

Our Place in Australia

Rev Dr Ian Robinson is a former Friend of Wellspring and Chaplain at the University of Western Australia. Well known to many in Wellspring, Ian played an important role in the Perth National Gathering, particularly in the provision of the post-Gathering desert journey. Through an organisation called "Spirit Journeys," Ian offers desert journeys that assist people to connect with the desert and explore their spiritual nature.



Rev Dr Ian Robinson

Nostalgia isn't what it used to be. Half way through the twentieth century, Australians used to refer to the 'dead heart' of Australia. The inland of this vast island continent was a far-off impossibility, the province of heroes and outlaws, a sea of god-forsaken sand. Until 1987, when we finally ceased legal appeal to the British Privy

Council, London was the capital of Australia and the deserts were a foreign land.

Then we discovered the "red heart". The inland became the place of exotic travel, camera in hand. Painters started following Sidney Nolan and Albert Namatjira. Then we discovered that the land had created a host of nations who had been painting country perfectly well for millennia and were still doing so. The dots of central Australia became famous, then sort of compulsory. The Centre was exotic and commodified. The awesome red brown of Uluru at sunset was only seen with chardonnay in hand. The vast majority of Australians had never been far from the coast and today still live at the coast.

So, with few exceptions, Australians have not come far towards belonging here. We are just off the boats, camped at the beach, and afraid of the desert that imposes itself on the background of our mind.

By the grace of God and an act of sheer silliness, on April Fool's day 2002, I left to become the first person to cross all Australia's deserts in one journey. I now belong here, the country speaks to me, I am no longer afraid of Australia.

Does this sound sentimental? The Bible of Jews and Christians makes it clear that beyond all other places

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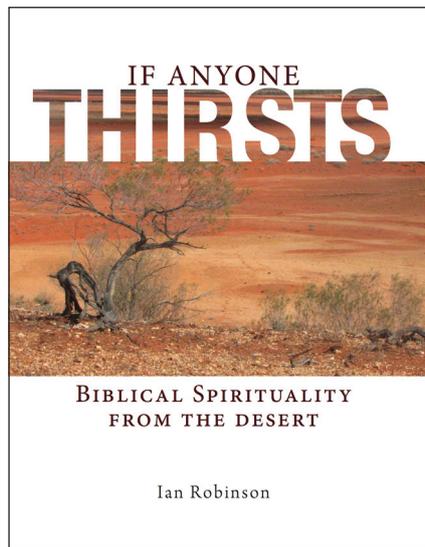
and spaces, the desert is definitive and formative of faith - more than temples and churches and more than doctrines and hardware. Exodus, Elijah and the prophets, the Festivals, the Exile, the desert sojourns of Jesus at the bookends of his public ministry, the desert spirituality practices that accompanied him in the mainstream, the Desert Fathers and Mothers and the founding of the monastic orders, arose through the explicit inspiration of the desert. How did we miss it?

The habits of our hearts and the habits of our heads have blind-sided us from the foundational adventure of our own faith. Yet at this time, we see a new public quest for a spiritual connection with the land and its peoples. The public are tired of colonialism with its assumed superiority and its left-brain hierarchies of thought and some kinds of rationalism. Apart from the desert of her own heritage, the church is unable to help.

Meditation is popular, the planet is drying out of water, oil, air and justice. We simply must all learn to live better with less, really truly seriously and soon. We deeply need the joyful simplicity of the desert's spirituality. Can we share it?

The desert of Australia could be a spiritual resource for the world. We claim this resource when we venture out, soak the desert in, listen to the Holy Spirit abroad in all the world (Prov 8), and then come back to the mainstream with a clear direction. If it sounds like a pilgrimage, you hear right. Why are you going to Europe for pilgrimage? You have one here, learning to belong in your own land, walking the desert with Moses and Jesus -- only without the chardonnay.

“The spirit within us rejoices in the desert - it now has a vastness to match its own.”



*Ian Robinson has led about forty Spirit Journeys in the Australian desert. His books are **This Thirsty Heart**, a picture book and narrative, and **If Anyone Thirsts**, an eye-opening biblical history and theology of desert spirituality today. Ian has allowed us to reprint David Tacey's foreword to **If Anyone Thirsts**. David Tacey is Professor of Humanities, La Trobe University, Melbourne. His recent book is "Beyond Literal Belief: Religion as Metaphor". For a Eureka Street review of this book go to <http://bit.ly/Tacey>*



David Tacey

Gardens were also a part of Roman culture and like many gardens today were a peaceful retreat from urban living. Roman gardens spread across Europe with their Empire. This gardening knowledge was preserved on the continent by monasteries. Deserts are primordial places, where everything is stripped back to basics. Survival of human, animal or plant life is by no means assured, and it is

risky business to go into the desert unprepared. But precisely because it is risky, deserts are places where we can experience the gift of life and the wonder of existence. Like Ian Robinson, I love deserts and have spent a lot of time in them. These places grow and strengthen our faith in unexpected and often indiscernible ways. Deserts jolt us out of our stupor, out of complacency and into new life, especially spiritual life. In the desert, we become aware of infinity – vast horizons, sweeping landscapes, limitless skies that fill up with numberless stars at night.

All these expressions of infinity are hard to avoid in the desert, and we are urged to find a personal relationship with them. In cities and urban areas, infinity is background and our human lives are foreground, but in the desert it works in reverse: we are background and infinity is foreground. Sometimes this makes us feel small, diminished, insignificant. But the spirit within us rejoices in the desert because, finally, it has a place to call its own, a vastness to match its own.

Our human spirit meets the spirit of creation and this can jolt us into recognitions that we may not have in cities, where the human strives to be in control. When the spirit inside us is activated and made joyful, we have to change our lives. We can no longer live encapsulated lives, shut off from ourselves and each other, shut off from nature, cosmos and stars. We are forced to adjust our identity, our understanding of ourselves and how we fit into the scheme of things. We also have to reconcile ourselves to a larger reality, to spirit within and beyond creation.

The spirit in us does not get excited in the desert for no reason. It sees vistas of infinity and they remind it of its home, its source, its origin in the universal spirit we call God. Personal spirit isn't satisfied with a weekend peak experience, with 'admiring' the desert or seeing its vastness. It feels impelled to connect with something

greater. Here personal spirituality meets with a bigger story, which we call religion. Reconnection is what religion is about: *re-ligio* in Latin, meaning to 'link back' or 'bind with'. When our personal spirit binds with universal spirit, religion is the result, religion is what happens.

This can be disconcerting to those of us who are secular, agnostic or atheist. Our minds might not 'believe' in God, but regardless of this, when the spirit is energised, it seeks out God. Spirit cannot be inhibited from this mystical striving, and our intellects can be baffled by our experience, creating internal discord. If our education tells us there is no God, but our desert experience tells us there is, which do we believe? As Simone Weil wrote, 'Even though we think God doesn't exist, he will make his existence manifest'. So the desert can be a dangerous place for atheists, putting them at odds with themselves, making them feel something they do not want to feel, something alien in their lives. Something *other* awakens in the self, that they do not recognise. Deserts can be disconcerting for believers as well, as they are jolted into a more immediate experience of their God, a more intimate encounter that can be unsettling. Believers are made to realise that there is a more intense, more personal dimension to their religion, which is not just about creeds and dogmas but what we call 'spirituality'. Spirituality leads to faith, and believers can be shocked that their 'beliefs' were so empty, because they did not include faith.

