

2020 Australian Christian Book of the Year

**For the Love of God:
How the Church is Better and Worse
Than You Ever Imagined**
Natasha Moore, John Dickson,
Simon Smart & Justine Toh
Centre for Public Christianity
9780647530351

Would the world be better off without Christianity? This bold yet balanced appraisal of the impact of Christianity examines both the best and worst of what Christians have done over two millennia. Natasha Moore and her collaborators confront the failure of those who claimed to follow Christ but were responsible for the Crusades, the Inquisition and the abuse of children. The ease with which Christians through the ages have ignored both the teaching of Jesus and the dissenting voices of contemporary prophets is a caution. The authors also show how—when they obey Jesus—Christians have contributed to what is beautiful and beneficial in culture and society. In a time of social media echo chambers, fact-free opinion bubbles and divisive culture wars, this sort of fair and generous commentary is invaluable.

Judging criteria

The **Australian Christian Book of the Year Award** is given annually to a book written by an Australian citizen normally resident in Australia. The award recognises and celebrates excellence in Australian Christian writing. A short list is announced in July and the award is presented during August. The award carries a prize of \$3,000. Supplementary awards may be made. Entries are judged with an eye to the following:

Original nature of the work.

Literary style, including suitability for the target audience.

Competence and expertise displayed by the author in writing the book and examining the underlying thesis.

Design, layout, cover, text and illustrations.

Contribution that the book makes in meeting a need for Christian writing for the Australian situation and in the Australian market.

Judges

Darren Cronshaw pastors the Auburn Life Baptist Church in Melbourne. He has doctorates in practical theology and missiology and postgraduate qualifications in linguistics and education. He is Professor of Missional Leadership and Head of Research with the Australian College of Ministries and serves as a Chaplain with the Australian Army Reserve. Darren is married to Jenni; they have three children. He keeps fit with the Hawthorn Triathlon Club.

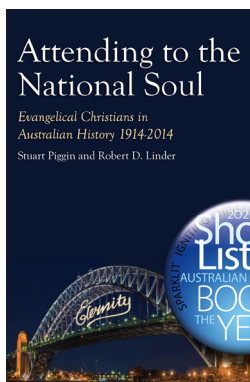
Judith Nichols has four children and fourteen grandchildren. She has a doctorate in classics and ancient history and qualifications in theology, missiology, education and linguistics. Judith and her late husband Tony ministered together in Indonesia, with Indigenous Australians at Nungalinga College and trained missionary candidates. She coordinates women's ministry at Dalkeith Anglican Church, Perth.

Barney Zwartz was a journalist and editor with The Age for thirty-two

years. He won several awards for his coverage of two papal conclaves in Rome, the clergy sexual abuse crisis and Islam. Barney retired in 2013 but still writes about classical music, opera and faith. Barney is married to author Morag Zwartz. They have four children.

Coordinator

Michael Collie
National Director
SparkLit

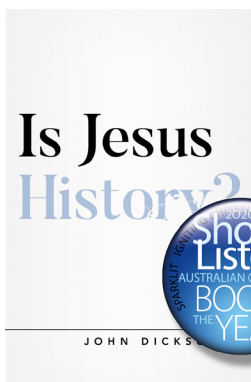


Shortlisted

Attending to the National Soul: Evangelical Christians in Australian History 1914–2014

Stuart Piggott &
Robert D. Linder
Monash University
9781925835366

In this superb sequel to the 2019 Australian Christian Book of the Year, the authors continue their landmark account of the profound yet unrecognised influence of evangelicals in shaping modern Australia. It begins with the legacy of Mary Bennett, a determined and outspoken campaigner for the rights of women and Indigenous people. This volume is replete with stories of long-forgotten Christians and their response to the challenges posed by world wars, the decline of the British empire, secularism and their expanding missionary ambitions. A fluent work of national and international importance.



Shortlisted

Is Jesus History?

