

# Learningguild Letter

1.2015

---

Dear members and friends of Learningguild,

“Are you a member of any church?” Consider three forms of answer. A says “Yes, I’m a member of ....” B: “No, I have never been.” C: “I used to be, but not since ....” A similar form of question could be asked, and similar forms of answer imagined, in respect of religions other than Christianity.

As I proposed in February (in my annual letter to our members), I shall consider here the question “Why the decline?” concerning the shrinking, from about 1970, of the Newman Society at the University of Melbourne and the Australian Student Christian Movement (ASCM). I said that the question was one to be “answered in part (but **not** entirely) as a matter of sociology”, and that I raised it in connection with two books. One is *Golden Years: Grounds for Hope: Father Golden and the Newman Society 1950-66*, published in 2008, and edited by Val Noone, with the help of others, after Greg Denning, who had been editor, had died in March that year. The other is *A Century of Influence*, by Renate Howe, the centenary history of the ASCM from its founding in 1896, published in 2009, and supplemented by oral history on a CD. Val and Renate, like Greg, are historians.

Having put that question “Why the decline?” and written to the end of the tenth paragraph of this letter, I sent a copy of the ten, substantially as they are now except for the fifth and tenth, to several people in the hope of obtaining responses for publication, whether in time for this issue or not. I am grateful for that of Sandy Yule and for advice from John Drennan.

My own response begins from the fact that both the Newman Society and the ASCM were, substantially, until the 1970s loyally related to “the Church” and its leaders. In one case that was what was also called by its “flock” the Catholic Church. In the other, whose members were not of that church, it included the group of churches which, after the Second World War, many hoped to see enjoy increasing fellowship and even unity through the ecumenical move-

ment. William Temple, the Archbishop of Canterbury (1942-4), himself much connected with the British SCM, had declared that movement to be “the great new fact of our era” (see Alec Vidler’s *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, 1961, p.268 – and p.6 below).

In 1955 Fr Golden wrote for students concerning the sacrament of Confirmation that it “bestows on the layman the power to profess, propagate and defend the faith under the guidance of the Hierarchy” (*GY*, p.262). Hopes rose in the Newman Society as elsewhere during the Second Vatican Council concerning what that hierarchy of Pope and bishops might permit and even encourage. They were dashed when, in 1968, Pope Paul VI went against the advice of his expert committee in maintaining, in his encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, the ban on so-called artificial contraception. Two notable articles in *Golden Years* are by Gerry Joyce (p.190) and John Funder (p.191f), both medical men. Funder says “*Humanae Vitae* was what toppled the house of cards”.

Since about 1968 few people who have been members of the ASCM would have been content, so far as the life and death of Jesus were concerned, with these lines of the familiar hymn beginning “The Church’s one foundation | is Jesus Christ her Lord”, which are equally focused upon “the Church” and “the Atonement”:

from heaven he came and sought her  
to be his holy bride;  
with his own blood he bought her,  
and for her life he died.

How few those now in Australia, even among Christians who sing or well remember that hymn, who really think of “the Church” as eventually “victorious”, as not only militant but to be triumphant.

Without a loyal-though-critical link to a wider Christian body or set of bodies, and therefore, in practice, a church or set of churches, neither the Newman Society nor the ASCM could have a *raison d’être* that would draw in a wide range of members who belonged to “the Church”, or appear to justify financial

or other support from such sources. Such a link gradually became less evident in each.

The Newman Society does not now exist at the University of Melbourne, according to the list of student societies called “spiritual”. There is a valuable history at [cosdu.blogspot.com.au](http://cosdu.blogspot.com.au) of what was formed in 1986 by Sr Carol Hogan as Overseas Students Down Under, but the next year put the name ‘Catholic’ in the front of its title. The society coexisted with the Newman Society at first; as late as 2013 it changed its name to become Catholics of One Spirit Down Under, “to open COSDU to all students, both local and international”. It has chaplains, most of its committee members’ names suggest that they are from Asian countries, and “over the years [it] has forged a network with the Archdiocese of Melbourne”.

The ASCM has a website on which these sentences occur under “Victorian SCM”:

We are a small, but active group of Christians who are committed to exploring what it means to be a Christian in today’s world. ... The ASCM in Victoria is not physically located on any campus, but we are open for all students from all denominations across Melbourne and Victoria. Every last Friday of the month we gather for a meal and bible study at somebody’s home.

From a study of the two books I have named I have understood better what was deeply attractive to mid-twentieth-century members of the Newman Society and members of the ASCM. (I belonged to the latter, between 1954 and 1971, as a student and a young lecturer.) Some faults in these bodies can also be discerned. Both books help us to understand how and why the beliefs and allegiances of many of us have markedly changed. That such changes have occurred, to the point of withdrawal from church membership, does not show that they are justifiable, and therefore I must discuss how we might best consider whether they are. Finally, in relation to all these matters, how can Learningguild better understand the kind of movement it should aim to be? After the next paragraph, five sections match those five sentences.

The two books are very different in range and type, and each is a considerable achievement and well worth reading. More apt than *Grounds for Hope* as a subtitle for the first would have been *Memories and Reflections*, because that covers the two kinds of written contribution, often combined, made by very many

former members of the Newman Society at the University of Melbourne (and some others, including relatives of Fr Golden). In contrast, Renate Howe is the sole author of the second book, though she quotes quite extensively from contemporary documents at the stages she is describing, and it covers the SCM in the whole of Australia for the whole of a century. A better title than *A Century of Influence* would have been *Community of Discipleship*, taking up a phrase used in the final sentence:

For over a century the movement provided a community of discipleship, a fellowship ...

Remarkable for being, at its strongest, intergenerational as well as interdenominational, the ASCM, through university branches, conferences, study books and magazines, drew together undergraduates, younger and older academics, general, travelling and resident secretaries, Senior Branch members, and church leaders, and also had branches in some schools.

## 1

Jeremiah Golden SJ (1910-80) does not appear at all in the index of *Golden Years*, because he is so prominent throughout. The only person to be given there ‘*et passim*’ in addition to particular pages is the poet and teacher of literature Vincent Buckley (1926-88). Penelope Buckley has told me that what Vin particularly marvelled at in his friend Fr Golden was his steadfast remaining through most days in his room at Newman College, awaiting anyone who might want to call on him, as very many did. That availability and the informality that went with it was deeply attractive to undergraduates, particularly since many of them had not known a priest who would play tennis and table tennis with them. But Golden also maintained the clerical work that a society of students needed, with much duplication by roneo of others’ papers (*GY* p.98). He was especially keen on members’ joining in a suitable study group, often related to their own faculty in the University. But, as Greg and Robyn O’Callaghan well say (p.73), because there were also cross-faculty friendships, discussions and other interactions, both “a serious perspective” and “a context of great camaraderie where laughter and good humour abounded”, and Fr Golden “creat[ed] the right framework ... and did it brilliantly and completely unobtrusively”, the life of the Newman Society at its best was one of a learning “as essential to our education as was our course work”.

