

Sea of Faith in Australia
2012 Conference

Fri 31 Aug — Sun 2 Sept 2012
Twin Towns Resort, Coolangatta

The Conference focuses on our *Shared Humanity* and the place of *Religion, Faith and Meaning* as expressions of the human spirit.

The *Global Village*, once simply an idea, is now a present reality. So too, is a heightened consciousness of our *Shared Humanity*. Are there implications in this for the way we live as individuals and in community?

This conference explores human diversity and our common life. It considers a 'trilogy' of issues - cultural and religious pluralism, human rights, and individual identity. This touches on the individual and the global, the nature of 'difference', cultural thinking, interfaith perspectives and societal values. Key thinkers and activists are introduced, inspiring positive and more hopeful visions as old paradigms are re-examined.

Such issues challenge the imagination. How does our sense of spirituality find expression in our living? What ethical commitments shape our spirituality? Is our thinking a reflection of what some might see as immutable 'truths' or of contingent cultural and social influences?

A new consciousness is shaping 21st century spirituality, challenging a culture of traditional boundaries and exclusivities, in a pluralist world. Differences exist between (and within) religions, each offering a different question and solution to the human condition, and exemplar of the path. Yet, at their core, the major spiritual traditions espouse similar ideals of one-ness, unconditional love and compassion.

Many look to universal values - love, peace, compassion, justice, inclusiveness - things most hold in common, that move individuals beyond particular boundaries, and that help critique the spiritual ideal and socio-political reality of one's own or other spiritual paths.

Desmond Tutu in *God is Not a Christian* speaks of the African concept of *Ubuntu* - 'A person is a person through other persons.' We are inextricably bound together in humanity - the solitary human life a contradiction in terms.

Re-imagine if you will a *new humanity and a new future*. We have been conditioned to fear utopian thinking. Without it, can we know the full potential of who we are?



Sea of Faith
In Australia

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PROGRAM OUTLINE

Friday 31 August

6.00pm -	Registration – Visions Room
7.00 – 7.45	Welcome Reception
7.45 – 8.00	Introduction
8.00 - 9.30	Keynote Presentation: Adrian Pyle - <i>Awakening Faith in an Alternative Future</i>

Saturday 1 September

8.00am -	Registration – Visions Room
8.45 – 9.00	Contemplation and Music
9.00 – 10.15	Keynote Presentation: Peter Kirkwood - <i>The Quiet Revolution: The Emergence of Interfaith Consciousness</i>
10.45 – 12.00	Together for Humanity - <i>Challenging Cultural Thinking</i>
12.00 – 12.30	Video Karen Armstrong – <i>Charter for Compassion</i>
1.30 – 2.30	Q&A Multi-faith Panel
2.30 – 3.00	Dr Steven Ogden – <i>What's Normal: Foucault, Freedom and the Spirit</i>
3.30 – 4.30	Workshop sessions (concurrent)
4.30 – 5.00	SoFIA AGM
6.30 -	Dinner and social program

Sunday 2 September (*Interfaith Sunday*)

9.00am -	Contemplation and Music
9.15 – 10.30	Keynote Presentation: Dr Noel Preston AM – <i>Our Common Story: A 21st century Spirituality for Humanity?</i>
11.00 – 12.15	John Wessel RFD and Bryan Gilmour – <i>The Shape of Future Spiritual Community?</i>
12.15 – 12.30	Closing Remarks

GENERAL INFORMATION

The **Conference venue** is located close to beaches and all facilities, including Coolangatta airport. **Twin Towns Resort** 4.5* on-site accommodation may be booked at Conference rates. Other hotel, apartment and van/cabin park accommodation is available in the area.

The **Registration Form** is an Insert to this Brochure, and is also on the SoFIA website www.sof-in-australia.org

Early Registration will assist organisers.

General enquiries: Peter Robinson 07 5577 2142.

Re-Imagine..
Beyond Difference
Beyond Belief

Faith, Meaning and Humanity
in the 21st Century
Global Village

Sea of Faith in Australia
2012 CONFERENCE
31 Aug—2 Sept

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SESSION, PANEL & WORKSHOP PRESENTERS



Adrian Pyle

Awakening Faith in an Alternative Future

Adrian will explore current religious, cultural and social forces and change, drawing on an innovative social model developed at MIT in the US, and La Trobe Centre for Dialogue.

Albert Einstein once said 'No problem can be solved by the same consciousness that caused it'.

Adrian's address focuses on re-imagining what might be and the idea of intuiting oneself into a new future space.

Adrian's professional interest is community engagement, and change processes. He is Director - Relationships Innovation, UCA VicTas Synod Melbourne, and associated with the growing Progressive Christian Network Victoria (PCNV).

In a Workshop session *Presencing – A Social Technology*, Adrian will further develop ideas and methods in a practical role play setting.



Peter Kirkwood

The Quiet Revolution: The Emergence of Interfaith Consciousness

Peter is a television journalist, documentary maker and author who specialises in coverage of religion. Peter will lead discussion on the subjects of his book *The Quiet Revolution: The Emergence of Interfaith Consciousness*, in which he introduces key thinkers and activists in global interfaith dialogue.

Peter has a master's degree in theology from Sydney College of Divinity, and is a Churchill Fellowship holder. He has co-authored with Geraldine Doogue *Tomorrow's Islam: Uniting age-old Beliefs and a Modern World*.

