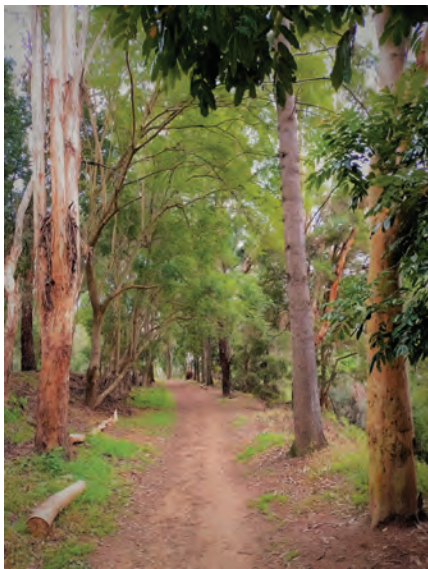


Introduction to June Pipeline



Geoff Stevenson (Day 3)

Over these last couple of months, I have tended to commence letters and emails to people by asking something like: ‘How are you going in this strange time in which we find ourselves?’ It is indeed a strange time and the world feels very different, as has the Easter Season and Pentecost. Whilst my own world has changed dramatically, and I find myself living within our home apart from the daily walk around Toongabbie Creek with our dog and an occasional foray to the shops for necessities.

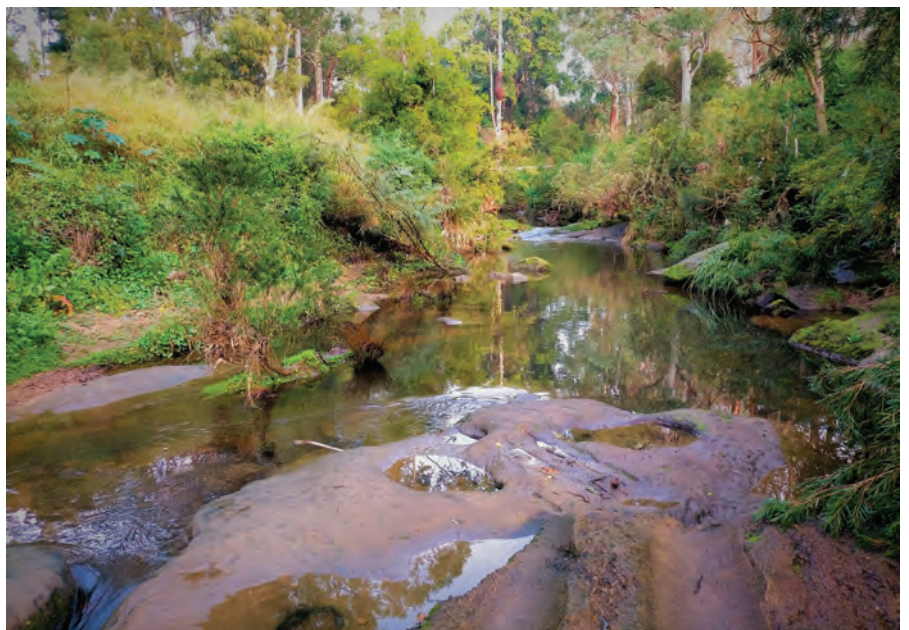
I, like most others have discovered the bane and blessing of Zoom and suffer from ‘Zoom neck-back-head-eyes...’ It has been wonderful to be able to connect with people via Zoom and conduct much of the business

and relational meetings we need through our congregations. To be able to conduct worship via Zoom or Facebook or to email resources to people, has been very important for us and I wonder how we might have coped a couple of decades ago?! We have even found that more people are connecting via these media than would normally attend our congregations – I suspect many who cannot or would not come to church find Zoom and Facebook safe and offer them a connection to the Spirit they desperately need.

As I have wandered the highways and byways of Old Toongabbie and Winston Hills, we have met many more people along the way. There

seem to be more birds singing, squawking, and making their beautiful bird-song noises along our way. The creek looks a little cleaner and the air is clear – especially obvious after the horrific summer where it was smoky for months.

The world also seems quieter, more subdued and that feels peaceful, although I suspect there is a hidden angst, fear and pain that pervades below the surface and behind the walls of the neighbourhood homes. There are people lost and alienated in an isolated world of loneliness, unable to live with their own being or those who share their house. Domestic violence has increased, and some children have struggled. Families complain about