Ian Robinson loves what deserts do to our lives. He sees that his beloved Christianity is failing in the modern world, that it is not getting through to people. He writes: 'We all know the church must begin anew but this book remembers how it began in the desert'. He describes Jesus in the wilderness of Judea as responsive to the physical and metaphysical challenges of the desert: 'The desert was dangerous, stretching,

calling as it always had – God alone'. Robinson explores desert spirituality in the Hebrew Bible and Christian Testament, showing how and why the desert works on the soul to draw out the best it contains, turning ordinary believers into prophets and making our religious lives less abstract and more existential.

Robinson cares about the Christian tradition and its current plight. He wants to 'ground Christian spirituality' in a 'new way' that is 'not institutional, not rationalist, not anti-intellectual'. He wants to go back to basics and this is what takes him to the desert, because that is where we find the beginnings of religious traditions. Robinson wants to take Christianity out of the abstractions of remote belief into the immediate experience of faith. This is a prophetic task, and requires sensitivity and awareness. Faith is more primordial than belief, and it is nurtured and grown in desert experience. In some ways, the future of religion is to go back to the beginning, back to basics, to when faith was more real than abstract creeds. The Christian tradition began as a movement of faith in Jesus and in what he revealed to his disciples. In the early days of the church, faith meant hope and assurance in the reign of God, its coming into reality, and its ability to change our lives: *metanoia*. This desert faith was a matter of heart, and it was about wonder, awe, trust and healing. It was emotionally satisfying and psychologically transformative.

Then, as church leaders began formulating creeds, and as Christianity became the state religion and wedded to power, the early experience of the community of faith was gradually eclipsed by dogmatic assertions. Eventually, 'being religious' for many simply meant assent to propositions and ideas. The connection with the living heart was, if not severed, then attenuated by the cerebral direction of religion. In the 12th century, Bernard

of Clairvaux argued that theological training and lay formation should remain a matter of heart, trying to remain faithful to the original Christian impulse which was to base the tradition on experience. But Peter Abelard claimed that religion could be inculcated and disseminated through dogmatic principles, thus beginning the decline of religion into abstractions.

The heart or soul of Christianity was in jeopardy in this modern development, which ensured that religion became more intellectual, based in beliefs. When Europe became intellectually enlightened, the soul and heart fell into darkness, because the educated mind could no longer accede to traditional beliefs. This plunged us into the spiritual desolation of our current period, where many people in educated societies find it impossible to engage in religious life, because they cannot 'believe' it. There is something more basic than belief, and we have to get it back. So, it's time to go to the desert. To commune again with the infinite landscapes and horizons, to listen for the call of God to the receptive heart, which with any luck might override the protest of the disbelieving educated mind. St Augustine wrote: 'The important task of the Christian life is to restore the eye of the heart by which God can be seen'. This much-needed spiritual vision is often kick-started in the desert, and we still face this possibility even today, in this disbelieving and secular age.

I commend readers to Ian Robinson's book, and hope that many who experience the spiritual aridity of urban existence can find the water of life in the desert places of the heart.

"The desert can be a dangerous place for atheists - something other awakens in the self."

Leader's Letter - Spirituality of Place



Neil Holm

The water wrapping around Berwick Bridge began to move in incredible shapes. A combination of wind, current, and resistance patterns around the bridge supports created intricate open lace patterns on the surface. Sometimes shell shapes, sometimes almost snowflake shapes, sometimes autumn leaves shapes, constantly reshaping, rippling, reforming, spreading, graceful, alluring. My friends walked on as I stood alone staring, transfixed by creation's energised beauty. Having caught my attention, creation piled grace upon grace for the wind changed. Now the water ripples began to radiate away from me, metre by metre the ripples danced across the bay towards the southern headland. When they had gone far further than I imagined possible, three birds swooped down until they were a few metres above the water and then curved away high into the heavens. I stood spellbound, touched by Mystery.

On my way to work at Macquarie University, I walked a short distance along two roads named after World War 1 battles of which I had no knowledge, entered the university grounds near the community garden, then across a paddock. The paddock was mowed from time to time but on this day, the grass was ankle deep.

Perhaps I stirred up small insects in the grass. I don't know. However, after walking 50 metres or so, I was accompanied by about six swallows who flew round and round me. Before me. Above me. Behind me. They sort of circled me. Not in perfect circles, they flew in ovals, ellipses, parabolas, and all variations thereof. I felt strangely comforted. I was present to the swallows and in a sense, they were present to me or at least a present to me. Celtic iconography often represents the Holy Spirit by the wild goose. On this day, in "Holm-ian" iconography, the swallows represented the Holy Spirit and blessed me abundantly.

The Spirituality of Place is the theme of our National Gathering in Ballarat, Victoria, from 17-20 September 2015. Please register now for a great time together. The descriptions above describe two places where the spirit of the place has affected me powerfully. I look forward to hearing your stories of special places as we meet together at the Gathering. Please plan to facilitate a discussion during our Open Space segments of the program. Alternatively, bring pictures accompanied by a brief description that we can use in a display. As I explain below, there is no need to restrict yourself to a self-conscious, blinkered focus on the Spirituality of Place. Feel free to facilitate an Open Space session around a topic or activity that energises you. Nothing is off limits – reflective walks, chess, bridge, making music, choral activities (how wonderful if a choir led us in songs that engage with place!), films, construction, art, meditation, writing blessings or prayers, or wine tasting. This Gathering is about being together, sharing conversation, getting to know each other, in short, building community.

Why do I say nothing is off limits? Surely, a gathering around a theme of spirituality of place requires a discipline to remain within those boundaries? Why have a theme at all if we allow participants to wander off in all directions? I argue that these less-focused activities, these engagements that seem to stray beyond the boundaries of spirituality of place, may in fact, be deeper experiences of the reality of the spirituality of place. It will take a few paragraphs to advance this argument because I use a sacramental perspective. I explore what sacrament means, then connect it to spirituality of place, and finally show it relates to less-focused engagements.

"The world is charged with the grandeur of God." Gerard Manley Hopkins provides a helpful introduction to sacrament. Even the most basic elements of the world, of creation, of reality, are more than they seem. They have an extra dimension that is not always obvious. There is an aspect of reality that we cannot properly express. There is a mystery that lies behind and beyond any feature of the created order. We recognise its sacramental nature when we are permitted to glimpse the mystery. When we recognise the sacrament, we recognise a real presence, the presence of the ineffable or, for some people, the presence of the Creator.

The sacrament does more than point to God. It is much more than a sign or a symbol. It is not God but there is a relationship, an engagement, between the sacrament and God. The sacrament has some of the characteristics of God. It shares the being of God. It is possible to think of a sacrament as a thing that is somehow endowed with a real spiritual nature that has the capacity to have a spiritual

effect on someone or something. Alternatively, we might say that a sacrament is a thing that on the one hand is ordinary, opaque, everyday, and lacking particularity. At the same time, this thing is mysterious, divine, radiant, and spiritual. When we recognise a sacrament, we become aware that God's engagement with the world has become visible.

