THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON RECEPTIVE ECUMENISM
DISCERNMENT, DECISION-MAKING AND RECEPTION
CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA | NOVEMBER 6-9, 2017
“I want the great things of abiding value… thoroughly baptized into the Australian scene, blown through by Australian winds, and even coated now and then with Australian dust.”

Bishop Ernest Henry Burgmann
Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn 1934-1961
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The Labyrinth, an ancient symbol of journey into wisdom, with a 2.8 billion year old rock from the Hamersley Ranges at the centre.
CONFERENCE VENUES & SCHEDULE

MONDAY 6TH NOVEMBER  All events to be held at University House

TUESDAY 7TH NOVEMBER  All events to be held at University House

WEDNESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER  All events up until 5.15pm to be held at University House
  All events after 5.30pm to be held at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University.

THURSDAY 9TH NOVEMBER  All events to be held at University House

University House
Main number: +61 2 6125 5211
Please call Virginia Ingram if your request is urgent.
Mobile: 0420 974 757
Address: 1 Balmain Crescent
Acton, Canberra, ACT 2601

The Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
Main number: +61 2 6272 6201
Please call Virginia Ingram if your request is urgent.
Mobile: 0420 974 757
George Browning Building
15 Blackall Street (cnr King's Avenue)
Barton, Canberra, ACT 2600
WELCOME FROM THE RT REV’D PROF STEPHEN PICKARD

It is a great joy and privilege to welcome you to Canberra Australia for the Fourth International Conference on Receptive Ecumenism. I am especially delighted to welcome those who have travelled from the far flung corners of the earth to the land down-under. I hope and trust your visit will be fruitful and memorable. It is a special delight to welcome our keynote speakers, men and women, from across the ecclesial spectrum. I congratulate all those who are to present papers. I trust that this conference will advance our understanding of the gifts we bring to the life of the church and its mission in the world. As the conference theme suggests discernment, decision-making and reception will only bear fruit in the world as together we learn to lean into the Spirit and attend to God’s voice.

I attended the inaugural conference at Ussher College, Durham County, UK in 2006. For some, perhaps many of you this will be your fourth. But it will be everybody’s first such gathering in the Southern Hemisphere. This conference is hosted by the Centre for Ecumenical Studies, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture; The Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre, Charles Sturt University; and the Australian Catholic University. The venue for the conference is University House, Australian National University. You will gather from this that the fourth international conference marks an important step for receptive ecumenism with respect to location and host partners. There is indeed a great deal to learn and receive from one another and we hope and trust that the setting will contribute greatly to this.

The organising committee is grateful for all the support and encouragement received in the planning of this conference. We wish you every blessing as you engage with the theme of the conference, make new friendships, grow in understanding and share a common vision of hope in the God who calls the broken and divided body of Christ to be one that the world may believe.

The Rt Rev’d Prof Stephen Pickard
Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University, Canberra / Assistant Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn

The Organizing Committee

Revd Dr Ray Williamson OAM
Hon. Director, Centre for Ecumenical Studies

Ms Geraldine Hawkes
Ecumenical Facilitator, South Australian Council of Churches

Assoc. Prof. Patrick McArdle
Campus Dean, Australian Catholic University, Signadou Campus (Canberra)

Prof. James McLaren
Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Research

Revd Assoc. Prof. Ormond Rush
Australian Catholic University, Banyo Campus (Brisbane)

Dr Virginia Ingram
Research fellow, Public and Contextual Theology Centre (PaCT)

Dr Michael Champion
Research fellow, Institute for Religion & Critical Inquiry
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MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6

REGISTRATION 2.00 PM – 5.15 PM
OPENING WORSHIP 5.30 PM – 6.30 PM
OPENING RECEPTION 7.00 PM – 9.00 PM

6.1 Registration
2.00 PM – 5.15 PM
Hall Foyer

6.2 Opening Worship
5.30 PM – 6.30 PM
Common Room
Presider: The Rev’d Canon Richard Tutin, Queensland Churches Together/ Charles Sturt University
Preacher: The Most Rev’d Dr Christopher Prowse, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Canberra and Goulbourn

6.3 Opening Reception
7.00 PM – 9.00 PM
Main Hall
Welcome to Country
Introduction to Canberra
The Honourable Dr Margaret Reid AO

Words of Welcome
The Rt Rev’d Prof Stephen Pickard
Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University, Canberra / Assistant Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn

Greetings
Opening address
The Rev’d Prof Dr Dr Michael Welker
Heidelberg University, Germany / Executive Director of FIIT
Dinner

Pilgrim Poles: 20 metres high, created in 1996 by young people, depict different aspects of creation, aboriginal themes and Christian symbols.
“The basic principle of Receptive Ecumenism is that considerable further ecumenical progress is indeed possible, but only if each of the traditions, both singly and jointly, makes a clear, programmatic shift from prioritising the question, “What do our various others first need to learn from us?” to asking instead, “What do we need to learn and what can we learn—or receive—with integrity from our other”?

