Talking about Albert . . .

The Unfinished Story



Edited by Hilary D Regan

Talking About Albert . . .

Edited by Hilary D Regan

Talking About Albert . . .

The Unfinished Story

Edited by Hilary Regan

ATF THEOLOGY
Adelaide
2025

Text copyright © 2025 remains the individual authors and ATF Press for the collection. All rights reserved. Except for any fair dealing under the Copyright Act, no part of the publication may be reproduced by any means without prior permission. Inquiries should be made in the first instance with the publisher.

Cardijn Studies: On the Church in the World of Today
Volume 6, Number 2, 2025

The *Cardijn Studies* journal is a refereed journal which aims to document the history of the Jocist, Cardijn inspired, lay movements both historically and in the present day as well as the examining the rich tradition of Catholic Social teaching on the Church in the world of today. Articles cover a range of areas: the spirituality, methodology and the history of these traditions and movements in the Church and in society.

Editor: Hilary Dominic Regan

Editorial Board

- **Dr Kevin Ahern**, Professor of Religious Studies, Manhattan College, USA
- **Dr Ana Maria Bidegain**, Professor of Latin American Religions at Florida International University, USA
- **Fr Michael Deeb OP**, former IYCS Chaplain, South Africa
- **Fr Mark James OP**, former National YCS Chaplain in South Africa, South Africa
- **David Moloney**, professional historian, Cardijn Community Australia Executive Member
- **Dr Stefan Gigacz**, Secretary Cardijn Community, Australia

Business Manager, Editor and Publisher:
Mr Hilary Dominic Regan, ATF Press Publishing Group, PO Box 234, Brompton, SA 5007, Australia.
Email: hdregan@atf.org.au

ISBN:
978-1-923668-25-6 Soft
978-1-923006-39-3 Hard
978-1-923006-40-9 Epub
978-1-923006-41-6 PDF

SCAN ME

Published and edited by

ATF THEOLOGY

Making a lasting impact

An imprint of the ATF Press Publishing Group
owned by ATF (Australia) Ltd.
PO Box 234
Brompton, SA 5007
Australia
ABN 90 116 359 963
www.atfpress.com
Making a lasting impact

Table of Contents

1. Editorial 1
Hilary D Regan

2. The Dominican Legacy and Albert Nolan OP 5
Myke Mwale OP, Johannesburg

3. What Trigged Me in Reading the Book: What I Did Not Know Before . . . 7
Frank Chikane, Johannesburg

4. Launching *A Reluctant Prophet* 13
Peter-John Pearson, Cape Town

5. The Significance of Albert Nolan's Writings 17
Stephen Brislin, Cape Town

6. Nolan: The Reluctant Prophet 21
Gerald West, Pietermaritzburg

7. Launch of *Reluctant Prophet: Tributes to Albert Nolan OP* 25
Frank Brennan SJ, Melbourne

8. Launch in Adelaide, of *Reluctant Prophet: Tributes to Albert Nolan OP* 31
Mary Cresp RSJ, Adelaide

9. Launch of *Reluctant Prophet: Tributes to Albert Nolan OP* 35
Response to Mary Cresp RSJ
Bernadette Kiley OP, Adelaide

10. Launch of Reluctant Prophet 39
Monica Cavanagh RSJ, Sydney

11. In Appreciation for Albert Nolan, OP, Theologian 45
Donald Goergen OP, Chicago

12. My Seminary Years in Pretoria During Apartheid and Albert Nolan OP 49
Thulani D Magwaza, Chicago

13. Interview regarding Albert Nolan with Nicholas Punch OP 53
Interviewed by Scott Stein Kerchner OP, Chicago

14. Albert Nolan and the Prophet Amos 57
Joe Falkiner OP, Pietermaritzburg

15. How Two scholars Introduced me to the 'Historical Jesus'—And Sent me on a Lifelong Quest to Know More 65
James Martin SJ, New York

16. Albert Redivivus: The Listening Paragon, Johannesburg 69
Alex Bhiman, Johannesburg

17. Conversing as We Travel: *Reluctant Prophet: Tributes to Albert Nolan OP* 85
Terence Creamer, Johannesburg

18. *Reluctant Prophet* Prize Giving Acceptance Speech—31 May, 2024 89
Mike Deeb OP, Cape Town

Contributors 91

Cardijn Studies: On the Church in the World of Today: Volume 6/2 2025

Talking About Albert . . .

