done so, cover to cover. Yet. The 2010 Penguin paperback version runs to 1,216 pages of fine-point print and, given the added fact that Sir Diarmaid MacCulloch is a history professor at Oxford University, there seems ample reason to expect this book to be a dry academic tome best left to the academics.

But don't be quick to judge. The book was the basis of an acclaimed 2009 six-part British TV series and has garnered many complimentary reviews from both those of Christian faith and those not. Rowan Williams, then Archbishop of Canterbury, described the book as 'A landmark in its field, astonishing in its range, compulsively readable, full of insight... it will have few if any rivals in the English Language.'

It's hard to do other than assent to that assessment.

MacCulloch will assuredly enrage some by his scrupulous objectivity, leavened with humour, while he will refresh others who have encountered church history expressed in darkly dogmatic terms.

MacCulloch describes himself as a child of an Anglican rectory who remembers 'with affection what it was like to hold a dogmatic position on the statements of Christian belief [but]... would now describe myself as a candid friend of Christianity.' And as a candid friend he can be witty, providing many startling, maybe discomfiting, insights.

MacCulloch made a lecture tour of Australia in 2014 and I heard him speak to a capacity audience at Elder Hall. His sparkling and erudite presentation assured a long queue in the foyer to buy, and have signed, copies of his book.

If you want to probe the origins and development of the Christian faith, and are prepared to have some long-held beliefs put to the test, I strongly recommend this book.

Don Sinnott

WISDOM, REVELATION and SCIENCE

There's a profound sort of idolatry associated with science at the moment, something that has been building in the West for the last several hundred years, at least since Copernicus/Galileo/Newton and the so-called "Scientific Revolution", although it has its roots much deeper in human history. It's what I call "scientific literalism". But more of that later; let me start by presenting to you the amazing words of Wisdom 9:13-18:

"We can hardly guess at what is on earth, and what is at hand we find with labour; but who has traced what is in the heavens?"

The ancients clearly understood the radical limitations, both of human understanding of the world, and of our practical ability to get it to do what we want it to do. But that was back then; would you say the same thing now? Now, in the 20th-21st century we have the amazing phenomena of modern science and technology, ruling the world and our lives. We seem to know what is even in the distant heavens (witness recent astonishing pictures from the James Webb Space Telescope), and we can do almost anything we want with our technology and industry.

For the wisdom writers of the Bible true understanding—true wisdom—could only be found by *revelation*—wisdom, such as we could garner it, was always revealed. Wisdom was understood as a central aspect of divinity—God created the world through wisdom, the *logos*, the divine word (John 1:1-3).

So, here's the question I want to ask: has science now replaced wisdom? Well, it seems to have—a few of us still read the Bible and go to church, but for virtually everybody else (at least in the West) science is now the primary and ultimate source of wisdom.

This is what I have to say on the matter, however: science is not revelation, is not wisdom. Science does not reveal the world, what the world really is, what is in the world. It doesn't describe the world, represent the world, explain the world. It is not revelation, it is not wisdom.

The false idea—one virtually all of us have swallowed, hook, line and sinker—that science reveals, describes, represents, explains the world, is what I call "scientific literalism". It's every bit as blind and dogmatic as biblical literalism, every bit as foolish and misleading as thinking that God created the world in seven literal days.

cont.

Science doesn't describe or explain the world, rather it is an unsurpassably powerful set of theoretical models/tools for doing things to the world, for changing the world. It is the human practical problem-solving tool *par excellence*—but it does not reveal, describe, represent, explain the world. If it did, it would be of no use to us practically, because describing the world and being a tool for changing it are two completely different things.

Scientific literalism is a profound, and insidious, form of idolatry, in which we build idols or models of the world, then, in sinful admiration of our own brilliance in doing so, mistake these idols or models for the world itself.

The map is not the territory is another way of putting it. Senior science and mathematics students in secondary schools now learn just this distinction in all their courses—that all the amazing mathematical/scientific models of reality we build are not the same thing as reality itself—so that an important learning outcome always involves an assessment of the assumptions, reasonableness and limitations of mathematical/scientific models in relation to the real life situations they are modelling. They're learning the critical life lesson of not confusing the two things: the ideal and the real, the map and the territory.

So, science cannot, does not, reveal things as they really are—that's not what it's for. Here's what Cervantes had to say on the matter, through his favourite mouthpiece:

Then Don Quixote said, "O man, you see not the world itself, but only the measures in which the world is veiled. Woe unto you, blind one."

Our wonderful science and technology wrap reality up in "measures" which, however amazingly useful, blind us from seeing "the world itself".

How, then, can we see the world itself, experience true reality, experience the One who is truly hidden from us by all our science and world wrapping up measures? Well this is ancient wisdom, and it is how humanity has been searching for wisdom all along. From God first, of course, through the special revelation of Jesus Christ, then through religions in general the world over, and now, in an amazing way, through Art in all its forms. Science is incredible and we wouldn't want to live without it, but it is not revelation, not wisdom.