From a sacramental perspective, the place of Berwick Bridge and the swallows of Macquarie University became sacraments. In these cases, God exists beyond the created order but I was blessed because I was permitted a glimpse of God's presence in the world, in creation. I was allowed to see the mystery. I was permitted to see the real spiritual nature of that place and those birds and this insight had a powerful spiritual effect on me.

In the seventeenth century, Thomas Traherne constructed his concept of transfiguration on sacramental principles. He recognised three forms of transfiguration. First, God's spirit transforms the individual to be increasingly like Christ (cf Romans 8:29). Second, the individual's perception is transformed when there is a momentary revelation of the fullness of life to come (cf my bridge and birds examples). Third, the individual changes permanently. She or he begins to act in ways that are directed by their changed perceptions. All future encounters are shaped and interpreted by the new way of seeing the world.

For me, Traherne's transfiguration becomes a desirable spiritual goal and I believe that I am making progress. I know that God is already forming me (slowly and nowhere near as fast as I'd like) into Christ. I am being "changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." (2 Corinthians 3:18, RSV). In the Berwick Bridge, the Macquarie swallows, and several other charged

episodes, I have had momentary revelations of fullness of life. Birds were no longer just birds, no longer just elements of creation. Somehow, I came to sense a kinship, a relationship, even a spiritual relationship with the birds. They were sacraments through which I encountered the Holy Spirit. Through these encounters, I sense a permanent change within me. Although not every swallow or every bird I encounter today is a sacrament, I retain a sense of relationship with birds whenever I manage to discipline myself to stop and pay attention.

A new way of seeing the world shapes many of my encounters, if only in the sense that in the past God has taken unlikely elements of creation and used them to reassure me of God's continuing presence. I have made a start towards transfiguration but I have a long way to go. I need others to accompany me on this journey and Wellspring provides many companions. However, place is an important element in this journey.

Places are "the seat of relations or the place of meeting and activity in the interaction between God and the world (Inge, *Christian Theology of Place*). Place is where God breaks into our spatial existence. Some places may no longer be holy or at least no longer seem to be holy. A place may have been so overlaid with past evil that its former holiness was no longer apparent or perhaps even extinguished. However, many places have the potential or possibility of sacramentality. A place takes on a sacramental nature through

action by God and response by human beings. A full understanding of sacramentality requires a relational perspective that takes God, humans, and place into account.

This relational perspective lies behind my statement that "nothing is off limits." At the Gathering we expect to come to a particular place, a place imbued with some degree of spirituality – an Anglican school, with a consecrated chapel, that despite the limitations and weaknesses of any school, has some degree of Christian sacramentality. Under what conditions might we experience the spirituality of this place? One condition might be that we come into that place with a degree of appreciation of being together as brothers and sisters in Christ, with an awareness of that bond of fellowship between us and between God and us. Another condition might be that we come with an expectation that since two or three are gathered together, God will be present, and God may act. God may create a sacrament between us, no matter how few we are, in whatever activity we are engaged. Another condition may be beauty, wonder and uniqueness. A walk around Lake Wendouree in the company of others has the potential for God to break into spatial existence as God did for me in the events I have described. God is able to create sacramentality if we are open to it whether we are painting, singing, reading poems, talking, studying, or reflecting together: nothing is off limits!



Lake Wendouree

BAMM: BOOKS, ART, MUSIC, MOVIES



BAMM is a place where Members and Friends reflect on their recent viewing, hearing, creating, and reading in ways that engage the central concerns of the Wellspring Community.

BAMM: BOOKS

The Forgotten Rebels of Eureka – Clare Wright

Eureka : The Unfinished Revolution – Peter Fitzsimons

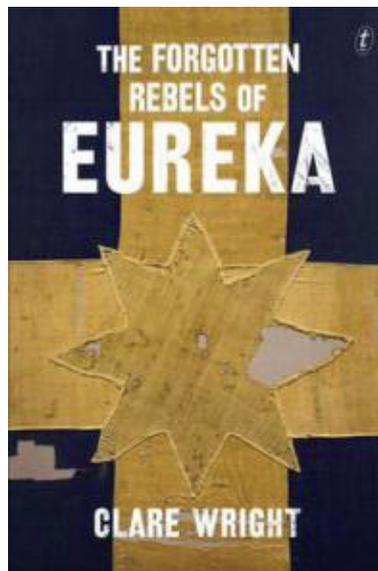
With the National Gathering in Ballarat in September, Margaret Holm (Inala Qld, PDD 26) began to engage with the place by reading and reviewing two recent books on Eureka.



Margaret Holm

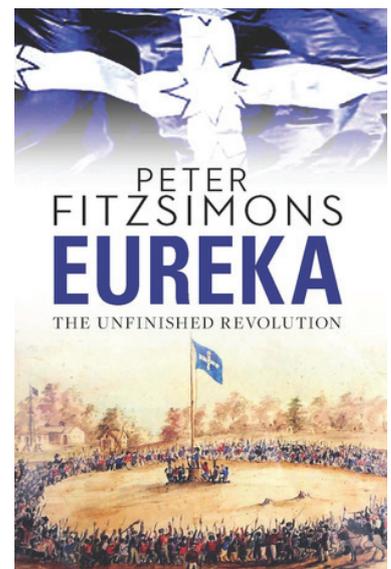
Today Eureka is a small eastern suburb of Ballarat. At the 2011 census, Eureka's population was 629. On Sunday 3 December, 1854, Victoria's goldfields had a population of "over 115,000 men, women and children" not including the indigenous population of perhaps 2,500 or the Chinese as neither group was "considered worth counting".

With the demise of the goldfields, Eureka became simply a locality in Ballarat East but in 1946 it was gazetted as a suburb in its own right. As the Eureka Rebellion of 3rd December, 1854 could arguably be one of Australia's most significant – if largely unrecognised - moments in history, it is important that this space remains recognisable in the Australian landscape.



In their books, Wright and Fitzsimons narrate the historical events of the birth and growth of Victoria's gold mining days, particularly the rebellion against injustice in the form of mining licenses or a poll tax. When introduced these cost each digger, 30 shillings a month: a sizeable amount if you were successful in your search; an impossible amount if you weren't. While large in size, both books make for very easy, engrossing reading. Their main difference is in their focus. Wright focuses on 'the forgotten – and almost invisible – rebels of Eureka: the women! In December 1854, 5,165 women lived in Ballarat and among

them they had 6,365 children. What a feisty bunch they were – and gifted in journalism, business, child care, theatre and home management – many in tents!



Wright includes poetry, journal entries, letters, editorials and petitions written by these women. Their writing reveals determined, resourceful, resilient women, fiercely protective of their partners and children, creative and independent, seeking justice and equality alongside their male counterparts on the Australian goldfields.