John Dickson
The Good Book Company
9781784983659

Did Jesus really live? Does it matter? The cheeky title sets the tone and thesis of the book. The author employs the same archaeological and literary methods used for the recovery of other historical figures to demonstrate that believing in the historical Jesus and the biblical record of what he said and did is reasonable. He examines both Christian and contemporary sources and builds his case logically and gently. As always, Dickson is absorbing and accessible. Edifying for curious believers and perfect for doubters and enquirers.

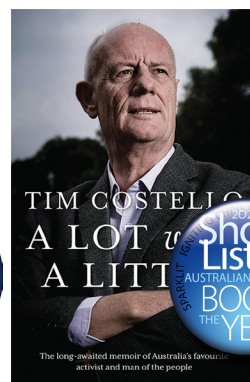


Shortlisted

I Will Avenge

P. Howard Smith
Morning Star Publishing
9780648453789

An angry and determined freedom fighter discovers freedom where she least expects it. After taking up arms in the Irish uprising at Vinegar Hill in 1798, Maggie Flannery is brutalised by British soldiers and authorities and transported to New South Wales. When Irish convicts rebel at Castle Hill in Sydney, Maggie is a servant in the house of Mrs Elizabeth MacArthur. This gripping yarn is based on meticulous research and honours the Irish contribution to Australian life. It deals thoughtfully with violence, suffering, revenge, justice, love and forgiveness, and the nature of God's providence during a period of which most Australians are ignorant.



Shortlisted

A Lot With a Little: The Long-Awaited Memoir from Australia's Favourite Activist and Man of the People

Tim Costello
Hardie Grant Books
9781743795521

An accomplished and respected leader explores what it means to be a Christian in contemporary Australia. Tim Costello traces his journey from a personal evangelical piety to his advocacy for the oppressed and leadership of World Vision. Many readers will be familiar with his upbringing in a Christian home in Melbourne's Bible belt and his work as a lawyer and Baptist pastor. However, this book is also an illuminating snapshot of a divided nation and the portrait of a family that embraces debate and difference. Costello's style is transparent and easy. There is much to admire and emulate.

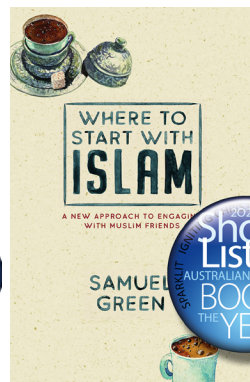
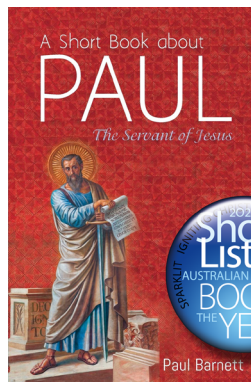
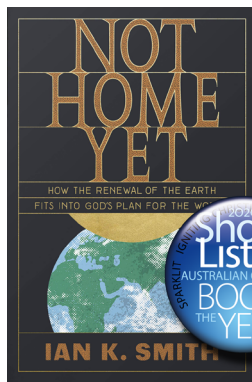


Shortlisted

Metanoia: A Memoir of a Born Again

Anna McGahan
Acorn Press
9780647519837

In this brave and honest book, an actor and playwright tells her story of destructive experiences with anorexia, drug use, promiscuity, cults, and disappointment. Her meeting with Jesus and her change of life are central to McGahan's transformation. Her miraculous yet ordinary experiences are not over. The book is a wrestling with faith and understanding, encouraging, and the founding of The Fellowship for the Performing Arts, neglected by mainstream churches. McGahan's personal and unique testimony to God's mercy.



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Shortlisted

Not Home Yet:
How the Renewal of the
Earth Fits into God's Plan
for the World
Ian K. Smith

Crossway
9781433562778

Theology matters. This timely book overturns erroneous and sentimental views of our eternal home that erode both our future hope and present stewardship of the earth. The author reminds Christians that our hope is in the resurrection and the new heaven and earth, not in becoming disembodied spirits. Smith expounds the profound and practical implications of God's mission to restore and redeem all things. Because God has not abandoned creation, neither must we disparage or abuse it. We can make no distinction between the sacred and secular; Jesus is Lord of all.

