

# **SPIRITUALITY FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

**SOFiA 2021 Annual Conference**

**St Andrews on The Terrace, Wellington**

**Friday 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2pm**

**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> November, 8:30am**



# **SOFiA**

**Exploring Values,  
spirituality & meaning**

***"Sea of Faith in Aotearoa: A network of people of all faiths and none, who explore religious thought non-dogmatically."***

**Web: [sofia.org.nz](http://sofia.org.nz)**

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

## FRIDAY 5 November

12.30	Registration Desk opens
2:00	Conference Opening, Mihi/Welcome, – Rob McKay/Steve Collard
2:10	Introduction to the theme by members of SOFiA Committee
2:30	Core group - Meet and greet
2:45	AFTERNOON TEA
3:00	Black Theology in African-American Music – illustrated by blues, gospel, soul, and reggae by John Thornley (Intro – Bob McKay)
4:00	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
4:45	Dinner time (eating out )
7:30	1 <sup>st</sup> Keynote – Ian Harris - The Sir Lloyd Geering Lecture <i>Spirituality for an eco-human future.</i> (Intro – Pete Cowley)
8.30	TEA/COFFEE/BISCUITS AND SOCIALISING

## SATURDAY 6 November

8.50	Welcome
9.00	2 <sup>nd</sup> Keynote – Rob McKay (Intro – Brian Ellis)
9.40	Core Groups
10.10	MORNING TEA
10.30	3 <sup>rd</sup> Keynote – Pushpa Wood (Intro – Pete Cowley)
11.10	Core Groups
11.40	Youth Panel 2 x 15-20 minute talks
12:40	Core groups
1:10	Make your own roll lunch or sandwich lunch (includes time to get to the hall)
2.00	All speakers Panel Discussion – Chaired by Doug Sellman, previous SOFiA chair
3.30	Poroporoaki – Rob McKay
3.45	AFTERNOON TEA and informal farewells

# The Presenters

**Black Theology in African-American Music – illustrated by blues, gospel, soul, and reggae recordings.**

## Presented by John Thornley

**Bio:** John lives in Palmerston North. He is a Lay Preacher in the Methodist Church who explores the links between spirituality and popular music.

He offers workshops and talks to church and civic groups.

Examples are a 2000 talk on Bob Marley at Te Papa and a mid 2021 talk to a local Rotary group titled 'Growing Up with Rock Music' and illustrated by Little Richard and Ria Hall. Three articles on Rock Icons Johnny Cash, Bob Dylan, and Aretha Franklin were published in recent issues of the SOFiA Newsletter.

**Précis:** The theological base of his thinking about popular music comes from diverse sources: the importance of social issues in Methodist Church life and witness; Theopoetics – exploring spirituality through poetry and story; Black Theology as found in the writings of the US theologian James Cone (1938-2018), including *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* and *Martin & Malcolm & America – a Dream or a Nightmare*.

For over 400 years the music of the African-American people can be summed up as either Seduction or Subversion, and sometimes it's a mix of both! John says 'I'm happy to have my sexuality fired by Black Music – it's a good-humoured fantasy world. And I'm challenged by the Truth-to-Power messages in singers like Bob Marley and Aretha Franklin. As the jazz photographer Valerie Wilmer puts it, in the title for one of her books, the music is 'as serious as your life'.



## The Sir Lloyd Geering lecture given by Ian Harris

### **“Spirituality for an eco-human future”**

**Bio:** Ian Harris's career straddles the worlds of journalism and the church. Born in Christchurch, he grew up in a Methodist parsonage, and gained an honours degree in English at Auckland University. Since then he has headed the English Department at Satya Wacana Christian University in Salatiga, Indonesia, edited *The New Zealand Methodist*, been assistant editor of the *Auckland Star*, served as Director of Communication for the Presbyterian Church, and been editorial writer for Wellington's *The Dominion*.



In 1990 Ian was instrumental in founding the Ephesus Group in Wellington, which explores new ways of understanding and expressing Christian faith in this millennium, and in 1993 became the first chairman of the New Zealand Sea of Faith Network's steering committee.

Ian's prime interest is in reimagining the Christian way in a secular society, reflected in his columns over 20 years in *The Dominion/Dominion Post*, the *Otago Daily Times* and *Touchstone*, his books *Creating God*, *Re-creating Christ*, *New World New God*, and *Hand in Hand*, and two volumes of *The Ephesus Liturgies*, produced with his late wife, Jill. He lives in Wellington.

