

# Sea of Faith

Exploring Values, Spirituality and Meaning

[www.sof.org.nz](http://www.sof.org.nz)

## Conference 2015

Something will turn up!



The future is all bad!



## MICAWBER *OR* CASSANDRA?

Responding to an increasingly  
uncertain future.

**Friday 2 October  
to Sunday 4 October 2015**

**St Cuthbert's College,  
122 Market Road,  
Epsom, Auckland**



# The Timetable

October 2015

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

## FRIDAY 2 October

12:30–1:30	Committee meets over lunch
1:00–1:45	Registration. Tea and Coffee available
2:00–2:30	Conference Opening
2:30–3:30	Keynote: Sir Lloyd Geering – <i>The World To Come</i>
3:30–4:00	Afternoon Tea
4:00–5:00	Core Group
5:00–6:00	A.G.M.
6:00–7:00	Happy Hour
7:00–8:00	Dinner

## SATURDAY 3 October

7:00	Meditation space open
7:30–8.30	Breakfast and prepare own Packed Lunch
8:30–9:30	Keynote: Anjum Rahman – <i>Beyond East and West, in search of a Global culture</i>
9:30–10:30	Core Group
10:30–11:00	Morning Tea
11:00–12:00	Keynote: Kennedy Graham – <i>Confronting our souls to save our hides: a global perspective on an uncertain future.</i>
12:00–1:00	Core Group
1:00	Lunch
1:30–6:00	Visits (see below) or these Workshops
	1:30–3:00 David Hines – <i>Bible in Schools, no: Teaching about all beliefs, yes</i>
	3:30–4:00 Afternoon Tea
	4:00–5:30 Tom Hall – <i>Cassawber Micandra, aka St. Paul.</i>
6:00–7:00	Happy Hour
7:00–8:00	Dinner
8:00–10:00	<b>Entertainment</b> — A surprise package giving opportunity for participatory fun, music and competition.

## SUNDAY 4 October

7:00	Meditation space open
7:30–8.30	Breakfast and prepare own Packed Lunch
8:30–9:30	Keynote: Rod Oram – <i>The Theology of Economics</i>
9:30–10:30	<b>Core Group</b>
10:30–11:00	Morning Tea
11:00–12:30	Panel Discussion
12:30–1:00	Conference Wind Up and Introduction to Conference 2016
1:00	Packed Lunch and Departure
1:30	New Steering Committee Meets

# Micawber or Cassandra?

## Responding to an increasingly uncertain future

CLIMATE CHANGE IS ONLY THE MOST VISIBLE AND URGENT OF SEVERAL INTERLOCKING CRISES: overpopulation, resource depletion, and pollution (terrorism, wars and financial crises are downstream effects of these crises). Although the price of oil is currently depressed at \$US63 a barrel, after peaking at almost \$150 and being over \$100 over the last five years, the oil supply is finite and being used up at an alarming rate. Experts tell us we need to lower atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> to 350 ppm in order to restrict warming to 2 degrees. Beyond this, we are likely to trigger tipping points that lead to positive feedback loops, bringing with them crop failures and a rise in sea level of meters, making millions homeless.

But how to respond? Conference needs to remind us of the current situation, and explore ways of responding to it. The March newsletter outlined a variety of responses. The following is another attempt.

**Deniers:** 13% of New Zealanders are climate change skeptics; they deny that climate change is human-induced. Most of the rest of us mostly continue life as usual, as if nothing need change.

**Optimists** trust, like Micawber, that “something will turn up.” Science, so powerful in solving problems, could give us cold fusion (abundant non-polluting energy), or geoengineering solutions that reverse global warming.

**Pessimists**, like Cassandra, prophesy doom and often, like James Lovelock, regard the battle as already lost. We are too dependent on deregulated capitalism for wealth and growth to live a simple lifestyle and too stupid as a species for concerted global action. But almost nobody wants to listen to such depressing news. Since we can't prevent, the best we can do is mitigate the effects.

**Activists** still hope. They are at work protesting against deep sea drilling, fracking, coal and tar sands oil. They tend to think, “If only we could change the others, everything will be OK.” But extractivist industries exist because there are eager consumers.

**Austerity advocates** hope that by dialling back our own consumption, we can avert the crisis. It's no use prospecting new sources of oil if we are still consuming carbon fuels.

Political moves to address the crisis have been a depressing failure. Negotiations towards a climate treaty began 1990 but global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are now (2013) 61% higher. Global emissions increased by 5.9% in 2010. A carbon tax was abandoned in Australia and carbon trading schemes are failures, with the market price of carbon collapsing to \$1.06 per tonne in 2012. Free trade agreements are binding, but climate change agreements are voluntary.