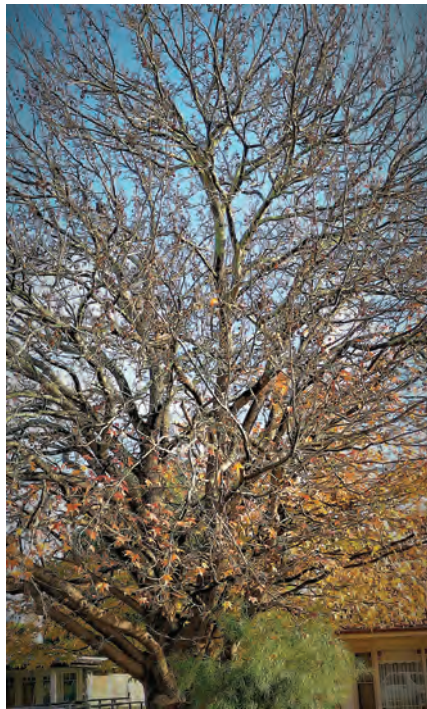


being at home together working in different rooms, supervising children doing school by screen and keeping some semblance of sanity. Parents are beginning to appreciate the art and dedication of teachers!

The earth seems to be resting and enjoying less influence and abuse at the hands of humanity and there is a simplicity of life that people, some at least, are beginning to appreciate. There is time to reflect, contemplate and wonder. There is time to do some creative projects. There is time and that can be a bane or blessing for people. Some lap it up and enjoy a break from busy-ness and distractions, space to be rather than always doing. Others need distraction and the busy-ness of their schedule to distract them from thinking, reflection, and the parts of life they desperately want to avoid.

Throughout this time, I have found myself praying for and articulating to all and sundry, the need for us to change; to use this time to reconfigure our lives, the life of our world and our churches. I desperately hope that the congregations over which I have some responsibility do not revert to business-as-usual, as if that was/is the way God calls us to engage the world and live as God's people. This seems like an apocalyptic moment, an inbreaking of gracious possibility and wonder. In the midst of catastrophe, pain, sickness and death, from which our nation has largely been spared, there is a deep warning and invitation to resurrection and new life. The protests and anxiety that have swelled up around isolation, and human rights in the 'Black Lives Matter' movement reveal the hidden and not-so-hidden pain and injustice that infects our world.

Resurrection always follows death and so this becomes a deep time of letting go, in order to find the new thing that God calls us to.



This morning I took time to ponder a large Liquid Amber tree around the corner. There are some leaves remaining, red and gold. Most have fallen and I realised that there is a dying, an annual death, so to speak. The tree lets go and endures the cold lifelessness of winter. In Spring there is always a rebirth, when new growth blossoms across the tree liberating new leaves and life. In this edition of *Pipeline* we are invited into the depths of people's reflections on life in a COVID-19 world and there are many signs of hope and resurrection within the stories and ponderings of our members. I hope that you find your own space for prayer, reflection and contemplation in this time and that the transformative life of God can renew you, your community, church and our world.



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Leader's Letter

Alex Scutt (Day 22)

I am writing this from my home office on a Sunday morning when I would normally be in church. This morning our church community is resuming face-to-face worship after having spent the latter part of the Lenten season, the entirety of the Easter Season, and the first two weeks of the Season of Pentecost worshipping in homes remotely connecting to a church service through the Internet. It has been the experience of the majority of Christians here in Australia and throughout the world. For various reasons – mainly to do with health and risk factors – it will be another week or two before I myself resume ministry among my faith community face to face.

It is a good time to note a few points about what I have learned from this experience and about the glimpses of the resurrection I have seen in this coronavirus world. I first turn to the world around me and I note that my everyday world has shrunk to contain only my immediate neighbourhood: no commuting to work in town, no trips beyond our own immediate part of suburbia, having to cancel a planned overseas trip planned for later this year. Moving from our house means visits to the local shops, and walks on a regular route in our nearby park. It has given me a chance to appreciate the natural light in my new home office – recently renewed and renovated to allow in a lot more light, a chance to appreciate the changing of the seasons which in this part of Australia is so wonderful with the colours of the trees, the cold crisp air, and days like today of perfect sunshine. The air is clearer – less pollution due to the reduction in traffic, the ambient sounds are those of birds and people rather than the



continuous white noise and hum of traffic. For me, these things have been refreshing and life-giving.

For the first few weeks I made a series of forty short piano pieces to post on Facebook and on YouTube using basic technological ingredients of a mobile phone, a tripod, a video-editor for post production, and above all a vast quantity of music some of which had been on my shelves unplayed for decades. It was also a chance to explore them again, and explore new territory as well. The discipline of preparing these to an acceptable standard for performance and sharing with others provided enjoyment and focus and clear task at a time of unfamiliarity, uncertainty and fear. A small number of people in all parts of Australia got to hear it and some were kind enough to say that they looked forward to each new instalment – and who saw this musical moment in a day as an offering. That was indeed my aim.

Throughout these weeks Stephanie and I have together found extra time for prayer and for exploring anew the riches of the daily offices and the daily scripture readings – and especially the regularly cyclical reading of the Psalms. So often they have hit the nail right on the head of where we all stand in our coronavirus world. The readings from John's gospel, and the chance to read sequentially through large chunks of the Acts of the Apostles has sustained us and given us much to ponder about the life of the early church as it suffered and struggled in the world of first century Palestine and beyond.