Professor Paul Murray, Durham University, UK
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 7

7.1 Morning Prayer and Bible Study
8.30 AM – 9.20 AM
Common Room

The Rev’d Dr Vicky Balabanski
Flinders University, South Australia
‘Neither Greek nor Jew…for Christ is all and in all.’ (Col. 3:11-17) (30 mins)

7.2 Plenary Session 1
9.30 AM – 11.00 AM
Main Hall

The Rt Rev’d Prof Stephen Pickard, Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University, Canberra / Assistant Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn, presiding

Prof Paul Murray
Durham University, UK
Discerning the Call of the Spirit to Theological-Ecclesial Renewal: “Tests”, “Notes” and Criteria for Receptive Ecumenical Learning. (1 hour)
Discussion (25 mins)
Reflection (5 mins)

7.3 Plenary Session 2 –
The Role of Context in Discernment, Decision-Making and Reception
11.30 AM – 1.00 PM
Main Hall

Ms Geraldine Hawkes, Executive Officer of the South Australian Council of Churches, presiding

Dr Stan Chu Ilo
DePaul University, Chicago
Receptive Ecumenism in the Christian Mission in Africa: Lessons from the Actual Faith of Everyday Christians. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

The Rev’d Prof Dr Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies Van Huffel
Stellenbosch University, South Africa / Co-president of the World Council of Churches
A critical reflection of the role of ‘context’ in discernment, decision-making, and reception. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Dr Paul Pulikkan
University of Calicut/Pontifical Seminary, Alwaye and Marymatha Major Seminary, Trichur, India.
Ecumenical Thrusts for Discernment from the perspectives of the Indian Sub-continent. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)
7.4 Parallel Session - Biblical
2.00 PM – 3.30 PM
Drawing Room

Dr Virginia Ingram, Charles Sturt University, Canberra, presiding

Andre van Oudtshoorn
Perth Bible College
Bracketing Belief. Engaging Receptively with Different Traditions on Baptism Through a Phenomenological Analysis of Ephesians 4:4-6 (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Michael Trainor
Australian Catholic University, South Australia
Encountering Receptive Ecumenism in the First Century CE (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Adelbert Denaux
University Leuven/Tilburg School of Catholic Theology
Discernment, Decision-Making and Reception in the Early Church. The Jerusalem Meeting of Acts 15 as a Test-Case (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

7.5 Parallel Session - Dialogues
2.00 PM – 3.30 PM
Common Room

The Rev’d Dr Ray Williamson OAM, Director of the Centre for Ecumenical Studies, Charles Sturt University, presiding

Keith Pecklers
Pontifical Gregorian University
“United, not Absorbed”: The Malines Conversations Revisited. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Gerard Kelly
Catholic Institute of Sydney
The Anniversary of the Reformation as a moment for ecclesial learning. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Tony Franklin-Ross
Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
Receptive Ecumenism: a reflection from the Anglican-Methodist Dialogue in Ireland and Aotearoa New Zealand. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

7.6 Parallel Session - Theology
2.00 PM – 3.30 PM
Main Hall

Bishop Stephen Pickard, Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Canberra, presiding

Denis Edwards
Australian Catholic University, Adelaide
Ecclesial Decision-Making: Exploring and Insight from Karl Rahner. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Karen Finch
Whitworth University, Washington
Lonergan’s Method as Scaffolding for Ecumenical Discernment. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Jane Lee-Barker
Anglican Church of South Australia
Receptive Ecumenism: Contributions from two philosophers and a theological, philosopher of religion. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

7.7 Parallel Session – Spirituality
2.00 PM – 3.30 PM
Scarth Room

Ms Geraldine Hawkes, Executive Officer of the South Australian Council of Churches, presiding