Three women and two men stand out for me among the many named in the book on the ASCM. Margaret Holmes, the Headquarters Secretary for

twenty years from 1924, is well described on pp. 170, 244f and (with reference to her marvellous work that especially helped the *Dunera* boys, mostly from German Jewish families) 250-2. The other two women I knew. Rosalie McCutcheon, thoughtful, sensitive and calm, was a travelling secretary and later a resident one at Sydney, and after that Deputy Director of Sydney's International House. There is a fine biography by June Epstein. Joyce Leigh was for many years business secretary, alert and prudent and an indefatigable writer of appreciative thanks.

Sandy Boyce Gibson, who appointed me to his Department (Philosophy at Melbourne) from 1965, not long before he retired, had been Professor since 1935. Renate Howe rightly gives prominence on p.220f and elsewhere to the debt to him of the ASCM generally. In the last issue of its journal *Crux* that I edited (officially 3-4. 1971, but containing later material and published in 1974), there are perceptive tributes to Sandy, who had died in 1972, by students of his in the 1930s, Edgar French and Rhys Miller. (I should be glad to provide copies.) French was especially grateful (p.31) for "his addresses to the ASCM and his editorial essays in its journal *The Australian Intercollegian*". The kind of influence such a person had on some students is indicated by Miller (p.32):

He was a theist, a Christian theist; and those like myself who belonged to the ASCM were delighted to have a champion of professorial rank, who stimulated our thinking while demonstrating that faith was both the beginning and the end of thought.

The second man is Davis McCaughey, well described in our last issue by his second son Patrick. The concerns of Davis and others in the SCM of Great Britain and Ireland in the thirties and forties are plain in his book of 1957 *Christian Obedience in the University*. It is right, but not sufficiently informative, to associate Davis with "the importance of biblical study" (p.283). I still have my copy of the study book for the Mittagong National Conference of 1956, of which Davis was a major author. Typical of him were, like the title of his address at the previous conference, in Adelaide, "Christ the disturber", his quoting of a statement and putting of a question for discussion at the end of the study book: "The Sermon [on the Mount] is a statement of what will happen to a man who allows Christ to get hold of him" and "How do we know we are being really obedient?". On p.283f Renate Howe notes, on conferences, both the expectation of study of biblical commentaries and the excitement of "the opportunity to talk informally with university staff and church leaders".

Fr Golden (see p.69) regarded as of special importance the senior group, among the most prominent members of which were Vin Buckley, a tutor and later Lockie Fellow in English, and Bill Ginnane, a philosophy student older than most and then a tutor. These sentences near the end of a talk Ginnane gave at a University Catholic Federation of Australia Conference in 1957 appear on p.94 of *GY*.

If, as a community, we can live both the full life of Christ and the full life of the University in such a way that there is absolutely no divorce or separation between the two then we are really re-living the Incarnation. Christ is then brought into the world again in a new way. The world is then actually able to see what a transformed University would be like because it is there before them in microcosm in the apostolic community.

One does not have to be a non-Christian to judge that to be both narrow and grandiose. One mark of a good university is the presentation, where possible by their holders, of a variety of views, accompanied by careful criticism. People in the SCM were, as Howe notes on p.278f, happy to take from the Jewish thinker Martin Buber sets of words such as 'Real life is meeting' and 'I-thou relationships'; but no one thought of asking whether his (or other non-Christians') view of Jesus, and of Paul, deserved study. (It certainly does: see my summary and analysis of his book *Two Types of Faith*, which appear as a supplement to *Lg Letter* 2.2002.) In 1967, for the first time, there was a course called Philosophy of Religion at the University of Melbourne. I lectured in first term (at that time I was a liberal Protestant), followed in the others by an atheist and a traditional Catholic.

In *GY* there is from women considerable criticism of the senior group of the Newman Society and its influence. Women who felt silenced and excluded in meetings realized, says Penelope Buckley (p.40), that

in some ways the apostolate and its culture were more imperfect than the university they sought to transform.

A wide and balanced survey is given by Elizabeth Rennick on p.76f. It includes this indictment:

I can remember no investigation of any of the fundamental ideas or assumptions or tenets of the Newman Society. One was expected to imbibe the received orthodoxy from people [in the senior group] and ... to apply it, enlarge upon it, find one's own personal reasons for appreciating it, but not actually to question it.

(In the SCM there was talk of commitment rather than of questioning.) Mary Scarfe writes (p.239):

My memory is that the group around Vin was a closed system. All the thinking seemed to be the prerogative of males. Their language and the structure of their writings was complex and sometimes impenetrable.

Excellent contributions by Joanne Lee Dow (pp. 186-9) and Tony Coady (pp. 123-6) concern, amid very much else, the failure, not unrelated to damaging over-consumption of alcohol by some men, to face and discuss the fear in some of domestication and so of reduced involvement in a group such as this senior one.

### 3

In the other article by Tony Coady (p.177f), he says that it is “my firm impression” that

most of the people I knew best in the Newman Society no longer consider themselves members of the Catholic church, many have abandoned any form of Christianity or indeed religious faith.

Greg Dening (p.133) mentions that “our believing selves have changed so much”. Joanne Lee Dow reveals much inner conflict when she writes (p.189) of

a beloved liturgy that contradicts the church’s own best theology of God as authoring spirit of everything by the reductionism of a male-only trinity.

Paul Simpson (p.220) says how disturbing to him were

the failings to the point of unreason, as I saw things, of the institutional church and its spokesmen and legislators,

instancing compulsory celibacy for priests.

John Gill has a balanced paper (p.214f) on faith and reason, but in the book there is no reference to any discussion of what version of Christianity, if any, might reasonably be believed and offered to others. It is noteworthy that, in his autobiographical *Cutting Green Hay* (p.256), Vincent Buckley says that, early in the time of the Vatican Council, he was asking himself

What did ‘belief’ mean? If belief was being abandoned, what in the human psyche was abandoning it?

He says he was “tak[ing] an anthropological approach, as it were, to institution and self alike” and, on p.258, that Bill Ginnane was thinking on similar lines. Given

their earlier advocacy of orthodox beliefs, it would have been reasonable to expect them to explain to the Newman Society and more widely why they held them no longer, rather than presenting the change as an “anthropological” one (without an adequate defence of doing just that?).

The last three chapters of *A Century of Influence* deal with the change in the ASCM in and after the 1960s away from theological orthodoxy and acceptance of familiar church structures, and into support for political and other causes. In the issue of *Crux* to which I referred on the previous page I sought on pp. 4 and 28 to explain my own ceasing (in 1971) to think of myself as a Christian.

### 4

Turning now to the question how we might best consider (and preferably discuss) the question of what, if anything, in traditional forms of Catholicism or Protestantism deserves our adherence, we should first recognize how difficult and worrying the exploration of such a question can be. Mrs Humphry Ward’s novel *Robert Elsmere* (1888), especially in Chs XXIV-XXX, is a notable depiction of that. It is fictional, but in Ch. XXVII Robert is helped to gain courage by his former tutor Mr Grey, in whom T.H.Green of Oxford is depicted almost without disguise.