In the last few weeks it has been Matthew's Sermon on the Mount and the fantastic stories about the deeds of Elijah during the turbulent period of the reign of king Ahab recorded in the first book of Kings. With settings in Mount Carmel, Mount Sinai and Samaria, the stories recall the great places where the faith of Israel was forged and formed, to be recalled at times of drought, famine and war.



For me all of these things are glimpses of the resurrection because Jesus' resurrection sheds new light on the ordinary, the small things, as well as the opportunity to try new things, and to appreciate the givenness and giftness of all life. As far as Wellspring is concerned, I have had a chance in the month or so that I had no regular work to ring around as many people as I could on their prayer diary day and get to know many of you that little bit more. I will do it again in the coming months. As another council meeting comes around I am grateful to the Queensland group, to Lisa Wriley, Helen Weavers and Doug Hewitt from Newcastle and the North Coast for suggesting ways that our community can share its resources with others – Common Grace, the Refugee Resource Centre,

and Iona are the three main ones they highlighted. This will give the council a good starting point for considering these things and what next steps we take. Matters of governance and structure will also be matters for discussion and action in the coming months for Wellspring Council.

In closing I want to take this opportunity of welcoming long-time Wellspring member Helen Weavers

to the council, and extend a warm welcome to Marie McInnes from Springwood in New South Wales who is a new member of Wellspring Community. I also thank Diane Speed for her willingness to accept nomination as Deputy Leader. She will be particularly helping to update the community's constitution and contribute to discussions about Wellspring's overall structure.

Look kindly on our world, our God, as we suffer and struggle with one another.

Look kindly on your Church, driven by the same necessity; and may the light we have seen in Jesus illuminate and brighten all the world

Amen

Resurrection Glimpses

Peggy Goldsmith (Day 3)

For those of us who are passionate about our responsibility for the earth, its creatures, its oceans, its skies, even momentary signs of hope – a rising from the dead – are welcome. One's eyes and ears are alert for words and phrases like: renewables, energy storage, planting trees, care for the earth, leaving coal in the ground, renewing waterways with planting, clear skies and investment in renewable energies. So, what is happening in our Coronavirus World?

In an article in the SMH May 22, 2020, Clyde Russell wrote:

'Which commodities and countries are best placed to emerge as winners in the post-coronavirus world, especially if the anticipated boost to investment in renewables energies actually happens?

One of the themes emerging for a post-coronavirus world is that investment should flow into renewable energies, both as economic stimulus and as a way of limiting the impact of climate change.'

He cites Australia as having a unique opportunity to assist in building the wind, solar and geothermal power as well as energy storage, which are required to keep the increase in global temperatures to under 2 degrees Celsius.

This is only a glimpse. The World Bank released a report on May 11

stating that global production of minerals such as lithium, cobalt and graphite would be needed to build this power. Are we sure that Australia producing further billions of tons of minerals and metals is a unique opportunity for us? Maybe.

It is indeed welcome news, good news that *'Australia's reliance on coal-fired electricity is waning as new figures reveal renewable energy now accounts for more than 20 per cent of the nation's power, passing a new record.*

While coal and gas-fired power remain dominant in the energy mix, together accounting for 77 per cent, the latest data from the Energy Department shows renewable energy's share of total power generation has continued to surge on the back of a 46 per cent rise in solar output last year and a 19 per cent increase in wind power.' SMH May 27. Nick Toscano & Mike Foley: *Renewable energy eats into coal's share of electricity grid.*

At the moment, gas-fired power generation still has a 21 per cent share of the energy mix. Renewable energy – including wind power, hydro power, large-scale solar and rooftop solar panels – rose from a combined 19 per cent share in 2018 to 21 per cent in 2019. So it is a glimpse of a rising percentage of renewable energy that we see, not yet a major percentage.

Locally in the Blue Mountains, there are signs of resurrection after the bushfires. The amazing ability of eucalyptus trees and others to commence greening up their trunks following fire always delights and amazes us. The fire closest to me was a back burn so not a hot fire, not a total fire, but one that was here and there and close to the ground. Massive stone ledges were revealed no longer hidden by undergrowth, bushes and grasses. Our fires were followed by a deluge of rain, causing rail embankments to cave in, retaining walls to collapse and flooding to occur on mountains that normally had just run-off. That this rejuvenated the bush too is not in dispute. Then came our Coronavirus world.

Lockdown: A walk along the road that normally took 20 minutes turned into 1¼ hours as one chatted to property bound neighbours up and down the road. Walkers and cyclists were everywhere, even on our steep hills. This in itself is a resurrection of an earlier life, when exercise per se did not need to be undertaken, as one walked everywhere. Our bicycle shops emptied themselves of new bicycles, and extra staff were employed to repair bikes now urgently needed.

