

Abstracts for Participants

‘Creation, Nature and the Built Environment’

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Alphabetical Order

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Eco-nomy of Life from the Perspective of Earth

My argument is that an understanding of the economy as related solely to finance is too limited and leads to distortion; I therefore propose that “economy” is best understood in a more literal sense as “eco-nomy”, or household management; and the “house” is the Earth itself. The pursuit of “the good life” viewed as wealth contrasts with the plight of the poor, who are hardest hit by disasters. Eco-nomy requires a definition of the household that moves beyond humanity and the Church to include all life. Eco-nomy relates to the Earth in three ways. First, humankind is taking too much, so the Earth suffers. Second, God suffers with the Earth, and third, God’s suffering with humanity extends beyond the cross.

Three principles of household management are considered. First, economy is re-defined beyond fiscal arrangements. Second, all participants, including the Church, need to revise their understanding of “house”. Third, the paper considers a revised understanding of what constitutes sustainable growth, including issues relating to the built and natural environment. In more specific terms for the Church, eco-nomy means re-visioning the “house” in a more holistic way. The Church can be viewed as one room within the house or as a particular vision of the very architecture, building and ownership of the house. In summary, the Church is called to “live a different story”, with implications both for the Church and the general community.

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“The (Hindu) God is Dead” - Thus spoke the Buddha (to Nietzsche)

The common view is that Hindu metaphysics oscillates somewhere between belief in rampant polytheism and a somewhat confused pantheism or panentheism (*pace* Hegel, Schopenhauer), and only just reaches the sophistications of monotheism with the devotional tradition most markedly in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (cf. Zaehner). As to the problem of theodicy and articulation of an unassailable argument for belief in God (or God-like being, henceforth God*), the tradition deferred itself to the Naiyāyikas (logicians of the Nyāya school). Here one finds the rare attempt in the broad spectrum of Indian philosophical theology to offer “proofs” for the existence of God* (otherwise unrigidly designated as *Ishvara*, *Bhagavān*, *Paramātmān*). The arguments are more interesting and convincing for the robustness of the logical analyses and the evidence of a complicated epistemology that was being developed in this school over a span of some 1200 years, than they are for their incorrigibility and truth-warranting strength. Nevertheless, these scholastic efforts, which compare with the “proofs” of Aquinas, Don Scotus, Paley et al, have not gone without comment and vehement criticisms from other – albeit decidedly non-theistic – schools, notably the Mīmāṃsā (a variant Hindu) and especially of the Buddhist (and Jain) ilk.

In the first part of the paper, I outline the basic argument – curiously a hybrid of the cosmological and design/teleological – and lay out the structure of the two-tiered proof grounded in the epistemological engine of ‘knowledge-event maker’ (*pramāṇa*). In accordance with this criterial definition, every new knowledge-event (*jñāna*) must satisfy a set of conditions both for its non-defective arising and non-defeatist justification, in addition to satisfying certain properties of ‘excellence’-rendering, before it gains the warrant of a true belief of that which it is a belief. The logicians work up an argument to demonstrate just this accomplishment in respect of the traditional (or increasingly appropriated) belief in the existence of God*. Through an expansion and fine-tuning of the ordinary five-step syllogism that takes as its stock example the inference ‘there is fire on the hill, because... smoke’, and analogically the ‘pot-[watch]-maker’ proof, the logicians believe that they have shielded their case

against all possible objections and refutations and defeaters that their Indian adversaries had been brandishing.

In the second part of the paper, I turn precisely to these counter-arguments, defeaters and conditional dissatisfactions (*duhkha*-like), and other shortcomings which the logicians had not anticipated. I draw on the works of two classical Indian philosophers, Kumāṛila Bhaṭṭa, Buddhist Dharmakīrti, and in much greater detail Ratnākīrti, as well as from recent scholarship that has revisited the debate from an analytical, a/theological perspective (Katsura, Patil, Jackson, Phillips, Ganeri, Bilimoria). My imaginary interlocutor is trivially Nietzsche, though it is doubtful if even this great post-Enlightenment admirer of the Buddha would have quite followed and appreciated the logical rigor with which Ratnakīrti in particular demolishes the Nyāya position and declares the Hindu God to be 'dead, buried and cremated' (an oxymoron from Tony Abbott in another context).

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"The World is Charged with the Grandeur of God": The Genesis Creation Stories, the World of Poetry and Aboriginal understanding of the land

The focus of this paper will evolve around the characteristics of Hebrew poetry as reflected in the creation narratives of the book of Genesis. It will present a comparative discussion of western poetry that notes the similarities and differences between the two bodies of literature together with an intertwining of Aboriginal understandings of creation. The works of a variety of poets including Gerard Manley Hopkins and John Shaw Nielsen will be included. The environmental awareness and concerns of the biblical texts, the later poets and Aboriginal thinking will be compared for parallel and contrasting mindsets. What can these different and often similar expressions of art and creation say to us in the 21st Century?

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God's Creation and the Work of Human Hands: Sites for the Proclamation of the Word of God in the Acts of the Apostles

In the context of the Mediterranean Sea, a geographic area perceived according to the world maps of the 1st century C.E., the Book of Acts depicts the expansion of Christian preaching from Jerusalem to Rome. This preaching takes place in built environments of the day, ranging from cities to royal courts, to synagogues, gaols and to house churches. The preachers travel to these locations by means of the built environment of Roman roads but also by sea, in both cases subject to the power of nature. Acts of the Apostles portrays both the environments built by human hands and the arena of the natural world as contexts in which the word of God may be carried and preached, so that it does indeed extend "to the ends of the earth."