Truth-seeking has so often been assisted by open dialogue, in the four ways Mill sets out in *Liberty* Ch. 2, but, whatever one’s current standpoint (or lack of one), there is a particular kind of need for that dialogue now. People talk and write (e.g., in advertisements for teaching positions in Catholic schools) of fostering “Catholic identity”, or make a remark similar to that once made by a friend of mine, that he just **was** *homo Christianus*, a Christian human being. Isn’t this a sort of tribalism that we need to get beyond by seeking out and considering objections, so that participants find themselves saying or thinking “Yes, you’ve got something there”? Would not that process be one good response of some Jesuits to the fact that their theological college in Melbourne has had to be closed because of a dearth of novices? Such discussions are valuable in themselves, but could and should lead to joint publications characterized by both frankness and mutual respect. I know that it is not easy to “make” the time for such activities; but they are far too rare.

To indicate and enter upon the kind of discussion I envisage, I refer to lectures given at the London

branch of the SCM in 1909 by the young William Temple, which were published as *The Faith and Modern Thought*. Renate Howe notes (p.117f) that Temple visited Australia in the following year and gave memorable lectures of similar kinds. The book is not merely of historical interest: it raises fundamental questions. On p.3 he says that he aims to show, “if you like to put it so, that Christian theology is the only hypothesis that meets all the facts”. On the second-last page (171), he goes so far as to say

The whole creed is the only hypothesis that meets the facts; no article of it – not even the first – can stand without the rest. No Spirit, no Christ; no Christ, no God.

I shall both criticize Temple’s defence of the Christian faith and yet agree with the use of the word ‘hypothesis’ in relation to considering whether one can or should have a particular kind of religious faith. Contributions would be welcome from anyone who would refer us to a defence thought better and/or reject any talk here of a hypothesis.

Such was the common Christian insularity until after the Second World War that Temple was probably unaware that in the words I have just quoted he was committed to holding that even the classical Judaic form of theism was not really a defensible world-view in the absence of belief in Jesus as the Messiah or Christ. In fact a terrible cost of widespread acceptance of orthodox Christianity in Europe has been a lack of sympathy, to put it mildly, with Judaism, which has underlain the unpopularity and persecution of Jews and so made possible the Holocaust. To be consistent with the view of Temple and many another, one would have to hold that only those acquainted with Christianity had been given the blessing of sufficient reason for believing in God as perfectly loving and good.

On p.62 Temple says:

We need the fact of Christ, if our belief in the love of God and his revelation of Himself to us is to be rationally defensible and morally effective.

Immediately following is a remarkable paragraph (pp. 62-4), which concerns the very question that arose above in my introduction and in Sec. 3: does whatever we call the Church contain credible evidence for the Christian faith it proclaims and provide good reason for remaining in it? Temple’s answer, even if unsatisfying, is remarkably relevant to what many have felt and said since, whether they have remained in what they call the Church or not. He refers to “this enormous network of ecclesiastical organizations” and

says

it seems easy to ask and difficult to answer, why the Divine Founder should found an institution so remote in its practice from His own ideals.

Here is some of his answer:

... the Church ... has always represented and stood for an ideal not to be accounted for by the ordinary social environment of the times. ... This is something perfectly intelligible if the whole Church is rooted in a Divine Christ who is also a historical figure: otherwise it is not intelligible at all. ... if the Founder’s purpose is to produce a type of character and to achieve a spiritual result, then the new force which he brings into the world must take men as it finds them, and win their free consent .... But if that is true, then of course, we shall expect the whole history of the Church to be one long conflict between the ordinary worldly nature of the men who make up the body of the Church and the new spirit which is the Church’s real life.

Nothing triumphalist there, and nothing to justify talk of a group of Catholic Christians as continuing or being an “Incarnation in the University”, nor of Christians as a whole as the Mystical Body of Christ. Some Christians would emphasize the Sacraments at this point, but do they not, with the conditions put upon their observance, tend to reinforce divisions and narrowness?

Green, in the lectures published after his death in 1882 as *Prolegomena to Ethics*, had, like Temple, given prominence to a certain spirit or ideal: that of “self-devoted service to mankind” (sec. 273), with “long-suffering, considerateness, ... charity” (258), as contrasted with the limited scope of a classical Greek ethic that allowed many human beings to be treated merely as means. He saw as the primary mark of what he called Christendom that it had seen the emergence of this kind of barrier-rejecting and compassionate service to mankind; but as quite a young man he had ceased to be an orthodox Christian.

Those of us who have been much influenced by Christianity have to face two very different questions: whether we are willing to seek to maintain and act upon this ideal of self-devoted service in a range to which we give no narrow limits, and whether we are able or willing to agree with Temple that the emergence of that ideal and approximations to it are intelligible only “if the whole Church is rooted in a Divine Christ who is also a historical figure”. Yes to the first and no to the second?

Let us return to the page of Vidler from which I quoted on p.1:

In oft-quoted words William Temple called the ecumenical movement 'the great new fact of our era': it is too early yet to say whether this was a piece of prophetic insight or of wishful thinking.

What are we to say now, 54 years after Vidler's book? Christian scholars take more notice than they did of works from other traditions; and students of theology are quite likely to be taught by people from several denominations. There is often local cooperation, as for example in assisting asylum-seekers and protesting on their behalf. There is much more goodwill between Catholics and Protestants in Australia than there was in the interwar years. Is there, however, such preponderant evidence of what Temple called "the new spirit which is the Church's real life" as to justify his explanation of its existence? The actual life of the churches has included inertia, intolerance and persecution.

A serious defence of any form of Christianity must be what Basil Mitchell called a cumulative one, such that it draws upon and seeks to account for many things. One such that influenced me for many years is that of Mitchell's Oxford colleague Ian Crombie, in the 1950s, in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* (ed. Flew and MacIntyre). He and Temple both dealt, as any apologist must, with questions about what is often called "the problem of evil". Temple says (p.121):

there are three main forms of evil – intellectual evil which we call Error, emotional evil which we call Pain, and moral evil which we call Sin.

Apart from the awkwardness of calling pain emotional evil, my main objection to that statement is its omission of the kinds of **loss** typified in maternal and infant mortality and in dementia. Crombie (p.124f) concentrates on suffering, also without mention of such loss:

Does anything count against the assertion that God is merciful? Yes, suffering. Does anything count decisively against it? No, we reply, because it is true. Could anything count decisively against it? Yes, suffering which was utterly, eternally and irredeemably pointless. Can we then design a crucial experiment? No, because we can never see all of the picture. Two things at least are hidden from us; what goes on in the recesses of the personality of the sufferer, and what shall happen hereafter.

Can we consider the loss as compatible with there being an all-powerful and all-loving God? Can we,

given tsunamis, sing "whose arm doth bind the restless wave", or, given earthquakes, "He's got the whole world in His hands"?

Bill Ginnane's address, which ends the collection *The Incarnation in the University*, portrays Peter, an imagined Australian law student (p.113f), and concludes:

If he is typical of modern man he is distracted, living his life in isolated fragments or compartments. He has a disjointed consciousness: one would almost say he is a mild sort of schizoid.

Rightly Ginnane desires for such persons a unifying orientation. Of what kind?