Another glimpse of resurrection was in relationships: conversations which had been hurried in the past, now became more leisurely. Well,

neither person was going anywhere, so there was no hurry. People were listening more intently and ringing back later to check on how the person was going with, for instance, their new iPad purchased in order to Zoom into church services and discussion groups. It was suddenly discovered that you

could Face-Time a relative in a nursing home and provide much more pleasure for the person glimpsing your face, even if they thought it was a picture! (but still listened for your voice). There are some good things to come out of our time within a Coronavirus World. We need to look out for them,

share them with each other and give thanks for being spared thousands of deaths in Australia. Despite our propensity for preferring to be 'larrikins' and being 'agin the Government' we are capable of good leadership and responsible reactions to sound advice when we put our minds to it.



Reflection

David Sloane (Day 15)

There was recently a statement on Social Media which was rather confronting and I quote. "I see you worship consumerism, so I will close your shops. You love physical prowess, strength and beauty, so I will close your gyms and sports. You are lovers of money, so I will send your stock market into a spin. Rich food and alcohol are your gods, so I will close bistros and restaurants, you refuse to worship me, so I will close your churches."

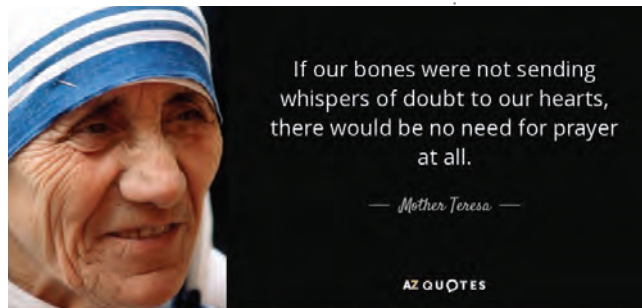


As Christians we are confronted with the need for serious theological reflection in this COVID-19 age. Where is God in this crisis? How should we pray? Is there hope? Is this virus a wakeup call for our materialistic world? For the church?

If there was a time, now is the time and the opportunity to rediscover the whole concept of Lamentation in our prayers and in our worship. The Bible, especially in the Old Testament (Job and the Psalms) is full of examples of Lamentations. A lament is an expression of grief and sorrow. It is often a prayer or song expressing deep sorrow or grief. It is a very biblical way of making sense of suffering, not by trying to explain it but by feeling it. The Book of Job is a classic expression of lament, a crying out to God in pain. It is what Jesus did on the cross.

Paul in Romans Chapter 8 speaks of our groaning inwardly along with the whole creation.

Likewise, when we read Psalm 77 we discover that the writer expresses his frustration to God, who seemingly is deaf to his cries for help and relief (Verses 1-4). As we watch the Evening News we may find our security and faith shaken. All Christians, if they are honest, have felt like this at times. Mother Theresa of Calcutta often expressed her many doubts in her letters to her superiors. Thomas Merton, who had his own struggles with God's will, once said that the person of faith who has never experienced doubt, is not a person of faith. A lament is not a failure of faith, but an act of faith. We cry out directly to God because deep down we know our relationship with God matters. Even St Paul was perplexed but not driven to despair (2 Corinthians 4:8).



Dr Andrew Dutney, Uniting Church theologian, has said that grieving is a source of healing. God actually changes us during the times we pour our hearts to Him in our anger or confusion. As the Jews have discovered through the ages, lamentation is a powerful form of worship and faith. The modern church loses the sense of lament at great cost.

But laments to God about our suffering world do not stop there. The writer of Psalm 77 does not continue with lament but moves from focusing on himself to focusing on God. He moves from "I", "me", "my", to "you"

and "thou" (Verses 10-11). We are encouraged to think and meditate on our relationship to Him and how He has acted for good in our lives and in the world. "I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds" v 12.

As Christians, we can hold onto the Christian hope that God has promised that in the end all will be well and all manner of things will be well (Julian of Norwich). The Christian hope is not a vague optimism but is sure and certain. It is anchored in the life, death and resurrection of the Lord of history, Jesus Christ, who has risen from the dead. We believe He will come again to renew creation and bring heaven and earth together (Revelation 21:1-4). Hope for the Christian is like a bird who feels the dawn is breaking but yet sings while it is still dark.

In this age of Corona, we cannot go a day without such hope. Such

Christian hope is a confident hope that makes positive action possible, even in situations which may seem hopeless. Just as Abraham and Sarah were reminded when told by the

Lord that Sarah in her old age would bear a son, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Genesis 18:14).