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Landscape's Intersection with Human Activity in Les Murray's Early Writing

Les Murray's collected verse is a poem: an anthology accumulated over fifty years of observation, composition and reflection. It is perhaps akin to the form so central to Mallarmé's or Christopher Brennan's work, the *livre composée*. Murray's poems body forth, or to use one of Les's favourite expressions, they embody a voice which is in turn the representation (manifestation?) of a self, be that the poet's self or the implicit collective self of his readership or even the broader experienced world.

The poems themselves are in that sense enunciations and the utterance of their various subjects an Annunciation of the Being and Becoming of the world of the poem. The Murray persona interacts with that world and the greater reality beyond it as both participant and witness. As has been said of Wordsworth, Murray constantly maintains a close eye on his subject, identifying, interpreting and presenting its details. His making is recollection and assembling; his poetic voice is the medium through which the making is reified. And his subject is no less than the works of God.

Talking about God today is a dubious enterprise. In contemporary Australian popular culture, there seems to be a view that there is something vaguely indecent in any public discussion of religious issues in general. A shyness clouds up any attempt to enter such an interaction. A positive foginess

muffles any discussion of God; a mere serious mention of the deity provokes a sense of something having been done in bad taste, in discursive terms that something nasty has been stepped on. Within such a context, Les Murray writes poems that express a truculent opposition to banality, re-evaluating ordinariness, re-presenting its remarkableness, its shocking wonder as it touches the transcendent. What, in comprehensible terms, could such a claim signify?

Murray's poetry expresses a radically presented theology of the ordinary, nowhere less evident than in his presentations of the inhabited material world in the form of the Australian landscape. In this paper, I intend to consider these propositions in the light of Murray's early poems, those that announce and figure this poet's particular genius for aesthetic participation within and witness to the transcendent world of the poem.

Three early poems elaborate Murray's vision. 'Noonday Axeman' presents the process of clearance as a form of composition. 'Driving Through Sawmill Towns' figures an epiphanic town beset by fog. It is a miniature of both humility and personal distinctiveness, to which the speaking voice responds in wry but respectful tones. In 'The Sleepout', diminution is seen as magnification: there is an imagistic alignment of the child's bedtime toes as a form of magical telescope; the house is a construction of the context for a seeing Self, affirmed in nature; the whole amounts to a total reminiscent of the notion of *correspondences* and the poetic practice of the French *Symbolistes*.

Finally, I advance a conclusion that Murray's early poems are notable for their socio-religious dimension. They are a construction of religious 'seeing' or witness, emphatically claiming a status for Poetry as Spilt Religion or Religion as Spilt Poetry. In terms of Christian values, the poems present views of a 'People's Otherworld'. In generally theological terms they form a divine immanence embodied in Nature, of the Sacred in the Profane, as well as the Sacred as the Profane.

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Beyond Hello: Christians in Conversation

While it is often said that people fear public speaking more than death, many people find meeting strangers and having meaningful conversations with them difficult too. Often our everyday conversations never move beyond the superficial. At the 2008 Biennial Conference in Philosophy, Religion and Culture, the first author presented a questionnaire-based study on the interpersonal skills training component of an inter-denominational leadership course. Participants self-rated their skills and the frequency of the application of skills pre- and post-training. Four skills and seven applications of skills were addressed and for all items there were significant changes between participants' assessments of their pre- and post-training skills and the frequency of utilising those skills. Increased confidence was a common reason given for changed conversational styles and the increased use of various elements of conversation.

The current study builds on the findings of the 2008 paper and takes a qualitative approach that includes interviewing participants. Thematic analysis is used to assist in a richer understanding of how participants' conversations changed and the degree to which those changes were sustained nine months after the training. It seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do participants believe their relationship skills have changed since the training?
2. What are participants doing differently in conversation since the training?
3. How has the spiritual dimension of participants' conversations changed?
4. How do participants feel about their changed interactions with others?

Relationships are the essence of what it is to be human and conversation is an important element in building relationships. Christians are admonished to be careful in their conversations and also to be prepared for conversation. Research on the conversations of Christians is sparse. Understanding the experience of implementing new relational strategies will be helpful to those who want to enrich their conversations and create more satisfying interpersonal relationships.

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Baudelaire's Aesthetic

This paper will take up the work of Charles Baudelaire, poetic and critical, in order to present the Baudelairean aesthetic and to make a case for its relevance in our judgments about art today. Baudelaire was the first poet of the modern built environment and is known as the Father of modern poetry. While his poetry is still admired his aesthetic has been historicized: deemed to belong to that time and place in which Baudelaire wrote. This paper will argue that this historicization by subsequent aesthetic theory and philosophy is a suppression of something integral to art and artists, without which art is liable to lose what is true about it and sink into a morass of irrelevance and triviality; or (as will be argued has partly happened) may become devoid of any value beyond the business interests that control it. In this regard, it will be suggested, Baudelaire's aesthetic has important redeeming qualities.

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Spinozistic Pantheism, the Environment and Christianity

The traditional problem of faith and reason goes something like this. The pre-reflective (intuitive and emotion-influenced) judgements support religion X. Critical reflection tends to undermine Religion X. How do we adjudicate? The details of religious beliefs and practices are not my present concern. Here I merely assert that theism has considerable intellectual support, where theism is here understood as belief in an agent that creates the physical universe, provided and all that it strictly entails is to be predicated univocally of human beings and of God. My present topic is a shift in the pre-reflective support from straightforward theism towards pantheism and neo-Paganism. In this paper I distinguish Spinozistic pantheism from Absolute Idealism and from Impersonal Pantheism, and argue that once it is de-coupled from Spinoza's Necessity Thesis the former coheres well both with deep ecology and Christianity.