In stark contrast, Fitzsimons mentions women rarely. His focus is more in line with Mark Twain's description of

the rebellion as “a strike for liberty, a struggle for principle, a stand against injustice and oppression”. As I read Wright’s book first, the dearth of women in Fitzsimons account was very noticeable. A preliminary event to the rebellion was the burning down of an elite hotel. Fitzsimons notes that James Bentley, the male owner of the hotel, escapes the hotel prior to the fire, “leaving his heavily pregnant wife Catherine, behind in the hotel”. Wright reveals that Catherine escapes with her two-year-old son. With Fitzsimons, Catherine disappears for a time from the narrative! He later talks of the Bentleys being

found in Melbourne and then a little patronisingly (?) describes Catherine sitting beside her husband during their trial “looking pale and unwell, though this may be because she is clearly not far away from confinement – perhaps in both senses of the word”. (You’ll need to read either book to discover why the Bentleys were on trial!)

In the Foreword of her book, Wright quotes Australian historian, Geoffrey Blainey: “Every history of every country is a mirror of the author’s own interests and therefore selective rather than comprehensive.” These books reflect this truth. Both are worth spending time with, especially

if you, like me, know very little of the details of this turbulent time in Victoria’s multicultural, multifaith, multifaceted history.

Fitzsimons says that “The local Wathaurong clan called – a wide valley nestled amidst soft, rolling hills, graced by bubbling creeks and shaded by a thick and fragrant cover of eucalyptus trees – ballarat, a place to recline on your balla, your elbow.” I look forward to doing just that in September and reflecting on the amazing, unsung, rich heritage the people – the First People, and the men/the diggers, the women, and the children of the goldfields of 1854 – bequeathed us.

BAMM: BOOKS

Jesus and God?

Many (most?) Christians argue that Christ’s resurrection is the foundation for a belief that Jesus was God. Bart Ehrman’s recent book, How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee, takes another approach. Ehrman, currently the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is a “genuinely erudite scholar of ancient texts and a fierce debater, Ehrman is the bane of traditionalists and the champion of sceptics” (<http://bit.ly/Ehrman>). In his youth he was an Evangelical Christian as a teenager but during his graduate studies, he became convinced that there are contradictions and discrepancies in the biblical manuscripts that could not be harmonized or reconciled. He remained a liberal Christian for 15 years but later became an agnostic after struggling with the philosophical problems of evil and suffering. (Wikipedia). Peter Fensham (Kew Vic, PDD 13) offers us his interpretation.



Peter Fensham

If you were asked, “When did Jesus become God?” What would your answer be?

The Gospel writers and Paul give us four different answers. For Mark, it was when John the Baptist baptised Jesus. For Matthew and Luke, it was Jesus’ moment of conception by the Holy Spirit. For John, it was from the beginning of creation. For Paul, it was when Jesus was resurrected and appeared to the disciples and to him.

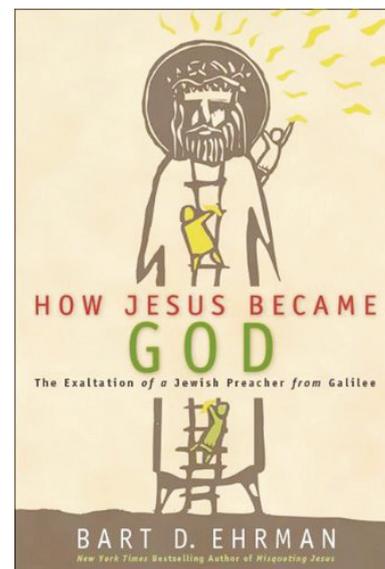
In his 2014 book, *How Jesus Became God* (Harper Collins), Bart Ehrman

introduces readers to the manner in which a Biblical historian goes about drawing on the sources we have, to deduce an answer to this question (and incidentally to my rephrasing of it as “When did Jesus become God?”).

I particularly liked the clear way the book set out the historical and literary processes of analysis that a scholar from one of these disciplines uses to address this type of question.

Ehrman starts by identifying the main sources that are available to us today and the timing of their appearance after Jesus death. About 20 years after Jesus’ death (50-60 CE), there were the seven epistles of Paul that scholars agree are certainly his writing. A decade later, there was Mark’s Gospel that draws on a probably lost source scholars called Q. In the 80-85 CE period, the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and Luke’s Acts of the Apostles appeared. Towards the end of that

first century John’s Gospel was written.



None of these very Greek literate authors had known or met Jesus alive. They were writing down stories and beliefs told by Jesus’ immediate or subsequent followers in the various parts of the Roman Empire where

these writers were living. *[For a contrary view to Ehrman's claim that the Gospels were not written by eyewitnesses, see Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony by Richard Bauckham. [Editor]]*

Ehrman, on literary grounds, adds to the main sources some short sets of words that appear in Paul's epistles and in Acts. He calls these sets 'pre-literate traditions'. He identifies these sets using the criterion that they are a self-contained bit of the larger text that is highly structured, like a poem, and contains phrases and words not otherwise used by Paul or Luke. He sees them as short creeds or poems that were being used in these very early gatherings of Christians (followers of Jesus as Messiah or Christ) much as we now repeat phrases and words in family graces or in services of worship. The distinctiveness of these extra sources is unfortunately almost lost in the way the Bible is now presented.

The historical phenomenon that Ehrman acknowledges as requiring an answer to his primary question is the rapid emergence of groups of persons after Jesus death, who acted out their lives in quite new ways, because they believed that Jesus was God. It has been estimated that the growth rate of these groups was at least 40 per cent per decade for the next two or three hundred years, despite them often paying dearly under the Roman authorities for their practices and beliefs.

The historical criteria Ehrman uses are as follows:

- independent attestation in several of the sources,
- dissimilarity – stories that are not positively helpful to writers basically trying to promote the Jesus message,
- contextual credibility – statements that are, or are not, consistent with what is known about the social context at the time of Jesus from other sources, and
- cultural appropriateness – statements that are, or are not, in keeping with Jewish culture and tradition.

By applying these criteria to the source materials, Ehrman works through a number of questions before Jesus' death: "Did Jesus think he was God?" "Did the disciples think Jesus was God" "What is the significance of Pilate's charge, 'Are you the King of the Jews?'" and "What was Judas' act of betrayal?" He concludes that there is no historical case for Jesus being God in his lifetime, but that both Jesus and the disciples were very expectant of an apocalyptic event soon to happen in which they would all have important roles in the Kingdom of God that would follow.

Ehrman then turns to Jesus' death and what happened in the post-death days. There is great confusion in the gospel sources about the empty tomb, who was there, and where the disciples went after the crucifixion. There are, however, attested stories about some

of his followers believing they saw Jesus after his death. While history cannot vouch for such appearances of Jesus, history can vouch for these claims about his appearances in a form that was both familiar but with other qualities.

After a short review of the commonness of the experience of reporting seeing persons after their death in modern society, and extrapolating this likelihood to Jesus' time, Ehrman concludes that it is their belief in these appearances and their interpretation of them as Jesus had been especially exalted by God that changed their lives.

They began to share with others. They shared their knowledge of Jesus' teaching as a human being and their belief in him as having been specially chosen by God to be resurrected and exalted to divine status and purpose - the first steps towards the movement that became Christianity. So Paul begins his letter to the Romans (1:3-4) by quoting a very early pre-literary credal statement of these pioneering Christians:

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| A1 who was descended | B1 who was appointed |
| A2 from the seed of David | B2 Son of God in power |
| A3 according to the flesh | B3 according to the Spirit of Holiness by his resurrection from the dead |

The A statements affirm the humanity of Jesus and the B statements affirm his exaltation into the spiritual and divine realm. Ehrman's historical quest leads to the resurrection of Jesus as the primal event for his Divinity, displacing his incarnation, his baptism, and his crucifixion.