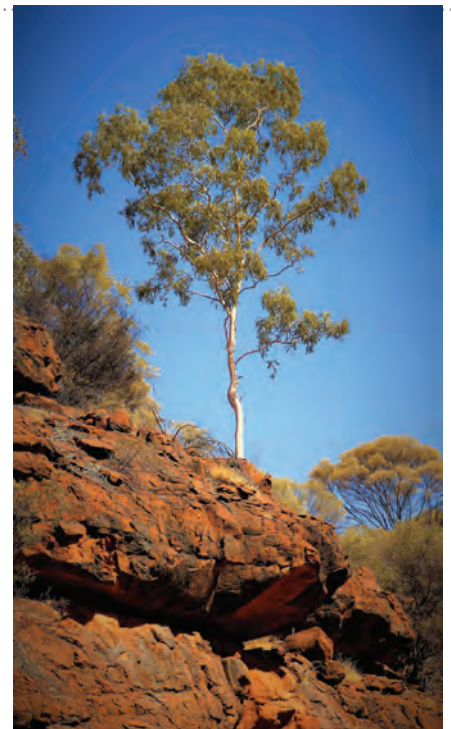
The way the writer of this psalm experienced hope came after a lament for a personal crisis. A lament by us for the suffering caused by COVID-19 can also lead to renewed hope for us in these dire times.



PEACE

By Heather Eckersley 30 March 2020 (Day 17)

Is it presence or absence?
Only found in certain places
Calm quiet surroundings
With gentle music playing
No sense of rush or busyness
Or is it in the fierce centre of the storm?
Darkness and turmoil everywhere
Unable to control these tumults
Fear looming large
Yet the compelling Presence
At the centre and the circumference
Beyond words or explanation
Peace within the eternal embrace of LOVE.



Quote from *Pacebene.org*
27 March 2020

“To attain inner peace you must actually give up your life, not just your possessions. When you at last give your life - bringing into alignment your beliefs and the way you live them - then, and only then, you begin to find inner peace.” By Peace Pilgrim



The Way of Meditation: Pathway to Silence, Stillness, Simplicity . . . Beauty

Judith Keller and Gerard Sullivan (Day 28)

Many people today may have heard of meditation. For example, some people meditate for good health, wellness or stress management. Meditation is also a universal wisdom found in all spiritual traditions. In the Christian tradition, meditation is a form of prayer.

For many years we have facilitated groups of Christian meditators and taught courses to introduce Christian meditation to others. As such we are part of a wider Australian community of Christian meditators who are linked into a worldwide community, the World Community for Christian

Meditation, www.wccm.org. The WCCM is ecumenical and open to dialogue with other faiths and the secular world.

Our Christian meditation practice has been for us, and continues to be, prayerful formation for just and loving action in our lives. This union between the active and contemplative aspects of life is actually expressed in the logo associated with the WCCM, two doves perched on the edge of a chalice shaped cup, one turned inwards drinking from cup, the other standing on the rim looking out on the world. The logo is often interpreted as representing the eucharistic cup of Christ, the drinking of the waters of eternal life, as well as an assurance of

Resurrection. Doves symbolise the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Our practice is described as Christian meditation *in the tradition of John Main*. John Main was a Benedictine priest who was born in the U.K in 1926, and who died in Montreal in Canada in 1982. The range of John Main's thought and experience, his many books and his recorded talks on Christian meditation make him one of the great spiritual teachers of the twentieth century.

In *Word Into Silence*, John Main wrote: *‘I think that what all of us have to learn is not so much that we have to create silence. The silence is there within us. What we have to do is to enter into it, to become. silent,*

to become the silence. The purpose of meditation and the challenge of meditation is to allow ourselves to become silent enough to allow this interior silence to emerge, Silence is the language of the Spirit'. *Daily Readings with John Main*, ed Paul Harris, 2010, p. 2).

John Main's teaching on Christian prayer and meditation involves the use of a prayer word, or mantra. The prayer word recommended is Maranatha, Aramaic for 'Come Lord Jesus', words which are to be found in the final book of the Christian Scriptures, the Book of Revelation (Rev 22: 20).

The use of a prayer word in Christian prayer practice is a rediscovery of its roots in the teachings about prayer of the ancient desert mothers and fathers and early Christian monasticism but the earliest roots of Christian meditation prayer can be found in the scriptures, including there Jesus' own teachings on prayer (in the Gospel of Matthew for example). Jesus' teaching on prayer infuse and inform the nature and purpose of Christian meditation prayer and practice. The practice of Christian meditation involves sitting still, closing our eyes, placing our hands on our knees or laps, letting go of any tension in our bodies of which we are aware so that we are



relaxed but alert, breathing normally. Silently, interiorly we begin to say our prayer word or mantra. We continue to say this gently and continuously, repeating it from the beginning to the end of the meditation period (20 minutes). The opening prayer that Christian meditators may thus draw on is: *Living God, open our hearts to the silent presence the Spirit of your Son. Lead us into that mysterious silence where your love is revealed to all who call. Maranatha. Come Lord Jesus.*

Christian meditation practice does not replace other forms of prayer or liturgy or ritual in one's life, including the daily practice of prayer in our Wellspring Prayer Diary. Like other forms of Christian prayer, it is centred on Christ. It is entering simply into God's presence through the discipline of sitting in silence. *'Be still and know that I am God'*, wrote the Psalmist (Psalm 46:10).