Conference will look at what we are facing and explore different ways of responding.

*Laurie Chisholm, Chairperson*



# The Papers

**Sir Lloyd Geering**

***Keynote: The World to Come***

During the 20th century the focus of attention in the Western world shifted from the 'life after death' to the 'life before death'. The last words of the Nicene Creed - "The World to come"- have taken on a new meaning. They now refer to the kind of world that we humans are building for ourselves. Or are we simply destroying it through ignorance? Since only an infinitesimal number understand and acknowledge our current critical situation the human species may be walking blindly towards its own extinction.

**Anjum Rahman**

***Keynote: Beyond East and West—in search of a Global culture***

The evolution of transportation systems in the last 150 years has meant that migration has become much easier across ever-greater distances. At the same time, countries have had their borders redefined due to colonisation, world wars, localised conflicts & independence struggles. These nation states, particularly the more affluent countries, have become ever more protective of their borders with tougher immigration laws and border security measures. Even so, populations in the West have become increasingly multi-cultural due to migration based on skills gaps in the job market and the drive to push down wages using migrant labour. At the same time, populations in the East have been bombarded with cultural messaging from the West in the form of movies, music, television programmes, globalised news services and social media.

Add to this the fact that climate change will affect poorer countries more strongly, creating an increasing surge of climate refugees seeking safety, food, employment, and shelter in more affluent countries. In an increasingly commercialised and mobilised world where individual cultures and traditions meld and develop in response to the changes outlined above, do the differences between East and West carry much significance; or are they constructs that prevent us from seeking globalised solutions to global problems such as climate change and fair resource allocation?

Perhaps it is time to work on a global culture, but what would such a culture look like and how would it be upheld?

## **Kennedy Graham**

***Keynote: Confronting our souls to save our hides: a global perspective on an uncertain future.***

After ten millennia of the Holocene, we have entered the Anthropocene where the fate of the planet and its life-forms is in our hands. After five millennia of recorded history, we have entered what the UN Secretary-General has called the 'global age'. But technology is outstripping our political evolution. Our ability to plan rationally and inclusively for an uncertain future is proving inadequate before the magnitude and pace of such change.

The 20th century CE was the apogee of the international era, with international relations being loosely handled by a multitude of competitive sovereign nation-states. The 21st century is witnessing the emergence of global problems, with 20th international organisation, principles and law proving incapable of finding solutions. The situation requires a sea-change in mental framework, moral compass and political identity - across all nations, among all humans. Underlying this there must be an awakening spiritual and cosmological self-perception. To save our hides, or those of our grand-children, we need to confront our souls - perhaps the collective human soul. We need to explore how we might do this - how to steer a course between Micawber and Cassandra for collective (political) salvation.

## **Rod Oram**

***Keynote: The Theology of Economics***

The term economics is derived from the ancient Greek for housekeeping. Yet, the economics we practice today serve us poorly in our two most important housekeeping roles - of nurturing families and thus a strong and effective society, and of guiding our relationship with our ecosystem, our planetary home. We undervalue the former role, and exploit the latter role. But economics that help us develop right relationships with each other and the ecosystem would enrich lives for all in truly sustainable ways, and enliven our theology.

## **Noel Cheer**

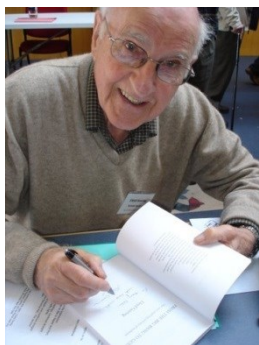
***Panel Discussion***

All of the available Keynote Speakers are brought together into an on-stage discussion chaired by Noel Cheer. Provision will be made for the audience to ask questions.



# The Keynote Speakers

## Sir Lloyd Geering



Professor Sir Lloyd Geering was born in Canterbury in 1918 and educated in Otago. He holds Honours degrees in Mathematics and Old Testament Language and Literature. Ordained as a Presbyterian minister, he served in Kurow, Dunedin and Wellington. He held Chairs of Old Testament Studies at theological colleges in Brisbane and Dunedin before being appointed as the foundation Professor of Religious Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. From this he retired in 1984. The University of Otago awarded him an Honorary D.D. in 1976 and he received a C.B.E. in the 1987 New Year Honours, PCNZM in 2001 and ONZ in 2007.

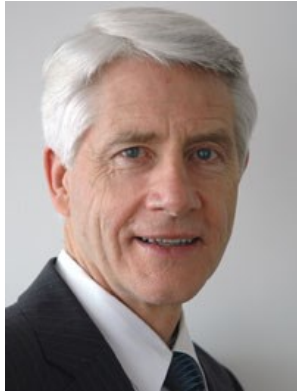
His major publications include "God in the New World" (1968), "Resurrection - a Symbol of Hope" (1971), "Faith's New Age" (1980), "In the World Today" (1988), "Tomorrow's God" (1994), "The World to Come" (1999), 'Christianity without God' (2002), 'Wrestling with God' (2006), 'Coming back to Earth' (2009), 'Such is Life!' (2010), 'From the Big Bang to God' (2013), 'Reimagining God' (2014).

