

- **Glynn Cardy**⁴ named G.O.D as Sacred, not as a being.
- **Bruce Sanguin**⁵ said, pursue “God” with intellectual integrity, honesty and critical reflection. He talked of the “Kin-dom” of God, “God, the originating mystery involved in the adventure of being”.
- **About Jesus**
 - **Marcus Borg** talked of Jesus being **about life** rather than **about the after-life**. Resurrection is radical transformation in **this** life. Salvation is in **this** life. “The cross is not about Jesus doing it for us so that we can be forgiven, but is an invitation to participate in the path and passion we see in Jesus.”
 - **Val Webb** encouraged us to “find ethical ways to live like Jesus with justice and kindness.”
 - **Lorraine Parkinson**⁶ talked about Constantine and the alliance between Jesus Christ and the Roman Empire in the 4th Century AD. She said that we need to turn back to Jesus of Nazareth.
 - **Nigel Leaves**⁷ saw Jesus as a wisdom teacher, prophetic teacher, an inclusive, religious figure.
- **About the Bible**
 - **Marcus Borg** urged us to put ancient texts *in ancient contexts* and bring texts alive for today. A metaphorical interpretation of the Bible is about meaning, not factual reports. There is no conflict between religion and science.
 - **Val Webb** – “Go to the Bible and hark back to the past for retrieval and renewal.”
 - **Nigel Leaves** – “It is important to be biblically responsible and intellectually honest.”
 - **Margaret Mayman**⁸ encouraged us to not just brush some parts of scripture away if they seem irredeemable. Rather, read, interpret and bring an ethical lens to them.

I believe that a general perception from the conference was of the need to carefully consider the traditions we value but to create new songs, liturgies and prayers through a lens that reflects life and thought in the 21st century. Here are some more impressions along those lines.

- **About our Tradition (some examples of what to keep or adapt)**
 - **Val Webb** talked about Creeds that were declared and then set in concrete. This has dampened creative thought. Our living traditions lend themselves to a wide range of interpretation.
 - **Lorraine Parkinson** provided us with some examples of creative, progressive thought. For those who find the 4th Century AD Nicene Creed difficult, she has written *The Jesus Creed*, based on The Beatitudes. She has written The Beatitudes in a modern context too.
 - **Rex A. E. Hunt**⁹ has rewritten and created many liturgies for use in services and celebrations and you will find these on his website. He presented a workshop on some of these.
 - **Steven Ogden**¹⁰ – “Look at old things with new eyes.”
 - **Bruce Sanguin** reminded us of the power of the parable.
- **About Prayer**
 - **Glynn Cardy** discussed prayer in many non-theistic ways. God is not a “behind-the-scenes fixer.” Prayer can be self-talk and together-talk. Sometimes no words are needed. Learn to be silent, attentive and mindful. The focus can sometimes be on a candle, on something of beauty or a work of art. Discern the actions to be taken. Hold people or the situation in Love. Prayer is **living** the vision. This conflicts with the vision of a God of power.
- **About Power**
 - **Steven Ogden** was concerned about the power that is used to establish norms which then become encoded in society and into our heads. A misuse of power relies on compliance. A misuse of power can be seen in sovereign power, hierarchical power and patriarchal power; and

also through managerial behaviour and bullying. Power should be about mutual accountability. Resistance, truth-telling and social critique are clues for a Christian Theology of Freedom. Freedom finds its voice in justice and compassion.

- **Glynn Cardy** talked about the power of mutual love and justice rather than the power of domination and control. The latter is founded on fear.
- **About Progressive Christianity and the future**
 - **Where are we going?**
 - **Bruce Sanguin** urged us to “Put the progress back in Progressive Christianity.” His important theme now, for the church and for the future of the planet is Evolutionary and Ecological Christianity. Live with joy, radical amazement and positive thinking. Believe in the enduring power of love.
 - **Val Webb** talked about the progressive future as a way of life rather than a set of beliefs. A question was asked of her. “Have we failed the next generation and the next? So many do not go to church and therefore will not be carrying Christianity forward into the future? She said “No”. She passed on the view of one young woman. “You have not failed us. You have taught us how to think and have given us freedom”. Her advice to grandparents was to tell their grandchildren about Jesus as a good man and to impart to them a passionate love of nature. “Tell them the history of our world through stories of the great book of nature.” Children are the future custodians of our sacred planet Earth.
 - **Nigel Leaves** - Go into the future, “inspired by the possibility that one’s head and one’s heart can be equal partners in faith”. “Radical truth-telling is part of the job prescription for those going into the future. Be biblically responsible, intellectually honest, emotionally satisfied and socially significant.”
 - **Action?**
 - Go out to the Market Place of Ideas to seek the common good, not to convert, said **Margaret Mayman**. She talked about Public Theology but approach this with humility. Immerse ourselves in society, in other faiths. She reminded us of Martin Luther King. The Christian story shaped his political influence and brought forth the 1964 Civil Rights Act. His speech, “I have a dream” was powerful theology – all people are created equal. To bring about political change, one must name the evil.
 - Stand up for the marginalised said **Nigel Leaves**. He believes in Gay Marriage because that’s what the Gospel of Jesus demands of us.
 - Go out and march, urged **Glynn Cardy**. It’s the issue that’s important and joining together, standing together.
 - Change language, change discourse, said **Steven Ogden**¹⁰.
 - Create slogans. Val Webb, with a wry smile, suggested, “Christians without Borders”. She came up with another one, “Progressives are Seekers of the Sacred.”
 - Join the group, “A Progressive Christian Voice” (Australia) which stands in contrast to The Australian Christian Lobby.
 - Sign a petition, said our Minister, **Jana**, waving around a paper as she stood on a chair near the book sale area. We signed, to challenge the Government on issues such as lack of female ministers in Cabinet, refugees, gender equality, racism, gay issues, climate change ...