Hilary D Regan

In an article published in the *Weekend Australian* newspaper on the 3rd of August 2024 Australian journalist and commentator, Chris Ulhman wrote that 'Perhaps the Church still has an important role to play, but stripped back to its essence with the grime of the centuries scraped away. To once again be a small, revolutionary movement. To find its voice as a counterpoint to this anchorless age. But if it is to be redeemed the deeds of the faithful must match their words.' In the witness of the life and writings of Albert Nolan OP, it is clear that the option for the poor, the work for a just world, and of a Church of and for the poor in any society is not 'a small, revolutionary movement' and that thre Church does have 'an important role to play'.

In October 2025 Pope Leo's Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te* (I Have Loved You) completes an unfinished project of Pope Francis which as the 'option for the poor', the Church of the justice and transformation of society. While not referring to immigration or any country, or any person, his intent is clear.

As Dr Sandie Cornish has written in an article on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Religion and Ethics homepage Leo 'says we "need to go back and re-read the Gospel" rather than risk "replacing it with the wisdom of the world"'. She adds 'There can be no doubt that Leo XIV has in mind Christians—perhaps even some Catholic bishops—in the country of his birth who are loudly backing policies and politicians that blame, denigrate and target those made poor, pushed to the margins or experiencing vulnerability. But it would be a mistake to think that the Apostolic Exhortation is simply a letter to America. It is a challenge to Christians everywhere, especially those who are materially comfortable.'

Albert Nolan OP died in October of 2022 and in July 2023 a large book of 500 pages with over seventy contributors from around the world was launched in South Africa and then in various places: Australia (Melbourne, Sydney and Adelaide), Oxford and Chicago. This volume brings together many of those launch speeches plus some other pieces.

The book was published by ATF Press and UJ Press in Johannesburg published it for Southern Africa. In May 2024 the editors of the book, *Reluctant Prophet: Tributes to Albert Nolan OP*, fellow Dominicans Mike Deeb, Philippe Denis and Mark James received a prize for the book. The book received the prestigious South African Andrew Murray-Desmond Tutu Prize for Theological Publications. The book had been submitted by Wikus Van Zyl of UJ Press and was one of the seven short listed books from an original twenty-seven titles from fifteen publishers. The judges said that the book offered 'a comprehensive view of a life's journey for our time, and a freeing message of Christ to act fairly in today's world'.

The cover of this volume is a photo from the book prize ceremony in Cape Town and brings together many of the speeches at the launches from July 2023 to December 2023, plus the acceptance speech by Mike Deeb OP at the ceremony in Cape Town, plus other pieces written about the book.

Since the publication of the book, ATF Press has been working with the Vice Province of the Dominican Order in Southern Africa to reproduce some of Nolan's out of print books and put together some of his papers, and writings in various volumes. The process will take at least two years, but is yet another step in keeping Nolan's memory and writings alive. Nolan was theologian, chaplain to various Catholic groups, a writer and an activist.

Through the publication of *Reluctant Prophet* many people became aware that Nolan was an ANC operative, had a code name, '42'. From various things that have been said and written since the *Reluctant Prophet* book was published, the many connections between Nolan and Kallie Hanekom have become clearer. Kallie, was a student leader in Catholic circles and an ANC activist who had worked with Nolan when he was a student chaplain.[1]

1. See *Kalie Hanekom: A Man of the People,* in *Cardijin Studies* 5/2 (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2024).

Nolan was an anti-apartheid activist, but was also a champion of the Cardijn inspired 'Review of Life Method', and through this an advocate of the vocation of the lay person in the Church, of formation through action and reflection. His particular involvement was with students while other Dominicans in South Africa were involved with workers and the Young Christian Workers (YCW) in particular.[2]

In much of his writing we see Nolan was inspired by the Cardijn methodology but also the Cardijn theology. Nolan never met Cardijn but was influenced by him through his time as a student chaplain and from the time of his visit to Peru and meeting Gustavo Gutierrez and his encounters with Liberation Theology. Circles within circles of influence, Cardijn, Gutierrez and Liberation Theology which he then transferred to his work in South Africa.

This volume is yet another element in the development of understanding Nolan and his work, by talking about Albert. 'Talking about Albert, . . .' it is an unfinished story.

2. Joseph Falkiner OP was one example, see *A Priest for Workers*, Cardijn Studies 6/1 (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2025).