During this time of COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing,

opportunities have arisen for Christian meditators to meet online. We ourselves facilitate an online meditation session on Monday afternoons at 4.00pm - 4.35pm (AEST). Some of our local Wellspring community around Brisbane and the Gold Coast join us. We may have around 10-20 meditators in the session and we keep the session muted. We stay online at the end for anyone who wants to have a chat but some meditators simply 'leave' the session after a closing piece of music.

We are writing this for *Pipeline* so that the invitation to meditate with us be extended to the wider Wellspring Community around Australia.

We are expecting to keep our online meditation sessions going beyond the lifting of COVID-19 related restrictions.

Instead of talking about this time of COVID-19 as a time of social distancing, we are claiming this time as a time of Sacred Presence and the way of meditation is one way in which we may enter into this with deeper awareness. You are very welcome to sit with us in silent prayer. As John Main once stated: *'the journey into our own heart is a journey into every heart'*. Email us if you would like further details kellsull@ozemail.com.au

Can We Find Ourselves If In Isolation?

Col Jennings (Day 3)

Reflection is the means whereby we take time for ourselves and in that quiet space we allow ourselves to see how others might see us. Through our gradual understanding and knowledge of God we can then try to counterbalance our understanding of our self with a more reliable understanding of ourselves.

Instead of coming to a point of 'knowing yourself' through your eyes only Professor E.F. Schumacher in his book *A Guide for the Perplexed* made it clear that we can know ourselves better

through a combined understanding and sense of ourselves along with the perspective or observation of others in our life.

From the works received from the mid to late 1800s by Gottfried Mayerhofer and Jakob Lorber, I have learnt that isolation tends to exhaust the energy charge of our souls, that we have a strong need to engage, to belong and to be connected with others. Ultimately, we discover either in this existence or the next that we will need to be connected to God. Within our human and natural environment, or throughout our vast and totally

immeasurable universe, it is certain that love connects us all.

Love, I have also learnt from my biologist friend Lloyd Fell, is even recognised as the primary, biological imperative for living a good, healthy and meaningful life. On birth it could be said most of us are still all empty vessels with a 'receptor'. We all have the ability, the means and the potential to 'recognise' God. Yet it is by choice that we do so or not. Today with our modern technology most human beings are able to discover all kinds of spiritual knowledge through various ways and can readily access the Bible,

the New Revelations of God and so many other good spiritual works or writings.

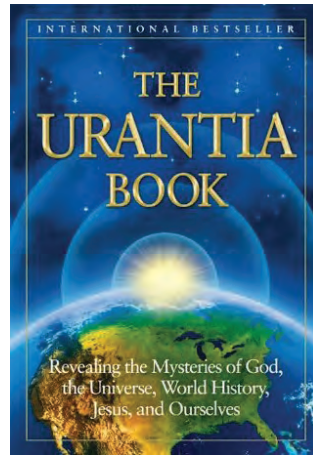
All of us can become receptive to God, if we will it. Sadly it often appears to happen that we (by the grace of God) need to be 'broken down' and transformed in order to realise this. Furthermore, some people in authority sadly seem to suggest to others that have no insight, but who can really decide what spiritual insight you or any of us might have? If, as I suspect, spiritual insight is the ultimate reality, then who do we turn to when we face death or great distress? That seems obvious!

Can we easily (or do we even want to) turn to our professional people, to our teachers, politicians, our research scientists, our health service providers or our many academic advisors - if they have so little spiritual understanding?

At this critical time in human history we are surely being called to prayer, to finding spiritual light and truth. We are called to love God and our neighbours, both here beside us and also around the world, unreservedly.

In my reading of *The Urantia Book* I have come to learn that all true love comes from God and this love is dynamic, alive, free and cannot be merely captured. If you consider this - where love is alive and free (as a bird is in flight) we know we can't just hold it, or know it, or buy it. Love is free and can be shared with others in normal circumstances. The Great Gospel of John, received by Jakob Lorber, tells you that no one can give their brother or their sister anything they do not already possess themselves. It tells you that if you want to awaken love in your brothers and sisters, you need to approach them with love. Likewise, if you wish to create humility within your brothers and sisters, you need to come to them with humility. And flowing from this, we learn that 'gentleness creates gentleness, kindness creates kindness, and mercy, mercy'.

So, how can this love flow through us? You certainly can't take the love



of God and merely imprison it within your heart - just for yourself. It must be shared or given away in affection and love for your brothers and sisters in this life, for love ultimately is that desire to do good for others.