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Creation, Evolution and "First Sight": The Spirit of Centralia

Theo Price had an extraordinary admiration for the Aborigines of Central Australia. Infinitely more respectful of their character and way of life than was common in the 1930s, he was in awe of their power to connect with the unseen world ("first sight") and find harmony with the One Good, the primal cause of all things. His little known 1935 mystical romance, *God in the Sand* (publisher's title forced on the author) is an elaborate romance that grows out of a realistic journey in Central Australia. But at its heart is a series of beautifully told creation and other mythic stories related to the hero, Errol, by the heroine, Luma. The earliest stories tell of the creation of human kind, of many geographic features, plants and animals and the origins of the totemic system. Neither a conventional Christian nor a rationalist, Price does not discount Aboriginal totemism as pre-religious or sub-rational "magic." On the contrary, he elevates Aboriginal religion as impressively spiritual. The novel concludes with the hero and heroine exploring in dream the world of the spirit and learning wisdom from the fount of truth and knowledge.

God in the Sand is a unique creation of day-to-day actuality, mystic romance and an apparently authoritative re-telling of Central Australian Dream Time stories. A desperately poor and ill man, Price published the work through P. R. "Inky" Stephensen, who imposed massive cuts and changes of style as a condition of publication. The harrowing story of how the novel found its way into print is perhaps the most extraordinary in Australian publishing history.

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The Not-So-Alien Ecology of James Cameron's *Avatar*

Why was James Cameron's *Avatar* so popular? Trite as the plot may be, its themes of eco-spirituality and environmental destruction captivated enough people across the globe to make it the highest grossing film of all time. Did audiences feel empathy with the Na'vi, the indigenous people of planet Pandora portrayed in the film, and their "deep ecology?" In this presentation I examine the spiritual and ecological themes of the film.

The film depicts two perceptions of the environment and man's place within it: the economic rationalism of the dominant global business culture and the eco-spirituality of a myriad of human indigenous groups represented herein, in somewhat exaggerated form, by the imaginary alien race of the Na'vi. The real world validity of this contrast will be discussed with reference to my own PhD research about the Luangan Dayak, an indigenous people on the island of Borneo, Indonesia. Public debate over sustainability tends to remain confined within the dominant economic framework – carbon credits and 'green' consumer products – but the cosmological assumptions upon which our society is based go unexamined. Following the theme of *Avatar*, the paper seeks to address this problem by asking: What are the consequences of a particular concept of 'nature'? A set of ideas based on scientific and economic rationalism has triumphed in modern society, but are we better off for it, compared to indigenous peoples whose cosmologies result in a less interventionist attitude toward nature? How can our present relationship with nature be characterized and, if it is unsustainable, what is preventing us from changing our attitude? What could be learned from other societies at the global margins?

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Presentation and Incarnation: The Iconography of the Presentation of Christ in Late Medieval Italy

Art Historians have yet to universally grasp all the theological themes that Medieval and Renaissance images of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple presented to the original viewers. Chartres Cathedral's "Incarnation Portal" serves as an iconographical paradigm in which to view images of this Lucan gospel scene in sacred art. I argue that the theological theme of the incarnate Christ-child so clearly displayed at Chartres and explained by Adolf Katzenellenbogen in 1959 is a model to interpret other images hitherto unanalysed in this light. The magnificent fourteenth century altarpiece of the same subject by Pseudo-Jacopino now held in the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna serves as a case study. To interpret this and other images, I use examples of patristic and medieval writings, the iconographic meaning of the altar in presentation images and the theological themes in medieval liturgical dramas to argue that the images of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple evoked themes of incarnation and the incarnate Christ child as a proto-eucharistic sacrifice. I argue that this was an understanding imbued in the medieval religious mind exposed in the imagery of the art and architecture of the time.

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Population Policy as an Instrument of Integral Human Development

The current public discussion about projected population growth figures for Australia in the mid-21st century reveals a range of views based on the implications for infrastructure costs, health and education services and environmental degradation, as well as the potential benefits for economic growth and an expanding tax revenue base. As the discussion becomes politicised, self-interest and short-term expediency threaten to obscure the obligations of inter-generational justice, global solidarity and responsible stewardship of our natural heritage. This paper will propose that political theology, with its defining horizon of eschatological hope, has a duty to enter this public conversation and challenge some of the assumptions on which it is based. The historical development of the Church's teaching on population growth, such that a demographic problem is now said to exist, will be attributed to the convergence of various social commitments and to a theology that responds to human crises. The paper will argue that further clarity can be achieved on what might constitute a responsible way of addressing the Creator's call to propagate the human species, by naming the goods that are at stake and situating them in a global context. In relation to this, responsible trade and immigration policies must be connected with demographic policy, as must the extent to which aspects of the built environment reflect the excesses of consumerism. The paper thus seeks to give substantive content to what John Paul II described as "integral human development". It is a response to Benedict XVI's call for "a new humanistic synthesis" as a result of which we are obliged "to re-plan our journey" (*Caritas in Veritate*, n.21).

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Creation Covenant for an Environmental Theology

This paper will argue that there needs to be a change away from the dualistic model of a mechanical worldview when we look at creation, and returning to an organic, or holistic model. Here I believe that the Temple theology of the Old Testament, and a deeper understanding of the 'creation covenant' are helpful starting points for analysing the creation stories, and thereby gaining a new understanding of both our place in the environment, and our use of the resources of the earth. Karl Rahner's Christology adds a New Testament development of this theology into the modern, western framework.

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Recognition of the Sacred Grove: A Reflection on the Location and Composition of Conversation around the Divine.

This experimental paper draws an analogy between the recognition of the sacred grove with the idea that the Sacral is within a landscape of discourses. This relational model is employed as a general analysis but also adapted to be utilised in the examination of the internal structure of sacred discourse. Using Pseudo-Dionysius' *Divine Names* as an example I argue that the work's internal structure has a degree of indeterminacy. However, there are still certain unconditional claims that cause and maintain the discourse. I argue for the necessity that sacred discourse maintains unquestionable and indisputable axioms and I playfully name two: That the sacred exists and that human's recognise the sacred.

