

**JUSTICE AT THE
HEART OF LITURGY
QUESTIONS UNRESOLVED**



EDITED BY BRYAN CONES

Justice at the Heart of Liturgy

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Australian Journal of Liturgy

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Editorial

Bryan Cones, Editor



One benefit of a conference gathering for a journal editor is the abundance of content for future issues, and our January conference in Brisbane was no exception. This first issue of 2025 cannot contain it all; the second issue will also feature contributions shared at our gathering. My thanks to all the presenters who reworked their talks to appear in the journal.

The broad topic of our conference, ‘Justice at the Heart of Liturgy’, drew an equally broad range of approaches and topics. Our three keynote speakers, along with a response to each by Stephen Burns, each took a different tack on some matter of import. Gerard Moore’s historically funded investigation of the *lex* lying at the heart of that oft-quoted expression, *lex orandi, lex credenda*, unveils an imperial pedigree at odds with the kind of justice we seek now. His contribution leads off this issue, as it did the conference. Peter Catt, whose paper is not available for publication at this time, noted the complexity of the present moment and highlighted the danger of ‘tinkering’ around the edges lest we introduce unexpected or unwelcome consequences into the practice of our assemblies. Anita Monro’s reflections on worshipping on occupied land, which follows Moore in this issue, point out how easily that reality can be occluded and even reinforced when assemblies do not regularly acknowledge the dissonance between God’s reign and our reality through practices of confession and lament. Burns’s responses, collected in one essay, appreciate, expand, and occasionally collegially contest the keynoters’ points, gesturing toward paths that might lead to liturgies that provide a fleeting glimpse of the justice lying at an assembly’s heart.

Three further contributions draw attention to the practical realities in need of justice. Annie Brophy sets The Uniting Church in Australia's *Uniting in Worship 2* in dialogue with other Uniting sources, with special attention to that Church's Act2 Project, which seeks to map the UCA's future in a changed cultural landscape. Brophy laments the absence of liturgy from the Act2 process, arguing that church's next 'act' must include updating resources to ritualise it, especially in the matter of gender, acknowledgment of First Peoples, and the legacy of colonisation. Jason McFarland's and Angela McCarthy's presentations on conferences held in Assisi, Italy, advocating for a proposed ecumenical 'feast of creation' describe a shared struggle to develop common prayer and common language to address the injustice unveiled in the climate crisis. At the time of this writing, members of our academy are again in Assisi to continue the conversation.

This issue of the journal also includes some changes to the list of officers and editorial panel. At the conference, members approved new governing documents incorporating the academy, which is now governed by a committee whose members are listed near the inside cover. The journal continues to be guided by an editorial panel. Two of its members, Charles Sherlock and Howard Harris, have completed decades of service. (Charles remembers working with the first editor of the journal, Ray Hartley.) Joining the panel are Clare Schwantes and Adam Couchman. Clare completed her doctoral research on 'A Liturgical Hermeneutic of Scripture' at the University of Queensland, published last year as *From Page to Proclamation: Interpreting Scripture in the Context of Liturgy* (and reviewed in this issue). She now works as director of Liturgy Brisbane and chair of the National Liturgical Council. Adam completed his PhD at the University of Divinity, focusing on Jesus as a worshipper in the light of the creeds, and outlining a 'theocentric' definition of worship, to be published soon. He is now academic dean at St Francis College, an Anglican theological college of the Diocese of Southern Queensland and a member college of the University of Divinity.

Finally, I offer my thanks to Sharon Boyd, who has for many years served as the journal's associate editor. That role is being taken up by my predecessor as editor, Angela McCarthy, to whom I also offer thanks.

The combination of a collegial gathering rich in challenging theological reflection along with the presence of emerging scholars—

including the two new members of the editorial panel—has left me feeling encouraged. We liturgical scholars and practitioners are facing a changed and challenging world, described well by contributors to this volume. Nevertheless, we continue to bring critical energy to this work we share, a work perhaps we feel called to do. It seems there is life in us yet.