In effect, we are all empty vessels with our receptor turned on or off. Love only makes sense when we give it away to others. If all love comes from God and God is the eternal source of life, light or truth, then we can all, by being receptive, begin to reflect it to our brothers and sisters in this life.

The question arises at this time, are we being restricted from wanting to give generously - without measure or favour - to reflect the love, goodness,

hope and beauty of our God and Creator? If reflecting these things is our primary task and our purpose in life, surely not only prayer, but by being co-creators with God, is what will bring us through this current global distress.

For those good people who feel particularly isolated or lonely at the moment, I believe it is imperative we hold fast to the precepts of God and work toward building our communities - wherever they might be in the world.

Some of our faith leaders have suggested this time might be used to reflect on regaining our balance and direction. In my reflections today I was reminded of Elias (or Elijah), the Prophet who fled when people made an attack on his life. He ran to the hills in a distant land and hid in a cave. When standing in the mouth of the cave he waited for God to pass. The story goes that God was not in the mighty wind, storm or the fire, but was in the gentle breeze. God was in that quiet and receptive corner of his heart that we all know. It was here Elias found his Creator. It was there where the love of God flowed and would grow for him - and for us all.

John Bell Package (Helen Weavers – Day 9)

In May 2019 John Bell visited Australia and held seminars and workshops in many places.

While John was in Newcastle, the clever techs at Adamstown Uniting Church recorded the seminar and workshops. I developed a package containing both and have included the words given on that day. The package has been circulating through my congregation since, and now I am happy to offer it to those in our Wellspring community who missed out on hearing John during his visit.

In the package:

Seminar:

“The arts, faith and imagination”

Workshops:

1. “Jesus, justice and joy”
2. “Sing with the world”



These are audio discs, so a CD player is required. I am offering to post it to anyone in Wellspring who would like to spend a week or two listening to John's seminar and workshops. Please contact me by e-mail if you wish to go on the list. The package at present is on its way to Melbourne. I do trust that you are inspired as you listen.

Helen Weavers

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02 49 454 318 or 0410 684636

A Letter to Wellspring Members from . . .

Judith Keller and Gerard Sullivan (Day 28)

Background: This letter is adapted from an earlier letter we wrote to our online Agape Group in April 2020. Each week in this group (whose members come from around Australia but who know one another), two participants are invited to write a letter to the group from where they live. The letter is to convey to the larger Agape group something of two participants' experiences in particular. Together with one of the Lectionary Readings these two letters are woven into the Agape ritual as sacred texts.

Greetings to all, near and far, from our home in Southport on the Gold Coast in S.E. Qld. As we unite during this time of transformation, we are invited to live patiently, to see the sacredness of Life, and to shelter within Divine Presence.

At Southport we are on the traditional lands of the Yugambeh speaking peoples of the Gold Coast region. According to archaeological research Yugambeh have lived on the Gold Coast for over 24,000 years. In Yugambeh nations 'the land is the lifeforce and the people are the spirit of the land: *Mibin wallul mundindhela nalinah dhagun*'.

Geographically, NORTH from Southport are the flood plains of the Logan, Albert and Nerang Rivers, and the city of Brisbane. EAST is the Pacific Ocean, and the islands of Moreton Bay, the traditional Lands of the Quandamooka peoples. SOUTH is the Tweed River Valley, Mt Warning/Wollumbin, and Lismore. WEST is the Gwandalan world heritage rainforest areas of the Green Mountains and Springbrook.

Over these weeks of COVID-19, we have taken to sitting in silence together a few times a day on our patio; we look out over a creek that runs along



the bottom of the property. On the banks of this creek (Loder's Creek) are swathes of tall eucalyptus trees inhabited by birds and insects.

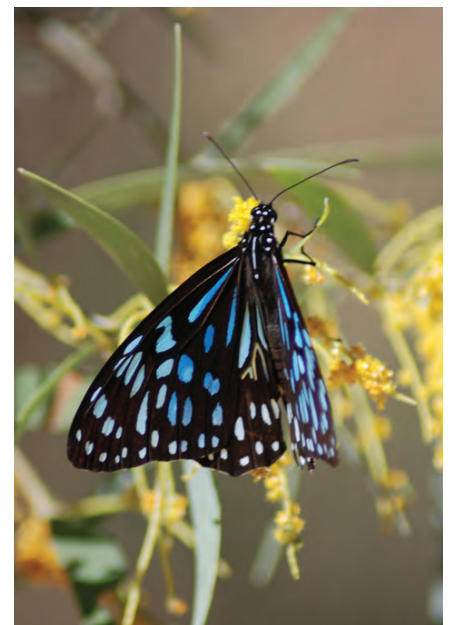
To our utter surprise, the view from our patio this week has been filled with butterflies. The butterflies are 'blue tigers' - they are black in colour with pale blue markings on their wings. They are migrating to North Queensland. Apart from the sheer beauty of clouds of butterflies passing in front of our eyes for days, there has also been something quite poignant about it - cultures around the world regard butterflies as evocations of the souls of the dead. [There are over 200,000 people worldwide who have died in this pandemic]. In addition, many of us are all too aware that pollinators such as butterflies, bees, birds and bats are under threat of extinction.