Shortlisted

Science and Christianity:
Understanding the
Conflict Myth
Chris Mulherin
Garratt Publishing
9781925073515

An excellent introduction to one of the most critical and pervasive misunderstandings of our time ardently peddled by militant secularists: that there is an inevitable clash between science and religion. Chris Mulherin shows that this has never been true and cannot be true. In this illustrated textbook he explores the interplay between the role of science in revealing the wonders of our universe and the role of Christianity as a worldview that answers questions about the meaning and purpose of life. Mulherin engages with controversial figures (Galileo, Darwin, Dawkins) and divisive issues (evolution, genetics, climate change) with clarity and grace.

Shortlisted

A Short Book about Paul:
The Servant of Jesus
Paul Barnett
Cascade Books
9781532665547

In his own lifetime and throughout the history of the Church, the Apostle Paul has been misinterpreted, misunderstood and vilified. In this succinct biography Paul Barnett both demolishes myths and presents what we can reasonably conclude about the Apostle, his milieu, thought and influence. Paul emerges as a warm-hearted man who loved his friends (both men and women) and the clusters of new believers across five Roman provinces. By demonstrating that atonement theology predates Paul's conversion, Barnett shows that instead of derailing the teaching of Jesus, Paul was a faithful and devoted servant of his Lord.

Shortlisted

Where to Start with Islam:
A New Approach to
Engaging With Muslim
Friends
Samuel Green
Matthias Media
9781925424607

Start by listening. What do our Muslim neighbours, shopkeepers and friends believe about Jesus, the cross, salvation, the Bible and history? What common beliefs can we build upon? What fruitless discussions should we avoid? Drawing on decades of experience talking with Muslims about Jesus, Samuel Green sets out clear and effective ways of communicating the gospel. He addresses common objections about the Trinity and the reliability of the Bible, and assumptions about Muhammad, Islamic history and the Crusades. Hints on how to read the Bible with Muslims are especially valuable. This is a practical and timely book.

Titles submitted for the 2020 Australian Christian Book of the Year Award

100 Movements

Reformation: Seeing God, People and Mission Through Reenchanted Frames,
Alan Hirsch & Mark Nelson

The Rise and Fall of Movements: A Roadmap for Leaders,
Steve Addison

Sive

Deeper Places: The Spirituality of the Psalms,
Matthew Jacoby

Acorn Press

Metanoia: A Memoir of a Body, Born Again,
Anna McGahan

Woven: A Faith for the Dissatisfied,
Joel McKerrrow

Ajax Magnum

So Shall It Be,
Ajax Magnum

Ark House Press

Beyond these Eyes: The Biography of Blind Surfer Derek Rabelo,
Lynn Goldsmith

The King's Daughter,
Carolann Kelleher

Baker Books

Grace Like Scarlett: Grieving with Hope after Miscarriage and Loss,
Adriel Booker

Big Sky Publishing

Scorched Earth: Peacekeeping in Timor During a Campaign of Death and Destruction,
Tammy Pempfer

Brian Curtis

Keys to a Godly Life: An A to Z of the Laws of Moses and the Proverbs of Solomon,
Brian A. Curtis

Cascade Books

A Short Book about Paul,
Paul W. Barnett

Making the Gospels: Mystery or Conspiracy?
Paul W. Barnett

Centre for Public Christianity

For the Love of God: How the Church is Better and Worse Than You Ever Imagined,
Natasha Moore, John Dickson, Simon Smart & Justine Toh

Christian Focus Publications

Athanasius of Alexandria: His Life and Impact,
Peter Barnes

Coventry Press

Bless You Heart Attack for Being in My Life: Wrestling with Death, Health, Self and Spirit,
Bruce Wilson

A Time to Hope: Finding Encouragement in Prayer and Ministry,
Paul F. Castley

Come Forward! Bold Enough to Heal,
Jane N. Dowling

Pluralism and Peace: The Religions in Global Civil Society,
John D'Arcy May

Deacons Today: New Wine and New Wineskins,
Anthony Gooley

Crossway

Not Home Yet: How the Renewal of the Earth Fits into God's Plan for the World,
Ian K. Smith