## Anjum Rahman

Anjum has been living in Hamilton for 42 years, arriving in this city at the age of 5 in 1972. She has done all her schooling here and has a Bachelor and Masters in Management Studies from the University of Waikato. Both of her children were born at Waikato Hospital. She is a fully qualified chartered accountant with 20 years of practical experience providing services to small and medium size businesses and farming operations. She also serves voluntarily as treasurer and/or board member for a variety of not-for-profit organisations including Free FM (Hamilton's community access radio station), the Waikato Interfaith Council, and Ethnic New Zealand Trust. She has currently taken on a second job as the Strategic Manager of Shama (Hamilton Ethnic Women's Centre), an organisation that provides social support services for ethnic women and their families. This includes family violence services, advocacy, settlement support and lifeskills classes. She is a political and human rights activist, a feminist, and a person who works continuously on social and cultural change with the aim of creating a more socially just and inclusive society.



## Kennedy Graham



Kennedy Graham was born in his parent's home in Remuera, Auckland, a year after World War II. He attended universities in Auckland, Wellington and Boston, with a B. Com. in economics & accounting, BA in political science, and MA and PhD in international relations. He was a visiting fellow at Cambridge University and visiting professor at the College of Europe, and has taught international relations and international law at Victoria and Canterbury. He

served as a NZ diplomat and as a UN official, living and working in Europe, Asia, North America and the Middle East. He has been a member of the NZ Parliament since 2008, and is founding director of the NZ Centre for Global Studies. He has written five books, including *The Planetary Interest: A New Concept for the Global Age* (Taylor & Francis/Routledge; London/New York; 1999).

## Rod Oram

Rod Oram has 40 years' experience as an international business journalist. He has worked in Europe and North America for leading publications such as the Financial Times of London. His FT career spanned 18 years (1979-1997) as an editor and writer based in London and New York. Rod has also travelled extensively in North America, Europe and Asia.



Rod and his family emigrated from the UK to New Zealand in 1997. They worship at St Andrew's, Epsom. Rod was a lay canon in the Chapter of Holy Trinity Cathedral, Auckland. He is currently a diocesan and general synod representative and active in those bodies on issues such as same gender relationships, the Living Wage and fossil fuel divestment.

Rod is currently a columnist for the Sunday Star-Times; a regular broadcaster on radio and television; and a frequent public speaker on business and economic issues. He was Editor of the Business Herald section of the New Zealand Herald, 1997-2000.

For more than a decade, Rod has been helping fast-growing New Zealand companies through his involvement with The ICEHOUSE, the entrepreneurship centre at the University of Auckland's Business School.

Penguin published in 2007 his book on the New Zealand economy, *Reinventing Paradise*.

He was named the Landcorp Agricultural Communicator of the Year for 2009.

In 2010, Rod was the winner in the individual category in the *Vero Excellence in Business Support Awards* and was Columnist of the Year in the consumer category in the national magazine awards for his columns in *Good*, a consumer sustainability magazine.

Rod was a founding trustee and chairman of the Akina Foundation, which helps social enterprises develop their business models in areas of sustainability. He remains very active with the foundation.



## The Panel Discussion

### Noel Cheer

Well known to all Sea of Faith members as the Newsletter Editor and to Conference participants as the Panel Chairperson, Noel has chaired the now traditional and celebrated Conference Closing Panels since 1997. Early in his career Noel took an interest in public speaking which paved the way for his involvement in the spoken media. Since his retirement in 1997, Noel has hosted or chaired current affairs and political discussions on regional television in both Wellington and Auckland. Until late 2013 he hosted "In Conversation" on Auckland's Triangle Television where he recorded 289 episodes over 7 years. Noel has a wide general knowledge and an ongoing interest in the changes that take place in the expression of religion. His debating and television interviewing experience ensures that this panel will be both informative and highly entertaining.

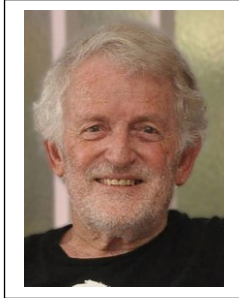




# Saturday Afternoon Workshops

On Saturday afternoon many Conference attendees will choose to go on one of the planned excursions listed below. Those who choose not to are offered the opportunity to listen to one or both of these speakers.