Ray Temmerman
Interchurch Families International Network
Eucharist: An opportunity for familial reception. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Tim Watson
Anglican priest
Jonathan Lopez
Member of St Anslem Community
Rachel Lopez
Member of St Anslem Community
Chemin Neuf, St Anslem, and the renewal of religious life through ecumenical learning. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Callan Slipper
Church of England’s National Ecumenical Officer
Chiara Lubich and decision-making: a spiritual methodology of mutual reception based on Christ crucified and forsaken. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)
7.8 Parallel Session – Receiving the Ecumenical Gift
2.00 PM – 3.30 PM
Stanner Room
The Rev’d Assoc Prof Orm Rush, Australian Catholic University, presiding

Greg Ryan
Durham University, UK
‘Receiving with Dynamic Integrity’: Exploring some Hermeneutical Commitments of Receptive Ecumenism (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Maria Ágústsdóttir
Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland
Receiving the Gifts of Reformation (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

JK Melton
Fordham University, New York
Learning across the Colonial Divide: Receptive Ecumenism and Postcolonial Schisms. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

7.9 Parallel Session – Unity/Diversity
2.00 PM – 3.30 PM
Seminar Room
Mr Peter Hooton, Charles Sturt University, presiding

David Schütz
Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
Don Saines
Trinity College, University of Melbourne
Discussion (10 mins)

Margaret Rose
Episcopal Church, USA
Leaning into the Spirit: “Reveal its Unity, Guard its Faith”. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

Marelle Harisun
Ecumenical Relationships Committee, UCA South Australia Synod
Ernest Sorensen
Uniting Church in South Australia
Case studies of RE: Denominational and Congregational (30 mins with audience participation)

7.10 Plenary Session 7 – ARCIC and Receptive Ecumenism
4.00 PM – 5.30 PM
Main Hall
The Rev’d Dr Gerard Kelly, President of the Catholic Institute of Sydney, presiding

The Most Rev’d Sir David Moxon
Archbishop Emeritus of Aotearoa/New Zealand
Rev’d Canon Anthony Currer
Official for Relations with Anglicans and Methodists at the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity
The role of receptive ecumenism in the recent work of the third phase of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission. (1 hour)
Discussion (25 mins)
Reflection (5 mins)

7.11 Worship
5.30 PM – 5.50 PM
Common Room
“The purpose of the church is to unite people with Christ in the power of the Spirit, to manifest communion in prayer and action and thus to point to the fullness of communion with God, humanity and the whole creation in the glory of the kingdom”.

WCC Seventh Assembly, Canberra, 1991.
**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8**

**UNIVERSITY HOUSE**

**MORNING PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY** ................................................................. 8.30 AM – 9.20 AM

**PLENARY SESSION FOUR** ................................................................................. 9.30 AM – 11.00 AM

**MORNING TEA** ..................................................................................................... 11.00 AM - 11.30AM

**PLENARY SESSION FIVE** .................................................................................. 11.30 AM – 1.00 PM

**LUNCH** .................................................................................................................. 1.00 PM – 1.45 PM

**WORKSHOP** ......................................................................................................... 1.45 PM – 3.00 PM

**AFTERNOON TEA** ................................................................................................ 3.00 PM- 3.30 PM

**PARALLEL SESSIONS** ....................................................................................... 3.30 PM – 5.00 PM

**MEET FOR COACHES** ....................................................................................... 5.15 PM

**THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE**

**ARRIVE** ............................................................................................................... 5.30 PM

**TOUR** ................................................................................................................... 5.30 PM – 6.00 PM

**REFORMATION BIBLE DISPLAY** ......................................................................... 6.00 PM -6.30 PM

**DINNER** ............................................................................................................... 6.30 PM – 7.15 PM

**WORSHIP** .......................................................................................................... 7.15 PM – 7.30 PM

**PUBLIC LECTURE** ............................................................................................. 7.30 PM – 8.50 PM

**MEET FOR COACHES** ....................................................................................... 9.00 PM

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**8.1 Morning Prayer and Bible Study**

- **8.30 AM – 9.20 AM**
  - **Common Room**
  - **The Rev’d Dr Vicky Balabanski**
    - Flinders University, South Australia
  - *Creation eagerly waits for the children of God to be revealed* (Rom. 8:18-30). (30 mins)

**8.2 Plenary Session 4**

- **9.30 AM – 11.00 AM**
  - **Main Hall**
  - **The Rev’d Assoc Prof Orm Rush**, Australian Catholic University, Brisbane, presiding
  - **Dr Antonia Pizzey**
    - Australian Catholic University, Brisbane