**Précis:** In *Spirituality for an Eco-human Future*, Ian confronts the role religion has played in undermining the relationship between humankind and planet Earth. He then notes a tectonic shift in Christian understanding of that relationship, highlighting contemporary moves towards an ecological spirituality, with examples from New Zealand. What role, he asks, can the Sea of Faith play in renewing our human participation *in the grand liturgy of the universe*

## Address by Rob McKay

### “Interrelationship with Creation”

**Bio:** I am a 4th generation Mormon, educated at the Mormon College down in Hamilton, Temple View and I served a 2 year mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. I started ministry in prison work under Father Mark Beale (Anglican) back in 2008 at Auckland Women's Correction Facility in Wiri - South Auckland participating in Christian ministry to women inside the wire. That was interrupted with me joining the NZ Army as chaplain in 2008- 2011 where i was trained for 3 months down in Waikouaiti and served as army chaplain to my unit at Auckland North 3rd Battalion after which in 2012 I joined the organisation PARS Incorporated where I continued working with prisoners who were released into our care. In 2014 I joined a Maori organisation under Willie Jackson called MUMA where once again I took up a position as field worker to released prisoners with the task of finding them accommodation and all those essentials itemized in Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In 2020 during Covid 19 Corona Virus I was made redundant for several months but soon found a job back at PARS Incorporated working and now living with released prisoners. At the moment I spend 4 days out of five going into Mt Eden Correction Facility doing assessments with potential clients/prisoners who may need our help once released.



**Précis:** His talk reflects his Maori understandings of spirituality, as they provide a foundation for his social work.

## Address by Dr Pushpa Wood ONZM

### “What role can spirituality play in securing a sustainable future for then next generation.”

**Bio:** Pushpa is the Director of the NZ Financial Education and Research at Massey University. Dr Wood was appointed as an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the Queen’s 90th Birthday Honours List for 2016 for her services to financial literacy and interfaith relations. She is the first person in the country to be awarded such an honour for services to interfaith relations and financial literacy. She is also the first Indian women in the country to be awarded with such a high honour and in two areas.



Dr Wood is one of the founding and life members of the Wellington Interfaith Council and has been involved in interfaith activities for over 35 years. She is passionate about encouraging and developing initiatives that promote social harmony in various forms including religious and spiritual harmony.

**Précis:** There has always been a tension between development, economic progress and spirituality. To further complicate this tension, religion and spirituality have often been used interchangeably. Thus, it is important to explore the relationship between spirituality and sustainable future, whether it be an environmental, financial, political or social future.

While observing and participating in discussions among various groups, one thing is evident, that all faiths/religious traditions and spiritual belief systems have one thing in common - they assign the role of ‘guardianship’ to humans thus giving us the responsibility of maintenance and protection of this world. The role of interfaith dialogue has never been more important than now. The havoc created by COVID-19 in some ways has highlighted the need for spiritual belief and religious practices in our day to day life.

Compared to religion, spirituality has more of an 'individual' flavour than a 'communal loyalty' flavour. It is important to note that one does not have to belong to a 'religion' to lead a spiritual life. Organised form of religion in some ways can inhibit one's spiritual path and it is this belief that given rise to a "Spiritual but not religious" (SBNR), also known as "Spiritual but not religious" (SBNA), popular phrase.

An individual and collective spiritual belief system is not and does not have to be at odds with the practice of 'progress and the materialistic world'. Where it is at odds is with the 'profit and benefit at the cost of stakeholders of this this world. Almost every religion and belief system in its essence teaches its followers to respect and live in harmony with nature, look after those who cannot look after themselves and protect those who cannot protect themselves. We need to translate this into economic and environmental terms, making a profit from your investment is not forbidden but when profit becomes the sole focus of the progress and individual interests start to take over the wellbeing of society, and the interests of humanity and nature become secondary, that is when inequality, injustice, damage to environment and poverty start to rear its ugly head!! That is where spirituality can play a guiding role to move towards a sustainable future for all.

## Youth Panel address by Mustenser Qamar

### “Ignore the moral/spiritual link at our peril”

**Bio:** Mustenser Qamar is an Imam and Minister of Religion of the International Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He has a deep interest in comparative religions and is also serving as the Secretary of the Wellington Interfaith Council.