30mins

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A Systematic Theologian Reflects on Saving the Environment

Much religious thinking about the environment has focused on moral issues and on spirituality. This paper will approach the question as a something that should be of concern to the systematic theologian. As such it will ask what "saving the environment" might have to do with the doctrine of salvation. This will entail a consideration of the connection between the doctrines of creation and salvation. In the end, it may all be a question of how we understand and communicate an adequate understanding of the eschaton.

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Ezekiel 47:1-12: The Divine Warrior Initiates a New Creation

The Divine Warrior is an important biblical image of God that appears throughout the Bible. He first appears in the book of Exodus to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. The Song of Moses in chapter 15 vividly portrays the Divine Warrior rescuing the Israelites from Pharaoh's army. After appearing throughout the Bible, the Divine Warrior makes his last appearance in the book of Revelation as the Rider on the White Horse (19:11-16).

It is believed that this important image was borrowed by the Israelites from their Canaanite neighbours. Relying heavily upon the characteristics of the Canaanite Divine Warrior, Baal, Israel adapted the image for use with YHWH. The paradigm for the Divine Warrior follows a set pattern composed of eight parts: 1) the reason for conflict; 2) the Divine Warrior goes into battle; 3) nature convulses at the approach of the Divine Warrior; 4) the divine Warrior defeats his enemies; 5) the Divine Warrior establishes his kingship; 6) the Divine Warrior is enthroned on his holy mountain; 7) the Divine Warrior hosts a banquet; 8) the Divine Warrior initiates a new creation and restores peace and harmony.

In his commentary on Ezekiel, Leslie C. Allen demonstrates that YHWH appears to Ezekiel as the Divine Warrior who declares war upon the exiles for breaking the covenant. Although they appear in varying degrees, the eight characteristics of the Divine Warrior can be found in the rest of this prophetic book. This paper is concerned only with the final stage of the pattern in which the Divine Warrior being victorious in battle initiates a new creation thus restoring peace and harmony. This paper will demonstrate that Ezekiel 47:1-12, the water flowing from the temple, reflects YHWH, the Divine Warrior, at work bringing about this new creation.

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The Nature of Space and the Problem of Pain

The problem of pain and suffering is a persistent one in both theology and philosophy. This problem can now be approached from a new direction given the understanding of the nature of the universe outlined by the theory of quantum mechanics. This theory contains the idea that the apparent deterministic observed behavior of the world is really a stochastic effect built on billions of random occurrences. The "laws of nature" therefore are not laws at all but simply human descriptions of how the universe normally behaves. The fundamental constants which determine the nature of our universe are also shown to exist on the balance point between deterministic inertia and chaos. Together, these observations mean that the universe has an in built freedom which can, on occasions, cause rare and catastrophic things to happen. The problem of human pain considered more broadly then becomes "Why does God permit such random behavior? Indeed, why did God design the universe in such a way?" This paper proposes that the answer is that the universe was intended to bring forth love and that in order to do that it had to be free. Human free will has long been proposed as a partial answer to the problem of pain but this can now be linked to an inbuilt freedom in the universe itself. In order for humans, who are part of the universe, to have the freedom needed for real love, that freedom must be possible within the nature of the universe: human free will is built on the innate "freedom" of physical creation. If love is to be possible, then so must disaster and suffering. "If we take good from God's hand, must we not take suffering also?"

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The Villa Madama: Clement VII's Sanctuary of Beauty

Raphael proved his talent as an architect with plans for the new St. Peter's but his grandiose plans for the Roman villa of Cardinal Giulio de'Medici (later Clement VII: 1523-34) take his Neo-classical ideology to a new level. Situated a few miles north of the Vatican, high on the green slopes of Monte Mario, the Cardinal aspired to create a grand residence in direct imitation of the villas of antiquity as described by Pliny and Philostratus.

This paper examines Raphael's plans for the Villa Madama and the decorative scheme, which evidence the Renaissance impulse toward the resurrection of classical beauty. It also considers the importance of formal landscaped gardens as an integral part of Renaissance villa design creating a private 'realm within a realm' where Clement VII could immerse himself in nature. This follows the Platonic idea that for great minds to be inspired, a restful, leafy and tranquil environment was needed. The establishment of such a garden also follows the Christian concept of an earthly paradise cultivated as a form of praise for the Creator, celebrating the Creation. Whilst the splendour of the Vatican gardens illustrated the authority and power of the Church and its leadership, the retreat of the Villa Madama provided a private setting of beauty to nourish the spirit of the head of the Catholic Church.

This paper is based on research carried out in Italy for the doctoral thesis *Philostratus Illustrated: the Reception of the 'Imagines' in Renaissance Art & Culture* and includes a series of photographic images taken at the Villa Madama.

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Heidegger's Temple: Building a Place between Earth and World

In *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger's concern is the question of being, which he attempts to address through an examination of the being of Dasein (i.e., human being). This leads him to focus on Dasein's self-projection, in which the world is opened as the place for the happening of meaningfulness and intelligibility (for Dasein). In his works of the following decade, while Heidegger's interest in the question of being remains, he shifts his focus from meaning (for Dasein) to truth. "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1935) comes towards the end of this period, and engages with truth as an event of disclosure and uncovering that arises out of the striving between the sheltering/concealing of earth and the clearing/unconcealing of world. The essay explores two striking and enigmatic artworks: a painting by Van Gogh of a pair of peasant shoes, and a Greek temple. Both of these works are places in which the truth of beings are put to work, precisely by the relation that is played out in them between earth and world.

As a building, Heidegger's Greek temple is of particular interest for the theme of the conference. In this paper, I will examine his account of the temple as a building that opens up a striving between earth and world, in which the truth of beings can happen. In particular, I will assess the idea of 'truth' employed here, the relation between truth and art, and the relation between truth and buildings such as temples.

