

# Christians for an Ethical Society

## Report 2020

Some words are repeated seemingly ad nauseam because no other word seems to fit, and yet in the repetition impact is lost. 2020 has been the year of 'unprecedented' events and experiences.

Logically if something is unprecedented, its consequence in the short and long term is unknown and not subject to prediction based on previous experience.

This is undoubtedly the case globally in relation to the pandemic and locally in relation to the bushfires. How has the frailty of the human condition contributed to this situation and does humanity have the capacity to act globally for a pathway out to a sustainable future?

- Will the younger generation face economic consequences which will permanently reduce previous expectations for wealth accumulation and life-style choices?
- Will people's experience of work be permanently altered with fewer needing or choosing to occupy office space and CBDs?
- Will provision of aged care now be radically transformed, will it be less institutionalised and more home provided. Where is the money to come from?
- Will communities of faith return to what had been assumed to be normal on Sunday mornings or has an unstoppable new experience of Church emerged?
- Can capitalism remain the same? Have perceptions of value changed to the extent that social capital is understood to hold pre-eminence, financial capital being its servant?
- Can democracies or even civilisations survive partisan politics anymore?
- What industries can, or even should, survive?
- Have we now passed some irreversible climatic tipping points and if so, what are the consequences?

Is there a right or wrong answer to these questions, or perhaps, is there a desirable or less desirable answer? Or does it not matter?

There cannot be an environment more in need of a network such as CES, but how are we to respond? It is reasonably clear that our accustomed modus operandi touches too few people and really touches the 'rustied on' of like mind.

The CES chair must be the one, more than most to give a lead in these circumstances. As I approach the end of my eighth decade I have not lost any passion or energy for engagement, but because of distance, age and more particularly cultural experience to do with my generation I do not feel capable of such leadership. I have no doubt that CES engagement must change quite radically. It must make use of social media of which I am not a user or fan.

Perhaps Twitter, Facebook and the like need to be the primary mode of engagement while physical forums are reserved for very special occasions.

As you know I run a blog. It pleases me that there are two main readerships which find it encouraging and energising. The first, clergy who desperately want to engage beyond a narrow piety too often associated with institutional leadership, and secondly those completely on the edge of faith who long for a Christianity with which they can meaningfully engage. This is a medium I enjoy, through which I can make a reasonable contribution, and which reaches a satisfying weekly audience.

I have also come close to publishing a book which is aimed at similar audiences.

I continue to absolutely believe in the importance of CES and especially its connection with the ACC&C. and although not wishing to serve on the executive I am always ready to make a contribution should it be felt I have something limited to offer.

**George Browning**

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