Each one of us here is a fully baptized and confirmed member of the Mystical Body of Christ. This, for each of us, is a tremendous fact, and one which totally modifies our existence. (p.110)

The world is being prepared for the second coming of Our Lord. In an infinitely complex and secret way, Christ is being mystically completed through the action of the Church in the world. (p.125)

Anyone who has such an orientation and such beliefs will of course attach great importance to his or her membership of whatever he or she calls the Church. But it may be no more than honest for Peter to ask himself "Is such an orientation, are such beliefs well-founded?" He might begin from the two facts that Jesus himself, and the early disciples, mistakenly expected an imminent second coming, and that the Jesus of Mark (10.18) and Luke (18.19) said "Why do you call me good? There is none good but God."

I was once light-heartedly accused, by an ASCM staff member, of being too disposed to ask "Is that academically sound?" I do not think it is a matter of allegiance to something called the academy, or the university. I would not want Peter to think of himself as fundamentally a university student, or a Christian, but as an enquirer motivated by human capacities and human needs. In that light he might well be dissatisfied by a university as by a church.

In *Lg Letter 2.2013* I put some objections to some Christian writing on sin, atonement and repentance. On any matter, moral, political, aesthetic, religious, or practical, I propose the adoption of a "Consider the objections" standpoint as a help in seeking the truth or some approximation to it. The fact that the Church headed by a Pope has ruled out open discussion of such controversial matters as the

ordination of women seems to me a reason for not being a member of it. But Christians outside that Church may be virtually under the rule of tradition, e.g., in insisting upon adherence to belief in “the divinity of Christ”. Some will understandably say that such beliefs are constitutive of anything that deserves to be called a Christian church, and at least most of these will be Christians within one, regarding it as a primary focus of their allegiance, though preferably always open to reformation. Some (including me, but also including some in the former set) will emphasize the need for membership of a body that is open to adherents of any religion or of none, not for “academic” discussion alone but for mutual understanding (which will require questioning and the consideration of objections), help and cooperation.

## 5

So, without attaching inordinate importance to it, I come to Learningguild. What are or should be our particular concerns? We set out our nature by saying that we are an international educational and social movement whose membership is open to everyone who wants to go on learning and help others learn.

Let’s take the three adjectives before ‘movement’. First ‘international’, and a range of examples. I have been exchanging emails this month (December) with Amish Amin, who has done plenty of volunteering as a teacher of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages). He tells me that he was born in Tanzania in 1963, of Indian parents from Gujarat, and has studied at the British universities Nottingham, London and Glasgow. He has been a developer of computer software and an English teacher. Recently he took part in an ESOL project in Bangladesh, where he used my booklet-and-CD on pronunciation *Sounds, Words, Sentences*. My sending of it had been the result of continued contact, involving Learningguild, with my friend from undergraduate years (and the ASCM) Anthony Clunies-Ross, to whom a tribute by John Langmore, a lifelong friend of his (and also a member of Learningguild), appears in this issue. Anthony, a professor at Strathclyde in the city of Glasgow, had put me in touch with his colleague Mozammel Huq and the latter with Irene Graham: they have been prime movers in helping students at a college in northern Bangladesh to develop their English. Our links with overseas members are of great potential value to all concerned, not least because they are intended to be ongoing and, though enriched by travel, not dependent on it.

We are educational but not course-dependent (though we can help with many a course). It is very important that some education and research, both in and beyond schools, colleges and universities, should not be tied to courses, but rather to strong and often sustained interests in which, preferably, people of different levels of experience and ages (and views of politics and religion) gladly combine. I have mentioned (p.2) the intergenerational nature of the ASCM at its strongest, and the roles of Fr Golden and Vincent Buckley in the Newman Society (in which there were other senior members), and (p.2f) some particular senior members of the ASCM. This magazine is wide-ranging (including religion in its scope, in which many periodicals are newsy or esoteric) and there have been supplements and other publications. Since 1995 there has been a philosophy seminar. I should like to see more letters and book reviews, and more use of our growing library, with stewards in many places (contact details available) holding particular books or sets of them. The examination for the Learningguild Certificate in Reasoning and Expression has been set on more than fifty occasions, and was recently taken by four students of logic at George Washington University in DC, where their lecturer, Prof. Michele Friend, is a member of Learningguild.

We are also social. **Hospitality**, with the acceptance, encouragement and sympathy, example, and good humour that at best it provides, is often missing from educational institutions. Our main form of hospitality is the Saturday Meeting, beginning with a contributory lunch, at present on the first and third Saturdays of a month within term-times. People need contribute no more to the wide range of cuisine than they can readily afford. Fourteen people attended the end-of-year dinner we have just held. One of them, from Colombia, has to undertake a great deal of paid employment to keep going in her Social Work course, but appreciates Learningguild’s hospitality none the less for that. Nothing (and certainly not the cry “Universities have changed”) excuses the depersonalizing of tertiary education, or the related undervaluing of teaching or of voluntary groups.

I wrote in *Lg Letter 1.2007* about sustained study, membership and assistance (and discussion, vigour and fellowship). I end by saying how vital it is that members often contribute ideas and offers of help, as well as subscriptions and donations.

Yours in Learningguild,  
John Howes

## Discussion

**SANDY YULE** was General Secretary of the Australian Student Christian Movement 1970-75. He is a minister of the Uniting Church. This is his response to an earlier draft of the first ten paragraphs of my editorial letter. Continuation of the discussion is invited. JH

Dear John,

I appreciate your raising of the question (as you say, not merely sociological) about the reasons for the decline of the Newman Society and of the ASCM, and your recognition that the ASCM still exists.

As one who has never felt the need to separate myself from the ASCM or the church in general, I should mention that I am currently involved in the ongoing life of the ASCM, small and marginal as that has become, in particular in the monthly bible study referred to in your quotation from the Victorian ASCM website. My own theological journey has been through existentialism (Kierkegaard) to liberation theology (Gutierrez) and back to an orthodoxy which emphasizes the openness of our future and the role of the Holy Spirit of God working with our spirits (Moltmann).

I agree with your view that a Christian movement cannot avoid a continuing link with some Christian church or set of churches. The genius of the ASCM has been to accept the challenge of the university for a coherent faith oriented towards truth in all its forms, leading to a critical (though not unsympathetic) relationship to church formulations of the Christian faith.

There are sociological explanations for the decline of the ASCM and the Newman Society: widespread loss of free time spent on a campus, the cultural thirst for personal autonomy over against all forms of collective identity (the "anti-joining" mood), and the negative experiences (ranging from stuffiness to abuse) that have led many away from church membership. The ASCM went through some stringent self-criticism as a self-perpetuating organization in 1968-69, leading to a willingness to eschew organizationally oriented fund-raising and membership drives in the following years. The most significant subsequent event was the Centenary gathering in Canberra in 1996 which launched the ASCM Trust Fund that continues to support the work of the ASCM. This event functioned as a corrective to the earlier somewhat anti-organizational stance.

The ASCM's engagement in sympathetic conversation with people from other churches and other cultures was unusual until about 1965, and appreciated as such. Then it began to become mainstream in Australian universities and in society in general, perhaps partly because of the success of the ASCM style of open dialogue.