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Humanity and Nature after the Apocalypse: Some Recent Portrayals in Film and Literature

Contemporary culture is saturated with images of the end of the world and the idea that humanity is standing on the edge of destruction. This paper will look at some recent portrayals of what humanity will look like after the great destruction has occurred. Works to be considered will include *Battlestar Galactica*, *The Children of Men*, *The Road* and *2012*. Two things stand out in these works. One is that there is no standard account of the end nor of the condition of nature after the event. The second is that these works often have a theological dimension even though they are part of a 'secular' culture. The paper will conclude with some reflections on what these sorts of works tell us about the nature of contemporary culture.

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Emerging Ethical Symbols in Public Water Infrastructure: Bundy on Tap: a Bottler of an Idea; a Catalyst for Community Transition

Throughout history water has had symbolic significance to heal, regenerate and transform. However the rich symbolic value of water in our religious traditions is no longer congruent with scientific indicators regarding the world water crisis and broader environmental concerns.

The commodification of water, once seen as one of God's gifts, drains the numinous dimension of life and reflects our disconnection from the natural world as well as human and other life that share the Earth our common home.

In recent decades this commodification has become 'normalised' in the marketing phenomenon of bottled water. Countering the trend, is the inspiring case study of 'Bundy on Tap', a recent community initiative making Bundanoon Australia's (and probably the world's) first bottled water free town. Bundy on Tap has been a catalyst for community transition and source of new life, and in a benign domino effect this small town's project has sent ripples of change around the globe.

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The Interior Landscape: Metaphors for Faith and Belief in the Religious Paintings of Colin McCahon

For artist Colin McCahon, the dynamic interplay of light and form he witnessed in the New Zealand landscape, provided inspiration for the development of a pictorial language the artist has used to communicate the dynamics of his own Christian experience. Through an abstract visual vocabulary of shape, tone, and line which he largely distilled from the natural environment, and painted words and passages taken from scripture McCahon presents the viewer with paintings which chronicle his experiences of Christian faith and belief. What is fascinating about his work is that it seems to project such profound content through such minimal means. Virtually relying upon a black and white palette, McCahon is able to communicate with a profound delicacy, potent biblical themes grappled with in the life of the Christian. Avoiding the trappings of the sensuous and the outwardly beautiful, McCahon's paintings manifest an austere aesthetic of colour and form, and a sobriety of content, giving them what could be described as an 'interior' beauty of 'means'. Such treatment reinforces the perception that the works are 'stripped' bare of anything superfluous, and indebted to a genuine transparency on the part of the artist. This paper will investigate a selection of McCahon's paintings on the basis of how they articulate the artists interior 'landscape' of Christian faith and belief.

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Creation, Nature and the Built Environment in the Global Financial Crisis

This paper will explore the themes of creation, nature and the built environment in the onset of the global financial crisis of 2007-2008. It will focus on the creation of new financial institutions and instruments in the wake of financial deregulation, the subprime mortgage meltdown in the United States, and questions about the role of human nature and the nature of the underlying economic system in the development of the crisis. The paper will argue that explanations resting solely on notions of human nature are inadequate to explain the crisis. Instead, it will be argued that the crisis had a complex set of causes which stem from the nature of the underlying economic system, the development of new financial institutions and instruments, and the failure of authorities to adequately regulate the financial sector.

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Through a Glass, Darkly: Jorge Luis Borges, Thomas Jefferson, Arthur C. Clarke and the Academic Library

Sewn into the lining of Blaise Pascal's jacket, was found a document that read, 'God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of philosophers and scholars'. What is one to make of such a peculiar posthumous discovery? A statement of belief, hidden from the exterior world, yet kept, at all times, close to the heart. Such a find serves to highlight the longstanding theological and ontological quandaries that have troubled many thinkers from St. Thomas Aquinas to Jorge Luis Borges. Why should one seek to define God? Is it not suffice to heed the words of Exodus 3:14 ('I Am who I Am'), or Isaiah 45:15 ('Truly you are a God who hides himself')? Yet we persist in trying to find evidence of His omnipresence in our daily environment. If the eyes of the Lord are everywhere (Proverbs 15:3), could His presence be found in the library, that stark repository of knowledge that at once seeks to emulate His omniscience, yet shows the faltering limitations of our human means? What if, within a library, God were a book that we had yet to encounter?

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Aristotle's Most Beautiful City

In Book VII of the *Politics*, Aristotle notes that 'beauty is realized in number and magnitude, and the city which combines magnitude with good order must necessarily be the most beautiful.' {*Politics* VII, 4 (1326a33-35)} Not much else is said there about beauty itself, and so the sentence must refer to other discussions. What is Aristotle's understanding of beauty? How is it found in the physical features of a city as discussed in Book VII? How does it relate to the moral entity of the best possible city? The paper will in three sections discuss Aristotle's understanding of beauty, the beauty of the built city and the beauty of the constituted city and attempt to show a relationship between these.

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"One and One Equals Eleven": Spiritual and Ecological Mathematics from Vrindavan, India

The title of this paper suggests a natural ecological state as well as a way of developing human relationships. It claims that as seekers we should aspire to become "1" so that in relationship with others we inspire them to become "1". Here 'becoming one' means becoming and being *concentric*, i.e. by dealing with nature and the human world in a balanced way, a state arrived at through ecologically aware spiritual practice. In this equation, comprising two independent yet interdependent 1's coming together, there is a situation similar to what occurs in nature. This simultaneously dynamic and static state, where two entities do not simply join with or to each other but remain intimately connected yet separate, is represented as $1 + 1 = 11$ as opposed to the usual $1 + 1 = 2$. Such representations are present in nature, language and aesthetics and can be encompassed by the statement – the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The representation and metaphor of Radha-Krishna and their divine pastimes in the forest groves of Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh, India is used to present this problematic.