Elm Hill

When the Tiger Roars,
Graeme C. Cann

Frendrussi Press

Talks That Don't Suck: How to Write and Give Bible Talks for Teenagers,
Tom French

Garratt Publishing

Science and Christianity: Understanding the Conflict Myth,
Chris Mulherin

Getting Back on Mission: Reforming our Church Together,
Catholics for Renewal

See with the Eyes of the Heart,
Christopher J. Monaghan

Ginninderra Press

A Voice for Veronica: The Story of Veronica Knight, the First Victim in the Truro Murders in South Australia,
Jeanette Woods

Glenrowan West Media

Australian Bushrangers, the Police and God,
Alfred Heffron

The Good Book Company

Is Jesus History?
John Dickson

1 & 2 Timothy For You: Protect the Gospel, Pass on the Gospel,
Phillip D. Jensen

Hardie Grant

A Lot With a Little: The Long-Awaited Memoir from Australia's Favourite Activist and Man of the People,
Tim Costello

Immortalise Press

Papa's Shoes and Other Stories of Life,
Ed. Mark WORTHING, Pete Court & Claire Bell

Katherine Ruonala Ministries

Speak Life: Creating Your World with Your Words,
Katherine Ruonala

Lakeside Publishing

The Destiny and Passion of Philip Nigel Warrington Strong,
Jonathan Holland

Lexham Press

God of All Comfort: A Trinitarian Response to the Horrors of This World,
Scott Harrower

Lionize Press

Having Faith: One Woman's Nine-Year Faith Journey from Infertility to Motherhood,
Nicole Zoch

Matthias Media

Where to Start with Islam: A New Approach to Engaging with Muslim Friends,
Samuel Green

MediaCom Education

Tender: Stories that Lean into Kindness,
Julie Perrin

Monash University Publishing

Attending to the National Soul: Evangelical Christians in Australian History 1914–2014,
Stuart Piggins & Robert D. Linder

Morning Star Publishing

I Will Avenge,
P. Howard Smith

Journeying with Bonhoeffer: Six Steps on the Path of Discipleship,
Andreas Loewe & Katherine Firth

Beyond the Fish Sticker: Seeking a Deeper Knowledge of God and Ourselves,
Benjamin Swift

New College

Something Borrowed, Something Blue: 50 years of New College, UNSW, 1969–2019,
Adela R. Davis

Olive Tree Media

The Stuff of Life: Making the Most of Everyday Living,
Karl Faase

Oxford University Press

Edwards the Mentor,
Rhys S. Bezzant

Revival Flame Ministries

The Avenger: The Rise of the Kingdom,
Anita Alexander

Poetica Christi Press

On Arrivals of Breath,
Anne F. Elvey

Rhiza Press

The Silk Merchant of Sychar,
Cindy Williams

SMBC

On This Mountain: A Story from Where the Gospel Is Not Known,
Nicholas R. Lindeback

Starlabel Publishing

Pizza and Choir: A Walk Through the Garden of Life that Leads You Home,
Rebecca Moore

Turning Teardrops Into Joy

Scattering Church: Effective Mission in the Post-Institutional World,
Matthew C. Clarke

Venture3 Media

Jesus Over Everything: Notes for the Next Generation of Planetshakers,
Andy Harrison

Wipf & Stock

Foundations of Anglican Evangelicalism in Victoria: Four Elements for Continuity 1847–1937,
Wei-Han Kuan

Christian Political Theology in an Age of Discontent: Mediating Scripture, Doctrine and Political Reality,
Jonathan Cole

Wycliffe Australia

Dancing in the Firelight: The Story of Chris Kilham,
Sandra More



2020 Australian Christian Teen Writer Award

Winner



Phoebe Worseldine *Through Smoke and Flames*

Will Jasmine's trust in God's faithfulness survive the furnace of fear and disappointment? This portrayal of a devastating bushfire through the eyes of a child is set in a convincing landscape of suspense and desperation. An encouraging and hopeful story for everyone who doubts and quails while waiting "for the wind to change".