**8.3 Plenary Session 5**

- **11.30 AM – 1.00 PM**
  - **Main Hall**
  - **The Rev’d Prof James Haire AC**, Professor Emeritus, Charles Sturt University, Australian and past Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, presiding
  - **The Rev’d Prof Dr Dr Michael Welker**
    - Heidelberg University, Germany / Executive Director of FIIT
    - *Spirit Christology* (1 hour)
    - Discussion (25 mins)
    - Reflection (5 mins)
8.4 Workshop
1.45 PM – 3.00 PM
Main Hall
Ms Geraldine Hawkes, Executive Officer of the South Australian Council of Churches, presiding
Christian Council of Sweden/Swedish Mission Council
Dr Sara Gehlin
Church of Sweden Research Department, Uppsala / Helsinki University, Finland
Rev Sven-Erik Fjellström
Church of Sweden
The Rev’d Dr Olle Kristenson
Christian Council of Sweden
Nausikaa Haupt
Catholic diocese of Stockholm, Sweden
Receptive ecumenism in mission: A practical example from Sweden.

8.5 Parallel Session – Biblical/Bonhoeffer
3.30 PM – 5.00 PM
Scarth Room
The Rev’d Dr Vicky Balabanski, Flinders University, South Australia, presiding
Mary Coloe
University of Divinity, Melbourne
Breaking the Rules. Jesus transformed by his experience. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)
Clara Khayat-Nordblom
Charles Sturt University, Canberra
Unity in Faith in Syria. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)
Peter Hooton
Charles Sturt University, Canberra
The ecumenical Church and the things that make for exile. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

8.6 Parallel Session – Dialogues
3.30 PM – 5.00 PM
Main Hall
The Rev’d Assoc Prof Orm Rush, Australian Catholic University, presiding
Elizabeth Welch
King’s College, London
Communion and the Holy Spirit (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

8.7 Parallel Session – Theology
3.30 PM – 5.00 PM
Common Room
Ms Geraldine Hawkes, Executive Officer of the South Australian Council of Churches, presiding
Viorel Coman
University of Leuven, Belgium
Revisiting the Agenda of the Neo-Patristic Movement: A Plea for Receptive Ecumenism in Contemporary Orthodox Theology. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)
Sara Gehlin
Church of Sweden Research Department, Uppsala, Sweden / Helsinki University, Finland.
Recognition and Integrity – A Feminist Theological Approach to Receptive Ecumenism. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)
Thomas Hughson
Marquette University, Milwaukee, USA
Lutheran Reception of Pope Francis’ Laudato si: Receive in Turn? (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)

8.8 Parallel Session – Australian Themes
3.30 PM – 5.00 PM
Seminar Room
Mr David Schütz, Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, presiding
Virginia Ingram
Charles Sturt University, Canberra
Receptive Ecumenism in view of the Royal Commission into the Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. (20 mins)
Discussion (10 mins)
John Littleton
Anglican Church of Australia
*Ecumenical Learning and Learning Communities (20 mins)*
Discussion (10 mins)

8.9 Parallel Session – Ecumenical Formation and Ministry
3.30 PM – 5.00 PM
Drawing Room
The Rt Rev’d Prof Stephen Pickard, Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University, Canberra / Assistant Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn, presiding

Ray Williamson
Centre for Ecumenical Studies
*Formation of an Ecumenical Self. (20 mins)*
Discussion (10 mins)

Don Saines
Trinity College, University of Melbourne
*Cultural Diversity, Theological Education and a vision beyond Receptive Ecumenism. (20 mins)*
Discussion (10 mins)

Richard Tutin
Queensland Churches Together/ Charles Sturt University
*Do we wait for approval or do we just get on with it – putting into action decisions made by local churches about ecumenical ministry in rural areas. (20 mins)*
Discussion (10 mins)

PLEASE MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE MAIN ENTRANCE FOR THE COACH TRIP TO THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE – THE COACHES WILL LEAVE AT 5.15 PM

8.10 Tour of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
5.30 PM – 6.00 PM
The Rt Rev’d Prof Stephen Pickard, Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University, Canberra / Assistant Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn

8.11 Display of Reformation Bibles
6.00 PM – 6.30 PM
Chapel
Rev’d Dr Dr John Harris
President of the Bible Society of Australia
*The Book and the Reformation. (10 mins)*
The display includes the following Bibles, among others:

- Martin Luther's original *Commentary on Galatians* (1523)
- *Divinae Scripturae Veteris*, Corrected text of the Bible in Greek, (1545)
- *Novum Testamentum*, Erasmus’s Greek New Testament with notes and glosses by Matthias (1570)
- *The Gospels of the Fower Evangelistes*, First ever publication of the Saxon Gospels (1571)
- *Holy Bible*, King James or Authorised translation, first edition (1611)

