# CALL FOR PAPERS:

# THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH AND THE AUSTRALIAN SETTLEMENT

## Rev. Dr Charles Strong and the Australian Church’s power network, 1885-1917

### One-day Symposium, University of Newcastle, NSW, 4 December 2019

The politically active network associated with Rev. Charles Strong and his independent congregation, called the Australian Church, in Melbourne in the decades before and after Federation, included Members of Parliament, a chief justice, union leaders, feminist activists and leading participants in public debate. This church-based network was central in the shaping and institutionalisation of Australia’s secular political settlement.

This Symposium, leading to an edited volume, is part of a project to track relationships among members of this network, the development of their ideas on religion-state relations and the interrelation of religion and politics, and their involvement in non-religious forums such as parliaments, Federation conventions, newspapers and non-church-based organisations for social reform.

The congregation included poet and activist Bernard O’Dowd; Victorian supreme court judge (later chief justice) George Higinbotham; journalist Alice Henry; feminist Vida Goldstein; Liberal MP Samuel Mauger and Mauger’s parliamentary colleague Alfred Deakin. Around its members, the church attracted a broader network of people associated either through personal friendships with Strong or collaborations with him on projects of social reform. These included Henry Bournes Higgins, Charles Pearson, Catherine Helen Spence, David Syme, Horace Tucker and George Coppin.

Many network members are the subjects of biographies in which Charles Strong and the Australian Church make passing appearances. The Australian Church, its members and its associated organisations also walk in and out of major histories of the period. However, apart from Badger’s *The Reverend Charles Strong and the Australian Church* (1971), they have had little direct scholarly attention.

**Papers are invited on the Australian Church network, 1875-1917, with a focus on its members’, associates’ and associated organisations’ contributions to the shaping and institutionalisation of Australia’s secular political settlement, and related topics.**

The Symposium will interest scholars involved in, for example, biographical, political, legal, church and institutional histories.

Confirmed speakers and indicative topics include:

Judith Brett (Alfred Deakin and Charles Strong)

Ian Tregenza (Herbert Brookes)

Marion Maddox (The Australian Church network and Glasgow idealism)

Patricia Curthoys (Social network theory and the Australian Church network)

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Abstract submissions by 30 September 2019