An extract from *Through Smoke and Flames*

Mick called to Belinda, "I think we'd better put some more things into the bunker."

He paused for a moment as they watched the flames coming over the distant hills. It looked as if lava was spilling down the hillsides.

They hurried into the house and started grabbing clothes, kitchen equipment and linen.

Belinda held her breath as huge flaming embers shot through the sky and landed in the dry paddocks behind their property. With shaking hands she wiped the dust and ash from her forehead.

Mick and Belinda emerged from the bunker. They were both horrified to see a red glow light up the sky behind their property.

"Those embers must have started another fire behind us!" Mick yelled. The noise of the wind and fire was so loud they could hardly hear each other.

Flames roared across the dry paddocks, trees were alight and embers were landing everywhere.

Mick was trying to put out the spot fires as they started, while Belinda kept grabbing more things from the house and throwing them down into the bunker.

She felt sick and exhausted. The air was unbearably hot. She could hardly breathe.

Mick came running towards her. "Quick! We've got to get in the bunker now!"

Belinda took one last look. The house looked tiny against the red sky. Her heart nearly stopped beating as she watched flames lick the weatherboard walls of their home.

They hurriedly shut the bunker door behind them.

Second Prize

Claudia Anthony *Hopefully Happy*

Third Prize

Evelyn Poyitt *Some People*



2020 Young Australian Christian Writer Award

Winner



Daniel Li *Being Mulaney*

Our spiritual leaders care for us. But who cares for them? What does it mean to share the weight of ministry?

In this honest and gentle narrative, a young Christian confronts the loneliness of leadership, burnout and a family history of suicide. The writing is tight yet intimate and poetic. A timely reminder to bear one another's burdens and point each other to the grace and peace that surpasses understanding.

An extract from *Being Mulaney*

"We need to see it," Sarah said, snatching the key out of the box, and pushing her chair out. "Follow me."

Michael and Charles breathed deeply as she unlocked the door.

The blinds were closed and she flicked the lights on. There was a lacquered table that looked heavy and commanding. On it were three boxes. On the white wall behind was a large, framed photo of a man who looked like a farmer, gesturing from a pulpit.

The room was so impeccably clean. Michael walked over to the boxes.

Thousands of letters in all different sizes—some written in blue, red, purple ink—all dated like a macabre time line.

"These are ..."

Sarah nodded. "Letters to himself. He'd never let me read them. Nobody knew him. Maybe I will now."

Sarah stood alone and vacant. The boys shut the door behind her. It was 1:48 am.

They lay on the floor of the lounge room. They thought they would hear muffled tears. But there was nothing. Not even the shuffling of paper.

They heard only the churning clockwork of Sarah's heart.

Michael looked at Charles with eyes deeper and wearier than any boy should have.

"I'm scared."

"What of?"

"It's like my blood is calling to me. All the men in my family have found their answer in swinging from trees."

"And you think you will too?"

"I can't—" he looked around wildly, "I can't say."

Second Prize

Caroline Dehn

The Birdkeeper, and Other Forms of Myth

Third Prize

Stephen Reed

The Cartographer's Presence

Judging criteria

The **Australian Christian Teen Writer Award** carries a prize of \$1,000 and is offered annually for the best unpublished manuscript written by an Australian citizen under 18 years of age.

The **Young Australian Christian Writer Award** carries a prize of \$2,500 and is given annually for the best unpublished manuscript written by an Australian citizen under 30 years of age.

Supplementary awards may be made.

The winning works will explore a Christian perspective or theme and incorporate, explain or encourage Christian life and values. Entries are judged with an eye to the following:

Original nature and content of the work.

Literary style, including suitability for the target audience.

Contribution that the work makes in meeting a need for Christian writing in Australia.

The 2020 Australian Christian Literature Awards were announced and prizes presented on Thursday 13 August 2020.

The Australian Christian Literature Awards are administered by SparkLit (The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Australia Incorporated and the Australian Christian Literature Society).

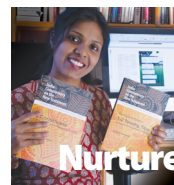


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