DINNER 6.30 PM – 7.15 PM

8.12 Worship
7.15 PM – 7.30 PM
Chapel

8.13 Public Lecture
7.30 PM – 8.50 PM
Chapel
Welcome: The Rt Rev’d Prof Stephen Pickard, Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University, Canberra / Assistant Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn

The Rev’d Prof Dr Dr Michael Welker
Heidelberg University, Germany / Executive Director of FIIT
*The European Reformation: Advocacy of Education and Liberation (1 hour)*
Discussion (20 mins)

9.00 PM – PLEASE MEET FOR THE COACHES. THE COACHES WILL STOP AT QT HOTEL/BREAKFREE CAPITAL TOWER AND UNIVERSITY HOUSE
“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me”.

John 17:20-23
### THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9

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<td>BREAKFAST IN CONVERSATION WITH SPEAKERS</td>
<td>8.00 AM – 9.00 AM</td>
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<td>TABLE GROUP CONVERSATION</td>
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<td>MORNING TEA</td>
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<td>PLENARY SESSION SEVEN</td>
<td>11.30 AM – 1.00 PM</td>
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<td>WORSHIP SERVICE</td>
<td>2.00 PM – 3.30 PM</td>
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#### 9.1 Morning Prayer
7.30 AM – 7.50 AM
Main Hall

#### 9.2 Breakfast in Conversation with Speakers
8.00 AM – 9.00 AM
Main Hall

Mr Greg Ryan, Durham University, UK.
*Reflections on the Conference (15 mins)*

#### 9.3 Table Group Conversation
9.00 AM – 10.00 AM
Main Hall

#### 9.4 Plenary Session 6
10.00 AM – 11.00 AM
Main Hall

The Most Rev’d Dr Phillip Aspinall, Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia (2005 -2014), presiding

**The Rt Rev Dr Peter Carnley AC**
*Has ‘Receptive Ecumenism’ Got a Future (45 mins)*
Discussion (15 mins)

#### 9.5 Plenary Session 7
11.30 AM – 1.00 PM
Main Hall

Prof Ross Chambers, retired Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic), Charles Sturt University

**Panel of Speakers**
- The Rev’d Prof Dr Dr Michael Welker
  Heidelberg University, Germany / Executive Director of FIIT
- Prof Paul Murray
  Durham University, UK
- Dr Antonia Pizzey
  Australian Catholic University, Brisbane

#### 9.6 Closing Worship
2.00 PM – 3.30 PM
Common Room

**Presider:** The Rev’d Prof Dr Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies Van Huffel
Stellenbosch University, South Africa / Co-president of the World Council of Churches

**Preacher:** The Rt Rev’d Prof Stephen Pickard, Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Charles Sturt University, Canberra / Assistant Bishop, Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn
Plenary Speakers – Bios

The Rev’d Dr Vicky Balabanski

Dr Vicky Balabanski (Adelaide, Australia) is senior lecturer in New Testament at Flinders University Department of Theology and Co-Director of Biblical Studies at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology. She is a team member and editor of the International Earth Bible Project, and she has written for various feminist collections. She is a member of the Board of the Centre for Ecumenical Studies in Australia.

The Rt Rev’d Dr Peter Carnley AC

Dr Peter Carnley was born in New Lambton, NSW and grew up at Young, north of Canberra. He was Archbishop of Perth from 1981 to 2005, and Primate of Australia from 2000 to 2005. From 2004 he was Anglican Co-Chair of ARCIC II, and a member of IARCCUM at its inception, and worked on Anglican-Lutheran relations from 1988 onwards.

Dr Stan Chu Ilo

Dr Stan Chu Ilo is a Research Professor at the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology at DePaul University, Chicago, USA where he leads the African Catholicism Project, a research project of over 40 African Catholic scholars with a view to producing the first Handbook on African Catholicism. He is the author of the forthcoming book, A Poor and Merciful Church: The Illuminative Ecclesiology of Pope Francis; and editor of Wealth, Health and Hope in African Christian Religion: The Search for Abundant Life.

