



Winter 2023

Welcome to our Winter Edition of Mark the Word – the last edition to be published from our Elm Street premises. This edition's offerings are quite eclectic, and we hope you enjoy these contributions along with our regular From the Minister and News From The Church Council. Donald's contribution this time is also little different in that we are spoiled with the opportunity of reading a transcript of a radio program on which Donald was a guest, and listening to Donald Nicholson Plays the Beast, which was also a part of this radio program. All in all, it is a fascinating story.

Enjoy!

From the Editorial team: Rod Mummery, producer; Vicki Radcliffe, Editor, and Rosemary Wearing, Assistant Editor.

Many thanks to all our contributors to all of our editions of MtW. We would not be able to produce our quarterly MtW without your generous input. We also thank Rod for his patience and advice and Donald Nicolson for his selection of music.

From the Minister

by Craig Thompson

“The end is near”, cries the maligned prophet on the city street corner, ignored by all but the especially pious or fearful. The rest of us know that it usually isn't (near), but we now know that our Curzon Street site has been sold, and this means, undoubtedly, an end which is near. It is an end to what has been familiar and loved.

It's a not often noted fact about endings that the only things which end are those which have a beginning. Perhaps this is obvious. But it's sound logic to turn this around: what begins will end. This is life (and death) in time.

The only things which don't end are those which did not begin, which is the meaning of the church's talk about God and creation. Creation begins, and it will end. God neither begins nor ends.

But there's a trick here. Creation is the beginning of the time we know but occurs on the very cusp of God's own strange time and the time which begins with the world. The “moment” of creation – the thought, perhaps, just before God creates? – is outside created time but inextricably connected to created time. Creation's time begins not in its own time but in God's time (or Time).

What on earth (and in heaven) does this mean?

It means that what begins – creation and all within it – begins in God's time, and not in its own. It ends, then, also in God's time and not in its own. Any ending in time is not on its own terms but on God's, like the beginning which was and is creation.

This is a very complicated (and so perhaps not very helpful) way of saying that all our beginnings and endings take place within God. Or, more suggestively: with this God, endings are much like beginnings.

This can be said glibly, paying no attention to what an end feels like and costs. Let's not say it that way. But it can also be said hopefully. Christian hope does not deny death but lives through in spite of it, not merely enduring endings but living in them. Such a living in the end becomes a kind of beginning before the beginning.

Whatever ends with our moving from Curzon Street, what is beginning matters more than what will end. It is this kind of new beginning towards which we move. It is our hope – our way of being – that all our beginnings and endings take place in the God. And so, if we mourn, it is in view of the new life towards which God calls us.

Let us move, then, with joy.

News from Church Council

By Tim O'Connor, Secretary of Church Council

The move by the Congregation of Mark the Evangelist to another location has seemed to some like a receding mirage, yet it now draws nigh. However, my narrative will first be briefly suspended to report, particularly to those of you not present at the AGM on 7 May, that Peter Blackwood was elected Chairperson of the Congregation, and Rod Mummery Secretary and Presbytery Representative. Tim O'Connor was elected Elder for a further term of three years and David Radcliffe Elder for a further term of one year. The meeting received annual reports from the Church Council and the Hotham Mission Board as well as Audited Financial Statements for the calendar year 2022, which featured pie charts explained – or better illuminated! – by Treasurer Rod. In May, at Hotham Mission Board's recommendation, the Church Council re-appointed Mark Duckworth, Rob Gallacher and Vicki Radcliffe to the Board for periods of three, one and one years respectively, as well as Gaye Champion for a period of three years following her 'well-deserved break'.

Returning to the main narrative, the Congregation had its first experience on 16 April of worship in the Yuma Auditorium at the Centre for Theology and Ministry (CTM), being the preferred destination of our move. The Church Council then resolved in May to recommend to the Congregation the long-term relocation of MtE to the CTM, which a Congregational Meeting endorsed on 4 June. At its meeting two days later, the Church Council approved versions of the Memorandum of Understanding and Hirer's Agreement between MtE and Equipping Leadership for Mission (eLM), which establish the terms and conditions of the relationship and arrangements between the parties. [eLM is an entity consisting of several units of ministry and mission under the Synod, and also manages the CTM site and facilities.]