What other explanations might there be? I have always found the quality of conversational engagement to be the main attraction within the ASCM. No question is off-limits and honest answers contribute to truth-seeking, though with respect for our own limitations of information and intellect. I have valued the experience of worship that draws upon a wide range of Christian and other traditions and voices, within a community of mutual respect. Where these practices lose their potency or even sincerity, decline is inevitable. It may be that sections of the ASCM came into times of self-criticism and failed to find compelling answers or even the ability to hold together while continuing the search for adequate answers.

There may be a deeper reason for decline in the widespread abandonment of the expectation that there can be a grand narrative explaining human life and death (though materialistic, evolutionary humanism seems to offer just such a narrative). I remember, as an undergraduate student, meeting this rejection of the questions to which belief in God is an answer and feeling cheated out of what I would regard as a serious conversation.

As a Christian theologian, I am attracted to the question "What is God doing to us through this decline?". One possible answer to this question is suggested by the story of Gideon, whose troops for resisting the Philistines were mostly sent home so that the victory could be seen to be from beyond the human army. The specific vocation of the ASCM is not for everyone. Another possible answer would be that we don't know what God's purpose is, but we accept in faith that God's redemptive love is reliable. Similarly, we don't know with any certainty what to make of the biblical picture of Jesus as the crucified and risen Christ, but, despite all, some of us continue to say "To whom else shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68).

I believe that the need for truth-seeking conversation is as strong as ever and I affirm your own continuing commitment to this. I invite readers to reflect on the indispensability of the search for truth, and the value of movements and other organizations that support and promote this search.

Sandy Yule



# Eulogy for Anthony Clunies Ross

**JOHN LANGMORE** is a professor in the Melbourne School of Government at the University of Melbourne. A colleague of Anthony at the University of Papua New Guinea, he was later the Labor MHR for Fraser (ACT), and after that Director of the UN Division for Social Policy and Development in New York. Here is a slightly modified version of the eulogy he gave at the funeral service for Anthony in Dunblane, Scotland, in March 2015.

Anthony Clunies Ross was a remarkable man. I am here as one of many people who regarded him as a close friend. Some of his friends are here, or in other parts of Scotland, and others are in Australia, Papua New Guinea and elsewhere. To us he was a mentor, a wise counsellor, a brilliant colleague, an encouraging collaborator, an attentive conversationalist, and an intellectual, spiritual and moral inspiration.

Anthony's gift for friendship was one of his special qualities. Astonishingly in someone so brilliant and of patrician origins, he was also a humble, self-effacing person. He sought to enable friends, colleagues, students and others he met 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. His generosity to others sometimes exceeded what was fair to himself and to those he loved.

He encouraged me to apply for a position as a lecturer at the University of Papua New Guinea. There he gave me the opportunity to be joint editor with him of a book called *Alternative Strategies for Papua New Guinea*, and to extend a sabbatical six months to a year at Cambridge. When I became economic advisor to the parliamentary Australian Labor Party, he was the person to whom I turned most often for outside advice. While I was an MP we kept in close touch by phone, letter, emails and visits, to discuss innumerable national and global issues.

After I was appointed as a divisional director in the United Nations Secretariat, he accepted two commissions to write reports in preparation for UN conferences and to be rapporteur at one.

I now use the textbook *Development Economics* as the prescribed reading in a graduate course in the subject at Melbourne: it was written by Anthony and two colleagues at Strathclyde.

Others 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 from highly profitable mines without deterring investment in marginal resource projects. Their paper for the Papua New Guinea Government grew into an article in the *Economic Journal* and their joint book *The Taxation of Mineral Rent*, and their proposals were embodied in legislation in many countries, for example in the Australian Petroleum Resource Rent Tax.

Anthony was not only brilliant: he also had the imagination and rigour to be a striking intellectual innovator, especially about feasible public policies for the common good. Ross writes that Anthony was "the best and wisest of people". Makere Morauta, a former student who became Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, wrote after hearing of Anthony's death "He was one of the nicest and wisest men I have known." Mozammel Huq, one of those Strathclyde colleagues, writes: "Anthony epitomized the best of the best. He was a man of great wisdom. Indeed he was a development economist of supreme calibre. He also had a great love for his fellow human beings."

Anthony was born in Sydney in 1932, the eldest son of Ian and Janet Clunies Ross. Ian graduated as a vet, and became a scientist whose eminent career culminated when he became the first Chairman of CSIRO, the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Organization. He was nationally and internationally famous. Anthony wrote that his father was an enthusiastic romantic for science. Others who wrote about him praise both his grace and his natural authority. Anthony's mother has been described as "formidable".

His brother Adrian says that he was a precocious child, reading at three and writing sermons when he was four. At five he decided to be a vegetarian, a commitment from which he never deviated, and which always added to the complexity of life for his mother, wife and daughters! It also indicates the strength of

his principles. By the age of ten he had created an imaginary country with its own language, and recited to his parents and grandparents a poem written in that language. He was dux of Scotch College at the age of 15, after having studied science. He repeated the year because he was too young to go to university and studied humanities, and is reported to have been dux again.

He studied medicine at the University of Melbourne for four years but, finding treatment of illness too distressing, switched to history and economics. Helga Griffin, a fellow student, remembers him acting in the German Department's end-of-year nativity play and taking the cast to his family home. He lived in Trinity College for a while, and was a leader in the Student Christian Movement. He was awarded first-class honours at Cambridge, where he mostly studied economics.

Anthony and Morag met at a conference of young Christians in Strasbourg when she was a medical student at Aberdeen. They soon married and, returning to Australia, lived in Ormond College. Morag completed her medical training at Melbourne. Students tutored by Anthony at Ormond say they learnt more economics from him than from anyone else. A neighbour there is still inspired by Morag's syllabus, the making of which she fitted in as well as giving birth to Jamie, Sarah and David, caring for them and for Anthony, practising medicine, and entertaining visitors.

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

He was appointed Professor of Economics at the new University of Papua New Guinea in 1967. The family moved to Port Moresby, where Morag worked in the emergency department of the hospital. With such pressure she became ill and, concerned about her fourth pregnancy, returned to Scotland with the two younger children for Brigit's birth in 1972.

Anthony was an inspiring leader of the Department of Economics, a dedicated teacher, an outstanding thinker and an 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.

He stimulated public debate not only through his lecturing and publications but also by organising one of the early Waigani Seminars where national public policy was vigorously discussed. He taught well the first generation of Papua New Guinea economists, who led an administratively effective and analytically strong Department of Finance. Such students as the first Secretary for Finance, Mekere Morauta, the second, John Vulupindi, and their immediate successors guided an effective economic policy for the new nation's first decade and a half. The respect and affection with which he was regarded by students is shown by a poem written by John Waiko, who later became Minister for Education.

The family were reunited in Scotland in 1974. Their home was next to the railway line at Kinbuckby-Dunblane. Anthony joined the Economics Department of Strathclyde University and was appointed a professor in 1978. He also taught part-time at the University of Glasgow. His teaching was principally in public finance and the economics of developing countries. He published *Economic Stabilization for Developing Countries* and was commissioned to write a report on Albania.