Rev’d Canon Anthony Currer

Fr Tony Currer is a diocesan priest of Hexham and Newcastle diocese in the North East of England. He currently works at the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity where he is responsible for the Vatican’s relations with the worldwide Anglican and Methodist Communions and for the materials prepared for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Prior to coming to Rome in September 2013, Tony worked for eleven years in pastoral ministry in his diocese. For seven of these years he was parish priest of St Cuthbert’s in Durham and Chaplain to the University there. Earlier this year he was delighted to be made an Ecumenical Canon of Southwark Cathedral in London. He was also the first captain of the Vatican Cricket Club.

The Most Rev’d Sir David Moxon

Archbishop David Moxon served as a Parish priest in New Zealand from 1979 until 1987 when he became director of theological education by extension for his province. In 1993 he was consecrated bishop of Waikato and in 2008 appointed Archbishop of the New Zealand dioceses. In 2013 was appointed as the archbishop of Canterbury’s representative to the Holy See and director of the Anglican Centre in Rome. He is the Anglican co-chair of ARCIC III. He is a graduate of Canterbury, Massey and Oxford universities and was knighted in 2014.
Prof Paul Murray

Prof Paul Murray, a married lay Catholic, is Professor of Systematic Theology at Durham University, where he is also Dean of the Centre for Catholic Studies. He has served on the Editorial Board of Concilium International; is a former President of the Catholic Theological Association of Great Britain; and a member of the third phase of work of the Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC III). He has also served as a Consultor to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. His publications include Reason, Truth and Theology in Pragmatist Perspective (2004), Receptive Ecumenism and the Call to Catholic Learning: Exploring a Way for Contemporary Ecumenism [ed.] (2008), and Ressourcement: A Movement for Renewal in Twentieth Century Catholic Theology [co-ed. with Gabriel Flynn] (2012). He has also contributed many essays to leading journals and scholarly collections. His current monograph project is entitled Catholicism Transfigured: Conceiving Change in the Church.

Dr Antonia Pizzey

Dr Antonia Pizzey is a Lecturer in the School of Theology at Australian Catholic University. Her doctoral research focused on the importance of Receptive Ecumenism for the contemporary context, and its connection with Spiritual Ecumenism. She also has an interest in the role of virtues, especially humility and hope.

The Rev’d Prof Dr Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies Van Huffel

Prof Mary-Anne Plaatjies-Van Huffel is teaching Ecclesiology and Church Polity at the University of Stellenbosch. She is the holder of two doctorates, one in Systematic Theology and one in Church Polity. Since 2013 she is the president of the World Council of Churches representing Africa. Prof. Plaatjies van Huffel published mainly in accredited journals and books for example are the following: The relevance of Reformed church polity principles: Revisiting the concept In Protestant Church polity in Changing Contexts 1 (Editors: Leo Koffeman en Allan Janssen) LITLAG 2014; Natural law in the Reformed tradition in Natural Law and Christianity, (editor Norman Doe) Cambridge Series 2017; From conciliar ecumenism to transformative receptive ecumenism in Hervormde Theological Studies 2017.

Dr Paul Pulikkan

Dr Paul Pulikkan (Kerala, India) is the Chair for Christian Studies, at the University of Calicut and teaches at the Pontifical Seminary, Alwaye and Marymatha Major Seminary, Trichur. He is the Chief Editor, Eastern Journal of Dialogue and Culture and a research Guide at the Faculty of Social Sciences Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam and member of the International Board of Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique Louvain Journal of Church History. He was Project fellow, The Lived History of Vatican II, research project of the Cushwa Center, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, US. He is Coordinator of the project “Archives of the Fathers of the Ecumenical Second Vatican Council” (Syro Malabar Bishops), organized by Pontifical Committee for Historical Sciences, Rome. He was also a member in the International research project under the patronage of the International Federation of Catholic Universities on Vatican II. “Vatican II: historical event and stakes involved for today”.

The Rev’d Prof Dr Dr Michael Welker

Prof Michael Welker, Dr. theol.; Dr. phil.; Dr. theol. h.c. Dr. phil. h.c., Senior Professor for Systematic Theology and Director of the Research-Center International and Interdisciplinary Theology (FIT) at the University of Heidelberg. Member of the Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften; Corresponding Member of the Finnish Academy of Arts and Sciences. Honorary Professor at Seoul Theological University.
Plenary Speakers – Abstracts

The Rt Rev’d Dr Peter Carnley AC

Has ‘Receptive Ecumenism’ Got a Future?