MtE has accepted a tenancy of five years from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2028 under the MoU, which is to be reviewed during the fifth year. The sculpture 'Midwives and Mission' will be gifted to eLM for installation on the CTM grounds. A decision about organs to be used at the CTM has not yet been finalised at the time of writing in late June, while Hotham Mission is looking at properties for lease in North Melbourne. Most significantly, the Council decided that a final, thanksgiving service and lunch will be held in the Elm Street Church on 16 July, and the first weekly service at the CTM will be held from the following Sunday, 23 July. This Church Council news ends without the 'receding mirage'. We pray with all members for the continuing worship and mission of Mark the Evangelist at our new location.

Comments, queries and suggestions are welcomed by the Church Councillors:

Peter Blackwood (Chair), Gaye Champion (Elder), Mark Duckworth (Chairperson of Hotham Mission Board), John Langmore (Elder), Rod Mummery (Elder, Treasurer and Deputy Chair), Tim O'Connor (Elder and Secretary), David Radcliffe (Elder), Craig Thompson (Minister), Rosemary Wearing (Elder) and Alan Wilkinson (Mark the Evangelist Futures Project Coordinator)

The Fall and Rise of Harpsichord 6

RNZ (Radio New Zealand), in The Sunday Feature program which aired on 11th May, 2019, told story about a very special harpsichord that arrived in Wellington, New Zealand in 1956. Donald Nicholson was interviewed as part of this radio program, the long and short of this interview is that we find that this harpsichord ended up in Donald's possession, was named "the Beast" by Donald, and now resides in his house! To find out more about this interview you can read the transcript of this program (at <https://www.rnz.co.nz/concert/programmes/sundayfeature/audio/201821641/interview-donald-nicolson>). As well, you can [listen](https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=201797637) to Donald Nicholson Plays the Beast which was also part of this radio programme. (https://www.rnz.co.nz/audio/player?audio_id=201797637).

Anthony Clunies Ross, Contemporary Christian Prophet, and Saint, 1932 – 2015

by John Langmore

Anthony Clunies Ross was a remarkable man. Many people regarded him as a close friend. Some were in Melbourne, some in other parts of Australia, others in Papua New Guinea, Scotland and elsewhere. To me he was a mentor, a wise counsellor, a brilliant colleague, an encouraging collaborator, an attentive conversationalist, and an intellectual, spiritual, and moral inspiration. At his funeral in March 2015 many people described Anthony as a saint.

Anthony's gift for friendship was astonishing in someone so brilliant and of patrician origin, but he was also a remarkably humble, self-effacing person. He sought to enable friends, colleagues, students, and others to fulfil their own capacities.

He was empathetic, accepted those he met, was genuinely interested in them, and always sought the best for them. He didn't judge or attempt to control. He was highly socially and intellectually generous, sharing his time and ideas and taking more than his share of responsibility for tasks. He kept in close touch with many by phone, letter, emails, and by welcoming those seeking his comments and advice on innumerable national and global issues.

Many people tell the same type of story. For example, Anthony worked with Ross Garnaut in Papua New Guinea to design a system of mining taxation that would generate large revenue for PNG from highly profitable mines without deterring investment in marginal resource projects. Their paper for the PNG Government grew into an article in the premier Economic Journal, their joint book *The Taxation of Mineral Rent*, and the embodiment of their proposals in legislation in many countries including as the Australian Petroleum Resource Rent Tax. Anthony was not only brilliant, but he also had the imagination and rigour to be a striking intellectual innovator especially about feasible public policies for the common good.

Anthony was the son of Sir Ian Clunies-Ross, leader of the CSIRO for over two decades. He grew up in Sydney and later Melbourne where he was an undergraduate at Melbourne University. After completing his Master's degree at Cambridge he and Morag, the Scottish wife he met through the Student Christian Movement, moved to Ormond College at Melbourne Uni. Students who studied under Anthony at Ormond say they learnt more economics from him than from anyone else. At each place to which he moved he attended the local church. He read the Bible daily.

Soon Anthony was appointed to lecture at Monash University. He also undertook six months of research in the Philippines. His challenging publications during those years, written in collaboration with colleagues, included *One Per Cent: the Case for Greater Australian Foreign Aid* in 1963; and *Australia and Nuclear Weapons* in 1966.

He was appointed to the chair in economics at the new University of Papua New Guinea in 1967. Anthony was an inspiring leader of the University economics department, a dedicated teacher, an outstanding thinker and eloquent writer. A perhaps apocryphal story circulated at the University, though, that one day he fell asleep while lecturing! He certainly tended to work too hard late at night.