This paper forms part of a longitudinal project documenting the history of the modern environmental movement in Vrindavan. The "One and One Equals Eleven" motif as a logical question is presented in the light of empirical findings from over a decade of fieldwork and community involvement with Vrindavan NGO *Shri Hit Sadhana Mandal* and its environmental vision. It suggests that attaining a balanced state involving the trilogy of humanity, nature and divinity is one potential reading of the message of the dual aspect of Radha and Krishna and Vaishnava conceptions of ecology in Vrindavan.

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Georg Cantor (1845-1918) and the Controversy over Spinozist Pantheism

Spinozism is a metaphysical view associated with pantheism, the view that God is everywhere, or more precisely, somehow to be identified with nature as a whole. In 19th century Germany, Spinozism was both fashionable and anathema. We consider the engagement with Spinozism by one of Germany's leading mathematicians and thinkers, Georg Cantor (1845-1918), the founder of set theory. In his main philosophical-mathematical treatise, the *Grundlagen* (1883), Cantor enthusiastically espoused an apparently Spinozist metaphysics. However, in subsequent correspondence with Cardinal Johannes Franzelin SJ and in his essay, 'On Various Perspectives Concerning the Actual Infinite' (1885), Cantor took care to distance his views from Spinozist pantheism. We consider whether Cantor's explanations of the departure of his view from Spinozism are convincing and reflect on the wider implications of this episode in the history of ideas.

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Designing Human Habitat; Socially Responsible Urban Design

The way towns and cities are designed can have profound and often unintended consequences on the ability of people to fulfil their God given potential. Our surroundings influence the opportunities available to us to establish a relationship with each other and with God, to meet our needs, thrive and fulfil our potential. This session explores why urban design should be an issue of interest to everyone who believes in the inherent dignity of all people. It seeks to shed some light on how our towns and cities embody values and can have a profound effect on the quality of people's lives by effectively making people prisoners of their surroundings, limited in the opportunities available to them. This session will discuss ideas and examples of ways in which our urban areas can be designed to better meet people's needs.

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Creation and End-Directedness

Does the act of creation show itself in the creation? Contemporary discussions tend to see two possibilities here. The first is to argue that an original set of materials was brought out of nothing by divine action a long time ago. The second, in the tradition of Paley, posits a necessary divine action that oversees the building of some of the materials into entities with an end-directedness. Much contemporary energy focuses on this second possibility. The argument of the paper is that the ontology behind both these possibilities, which limits itself to the notions of creation and building, conceals rather than reveals the idea of creation. The paper tries to show how an Aristotelian sense of nature, with its recognition of internal teleology and original spontaneity, offers a better starting-point for coming up against the mystery of divine creative activity.

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Images of the City in Virgil, Calpurnius and Calvino

In classical pastoral, the city both allures and threatens. In Virgil's first *Eclogue*, Tityrus is captivated by the city and its promises; but the same city is forcing the hapless Meliboeus from his pastoral home. Polarisation of urban and pastoral values is a major theme of the *Eclogues* and continues through the *Georgics*, particularly in Virgil's representation of the bee community in Book 4. Born of bloodshed and living out their regulated and passionless lives in the pursuit of wealth, the bees become an analogue of the managed economy.

Like Virgil's Tityrus, Calpurnius' Corydon feels the allurements of the city. The advent of Nero is figured in *Eclogue 1* as the return of the 'golden age', here too presided over by the 'young god' of the city. In *Eclogue 4* Corydon seeks an entree into this new world, but the attempt proves a failure; *Eclogue 7* signals the impossibility of importing pastoral values into the city—the brashness and dazzling brilliance of the amphitheatre, whose exotic display animals mock the homeliness of the pastoral world's sheep and goats, is an environment in which pastoral has no place.

This increasing dominance of city over country, of urban over pastoral values, has re-emerged as a vital theme following the industrial revolution: Blake's 'dark satanic mills' and D.H. Lawrence's Gerald Crich are but two examples. Within society at large we see it in the ideology of the environmental movement; and it surfaces in texts such as Calvino's *Invisible Cities*. The 'Continuous Cities' set is of particular interest; and with the conversations in the city of Cecilia between Marco Polo, city-dweller and city-explorer, and the unnamed goatherd, archetypal figure of the pastoral world, we have the modern equivalent of Virgil's opening encounter between Tityrus and Meliboeus.

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The Petra Project: Working Towards a Harmonious Future in Flagstone

Since 2006 two academics and thirteen social science undergraduate research students from Christian Heritage College have conducted a community development research project in Flagstone (south west of Brisbane). This work was initiated after one of the authors had served as chaplain in a local secondary school. It was noted early in the study that while Flagstone was fast becoming a growing residential centre, (it has been gazetted by government as a satellite city in SE Qld with a potential population of 125,000-130,000 people) there were a number of challenges leading to a sense of alienation among its residents.

The research found residents were concerned about insufficient infrastructure and resources to adequately support a suburb and that there was a need for further development of local community identity, belonging and harmony. In the four years of this project, the research teams have walked alongside the Flagstone community helping them find new ways of using existing community resources and infrastructure as well as new resources. This has culminated in the formation of a community association through which many of these issues may be addressed, leading to sustainability and social harmony.

Through this research the authors have experienced that as Christians it is incumbent on them to go beyond dogma and doctrine in their faith. The idea of applying faith practically in the context of community engagement, which the quote above captures so well, is something they believe that Jesus of Nazareth calls them to. In this paper this social science research journey is shared in the light of the notions of incarnational theology and 'koinonia'.