Tragically, Anthony and Morag's eldest son Jamie, who was so full of hopes and of whom high expectations were held, contracted Hodgkin's disease and after five years of illness died in 1985.

In 2002 Anthony was commissioned by the International Labour Organization to write a paper on financing social development for the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization. Another of his innovative books came out in 2005: *Making the World Autonomous: A Global Role for the European Union*.

His final book, published in 2014, was also with Mozammel Huq: it is on social protection systems for every country.\* Imagine the courage in writing a book evaluating the credibility and cost of introducing universal social protection as a cost-effective means of ending severe poverty. It sounds impossible, but Anthony showed that it is feasible and a matter of political will. Roger Sandilands has mentioned that he and Anthony were planning to compile a book of anti-austerity readings. Anthony's intellectual creativity lasted until the end of his life.

He loved walking along the roads and paths winding through the hills around Dunblane or over the

\* A member of Learningguild, Anthony summarized the thesis of this book in *Learningguild Letter* 1.2014.

moors, on which wind turbines are being built on the ridges above the trees. It was wonderful to walk with him, for he was a fascinating conversationalist about history as well as contemporary issues. He loved the beauty and peace of the countryside.

A major part of Anthony and Morag's life was care for David. My daughters and others remember that young wanderer on the Port Moresby university campus with affection, as I understand do many people in Dunblane. His death in February, related to smoke inhalation when a fire broke out at home, was a great sadness.

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

As Ross Garnaut writes, 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 re-assembled 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 Anthony taught us and many others. Some of his innovative thinking will continue in the minds of those who have been his students, readers and friends and in the policies which they implement. His spirit will live on in each of us who admire his qualities and honour and love him.

A letter Anthony wrote to Ross after he visited last year concluded: "I do emphatically believe in 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." Many who knew Anthony can praise God with their whole hearts and minds for the life and achievements of this good and remarkable man.

## Memories of Graeme Marshall

**GRAEME MARSHALL** taught philosophy for about forty years at the University of Melbourne, and latterly also at King's College, London. He died in January this year. **EDWIN HARARI**, who spoke as follows about him at a memorial celebration at Ormond College, is a Consultant Psychiatrist at St. Vincent's Hospital, Melbourne, and Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of Melbourne. He graduated in Medicine there (1970), trained in psychiatry at the Royal Melbourne Hospital, and became Consultant in charge of the in-patient psychiatric unit at the Austin Hospital. He came to know Graeme Marshall when he was an undergraduate in the Philosophy Department at Melbourne, and they subsequently taught a course together there in Philosophy of Mind.

La Rochefoucauld, the 17th-century French essayist and satirist, quipped that we often forgive those we find boring, but can never forgive those who find us boring. Graeme Marshall's scholarly, agile mind, his impish sense of humour, his love of fine wine, good food and challenging conversation, ensured that for the forty years I knew him, I never found him boring.

Forty years ago, as an over-worked, world-weary resident in the neurology unit at St. Vincent's Hospital in Melbourne, a period of personal uncertainty combined with some clinical experiences that raised puzzling questions led me to consider studying philosophy. In those days, it was possible for a callow, untutored youth to pick up the phone on a Tues-

day afternoon, ring the switchboard at Melbourne Uni (as it was called back then, not the University of Melbourne), ask to be put through to the Philosophy Department, and moments later be talking to a helpful secretary about the possibility of "doing philosophy". Forty-eight hours later, I was navigating the maze that is the Old Arts Building at Melbourne Uni, in search of the office of one Graeme Marshall.

I entered his office, sat down and tentatively began to explain the purpose of my visit, and I remember seeing what I soon learned to recognise as his characteristic look of pleasure including a happy smile when he heard something he liked. He said something like "Splendid, my dear fellow, splendid,

and if you're going to DO philosophy, it had better be the case that you study philosophy.”

This was one of Graeme's characteristic ways of making a point: “If  $p$ , then it had better be the case that  $q$ .” For when he talked about doing philosophy, he meant it as a lived activity, with implications in the real world, not only in the realm of abstract ideas. Perhaps this is akin to what in those days in the early 1970s around the Uni some people, particularly those with a Marxist sensibility, referred to as “praxis”, a lived way of doing. Philosophy as praxis: as I later learned, that idea went back to Aristotle.

I eventually came to think that there was something in Graeme's expression ‘it had better be the case that ...’ which pointed toward an implicit faith he had about the ways reason interacts with the world. Maybe that had something to do with his roots in the New Zealand strain of Presbyterianism, which was his father's legacy, or a young child's lifelong need to make sense of why he'd lost his mother and wondered whether he would ever find her again.

We were at about the three-minute mark of that first conversation, Graeme had already said “Splendid, my dear fellow” twice, and I found myself thinking “Is this how philosophers talk?” Then he said: “If you have time, why don't we continue our conversation at University House?” That was the first of many lunches, dinners and impromptu raids over the ensuing years that we had at Graeme's favourite watering-hole.

During that first lunch he told me about the history of the Philosophy Department at Melbourne Uni, about his great friend and mentor in it, “Camo” Jackson, about Wittgenstein and why the Americans didn't “get” him.

My knowledge of wine was, and still is, even more deficient than my understanding of philosophy, but I always enjoyed watching Graeme in action at University House. He chatted expansively or conspiratorially with the *Maitre-de*, with the manager of the wine cellar, with the waiters and the chefs who would emerge from the kitchen to greet him, with the people who stopped by his table to have a word, whether they were friends, colleagues, or the very occasional one about whom Graeme subtly let it be known that he was less than a friend, all of whom inhabited that vast, complex, sometimes predatory organism that is a university.

Over the next few years, I meandered happily through several courses in the Philosophy and the History and Philosophy of Science Departments. Then Graeme proposed that I join him in teaching a course in the philosophy of mind, which we did for a few years. The philosophy of mind was one of Graeme's great passions, particularly its 18th-century formulations and their links with 20th-century British analytical philosophy and contemporary neuroscience. He spent a sabbatical in the Department of Neuroscience at Edinburgh University with the Australian neuroscientist Max Fink. He was also deeply interested in moral philosophy and questions about religious language, and he studied and taught in these areas on his periodic visits to King's College, London. He pursued the possibility of dialogue between moral philosophy and psychoanalysis during a sabbatical at the University of Chicago.

I have described the first time I met Graeme. Let me now describe the last time.

Over the past couple of years, as his health declined and it became more difficult for him to go out, I'd often call around to his home in Anderson Street, Clifton Hill on a Saturday afternoon. The last time I went there he appeared very vague, his memory was greatly impaired, difficulties in finding words were prominent, and he was easily distracted.

As we reached the foot of the staircase that led from the hallway up to the lounge room on the first floor, he paused beside a small desk. On it were a couple of books by Jonathan Lear, the Aristotelian philosopher and psychoanalyst, based at Chicago, who has written extensively on the relation between the ideas of Aristotle and Freud and their contemporary relevance. (Incidentally, there is a fine paper by him in a recent issue of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* titled “The wisdom that is to be gained from illness”. How Graeme would have smiled with delight and purred with pleasure when discussing this paper.) He paused at the foot of the stairs. He gestured towards Lear's books: “That's very good, you know him, don't you? That's very good!” I nodded.