## David Hines



Christian Atheist & Public relations officer, Secular Education Network

***"Bible in Schools, no: Teaching about all beliefs, yes"***

## Tom Hall



Friend and publishing colleague of Lloyd Geering from the United States.

***"Cassawber Micandra, aka St. Paul".***

Paul warned of the impending end of the age, and in the face of major crises managed to "turn up" a divine sanction to get himself out of trouble.



The Optimist believes that our's is  
the best of all possible worlds.  
The Pessimist fears that he is right.

# Visits and Activities – Saturday

## Afternoon Events

### The Auckland Experience

For those who would like to see some of the beauties of Auckland. This will include a taxi van trip to and from the downtown Ferry Buildings, a return-trip ferry ride on the Waitemata harbour to Devonport and a visit to the National Naval Museum in Devonport. Nearby the museum is the Museum Cafe looking out over the harbour which is superb for a mid-afternoon coffee. Entry to the Museum is free. Travel on the ferry is free for Gold Card holders, but the taxi van will cost \$10 per person for the return trip.

### Earthsong Collective

A visit to an Eco community housing project at Ranui (18 km west of Auckland). The cost per person is \$25 and this includes a tour of the site, a presentation (covering the history, philosophy, environmental aspects of the design, and social aspects of consensus decision making and living together as a community) and a visit inside one of the eco-homes. The visit is dependent on getting a minimum number of 7 people. If the number of persons choosing the visit is small we hope to accommodate people in cars from the Auckland Group. If the number is too large we will ask people to travel by train (free for Gold Card holders ) but this will take much longer and is less convenient.



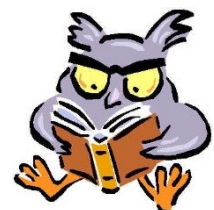
## Saturday Evening Entertainment

A surprise package giving opportunity for participatory fun, music and competition.



## Bookstall

Unity Books will provide a book stall. The opening times will be notified at the Conference as their full-time attendance for the 3 days is not practical.



# Travel and Accommodation

St Cuthbert's College, founded in 1915, is a private non-denominational day and boarding school for girls, located in Epsom, Auckland. The school, named after the Northumbrian monk-bishop Saint Cuthbert, serves Years 1 to 13.

## Public transport

Buses go along Market Rd and Manukau Rd and anyone wishing to use them can check details at <https://at.govt.nz/bus-train-ferry/bus-services/>

## Where to Park

Cars for persons staying on site can most easily enter from Wapiti Avenue (off Market Rd) to access Melrose for dropping off luggage. Some parking is available on site near Wapiti Ave and when that is full people should use St Cuthberts' underground carpark the entrance for which is on Market Rd about 40m from St Cuthberts' main entrance. We will have signs and dedicated traffic wardens on site to direct people where to go.

## Accommodation at St Cuthberts

Melrose House contains single and double rooms that have doors and are therefore private. If attendees prefer single or double rooms these will be allocated in the order that we receive bookings. Once the single/double accommodation has been used we will have to use the cubicles.

## Accommodation at Motels

<i>Name</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Phone</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Ranfurly Evergreen Motel	285 Manukau Road, Epsom		<a href="http://ranfurlymotel.co.nz">ranfurlymotel.co.nz</a>
Cornwall Park Motor Inn	317 Manukau Road, Epsom	09-638 6409	<a href="http://cornwallpark-motorinn.co.nz">cornwallpark-motorinn.co.nz</a>
Parklane Motor Lodge	222 Green Ln W, Epsom	09-630 2602	<a href="http://parklane-hotel.co.nz">parklane-hotel.co.nz</a>
Epsom Motel	232 Green Lane West, Epsom	09-630 5641	<a href="http://epsommotel.co.nz">epsommotel.co.nz</a>
Abella Court Motel	224 Green Ln W, Epsom	09-638 9059	<a href="http://abellacourtmotel.com">abellacourtmotel.com</a>
Best Western Great South Road Motor Lodge	112 Great South Road, Epsom	09-520 5509	<a href="http://aucklandmotels.net.nz">aucklandmotels.net.nz</a>
Knights Inn	234 Green Lane West, Epsom	09-630 8899	<a href="http://knightsinn.co.nz">knightsinn.co.nz</a>
Ascot Epsom Motel	92 Great South Road, Epsom	09-520 4833	<a href="http://ascotepsom.co.nz">ascotepsom.co.nz</a>
Rayland Epsom Motel	98 Great South Road, Epsom	09-520 0330	<a href="http://raylandepsom.co.nz">raylandepsom.co.nz</a>
Tudor Court Motor Lodge -Newmarket	108 Great South Road, Epsom	09-523 1069	<a href="http://tudor.co.nz">tudor.co.nz</a>