Anthony taught the first generation of Papua New Guinea economists who led an administratively effective and analytically strong national Department of Finance. Such students as the first Secretary for Finance, Mekere Morauta, and the second, John Vulupindi, and their immediate successors, guided an effective economic policy for the new nation's first decade and a half. Makere, who later became Prime Minister, wrote after hearing of Anthony's death that 'He was one of the nicest and wisest men I have known'.

After moving to Kinbuck-by-Dunblane in 1974, Anthony joined the Economics Department of Strathclyde University and was appointed a professor there in 1978. He also taught part time at the University of Glasgow. His subjects were principally public finance and the economics of developing countries. He published books on Economic Stabilization for Developing Countries and on Albania, on which he had been commissioned to write a report. In the nineties he accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan and advise the government.

In the late nineties Anthony accepted two commissions to write reports in preparation for United Nations conferences and to be rapporteur at one. In 2002 he was commissioned by the International Labour Organisation to write a paper on financing social development for the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalisation.

In 2001 he was the intellectual leader of an interagency retreat attended by policy leaders from the UN, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and major countries on means of generating increased investable funds for developing countries. This publicised a barely noticed reserve currency created by the IMF which was adopted by the first G20 meeting at government head level to assist coping with the 2008 global financial crisis.

In 2009 an authoritative textbook jointly written with two colleagues from Strathclyde, Development Economics, was published by McGraw Hill. Striking features include the intellectual depth and moral clarity of the writing and the breadth of the perspectives which are discussed.

His final book in 2014 was The Universal Social Safety Net and the Attack on World Poverty: Pressing Needs, Manageable Cost, Practical Problems, Favourable Spillovers, which makes a strong case for the feasibility of social protection systems for every country as a cost-effective means of greatly reducing poverty. Geoff Harris, a former colleague at UPNG, describes this book as classic Anthony: 'highly significant, wide in scope, quietly passionate and formidably intellectual'.

Anthony loved walking along the roads and paths winding through the hills around Dunblane or over the moors that are gradually growing wind turbines on the ridges above the trees. It was wonderful to walk with him for he was a fascinating conversationalist about history as well as about contemporary issues. And he loved the beauty and peace of the countryside.

A major part of Anthony and Morag's life was care for David, their intellectually limited son who had been injured at birth. My daughters and others remember that young wanderer on the Port Moresby university campus with affection, as I understand did many people in Dunblane. David died a few months before Anthony, freeing him of a demanding lifetime responsibility.

Anthony had immeasurable joy from his daughters Sarah and Brigit, son-in-law Jose and his grandchildren Kirsty, Laura, Aran, and Euan. He loved to talk about each of them and did so with great pride about their achievements.

Ross Garnaut writes that Anthony 'was the best and wisest of people'. Ross continues 'death seems so wasteful. So much knowledge about the cultures and economies of the world and how they could fit together in more productive ways—gone, and never to be reassembled in that form and perhaps that order and abundance. So much wisdom about what can go wrong as human societies grapple with immediate problems that turn out to cast long shadows.'

We can, however, reflect on how much he taught us and many others and how some at least of that will continue in the minds of those who have been his students, readers, and friends and in the policies which they implement. Not only will his innovative thinking survive. His spirit will live on in each of those who admired his qualities and honoured and loved him.

A letter Anthony wrote to Ross after he visited for the last time concluded 'I do emphatically believe and practise prayer for other people, and I am jubilantly glad that I cannot stop believing in the Resurrection, with all of the possibilities that opens'. In an email he wrote to me shortly before he died, Anthony wrote that he was finding great inspiration in reading Psalm 119. Anthony's friends praise God whole heartedly for the life and achievements of such a good, creative, scholarly, and saintly man.

Connections

by David Radcliffe

We first came to North Melbourne in January 1979. Vicki and I had driven down from Brisbane so I could take up a role as a lecturer in Chemical Engineering at the University of Melbourne, my first academic position. Vicki found a job with a patent attorney on Little Collins Street near Spring Street. We rented a flat on Wood Street, off Abbotsford and later that year we purchased our first home, a tiny Victorian-era cottage at 9 Erskine Street.

Both of us grew up deeply engaged with the Methodist Church. However, during the 1970s, while living in Glasgow, we fell away. We missed the process of church union and we never attended worship at Union Memorial Church, or any other church, while living in North Melbourne. We must have walked by UMC or along Elm St past the Sunday School, yet we have no memory of either place. At the end of 1980, we moved back to Brisbane where our son Dylan was born a week later.