In this presentation Dr Carnley will explore some possible future directions of ‘Receptive Ecumenism’ by first drawing on his own first-hand experience of working in the field of Anglican-Roman Catholic relations in the years between 1988 and 2003, and how we got to the point where the most realistic ecumenical future began to be spoken of as ‘Spiritual Ecumenism’ and more recently ‘Receptive Ecumenism’. He will seek to discern some possible ways ahead in terms of practical ecumenism under the headings of three ‘R’s – the logical implications of ‘Receptiveness’, the need for Respectful engagement, and the need for ‘Realism’ in ecumenical endeavour. The possibilities for an ecclesiology of ‘communion’, effectively of a pragmatic ‘post-denominational’ kind if ‘receptive ecumenism’ is able to fulfil its promise, will then lead to some logically necessary consequences.

Dr Stan Chu Ilo


This paper will show how the actual faith and everyday experiences and witnesses of African Christians are pointing towards some models and types of receptive ecumenism in the African Christian mission. Drawing from the lives of some prominent African Christians from, Dictionary of African Christian Biographies (of which this author is a contributor) this paper will explore the challenges and opportunities of developing a systematic theology on receptive ecumenism through learning from ‘what we see and hear’ from the field of faith, and the lives of prominent African Christians in the present momentum of Christian expansion in Africa.

The Most Rev’d Sir David Moxon and Rev’d Canon Anthony Currer


In May this year ARCIC III completed a new agreed statement, Walking Together on the Way, the first such ARCIC statement since 2005. The subtitle of the document, Learning to be Church-Local, Regional, Universal reflects the fact that it is an exercise in mutual receptive learning. Each communion is invited to examine its weaknesses and to seek wisdom with and from the other in its ministry and mission. In the other we find “healing gifts for wounded hands”.

Archbishop David Moxon, the Anglican co-chair, and the Revd Tony Currer, the Catholic co-secretary, previously close ecumenical colleagues in Rome, will reflect on this first application of the Receptive Ecumenism method in a major bi-lateral dialogue.

Prof Paul Murray


This keynote address will engage directly with the overall theme of the conference (‘Leaning into the Spirit: Discernment, Decision-making, and Reception’) by drilling down into what has rightly been identified as a crucial area requiring further attention and articulation within Receptive Ecumenical thought and practice. The paper will start out by recognising the affinity between Receptive Ecumenism and Spiritual Ecumenism, with Receptive Ecumenism properly being understood as a movement of attempted receptivity of and responsiveness to the movement of the Spirit in the lives of the churches. The specificity of Receptive Ecumenism will be presented as consisting in its pursuing this basic orientation in explicitly theological and ecclesial-institutional modes; focussed on the need for rigorous theological visioning and scrutiny in service of effective and significant ecclesial reform.
Accordingly, the main concern of this paper – working from within a Catholic theological perspective – will be to articulate and provide justification for the principles in accordance with which such theological visioning and scrutinising might appropriately be pursued. This exploration of possible tools for theological testing in service of Receptive Ecumenical ecclesial learning in Catholic contexts will be pursued in relation to some specific examples, e.g. the need to reconceive the lay-ordained relationship.

Towards the end of the paper, return will be made to the relationship between Receptive Ecumenism and Spiritual Ecumenism. The argument will be that if Receptive Ecumenism is indeed a specifically theological and ecclesiastically focussed enterprise (rather than just a matter of appropriating various seemingly attractive spiritual, liturgical, pastoral, and missiological practices), it is nevertheless the case that it is a mode of theological activity which can never properly be detached from the lived life of the church and life in the Spirit. That is, it is not an exercise in abstracted theological scrutiny pursued merely in the register of presumed rational and conceptual “proof”; but a situated exercise in testing and discerning the possible ways in which the Spirit might be calling an ecclesial tradition to grow through substantive theological-ecclesial learning from another tradition. If it is an exercise in “proving”, then it is so in the dual sense of fermenting and “probing”. Such theological-ecclesial probings then need, it is recognised, to be brought to the authorities and faithful of the relevant ecclesial tradition for discernment as to their timeliness and appropriateness.

Dr Antonia Pizzey


The issue of criteria to guide Receptive Ecumenical learning, decision-making, and discernment is something of a vexed one. Murray describes RE as a “virtuous virus”. This image is helpful, both for understanding Receptive Ecumenism and the issue of criteria for RE. Receptive Ecumenism is designed to be adapted to the needs of various contexts, in the way a virus changes and evolves, and therefore, there is no “one size fits all” set of criteria. However, one of the most distinctive and relevant features of RE is its focus on the affective and spiritual dimensions of ecumenical engagement. The virtues of humility, hope, and love, as well as the attitude of hospitality, are all key to applying the RE method, and can guide us in ecclesial discernment and decision-making. Therefore, the notion of RE as a virtuous virus helps us to avoid locking the Receptive Ecumenical approach down to a single set of criteria, while simultaneously acknowledging how the virtues of love, humility, hope, and hospitality guide us in Receptive Ecumenical discernment.