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Community and Incarceration: The Architecture of Alienation and the Politics of Redemption

According to the International Centre for Prison Studies (Kings College, London) New Zealand has the fifth highest rate of incarceration per head of population in the OECD – after the USA, Chile, Poland and Czechoslovakia – and well ahead of Australia. New Zealanders pride themselves on breaking records and perhaps the most impressive is the rate at which they lock people up and throw away ongoing responsibility. A new prison in the city of Auckland looms large over the surrounding urban landscape: it is a larger, gloomier, shadier and more embarrassingly obvious human cage than anyone had anticipated. From a Correctional perspective, the locality addresses essential needs. It is close to the courts and a perfect situation for the requisite remand centre. However, there are other perspectives at play – or at least they ought to be.

In this paper the authors address a range of issues thrown up by the sheer fact and location of this new correctional edifice, including local planning and community concerns and wider issues of the role, value and meaning of modern penal incarceration. To what extent do penal practices and policies contribute to personal redemption and communal salvation? Will more prisons keep a community safer and enable the rehabilitation of inmates? What is the purpose of penal servitude? What is the role and purpose of the social and built environment of incarceration?

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Releasing the River of the Water of Life

This paper derives from my PhD thesis, an ecotheological reading of a case study in human ecology that explores whether the so-called “ecological complaint” advanced by Lynn White Jnr in his seminal article *The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis* is supported by the effects humans have had on the waterways of Australia’s Murray Darling Basin. Having concluded that this ecotheological case study supports White’s “ecological complaint” against western Christianity I ask how, given the rich ecotheological resources of the Bible and Christian theology, this complaint can be sustained. I argue that in western theology God’s transcendence dominates God’s immanence, allowing the Bible’s and Christian theology’s high view of humankind to be distorted into an anthropocentrism inimical to the rest of creation. Ecological crisis provides the Church with an impetus to restore an integrated understanding of the Trinitarian God who is both transcendent and immanent, and of the Gospel which is theocentric, biocentric and enriched by the insight that “God’s kingdom is creation healed”, rather than anthropocentrically focused upon some form of human salvation. Starting from the exhortation “Release the river!” in the thesis’ title I outline an “ecotheology of rivers” that, centering on the biblical motif of “the river of the water of life” and Jesus’ invitation at Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles, to drink from Him, argues that a proper understanding and acceptance of the Holy Spirit helps humans to experience God immanently and to release to God the many things that we, in our desire for control over creation, have dammed.

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Earth as Religious Mother: Ecological Change Birthing Social Upheaval and Religious Reformulation

The aim of this paper will be to help stimulate creative religious responses to the increasingly serious environmental problems confronting humanity worldwide in the 21st century. The development of some theoretical framework would assist, for example, in the reformulation of Catholic faith. It could be an exciting adventure.

History indicates that major environmental changes have led to social disruption, compounded by the mass migration of peoples. This in turn has led to changing religious questions, reformulations of faith and even new religious answers. A pattern of religious change emerges that is stimulated by major ecological events. This pattern is exemplified through multiple eras presented in the BBC DVD ‘The Story of India’.

Some examples from Christian history which seem to support the idea that the power of major environmental events help change religion include:

- climate change in the early 2nd millennium BC and the pilgrimage stories of Abram leaving Ur and the exiled Jewish people in Egypt - both lead to new discoveries of God, content of faith and religious observance;
- crop and pasture failures following a volcanic eruption in the 6th century led to mass migrations which in turn sparked such things as the Irish monastic method of re-evangelising in Europe and even the foundation of Islam;
- the Black Death in 14th century Europe which led both to macabre religious responses and a restlessness with past religious answers culminating in the Reformation.

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Creationism and Intelligent Design: Why does the Struggle Continue?

Creationism in the forms in which we are familiar with it today is on the face of it a strange phenomenon. To the outsider, the kinds of argument that are offered for it look unconvincing, while there would equally appear to be approaches which reconcile orthodox Christian belief and an acceptance of evolutionary theory. Why, it might be asked, does the struggle continue? In this paper, I explore this issue from a variety of perspectives. While the particular form that the issue has taken seems to require explanation in terms of some of the peculiarities of the system of government in the U.S., the roots of this issue look to me best understood in terms of an interaction between the development of conservative evangelical theology in the US, and a poor knowledge of the history and philosophy of science on the part of most of those who have been involved on both sides of these arguments. (The problems, in turn, have been compounded by how First Amendment Jurisprudence in the US has developed, relating to these issues.) In the paper I seek to throw some light upon all these issues, to offer some illustrations of the kind of thing that is involved by reference to the writings of the semi-popular conservative theological writer Francis Schaeffer, and to suggest that the issues are only likely to be resolved if they are not only viewed from a variety of perspectives, but that a resolution is offered which is adequate to the problematic of each of these perspectives.

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Creation, Incarnation and Healing: A Reflection on the Theology of Karl Rahner

Karl Rahner recognises only too well the implications of a problematic dualism at the heart of traditional Theology and Christology that sets God over against the world, the soul over against the body, grace over against nature. Acutely aware of this problem Rahner in his transcendental theology seeks to steer a middle course between dualistic Theism and the alternative reductionist pantheism. The implications of his attempted synthesis has wide-ranging implications for healing the dualisms that alienate us from God ourselves and our environment.

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Covenanting the Cosmos: Finding Guidance for Survival and Salvation in Nature: Encounters with the Land in Raimon Panikkar, Judith Wright and Les. A. Murray as Sources for Spirituality

The universe has value in itself. As Keith Ward writes in Pascal's Fire, it is "an object of the divine consciousness and a manifestation of divine wisdom, beauty and power." Viewing creation as a testament comes from Judith Wright's poem "Creation – Annihilation": "He left us in his will / an ancient testament / The whole Creation." Christian and Catholic spiritualities inspired by nature gain enormous perspective when recognising the natural environment and ourselves as part of it as God's covenant with humankind.