Peter will also lead a Workshop *Retrospective on Raimon Panikkar - Principles of Interfaith Engagement* on the life and ideas of this renowned philosopher/theologian.

SESSION, PANEL & WORKSHOP PRESENTERS



Dr Noel Preston AM

Our Common Story: A 21st Century Spirituality for Humanity?

Noel will endeavour to link the vision of an ethical future with the role of those inspired by religion, faith and spirituality, addressing both spiritual and practical world issues and responses, articulating a way forward.

Noel, a UCA minister, has devoted much of his professional life to social justice and public ethics issues. He exercised a prophetic role in the volatile political era of the Bjelke-Petersen government in Queensland, and in later years as a university academic. He has authored a number of books, including *Beyond the Boundary*, a memoir exploring social ethics, politics and spirituality. Noel has presented at *Common Dreams* and other progressive religious forums.

John Wessel and Bryan Gilmour

Transformative Spirituality: The Shape of Future Spiritual Community?

Drawing on themes developed in earlier sessions, John and Bryan share their perspectives on the 'What' and the 'How' questions associated with the new consciousness shaping 21st century spirituality.

John Wessel RFD spent his professional life as a Uniting Church minister in NSW, and Chaplain to RMC Duntroon for twelve years. He is a co-founder of SoFiA Gold Coast group. John has researched and produced many articles, including published articles in SoFiA Bulletin, making important statements about the way we think and express spirituality.

Bryan Gilmour is a Minister and past Moderator of the UCA Queensland Synod, and a founder of John Paul College (Queensland's first ecumenical school which now has over 2500 Students). He was instrumental in establishing a large regional church in Logan, incorporating worship centre, school and aged care facilities. In his retirement years, Bryan has exercised interim ministry roles in Australia and New Zealand. His care, counsel and experience are often called upon to bring people and groups into dialogue. Bryan is a member of SoFiA Gold Coast group.

SESSION, PANEL & WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Q&A Panel

Adapting to the Global Village: Religious Pluralism, Human Rights and Social Cohesion

Moderated by **Peter Kirkwood**, multi-faith representatives share their views on a range of issues impacting our shared humanity.

Ahmad Abu Ghazaleh is an Associate Lecturer at Griffith University, and Principal of As-Salaam Institute Brisbane. Born in Syria, of Palestinian origins, and educated in Jordan in Islamic studies and Quran recitation, he moved to Australia in 2000. Ahmad brings a breadth of perspective to many interfaith forums.

Ronit Baras has an Israeli background and describes herself as a secular Jew. She is a professional Life Coach. With a national Foundation, she facilitates multi-faith programs for students in colleges and schools, un-bundling prejudices and identifying common values. In a workshop session *Finding my ...ism*, Ronit also explores the understanding of spirituality and developing a personal 'state of being'.

Dr Peter Bruza has studied Zen for more than 20 years, first with the Kanzeon Sangha (The Netherlands), later becoming a disciple of Japanese Soto zen master Hogen Yamahata (Open Way Zen), and appointed as a Dharma successor in 2008. Peter is Professor of Science and Engineering, QUT Brisbane.

Dr Ian Mavor OAM is a Christian UCA Minister, a past General Manager Gold Coast Lifeline, and a co-founder of Hopewell Hospice, Paradise Kids, the Living Well Centre and Clare College of Transformative Education. He is a SoFiA member.

Dr Steven Ogden

What's Normal: Foucault, Freedom and the Spirit

Steven addresses the question of politics of identity and its relationship with spirituality. He is Principal St Francis Theological College, Brisbane, and an academic associate Charles Sturt University. An educator and writer on spiritual practice, his latest book is *Love Upside Down*.

Nora Amath

Human Rights: An Islamic Perspective

In a Workshop, Nora shares her views as a feminist Muslim human rights advocate. Nora is associated with AMARAH. She has co-edited with Halim Rane, *Reflections: Young Muslims on the Contributions of Islamic Civilization to Humanity*, articles by young Muslim Australians on the positive role they envision for Islam.



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2012 Conference Registration Form

Please register early to secure your booking.

Name(s).....

Address

..... Postcode.....

E-Mail..... Phone.....

Attendance Fees – per person

Full program \$230 x _____ = \$ _____

(Incl. lunches, teas, dinner)

OR

Friday Evening Only \$ 35 x _____ = \$ _____

Saturday – Day Only (Incl. lunch, teas) \$ 120 x _____ = \$ _____

Saturday Evening Dinner + Social \$ 30 x _____ = \$ _____

Sunday Only (Incl. lunch, tea) \$ 60 x _____ = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

Accommodation

Outrigger Twin Towns Resort 4.5* accommodation may be booked at conference room rates from \$149 per night, twin share, incl. b/fast. For details, follow the link at www.sof-in-australia.org or [circle here](#) for these to be forwarded. Direct Bookings ph. 07 5506 6281.

Other hotel, apartment and van/cabin park accommodation is available in the area. Bookings (free service) - Tweed Tourism ph. 1800 674 414.

Return registration form to:

SoFiA, 21/14 Wilpark Cr., Currumbin Waters. Qld 4223 or

Email form to jrluxton@bigpond.com

Payment Method

- Cheque payable to Sea of Faith Gold Coast.

- By EFT - Sea of Faith Gold Coast BSB 064 480 A/c 10365922

(Use your Name as a reference, followed by CONF)

Registration queries - John Luxton 07- 5525 7277 or 0488 257 279

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