The rest of this very readable and engaging book discusses the historical development of these beliefs: from a Binitarian view of God to the Trinitarian position that came to hold sway after the great councils of the Christian Church in the 4th and 5th centuries.

Excerpt from How Jesus Became God

The idea that Jesus is God is not an invention of modern times, of course. As I will show in my discussion, it was the view of the very earliest Christians soon after Jesus's death. One of our driving questions throughout this study will always be what these Christians meant by saying "Jesus is God." As we will see, different Christians meant different things by it. Moreover, to understand this claim in any sense at all will require us to know

what people in the ancient world generally meant when they thought that a particular human was a god—or that a god had become a human. This claim was not unique to Christians. Even though Jesus may be the only miracle working Son of God that we know about in our world, numerous people in antiquity, among both pagans and Jews, were thought to have been both human and divine.

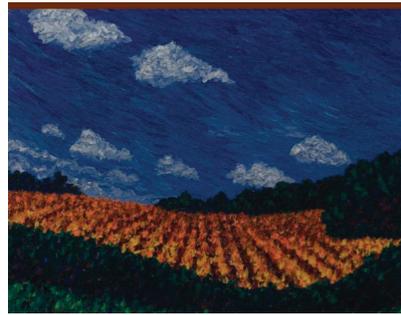
BAMM: BOOKS

Excerpt from *Bartholomew, Craig G. Where Mortals Dwell: A Christian View of Place for Today. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011. 372 pages. ISBN: 9780801036378. Reviewed by Mark Tazelaar, Professor of Philosophy, Dordt College (from Pro Rege: Vol. 40: No. 4, 40 - 43.)*

The chapters comprising the third part are filled with examples and practical suggestions that I'm sure will encourage reflection and conversation. Whether the topic be cities, neighborhoods, homes, farms, gardens, colleges, or churches, the focus is on that central component of "culture-making" that Bartholomew calls placemaking. Place-making is a task for people in all these locations. What follows is a small sample of the questions and suggestions in these pages.

A city is not an artwork, but why are we so good at paving parking lots but seem incapable of building cities of delight? Could a Christian community with ten acres of land at its disposal consider building the core elements of a potential neighborhood rather than simply a church building with a large parking lot? Might it instead focus on a church building of reasonable size, a public square, and a school? Could it take seriously the ecology of the land in the development of this plot? And commit to planting indigenous species of plants that would encourage vibrant bird and insect life?

Might neighborhoods commit to developing what are called "third



**Where
Mortals Dwell**
*A Christian View of Place
for Today*
Craig G. Bartholomew

places": contexts in which informal association and conversation are the main activities, in which all are welcome (but which has its group of "regulars"), a home away from home, within easy walking distance, characterized by a mood of playfulness, but the aesthetics of which are low-profile?

Might we work to develop homes that are not simply places inhabited by consumers but by true home-makers? Homes filled not exclusively with store-bought, standardized furniture

and accessories, but with items like ceramics, paintings, quilts, tables and clothing crafted by people you know? Can we imagine homes with porches on the front instead of garages? Homes in which bread is sometimes baked? Homes with gardens; neighborhoods with gardens?

Could we imagine a class of educators willing to live where they work and work where they live? Willing to take root and to cultivate a sense of place? Colleges aware of the history of the place where they are located? Committed to providing ample places for reflection and contemplation, and having spaces designed for conversation and the development of intellectual community? Campuses having a "third place" or two, and perhaps classrooms that aren't just "smart," but designed to evoke dialogue and exploration? Classrooms and buildings that carry a sense of their own history (unlike the kind of empty-space, nondescript, Cartesian classrooms that characterize too many colleges, in which one would have little sense of what might have taken place in the previous hour, or ever)?

BAMM: MOVIES

Marie and Andrew Thompson (Chatswood NSW, PDD 13) review Babette's Feast.



Marie and Andrew Thompson

Babette's Feast is a film set in the early 1800s, in a tiny Danish town on the bleak coast of Jutland. The life of the little Lutheran community is led by the two gracious elderly women, daughters of their late pastor, who faithfully continue their father's

austere teachings of salvation through self denial.

Amidst a winter's storm Babette, a desperate refugee from the civil unrest then in Paris, and unknown to them, the chef of a famous restaurant, arrives in the village. The sisters provide her with refuge and she eventually settles into the community's life and becomes the sisters' very competent companion-housekeeper.

The story takes a twist when Babette wins the Paris lottery, and the means to prepare and serve the community a lavish Parisian banquet.

So the story of the meal unfolds, with glimpses of wry humour and

reminders of the suspicions we Christians sometimes have, of earthly (in this case gustatory) pleasures.

And beautifully, as the story unfolds, it becomes a parable of grace and generosity, and the gentling effect one person can have on a community.

The soundtrack is in Danish, with English subtitles.

We borrowed our copy of the DVD from our local library. Hopefully yours will have a copy or can obtain one for you.

We found watching the film a thoroughly heartwarming experience and commend it to you.

BAMM: ARTS

Amy Daniel (Singapore, PDD 31) shares her poem “Empty Canvas”



Amy Daniel

*Kaleidoscope
My perspective in pieces
For the divine craftsman
To rearrange and realign.
Let there be new vision.*

*Broken clay
My tired, wounded self
For the divine potter
To refashion and empower.
Let there be new purpose.*

*Empty canvas
My life
For the divine maestro
To paint a masterpiece.
Let it be.*

BAMM: ARTS

Eric Smith (Shady Creek, Vic, Day 13) reviews what seems to be a fascinating Anzac Day commemoration. To hear the Sanctus go to <http://bit.ly/ArmedSanc>.

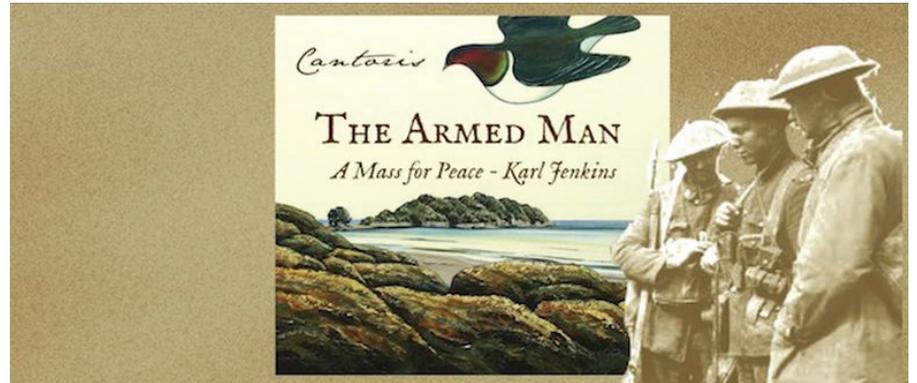


Eric Smith

The Armed Man, A Mass For Peace

With some trepidation I bought tickets for “Better is Peace,” a production at the Warragul Arts Centre on 24 April, sponsored by the Federal Government’s Anzac Centenary Board. I was apprehensive because much of what passes for this commemoration is trivialising and political. However, I knew some of the people involved, and felt encouraged by what they said.