This presentation reads poems that dream New Earth horizons where the Tradition and poetry fuse to supply more comprehensive descriptions of transformed identities and a transformed cosmos. In their distinctive textures and strengths from diverse strands, these dreaming events mandate redeeming the land and its peoples for seeking 'right-relatedness' with creation. At points like the Nativity, identified by Panikkar as radiances, more conscientious encounters with the Earth mandate ways to honour the creator's covenant.

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On My Walk: An Exploration of People and Environment Connections through the Act of Walking

Walking is a mode of transport as well as a recreation and form of exercise. It is a physical activity that can be done at different speeds, in almost all weathers and attire, throughout the year, and at different times of the day or night. Walking can be a solitary or companionable undertaking, involving exploration of the countryside or the busiest of city streets. Walking connects the walker with places as well as people – neighbours, acquaintances and strangers. Walking has been done throughout history, in all cultures across the globe, enabling exploration of the new, discovery of the unexpected and reassurance within familiar environments.

My paper investigates the experience of walking as a connecting force to the self, others and the environment. The starting point is an overview of the ways in which walking is being promoted in contemporary healthy built environment discourse. This is then set within broader historical, philosophical and environmental writings on connecting people and place. The experiences of everyday walking in a local neighbourhood are used to consider how this activity connects individual, community and environment. I am particularly interested in how walking can bring humanity closer to the changing environment, offering new possibilities for local action on sustainability.

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Cosmic Liturgy and Biblical Criticism: A Question of Method

For some decades now there has been what many have called a crisis in biblical criticism. A crisis concerning many of the basic assumptions informing the methods used, which we can see now were little more than the prejudices of modernity. With the rise of the 'Third Quest' the task has been not only to assimilate the early Jewish and Christian material previously neglected, but to rethink our method. A good deal of this project has involved a focus upon the concept of covenant, not merely as a social factor but as a cosmological, even metaphysical, one as well. The effects of this have been both profound and exciting, but the new approach is not without its own attendant pitfalls. By reference to the works of Margaret Barker this paper identifies what is one of the major pitfalls: this is the failure to give due attention to the way in which common concepts can be differently employed, not least by reference to the use of irony and reversal. It is a mistake that not only flattens out the depth and dimensions of history and the texts under discussion, but lends itself to what one might call 'a conspiracy theory method'. A method that effectively means the assumptions of the critic can only ever be confirmed. Thus, we run the risk of repeating the same errors of earlier biblical criticism. I will attempt not only to clarify this point but to suggest ways in which we might proceed.

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The Future of Philosophy of Religion

Philosophy of religion, in both its analytic and Continental streams, has been undergoing a renewal for some time now, as is evidenced by the work of Alvin Plantinga and Peter van Inwagen (in the analytic tradition), and John Caputo and Jean-Luc Marion (in the Continental tradition). I wish to explore this transformation in the fortunes of philosophy of religion, and I will do so by looking at how truth – and religious truth in particular – is conceptualised in both strands of philosophy. I will begin with an overview of the way in which truth has been commonly understood across nearly all groups within the analytic tradition, and I will underscore the difficulties and shortcomings of the analytic approach by comparing it with a Continental, and specifically Heideggerian, approach. I will then move onto a conception of truth that is even further removed from the analytic tradition, one that is prominent in Orthodox Christianity and which identifies truth with God. The point of this detour through divergent understandings of truth is to show how philosophy of religion, whether analytic or Continental, remains entrenched in forms of thinking that will need to be overcome if it is to have a credible future.

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Call to an Ecological Conversion as a matter of Faith and Urgency

We are all called to an ecological conversion but how well are we responding? Educational institutions are the 'womb' in which cultural change is nourished. Pope John Paul II directed educators to generate initiatives and concrete programs for the restoration of right relationships with the Earth. The challenge therefore is to address such issues as 'psychological state of denial', the 'myth of progress', which allows for 'business as usual' without concern for possible disastrous environmental consequences.

The scientific community have also appealed to religious communities to educate their people on the need to be proactive in stemming the tide of the global environmental crisis through acknowledging the Earth as sacred and spiritual "Mindful of our common responsibility, we scientists, many of us long engaged in combating the environmental crisis, urgently appeal to the world religious community to commit in word and deed, and as boldly as required, to preserve the environment of the Earth"

*"We will conserve only what we love.
We will love only what we understand.
We will understand only what we are taught."
(Baba Dioum - Senegalese Ecologist).*

This paper addresses the need for education for the environment by reviewing possible curriculum pathways. Fr Thomas Berry concludes, "I will end, however, with a view that the first college to announce that its entire program is grounded in the dynamics of the earth as a self-emerging, self-sustaining, self-educating, self governing, self- healing, and self-fulfilling community of all living and nonliving beings of the planet should have an extraordinary future.

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Finding the Beauty in Suffering: Abbé Henri Huvelin and Baron Friedrich von Hügel

Baron Friedrich von Hügel (1852-1925) was a religious philosopher and spiritual director in the early twentieth century who had a huge impact on many people, including Evelyn Underhill. One of his key teachings, inherited from his own spiritual director – the renowned Parisian soul guide, Abbé Henri Huvelin – was that of "suffering well". Huvelin and von Hügel recognised there is no beauty in suffering per se, that suffering itself is clearly evil. However, they both argued that "suffering well" coming to accept suffering without bitterness and pressing into Christ in the pain – can lead to joy and transformation. Whilst holding this position, von Hügel also states that suffering can destroy people. Suffering may narrow and harden souls instead of widening and softening them. Rather than glorifying suffering or seeking suffering through excessive asceticism, von Hügel recommends a focus upon Christ, in love, through practices such as contemplative prayer and the Eucharist, and a moderate asceticism. This paper explores this uncomfortable idea of "suffering well" as taught by both Huvelin and von Hügel, as well as highlighting the differences between their positions.