The Rev’d Prof Dr Dr Mary-Anne Plaatjies van Huffel

A critical reflection of the role of ‘context’ in discernment, decision-making, and reception.

This presentation will attend to discernment, decision making and reception with reference to two contexts namely the South African context and the ecumenical world namely in the World Council of Churches and the World Communion of Reformed Churches. In this paper I will juxtapose the ecumenical discourse regarding consensus/discernment with teaching at an ecumenical faculty of theology. Developing consensus outcomes requires a culture in which there is willingness mutually to seek God’s will in humility and openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In the curriculum at the Faculty of Theology attention is being given amongst others to discernment, consensus, communal decision making, and African decision making which works on a consensual basis versus parliamentarian decision making procedures. Attention will be given in this section to the notions of church polity experts like Hans Dombois and Leo Koffeman.

Secondly attention will be given to the Discernment Procedures Team of the WCRC (persons assisting with the use of discernment procedures in the WCRC; preparing the rules of procedure for adoption at the commencement of the meeting of the General Council, developing manuals that explains the processes and other aspects of the meeting to the delegates, developing training material for key leaders who will support the implementation of the WCRC approved discernment process.) and the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration of the WCC (the responsibility of the Committee is give advice and making recommendations to governing bodies during and between assemblies in order to contribute to the formation of consensus on matters proposed for the agenda; facilitating improved participation of the Orthodox in the entire life and work of the Council; offering counsel and providing opportunity for action in matters of common interest; giving attention to matters of ecclesiology. Member churches of both bodies and theological training are being influence by the discourse regarding reaching consensus.
Lastly attention will be given on the reception reached via the consensus model namely consensus process ensures the equality among member churches in ecumenical setting; between members in local congregations and emphasizes the centrality of Christ and mutual dependence on the Holy Spirit for fellowship and decision making; ensures a more efficient and effective use of the time and talents of members in reaching a common goal.

Dr Paul Pulikkan

Ecumenical Thrusts for Discernment from the perspectives of the Indian Subcontinent

A fresh ecumenical discernment on Christian identity is urgently called for, looking into the developments from the Indian subcontinent, especially when a robust nationalistic/Hindutva ideology gets deeper roots. The churches here have to witness the gospel amidst increasing challenges. They are called to be responsive to the different scenarios here: the need to evangelize with a greater thrust for interculturization as on the other hand there is the charge of conversion and alienation from Indian tradition; witnessing among people where there is increasing prosperity to some and economic hardships for many. In these situations, ecumenical discernment has to be actively promoted using the India’s rich traditions –Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant; Brahminic and Subaltern, to cite a few. In this process, the churches have to free themselves from all types of colonialism that could still linger in their theology and practice. The churches have to increasingly enter into the public space and enter into creative dialogue with the believers of other faiths, and even those who follow fundamentalist attitudes. Unfortunately, an ecumenical theological formation and reflection is lacking among the clergy and the laity. A fruitful ecumenical discernment and action will help the mission of the churches in India in 21st century.

The Rev’d Prof Dr Dr Michael Welker

Spirit Christology

The theology of the Reformation was, and still is, thoroughly concentrated upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. It is correlated with an anti-speculative academic and educational revolution.

However, as impressive as Luther’s famous Heidelberg disputation with its strong emphasis on a “theology of the cross” was for many young reformers, serious questions arose already for Luther’s old friends and teachers. And similar questions have to be answered today. “Only a suffering God can help!” said Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his letters from prison. Jürgen Moltmann published a famous book with the title “The crucified God”. But how can a suffering and crucified God be of any help in a world full of violence, injustice, agony and distress?

The lecture deals with the public and eschatological presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. It tries to illuminate the reality of the resurrected Christ in continuity and discontinuity to his pre-Easter life. Following great insights of John Calvin, it concentrates on the pouring of Christ’s Spirit inside and outside of the churches. The diaconal, prophetic, and priestly gifts of the Spirit are offered to and bestowed on the conscious and unconscious witnesses to Christ.

A threefold “Gestalt” of the reign of God can be identified and encourage a realistic theology and faith.