



# Prophecy and Passion: Essays in Honor of Athol Gill (ATF)

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Athol Gill--teacher, community-builder, advocate of justice, peacemaker, Christian gadfly! When he died a decade ago, the Australian church lost a creatively subversive native son who combined a tough-minded vision of radical discipleship with tenderhearted compassion for those whom Athol described as 'society's nobodies'.

Athol Gill sought to show that participation in community was integral to Christian discipleship. He recognized that individuals do not have the spiritual or material resources to maintain a lifestyle consistent with the radical teaching of Jesus. Athol made the words and actions, death and resurrection of Jesus the touchstone for all areas of life (including the social, political and economic), not merely private spirituality. His logic was simple, but it had profoundly disturbing implications: If Jesus is the human expression of God's love and purpose for humanity, his instruction in word and deed—not the values, norms and assumptions of society—should provide the church with its vision and direction.

As is clear from the content of each paper in this volume, all contributors learned something pivotal from their association with Athol Gill. Not everyone shared his fanatical support for Carlton Football Club, and no one considers that he spoke the definitive word on any theological or social issue. Yet all recognize that he made an extraordinary contribution to the life of the church in Australia and beyond--as visionary, community-leader, biblical scholar and agent of justice in the prophetic tradition.

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