The program was in three parts. In the foyer, the band led community singing – a good bit of fun. Once into the theatre, the full house witnessed “Dear Warragul”, written and produced by Jeannie Haughton and Off The Leash Theatre using the



words of letters from Gallipoli and the Western front to families in Warragul. Some other poetic reflections accompanied the letters as did and (I think) some of Keith Murdoch’s reports. It was brilliantly conceived, sensitively written, competently acted, and highly evocative. Portraying the emotions of war on the combatants and on their families and friends in Australia, we were taken through the history of World War 1 and its impact on each person. I had no more trepidations – this commemorated the ideals, the energies, the mistakes, and the costs of war on women and men. This was a Warragul specific script that was given added meaning by being local, but it could possibly be adapted for other use in other places with permission.

After interval, the West Gippsland Chorale, accompanied by the

Warragul Municipal Band augmented by Salvation Army friends, performed “The Armed Man – A Mass For Peace” written by Karl Jenkins. The program notes tell us that it was written for the British Millennium Celebrations in 2000 in memory of the people of Kosovo and has been performed 1100 times in many countries around the world.

It takes the form of the liturgy and music of a Christian mass, but is multi-faith with a Muslim call to prayer “Allah Akhbar” in Arabic, the Jewish words of Psalm 59, words from The Mahabharata from 6th Century BCE Hinduism, plus the Kyrie, Agnus Dei, and Benedictus. Other lyrics were adapted from John Dryden, Togi Sankichi, Rudyard Kipling and Alfred Lord Tennyson. Some was sung in Latin, Greek, and French as well as the Arabic and English and

thus was quite multi-cultural and international. It sounds like a disparate conglomeration that has the danger of lacking the integrity of the component parts. But the theme of war and peace provided an overall unity, indeed an enhanced integrity. It is religious and secular, no false divisions here. It is challenging musically, but able to be appreciated by people of all ages, beliefs and musical tastes.

Beginning to the sole sound of marching feet, the 15th Century French words of "L'homme armé" immediately involve the listener in the drama of conflict. As the piece progresses, it is softly reflective at times, inviting meditation on the

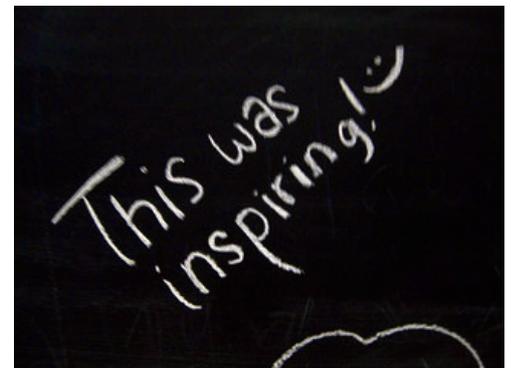
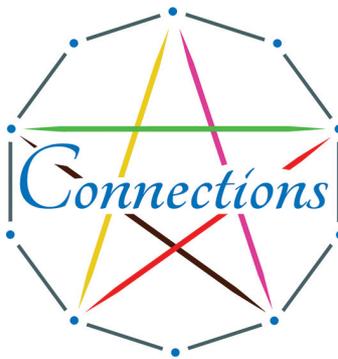
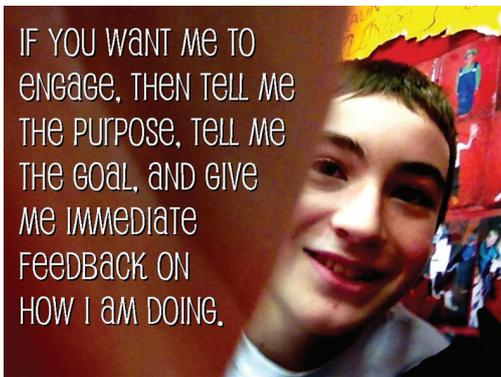
folly of war; whilst at other times it is boldly proclamatory in the cause of peace.

The stereotypes of mateship and sacrifice for country were avoided, without diminishing the sacrificial service of the defence forces, the nurses and all who honour them. The message is far removed from the "splendid defeat" as one of our leaders so ineptly described Gallipoli and his companion phrase "a tragic victory" for the Western front. Far from claiming that World War 1 made a nation of Australia, we are confronted with the devastation of war on people's lives, and the compelling case to seek true peace, in which each person can play a part.

The whole chorale looks ahead with hope, inviting humanity to commit ourselves to a more peaceful future, together.

The Armed Man is an accessible work that could be performed by many local choirs and bands – it would be a challenge vocally and musically, but worth every effort. If you get an opportunity to participate in it you will be helping other people in their understandings of war and peace, or if you get the opportunity to be in an audience, you will be encouraged that there is so much widespread community feeling that humanity can do so much better than we often do.

ENGAGEMENT



Engagement: Members and Friends will have an opportunity to engage with or respond to ideas that were addressed in the previous issue of *Pipeline*. Engaging with the ideas of others, respondents will affirm and / or commend the ideas and also take the opportunity to recommend other points of view.

The March 2015 issue of Pipeline featured Stephanie Hogg's article on "Gardens and the spirituality of place." The focus on the spirituality of place reminded Lucy Jones (Hobart Tas, PDD 25) of a related article she had read. The article by David Tacey was based on chapter four (Spirit and Place) of his book, ReEnchantment: The New Australian Spirituality (Harper Collins Publishers, 2000). An excerpt from that article follows. To explore Tacey's ideas in a different context, see the dialogue between Tacey and Laurence Freeman, Catholic priest, Benedictine monk and Director of the World Community for Christian Meditation: <http://bit.ly/TaceyFreeman>



Lucy Jones

In most European countries, spirit is felt to come from above, to descend from the sky like a dove, to shower upon earth like the flames of Pentecost. Spirit is linked to the heavens, to the blue skies, and to a Father God who is perceived to be "above" us. Yet in Australia, the country of reversals, the upside down land, the Antipodes whose symbol is the tilted Southern Cross, the celestial realm appears to be "below" us, in

the earth itself, in the soil, rocks, and plants of this ancient land. Here, the spirit has not departed the earth and retreated to its heavenly abode. The spirit is in the earth, under our feet, and below our normal level of vision and understanding.

Western European cosmology is reversed in Australia, and this gives rise to a completely different spiritual phenomenology. Because here spiritual feeling enters us, as it were,

from the feet, travels along the legs, through the trunk of the body, and if we are lucky, it ignites a new life in the heart. But it rarely reaches our heads, or is expressed through the voice, or articulated by the educated intellect. It operates below the level of normal ratiocination, which is why so few people in this country can intellectually express our spiritual experiences. We don't "have" spiritual experiences in Australia, rather, they "have" us, and hold us in their grip.