Fergus McGinley September 2022 Fergus

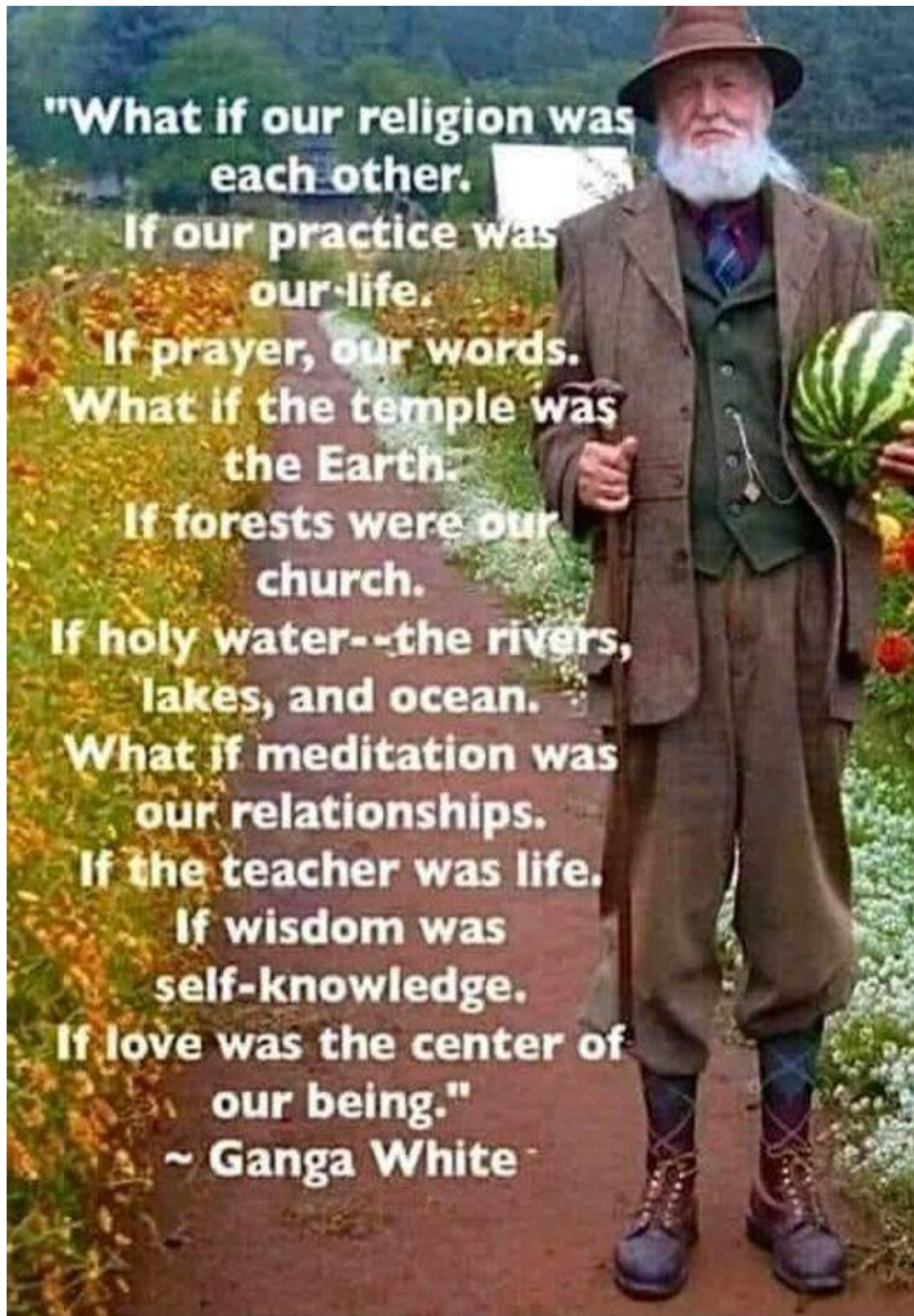
¹ From Miguel Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, 1605/1615. Quoted in J M Coetzee, *The Death of Jesus* (1999, Text, Australia), page 99.

Beholding Glory

Within, through, beyond your fleshly form
We glimpsed something
Encounter with the divine
We yearned for more
Fixated, we elaborated
Wrapped you in doctrines like linen sheets
Until your flesh and blood blurred and shimmered
We hewed a tomb of dogma
Harder than the toughest stone
Our words at once mausoleum and idol
Hiding your physical form away
We cut off from ourselves
the lifeblood that flowed through you
to quench our thirst
and give life to our branches
Help us look again with fresh eyes
With flesh eyes
Realize we've no others with which to behold
any glimpse of glory we might perceive
Roll away the idol we have made
with which we sought to seal you in
Confining you to the past
the abstract

the comforting and comfortable
the mental
the celestial
safer for us, we imagined
though dead
Let your fleshly form walk forth
Meet us anew
By the shore of our first encounter
An unsatisfying yet delicious glimpse
Of sun-darkened skin
Rough from labor
A face ever familiar, yet ever strange –
Like any other human visage
An old friend met again
In the warmth of hot coals
Over a breakfast of baked fish
September 15, 2022 by [James F. McGrath](#)





**"What if our religion was
each other.
If our practice was
our life.
If prayer, our words.
What if the temple was
the Earth.
If forests were our
church.
If holy water--the rivers,
lakes, and ocean.
What if meditation was
our relationships.
If the teacher was life.
If wisdom was
self-knowledge.
If love was the center of
our being."
~ Ganga White**

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