Fast forward six years. Now living in Adelaide, a friend of Vicki's invited us to the Tusmore Uniting Church on "bring-a-friend" Sunday. We joined the congregation, became involved and I was baptised on 1 January 1988. My mother, who was raised Baptist, refused to let me be christened because she was afraid that, as a very premature baby, I might not survive the whole process. This was despite the urgings of others to "get me done" lest I die and be in limbo. We moved to Brisbane later in 1988 and joined the Indooroopilly Uniting Church. There we got to know David and Mary Sutherland. A decade or so later, they moved back to Melbourne.

We returned to North Melbourne in September 2016. Over the preceding nine years we had lived in West Lafayette, Indiana, a university town in the mid-west of America, where we were members of the First United Methodist Church. When we made the decision to return to Australia, we had to choose between Brisbane, where members of our extended families including Vicki's mother resided, and Melbourne, where Dylan and his family lived. By this time our daughter, Sarah, was settled in Glasgow.

Upon arrival, we stayed in an airbnb in Curzon Place, right across from UMC. Imagine my surprise when I attended worship at MtE for the first time and there was Mary and David! While searching for a permanent place to live, we leased a townhouse on Abbotsford Street opposite Elm Street, a very convenient walk to church. Despite looking in every corner of North and West Melbourne, Kensington, and parts of Flemington we could not find a suitable home that we could afford. Then on Easter Monday 2017, we visited Port Melbourne, and the rest is history.

We have enjoyed coming to North Melbourne every week to worship, walking down Victoria, then Errol and Queensberry Streets. It takes us back to a time when, as a young married couple, we went weekly to the Queen Victoria Market to shop. Vicki is currently working on a project compiling memoirs of people who grew up in Port Melbourne. One of these trained at the Melbourne School of Printing and Graphic Arts, which most will know was on the site of the carpark next to the current church. While we do not recall seeing this building back in the late '70s, nevertheless we feel we know it because of our connection to MtE.

The prospect of our congregational move to Parkville evoked memories of an idealistic young academic in a tweed jacket, wet behind the ears, and barely older than the students he taught. Walking each day along Flemington Road between home and work, I could not have imagined the circumstances under which I would return to the University of Melbourne precinct forty-plus

years later. Passing Naughtons on the 19 tram when travelling up Royal Parade to the CTM brings to mind former colleagues no longer with us.

Although Elm Street will no longer be part of my weekly routine, I will still get to stroll past familiar places in North Melbourne on my periodic visits to the Public Record Office of Victoria to explore historical documents. People and place connect the seasons of our lives. They provide a continuum between what has long passed and what might be.

Looking Forward

by Neil Champion

I'm rather looking forward to our new location. With more time and resources, we may be able to help the church to serve people more fully. There seem to be opportunities to engage with the foot traffic along Morrison Place between St Hilda's and Ormond College. Sage and Grace looks like a good meeting place and there are other informal spaces to inhabit if we wish to do so.

The worship space will allow us to maintain "all things decently and in order" while opening up some innovative opportunities, including prayer and worship on weekdays. I am hopeful we can engage in a mutually beneficial partnership with CTM staff and students over mission and worship, those non-mutually exclusive categories. How we maintain and improve active links to Hotham Mission will be a challenge.

Over several years, Craig's sermons have provoked for me some images of time – *God's time* and *Our time*. We have had a few conversations. I am hoping to develop an interactive art installation: working title, *We all know what time is, don't we?* I'm a complete novice so might be looking for expertise from the congregation and CTM to help. We shall see if it could amount to something. If so, we might be able to use the CTM as an open venue in which to mount it.

"Clavesynth" is the beginning of my dream to bring the harpsichord into the world of electronica. Armed with an array of synths and pedal effects, none of this would be possible without The Beast, my 1956 Thomas Goff harpsichord. The title is of course a pun on "clavecin" the French word for harpsichord. I threw everything I could into this, programming my own sounds on the Jupiter-X, and JX-08, plus my first FM patch on the Korg OpSix. Harpsichord loops were collected with the RC-202. Add the TR-6S, MC-707 and of course, the MX-1 to keep it all together.

Donald Nicolson

Listen on YouTube – <https://youtu.be/A02yg-1Rzil>



Uniting Church in Australia
The Congregation of Mark the Evangelist - North Melbourne