In Western cultures, religion has become a remarkably heady experience. It is a way of the mind, and a way of moral understanding, and if we are very fortunate, it reaches down into the heart as well, and ignites a life of true faith. In the West, religion is intimately tied up with language, words, verbal expressions, sermons, creeds, catechism, theology. As Veronica Brady has said, there is a lot of chattering about religion, a great deal of God-language, but not always much God-presence. In Australia, I would contend, this pattern is reversed, so that we have a strong sense of God-presence, but not much God-language.

Our society does not appear to be very religious, because hardly any of our religion is articulated or on show.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE EARTH

The main language in Australia is earth-language: walking over the body of the earth, touching nature, feeling its presence and its other life, and attuning ourselves to its sensual reality.

Aboriginal culture is of the land, and Aboriginal religion is a spirituality of place. The sacred songs and chants are sung to gigantic and ancient rock formations and to vast expanses of red earth. The sacred dances are earth-dances, where the celebrants gather to "sing up" and sustain the spirits of the earth. Significantly, Aboriginal dance and celebration is concentrated upon the movements of the feet. [Aboriginal elder] Mowaljarlai says that when he is engaged in attunement in the bush, he performs movements with the feet to create greater spiritual intimacy with the earth: "You feel you want to get deeper, so you start moving around and stamp your feet – to come closer and to recognise what you are seeing". Stamping the feet gives connection to the land, spiritual quickening, and focus to the mind.

In traditional dance, the feet of the dancer are gently raised at first, and then strike the earth with much energy and vigour. At the climax of the dance, the feet hit the ground with great force, as if to draw the spirit out, to raise fire out of rock, to cause the spirit to flame up from below. Often the arms are limp or immobile, as the feet do the communicating, as in Irish Celtic dancing. Aboriginal visual art, as well, is governed by the feet. The so-called abstract paintings are not abstract at all, but are experiences of the land as seen from above and felt through the feet. The feet register the contours of place, the proportions, lines, dots, and rhythms of the landscape.

Even this country's greatest intellects, like Hope and Murray, can in certain lights appear non- or anti-sophisticated, because they are deeply suspicious of the routine chatter and madness which passes for civilization in other countries, and often in our own cities. But they are only suspicious of the chatter because they can feel something more and something greater. A reality larger than ourselves beckons us in this country, a reality born of silence and not readily translated into concepts or language. The analytical left brain may not even perceive it at all, but the poetical right brain, which governs our experience of the intuitive dimension of experience, must sing in praise of this larger and greater world:

*After the tree falls, there will reign
the same silence*

*as stuns and spurs us, enraptures and
defeats us,*

*as seems to some a challenge, and
seems to others*

*to be waiting here for something
beyond imagining.*

(from Les Murray poem "Noonday Axeman." For complete poem go to <http://bit.ly/NoonAxeman>)

How we conceptualise spirit in Australia is still beyond our imagining. And this spirit appears to be "waiting" for something to happen, waiting for some transformation or transfiguration. But of what? And of whom? Perhaps this is what the early sailors meant by *Australia del Espiritu Santo*, a land dedicated to the holy spirit.

Engagement with Barbara and Neville Washington

Barbara and Neville Washington (North Haven SA, PDD 18) joined Wellspring as Friends after returning from a weeklong stay on Iona; an Amnesty International week. Neville shares some of their life.

In our 54 years of married life we have had a passionate concern for social justice issues. We have 5 children. The first two boys are our biological children. The next three, one boy and two girls, were adopted. Our children are gifts from God in whom we delight. Their well being, health and happiness have been our main concern these last fifty years.

Now as 'seniors' we have their love and support also. It's a mutual God given blessing.

Barbara is a retired secondary school teacher with a Bachelor of Arts/Education. She has completed numerous studies down through the years relating to teaching and theological issues. A passion has

been developing and implementing Aboriginal Studies in the curriculum across the year levels.

She spent 14 years teaching at a parent controlled Christian school. When she retired from teaching due to a health issue she accepted the position as Lay Minister at the Grange Uniting Church and spent



Barbara Washington

5 1/2 years in this role until mid 2005. My position during that time was as the “minister’s wife” and her secretary! We are both involved now in various roles with the Port Adelaide Uniting church.

I am a retired pharmacist with a Diploma of Pharmacy from Adelaide University. While studying at the University I turned 18 and was required to do National Service -- 2 months basic training in two split intakes at Laverton RAAF base

in Victoria and, at the conclusion of this, 2 years part time in the Citizen Air Force graduating with the lowly commission of Pilot Officer.

We had 20 years living in Karoonda in the Murray Mallee where I had my own pharmacy. For 15 years of that time, I worked closely with two Christian doctors. We moved to the city in 1980 for the sake of our children’s education.

Our other interests are choral singing, symphony orchestral music, gardening (Barbara is helping establish a gardening club at primary school where our son is principal), attending the various events involving most of our 7 grand children, and occasional travel.

I am a volunteer at the South Australian Maritime Museum as a story teller and presenter for school children. I also assist one of my daughters-in-law helping with

reading sessions with her delightful year 1 and 2 children.

Our ongoing and ever-changing relationship with Jesus is a constant joy and strength that enlivens all our relationships. Our much loved and extending family continues to be a focus of our lives. The relationship with the people of Port Adelaide Uniting Church are rich and good. Life is a gift from God.



Neville Washington

From the Annual General Meeting on 9th May

The teleconference meeting was well attended with 22 Members present and 13 Friends as observers. We were pleased to welcome Jane Robertson and Peter Fensham to their first AGM as Members. With Linda Murray, Council had accepted Jane and Peter as Members at its last meeting. Their Membership will be formally confirmed at a time of celebration and worship at the Ballarat National Gathering. Jonathan Inkipin will prepare a fitting liturgy.

Reports on the activities of the last year were accepted. The reports are available on the website. The Leader’s report focused on the National Teleconference Workshop and included a compilation of the reports from the studies of 1 John.

RESOURCE PERSONS

We acknowledged the contributions of Jonathan Inkipin and Jenny Johnston who, after many years as the resource persons for Spirituality & Worship and Ecumenical & Interfaith, had

stepped down from these roles. We were pleased to welcome the new resource persons: Alex Nelson (Spirituality and Worship) and Doug Hewitt (Ecumenical and Interfaith).

The Resource Person’s role is dependent to some extent on the gifts and talents of the individual. However, in broad terms a Resource Person is someone who might serve in the following ways:

1. Occasionally, send some resources to Wellspring members and friends who are on the email list provided by Jan in the office.
2. Occasionally, contribute to the Wellspring Facebook page or encourage someone else to do so.
3. Occasionally, organise a Wellspring conversation among those on the email list by teleconference.
4. Occasionally, write something for Pipeline or encourage others to write for Pipeline

5. Be willing to ensure that, where possible, Members and Friends connected with the particular Spirituality and Justice Issue contribute to National Gatherings and the National Workshops.

NEW COUNCIL

Leader: Neil Holm

Deputy Leader: two positions were available, one nomination received. David Sloane was prepared to consider nomination if a second candidate stood to share the duties. No further nominations were received. Both positions of Deputy Leader remain vacant.

Treasurer: Margaret Allen (Margaret indicated her wish to retire as Hon Treasurer when a suitable replacement is found.)