Slowly, we climbed the stairs to the lounge room, where some classical music was playing, and we sat surrounded by shelves laden with his books, all meticulously arranged. After a few moments, he tried to say something, but the words wouldn't come. He became impatient; with furrowed brow, he scabbled around the pile of papers on the table beside his chair

and came up with a recent edition of the *London Review of Books*: “Here”, he said, pressing the journal into my hands with some urgency, “it’s here!” I scanned the table of contents. A review of Martin Amis’s latest book, *The Zone of Interest*, a fictional account of life in a concentration camp, caught my eye. “Is this it?” I asked. He nodded, pressed the paper into my hand again and said with that same air of urgency “It’s very important.”

We sat silently for a few minutes, listening to the music, which I thought I recognised as a Bach fugue, perhaps his great last unfinished one, though I wasn’t sure. As if reading my mind Graeme said “It’s very beautiful [then a pause], it’s very beautiful, Camo showed it to me.”

I left a short while later. As I left, scenes from the visit came to mind: Graeme stopping at the foot of the stairs, indicating Jonathan Lear’s books: “That’s very good.” Then the review of Martin Amis’s book about the radical evil of Auschwitz: “That’s very important.” And finally the Bach fugue: “That’s very

beautiful, Camo showed it to me.” The good, the significant, and the beautiful which a dear friend “showed” him. And all this at what I now know was to be our last meeting.

What did Graeme know then? What was he feeling? What did he mean? How did he know? What could I know? What neurological pathways or cortical organisation were activated or subtended in his thoughts, spoken words, emotions and aesthetic feelings? Where do value systems and the ideologies they subtend, and our aesthetic and moral judgements, come from?

So many questions. I felt sad that day as I left his house, for I knew that Graeme probably did not have long to live. Then, with a twinge of weary affection, I remembered, and wished I could meet again, that young naive neurology resident, who, reflecting on a long and difficult night in the hospital and pondering an array of daunting, half-articulated questions, picked up the phone one afternoon 40 years ago, rang Melbourne Uni, and asked to speak to a philosopher.

## How is higher education funded in Germany?

**HILARY HOWES** is a member of Learningguild (and a daughter of Michael and Dorothy). Since March 2015 she has been Postdoctoral Fellow in the School of Archaeology and Anthropology at the Australian National University, working on Professor Matthew Spriggs’s Laureate Fellowship project “The collective biography of archaeology in the Pacific: A hidden history”. In the previous three-and-a-half years she was Executive Assistant to the Australian Ambassador in Berlin, where her responsibilities included promoting bilateral research collaboration.

The Australian Federal Government’s recent attempts to deregulate tertiary student fees and reduce subsidies for new Commonwealth-supported students have led several commentators to compare Australia’s higher education system unfavourably with Germany’s, focusing particularly on the fact that German higher education institutions do not currently charge tuition fees. Others have remarked on the contrast between Germany, where the federal government has recently announced increases to student benefits and subsidies from the start of the 2016/17 academic year, and the United Kingdom, “where tuition fees have tripled [and] student grants and loans for living costs have struggled to keep pace with inflation” (Mechan-Schmidt 2014). In this context, it is worth looking more closely at how higher education in Germany is funded, and how German spending on tertiary education compares with that of other countries.

Higher education institutions in Germany today are of three main types. Universities offer strong theoretical and academically-oriented degree programs and a broad range of disciplines; some, such as medical schools and colleges of education, specialise in particular subject areas. Universities of applied sciences offer strongly practice-oriented instruction: internships and practical semesters form an integral part of degree programs. Colleges of art, film and music offer instruction in arts-related areas, including fine arts, acting, dance, industrial and fashion design, graphic art, instrumental music and singing. There are now 423 state-accredited institutions of higher education in some 180 towns and cities around Germany, offering over 17,000 degree programs. Of the almost 2.6 million students enrolled in a German higher education institution in the 2013/14 winter semester, 1.7 million were enrolled at a university,

880,000 at a university of applied sciences, 35,000 at a college of art, film and music, 25,000 at a college of theology, and 2500 at a college of education.

In accordance with the principle of cultural sovereignty articulated in Germany's Basic Law of 1949, primary responsibility for legislation and administration in the areas of education, science and culture rests not with the Federal Government but with the states. Public higher education institutions in Germany are therefore maintained by the states and receive the majority of their funding from them. Funds for staff and material costs and for investments in buildings and major equipment are supplied from the budget of either the Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs or the Ministry of Science and Research in the respective state. In 2010 the German public sector spent EUR 22.6 billion on higher education institutions; the states contributed just under 86 percent of that amount, and the rest came from federal funds.

Reforms to the Basic Law in 2006, intended to increase the efficiency of the legislative process and distinguish more clearly between federal and state legislative powers, eliminated one of the federal government's few remaining powers in the field of higher education, that of formulating framework provisions, and converted the fostering and funding of university and non-university research facilities and projects from a solely federal responsibility to one shared by federal and state governments. The same reforms transferred responsibility for the construction of higher education institutions, previously a joint federal-state responsibility, entirely to the states. The states were granted compensation payments from the federal budget until 2019.

In addition to those payments, public higher education institutions now have access to federal funding through three major joint programs run by the German Federal Government with the states: the Higher Education Pact 2020, the Excellence Initiative, and the Pact for Research and Innovation. The second and third are principally focused on supporting research. The Excellence Initiative is designed to support top-quality research and ensure that German higher education institutions remain internationally competitive. The Pact for Research and Innovation seeks to give security in financial planning to research organisations jointly funded by the Federal Government and the states – the Helmholtz Society, Max Planck Society, Fraunhofer Society, Leibniz Science Association, and German Research Foundation – by guaranteeing a five per cent funding increase per year between 2011 and 2015.

In contrast, the primary intention of the Higher Education Pact 2020 (HEP), established in December 2006 for the period 2007-2020, is to create more study places, both to address the expected increase in students wishing to undertake tertiary study and to meet Germany's growing demand for skilled workers. In addition to creating new study places, the states are expected to utilise federal funding supplied through the HEP to expand the so-called MINT subjects (Mathematics, Informatics, Natural and Technical Sciences) and promote equality of opportunities for women. A separate pillar of the HEP aims to strengthen university research by providing one-off payments (20 percent of project costs) for research projects supported by the German Research Foundation. The Federal Government committed a total of EUR 565.7 million to the HEP's initial program phase (2007-2010); in 2013, in response to projections suggesting that the HEP's second program phase (2011-2015) could expect some 300,000 more university entrants than previously predicted, federal funding for this phase was increased by EUR 2.2 billion, with a further EUR 2.7 billion planned by 2018. The states will contribute comparable amounts.

How does German spending on tertiary education compare with that of other countries? The most recent figures available indicate that spending per student at the tertiary level increased between 1995 and 2011 by an average of 10 percent in most OECD countries. Australia, where expenditure did not keep pace with expanding enrolments, was one of few exceptions to this trend. In total spending on tertiary education, OECD figures for 2011 show little difference between Germany and Australia. Total expenditure on tertiary education in Germany in 2011 amounted to USD 16,723 per student, compared to USD 16,267 in Australia and USD 13,958 on average across OECD countries.