**Précis:** Key points I have noted down for my address. I will give more details and examples when I speak:

- Whilst morals can be summarised as our dealings with one another, the same actions, when they relate to God, are called Spiritual.
- The physical and spiritual realm have a close link and are interconnected. Ignoring spirituality is already proving to have devastating effects across the world and therefore, there is a vital need to revisit this important aspect of life for a sustainable and bright future.



## Youth Panel address by Loo Connor

**Bio:** Loo (Elizabeth) Connor is a strategic communications consultant with a background in both science and spirituality.

She is the inaugural winner of the New Zealand Prime Minister's Science Communication Prize and has a Masters degree in Science Communication from Imperial College London and an Honours degree in Physics and Mathematics from Victoria University of Wellington.

**Précis:** When Loo was young she had a dream of starting a renaissance that would spread across the world, reuniting science, arts and spirituality and reconciling conflicts. She learnt how to meditate at age ten and was interested in philosophy and science. At Victoria University, she met her mentor, the great New Zealand scientist and visionary Sir Paul Callaghan and recognised her renaissance dream in his visions for Aotearoa, education and science. Paul gave Loo her first job, interviewing scientists and writing their stories. It was during this time that she discovered the power of storytelling to bring people to life and rekindle confidence and purpose.

For the past fifteen years Loo has worked as an independent consultant, helping a diverse range of groups across Aotearoa to find and communicate their visions, gain support for new ideas and communicate complex science. Alongside this, she has been on a spiritual adventure, searching for a spiritual practice and perspective that embraces both rationality and devotion and is able to meet the challenges of modern life with openness.







Philip Garside will have a stall at our conference with a selection of books and CDs for you to be tempted with.

### Eating places relatively close to St Andrews

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Cuisine</i>	<i>Average Cost</i>	<i>Distance Away</i>	
Jardin Grill (inside Sofatel)	11 Bolton St	European, Grill	\$\$\$\$	0	Booking preferred
Artisan (inside Bolton hotel)	12 Bolton St	Local, contemp, European	\$\$\$\$	0	
The Old Bailey	101 Lambton Quay	Bar, Pub, Gastropub	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.1	
The Churchill	132 Lambton Quay	Bar, Pub, British	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.1	Noisy
Bethel Woods	73 The Terrace	American, Bar, BBQ	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.1	Noisy
The Thistle Inn	3 Mulgrave St	Bar, Pub, Gastropub, NZ	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.4	Noisy
Aroy Thai Express	69 The Terrace	Thai	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.1	
Littel Penang	44 The Terrace	Malaysian	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.1	
1815 Cafe & Bar	208 McGinnity Street	Cafe, Contemp, NZ	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.2	
Leuven Belgian Beer Cafe	135 Featherston St	Belgian, Bar, European	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.4	
The Featherston	133 Featherston St	New Zealand	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.4	Noisy
The BacBencher	34 Molesworth St	Gastropub, NZ	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.3	Noisy
Honey Badger Saloon	125 Featherston St	NZ, Bar, Pub	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.4	
Spring Kitchen	203 Lambton Quay	Fusion, vegetarian	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.5	
The Long Bar	22 Brandon Street	Malay Cuisine	\$\$	0.4	
Junipers	142 Featherston Street	Beef/Fish	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.4	
Avida Bar	132 Featherston St	Spanish Tapas	\$\$ - \$\$\$	0.4	

<b>James Cook Grand Chancellor</b>	<b>147 The Terrace</b>	<b>European, Grill</b>	<b>\$ - \$\$\$</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>Reservations advised</b>
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### Accommodation possibilities

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Rating</i>	
James Cook Grand Chancellor	147 The Terrace	4.5	(
Rydges Wellington	75 Featherston St	4.5	(
IBIS	153 Featherston St	3.5	(
Novotel	133 The Terrace	4.5	(
Atura	24 Hawkstone St	3.5	(
Hotel Waterloo & Backpackers	1 Bunny Street	2	(
Quest Lambton Quay	43 The Terrace	3.5	(
Quest Atrium	154 The Terrace	3.5	(
Quest on The Terrace	120 The Terrace	3.5	(
Bolton Hotel	Cnr Bolton & Mowbray St	4.5	(
Citylife	300 Lambton Quay	3.5	(
Sofitel	11 Bolton St	4.5	(
Intercontinental	2 Grey St	4.5	(
Atura Wellington	24 Hawkstone St	4	(
St Pauls apartments	37 Pipatea St	3	(
Trinity Hotel	166 Willis St	4.5	(
Astelia Apartment Hotel	156 Willis St	4	(

## Map of the area surrounding St Andrew's