Secretary: Stephanie Hogg

Ordinary Members of Council: Jane Robertson, David Sloane, Jim Tulip, Peggy Goldsmith, and Clabon Allen.

The search for deputy leaders continues. Since the AGM, another Member was asked to accept nomination but was unable to do so. The table below shows the notional distribution of duties between the Leader and the Deputies:

ways; getting a feel for what we do. If you decide that you are living prophetically in the ways described in Are You Interested in Joining Wellspring Community? and you are able to agree to the Rule, then you may apply to become a Member. Your

Wellspring Community? you are ready for review. After a successful review you become a Traveller. Your Community of Support guides you through the next (year-long?) stage of formation. After a successful review as a Traveller, Wellspring Community welcomes your application to become a Member.]

| | State Oversight | Spirituality & Justice Oversight | Resourcing Oversight | Administration Oversight |
|-----------------|-------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| Leader | Qld, NSW, ACT, Overseas | Peace & Social Justice. Reconciliation | Pipeline. Wellspring Library | National Office. Council. Formation coordination. National Workshop. |
| Deputy A | Vic, Tas | Spirituality & Worship. Sustainability | Website | Formation of Travellers. National Gathering |
| Deputy B | SA, WA | Ecumenical & Interfaith. Healing & Hospitality | Isolated Members & Friends | Formation of Members. National Gathering. |

Bill Anderson spoke to the proposal for Life Membership. Several Members expressed concern that the proposal had potential to cause divisions within the Community.

The chair determined that a poll should be conducted. Each Member present was asked to state their support for or opposition to the life membership proposal. The poll revealed insufficient support for the life membership proposal to proceed.

Neil Holm spoke to the concept of Traveller that had been widely discussed and circulated at the 2013 Gathering, 2014 AGM, 2014 National Teleconference Workshop, and in various issues of Pipeline. Travellers give friends the opportunity for a mentoring and moving into full membership. A wide-ranging discussion ensued. The discussion revealed concerns by some Members.

The chair determined that a poll should be conducted. Each Member present was asked to state their support for or opposition to the Traveller proposal. The poll revealed insufficient support for the proposal to proceed. The poll results were: 13 in support and 9 opposed. The chair withdrew the motion because a simple majority was not in keeping with the ethos of Wellspring Community. The concerns were as follows:

- Lack of detail on the process
- Concern about the availability of suitable people to fill the Companion role
- Concern that levels of membership imply a hierarchical perspective that is not in keeping with the communitarian emphasis of Wellspring

PIPELINE

Pipeline will now have an editorial committee. The following members joined the panel: Geoff Stevenson, Eric Smith, Jim Tulip, and Neil Holm. Neil is still seeking a woman to join the editorial committee.

CONSTITUTION CHANGE

The meeting debated a proposed change to the membership clause of the constitution. The proposal was designed to create four categories of membership: Member, Friend, Traveller, and Life Member. The proposal provided two ways of becoming a Member with the second way allowing an intentional formation process:

One way involves mixing with Wellspring people in cells or in other

application will be reviewed and a decision made.

The other way is more structured and formational. This way involves a two-stage (notionally two-year) intentional formation process. You apply to begin. You are assigned a Companion to oversight your formation process. The Companion helps you find a Community of Support. This group helps you plan a formation process that (a) meets your needs and (b) moves you towards living prophetically. You work towards these goals for about a year. When you feel you have (a) made substantial progress towards meeting your formation goals and (b) made some progress towards living prophetically as per the descriptors in Are You Interested in Joining

Discussion followed about the need to develop agreed processes that lead to Membership. The chair urged Members who opposed the proposal to submit alternate proposals for consideration by Council. The meeting agreed to refer the issue back to Council to for further discussion and revised proposal.

Proposals should reach the Secretary by 1 August for discussion at the August Council meeting and possible Special Meeting at the National Gathering

Although the formation process has been discussed since *The Wellspring Mysteries* article in Pipeline December 2012 (see the website for back issues of Pipeline), the Traveller concept was most fully developed in the Leader's Report to the 2014 AGM and again as part of the 2014 National Teleconference Workshop.

The details are:

A Friend indicates that she wishes to commence the Intentional Track.

The Leader assigns a Companion to oversight the Friend's progress.

The Companion establishes a Community of Support for the Friend. The Community of Support may be a cell group or another group of mature Christians who will support the Friend on the Intentional track. Under some circumstances, the Companion may ask a Spiritual Director to act as the Community of Support.

The Community of Support works with the Friend to help her work out those aspects of prophetic living especially relevant to her. The Community of Support (with help from the Companion) guides the Friend in selecting appropriate resources. These resources might include a guide to the preparation of a Rule of Life and information about the Central Commitments of Wellspring and the Rule of Wellspring. As the Friend

works on her program, she discusses her ideas informally with the members of the Community of Support or with the Companion.

Companions will also remind the Community of Support of the need to access relevant resources already developed by others eg Just Faith resources prepared by TEAR Australia; Emmaus Walk/Cursillo program resources; The Gift of Each Other resources prepared by NSW Ecumenical Council; Igniting the Flame resources available through the Community of Aidan and Hilda; retreat resources available through St Clements Galong, Centre of Ignatian Spirituality etc; Waiters Union Community Orientation Course; Caring for the Environment resources prepared by Queensland Churches Together; and various resources produced by the National Council of Churches of Australia (including Seeds for Peace).

From time to time, the Friend shares her progress with the Community of Support that has been praying for her regularly. They meet with the Friend who outlines her ideas and the Community of Support offers suggestions on how her progress might be improved or strengthened (if this is necessary). Together the group tries to discern what kinds of creative and imaginative activities, knowledge, skills, or spiritual disciplines might assist in achieving the goal. The group tries to ensure that over a 12-month period the Friend will engage in activities that will ground her in ways that assist her to live more prophetically.

From time to time, the Companion works with the Friend. The Companion helps her to identify at least two role models who may be contemporary or historical figures. She will spend time with these role models, perhaps one in Year 1 and one in Year 2. She will seek to allow the character, lifestyle, and worldview

of the role models to engage with her character. The Companion will offer suggestions on ways of allowing this to happen creatively.

After a year, the Companion reviews the Friend's progress and, when appropriate, recommend to the Leader that the Friend be recognised as a Traveller.

A similar process will be followed for Year 2 in order to achieve recognition as a Member. The Traveller will meet from time to time with the Community of Support to report on progress and to seek further advice and support.

In Year 2, the Traveller chooses to focus on one Wellspring Central Commitment. The Companion discusses how the Traveller might engage in practical activities associated with this Central Commitment. The Companion will advise her that these activities need not be in addition to her normal Christian service but that they should be entered into in a manner that is thoughtful and intentionally shaped by the formation/transformation process.

The Companion meets with the Community of Support from time to time to review progress and help sort out any impediments to the process. At the appropriate time and on the advice of the Community of Support and on his own discernment, he will recommend recognition as Member to the Wellspring Leader.

National Gathering Ballarat

17-20 September 2015

Registrations close

31 July

(sooner, please)

See details & registration form
at

<http://bit.ly/NatGath>

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NEXT ISSUE: September 2015.

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Deadline for material is Monday 3 August, 2015. Contributions on any topic are welcome.