Measured as a percentage of GDP, German expenditure on tertiary education in 2011 amounted to 1.3 percent, while Australian expenditure reached exactly the OECD average of 1.6 percent. If we focus specifically on public investment in tertiary education, however, a substantially different picture emerges. By international standards, Australia's public investment in tertiary education is low and falling: in 2011, with public investment at 0.7 percent of GDP, we ranked 30th out of 31 OECD countries, down from 25th out of 30 in 2010. Germany, by contrast, ranked 15th out of 31 OECD countries, with public investment at 1.0 percent of GDP. Private funding, which makes up the shortfall between public investment and

total expenditure, comes mainly from households, raising concerns about equity of access to education.

Differences in tuition fees largely explain the fact that private funding accounts for a far greater proportion of total expenditure on tertiary education in Australia than in Germany. On average, Australian public tertiary institutions in the academic year 2010/11 charged annual tuition fees of USD 3924. In contrast, tuition fees in Germany were banned under federal law until 2005, when the Federal Constitutional Court ruled in favour of moderate fees, coupled with affordable loans. Seven of Germany's sixteen states introduced annual fees of EUR 1000 in the following two years, only to abolish them again after mass student protests. Apart from a small administration fee for registration or the use of an institution's social facilities, the only higher education institutions in Germany currently charging tuition fees are private universities, which account for a mere 5 percent of student enrolments.

In Australia, the Higher Education Loans Programme (HELP) assists students to pay their fees. In Germany, students in the tertiary sector can receive financial assistance under the terms of the Federal Training Assistance Act, commonly known by its German acronym 'BAföG'. Of the amount paid (EUR 670 per month maximum, increasing to EUR 735 per month maximum from the start of the 2016/17 academic year), half is provided as a non-repayable grant, while the other half is an interest-free state loan. In the year 2014, 647,000 higher education students in Germany received financial assistance amounting in total to EUR 2.3 billion.

Peter Woelert (2014) has suggested that the differences in public investment in tertiary education outlined above can largely be explained by differences in "how Australia and Germany view education". He argues that whereas Australia has in recent decades "seen a considerable shift toward conceiving of higher education primarily in terms of an 'industry'", with the result that "universities have become increasingly regarded as corporate organisations competing in the local and international service economy" rather than "social institutions providing orientation to society", in Germany "universities tend to be primarily regarded as vital infrastructure for the economy at large". The German view is supported by recent OECD figures concluding that investing in tertiary education pays off not only for individuals, who benefit from improved employment chances and higher earnings, but also for the public at large: across OECD coun-

tries, the net public return on investment in tertiary education is almost three times the amount of public investment for a man, and for a woman almost twice that amount. Whether the Australian public can be encouraged to accept this as a justification for higher taxes is a separate question – Melbourne University's Vice-Chancellor Glyn Davis (2015), for example, is pessimistic on this point – but in my view, it is imperative that we continue to make the argument for greater public investment in tertiary education. The quality and accessibility of Australia's higher education system and our intellectual, economic and social wellbeing are at stake.

### *References and further reading*

Burkhart, Simone; Manow, Philip; Zibblatt, Daniel (2010) A More Efficient and Accountable Federalism? An Analysis of the Consequences of Germany's 2006 Constitutional Reform. In Moore, Carolyn; Jacoby, Wade (eds) *German Federalism in Transition: Reforms in a Consensual State* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge), 16-34.

Davis, Glyn (2015): Why I support the deregulation of higher education. *The Conversation*, 28 January, online <https://theconversation.com/glyn-davis-why-i-support-the-deregulation-of-higher-education-36766>.

Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst e.V. (DAAD) (n.d.) Study in Germany: Land of Ideas, online <https://www.study-in.de/en/>.

Federal Ministry of Education and Research (2013) Higher Education Pact for more university entrants, online <http://www.bmbf.de/en/6142.php>.

Hotson, Howard (2014) Germany's great tuition fees U-turn. *Times Higher Education*, 13 February, online <https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/features/germanys-great-tuition-fees-u-turn/2011168.article>.

Kehm, Barbara (2014) How Germany managed to abolish university tuition fees. *The Conversation*, 13 October, online <https://theconversation.com/how-germany-managed-to-abolish-university-tuition-fees-32529>.

Lohmar, Brigitte; Eckhardt, Thomas (eds) (2014) *The Education System in the Federal Republic of Germany 2012/2013. A description of the responsibilities, structures and developments in education policy for the exchange of information in Europe*. Bonn: Secretariat of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany, online [http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/doc/Dokumentation/Bildungswesen\\_en\\_pdfs/dossier\\_en\\_ebook.pdf](http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/doc/Dokumentation/Bildungswesen_en_pdfs/dossier_en_ebook.pdf)

Mechan-Schmidt, Frances (2014), German reforms give students 'substantial' financial boost. *Times Higher Education*, 2 Oct, online <https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/german-reforms-give-students-substantial-financial-boost/2016024.article>.

OECD (2014) *Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators*, online <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/eag-2014-en>.

Woelert, Peter (2014) Why our university funding debate wouldn't make sense to Germans. *The Conversation*, 22 October, online <https://theconversation.com/why-our-university-funding-debate-wouldnt-make-sense-to-germans-33077>.

We invite our readers to explore Learningguild's extensive website at

[learningguild.org.au](http://learningguild.org.au),

and especially earlier issues of this twice-yearly magazine, and its titled supplements, listed at 'Publications', and five recent pairs, at 'Certificate', of our examination paper set for the Learningguild Certificate in Reasoning and Expression and the related report.

If you live in Australia, and are not yet a member of Learningguild, we invite you to become one (see p.7). The subscription is \$11 for a calendar year (new subscriptions from November 1 count for the following year). Couples pay \$16.50, and further members of a family \$5.50. We are grateful for donations, often added to subscriptions. Our BSB is 063 238, and account number 1027 2020.

If you live in another country, you may become a member of Learningguild without any subscription. It may be that you have provided hospitality and/or assistance to members, or simply that you undertake to write to Dr John Howes (the President, who edits *Learningguild Letter*), or his wife Margaret, or the Vice-President Dr Max Stephens, or the Secretary Milan Radoš, or another Australian member at least once a year. Tell John that you would like to be a member.

All members are asked to let us know whether they would like paper copies of *Learningguild Letter*, which we are happy to post on request, or simply notification that a new issue is on the website.

Our email address is [learningguild@gmail.com](mailto:learningguild@gmail.com) and the postal address 23 Fallon Street, Brunswick, Victoria 3056, Australia. Brunswick is a suburb of Melbourne, about four kilometres north of the city centre, and easily reached by train or tram. We welcome visitors, and suggest they phone us at (03) 9380 5892. Fallon Street (Melway 29F8) runs north from Union Street, which can be reached at Jewell station on the Upfield railway line, or by the 19 tram at Stop 20 on Sydney Road, or the 55 tram at Stop 30 on Grantham Street.