In an Australian book *Animal Dreaming*, we read the following two observations about the symbolic and spiritual significance of butterflies: As butterflies move from the darkness and confines of the chrysalis to the light of freedom, they show trust in their ability to grow and to adapt to new situations. And, butterflies are naturally deaf; they encourage us to harness the silence so that we may better hear those who may be calling intuitively to us from the heart rather than audibly by means of their voice. [Scott Alexander King, 2003, *Animal Dreaming: The Symbolic and Spiritual Language of the Australasian Animals*].

In this time of the post resurrection appearances of Jesus, and of the many lives lost due to COVID-19, the appearance of butterflies brought both beauty and sadness. We believe their visitation holds insights for us: there is what David Abram calls an 'immensity that enfolds us'; He refers to this immensity as 'animate', sentient, whole and complex. [2010, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology*]; there are opportunities for transformation - social, personal and political emerging from this time; we are being called more than ever to listen from our hearts; the silent ones, both human and non-human are calling us...

Let us remember in love our many sisters and brothers locally and around the world who in recent weeks have died from the virus. And in words adapted from John O'Donohue in *Eternal Echoes*: ... 'May we succumb to the danger of growth. May we live in the neighbourhood of wonder. May we know we are ever embraced in the kind circle of God'.

<https://bit.ly/Blue-Tiger>



Response to Neil Holm's article on Dag Hammarskjold in Pipeline March 2020

Doug Hewitt (Day 9)

First, I wish to thank Neil for leading me to explore new approaches to ideas and concepts which have been bubbling up within me for many years. I have been a great admirer of the example set by the former Secretary General of the United Nations, whose life was ended far too soon in that suspicious plane crash in Africa in 1961, when he was on the verge of bringing peace to the troubled nations of central Africa. There are always forces in our world for which peace is very threatening, not least the powerful nations who inevitably profit from unending conflict in the world.

After reading Neil's article, I was prompted to return to what I have written over several decades on Hammarskjold's continuing influence on my own life, leading to lectures, articles and contributions to public discourse. His very personal reflections in his seminal book *Markings*, published after his death, have inspired many times of prayer and worship which I have led over the years. One of my responses has been a review of the impact Hammarskjold has had on me (ask me for a copy).

Second, Neil's contribution led me to read for the first time Roger Lipsey's article in *Parabola* entitled "Desiring Peace: a Meditation on Dag Hammarskjold." The mission of the Garrison Institute, publisher of *Parabola*, is to use "the transformative power of contemplation to build a more compassionate, resilient future." Neil is urging us to adopt the practice of contemplation to "nourish and stimulate new patterns of behaviour." I share with him the urgency in our time of contemplation to recognise the crucial importance of interdependence and connectedness. I



also respond to the need for us all, as individuals and as a society to listen to the evidence of our scientists and philosophers in order to change the course of our societies, as our very existence is being challenged by forces such as pandemics, climate change, and ever-present threats of nuclear destruction. In many ways, serious scholars are showing that they are all linked, for the whole of God's marvellous creation is interconnected and interdependent.

Neil applies the transformative influence of this contemplation to the structure of the Wellspring Community, specifically to our focal Areas of Concern. He believes

that there is a connectedness and interdependence between the seven areas which we are not recognising. I certainly agree that they cannot be viewed as silos, because we cannot commit to one without being immersed in the others. For decades, I have argued that in our educational institutions the academic divisions into subject disciplines inhibits the effective solving of life's problems and to achieve success the adoption of interdisciplinary approaches is urgently needed. Maybe this is one cause of our inept politicians' inability to accept the overwhelming evidence from scientists about issues such as climate change. They remain stuck in the conventional silos!

If the Areas of Concern can be linked then we may get a greater exchange of ideas and resources to assist the concept of connectedness. It is interesting that the Iona Community is currently considering the introduction of what they are calling Common Concern

Continued page 12

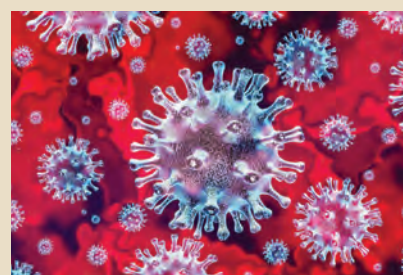
Lockdown May 2020

By Heather Eckersley (Day 17)

Loss of freedom, movements restricted
Withdraw from too much human contact
Social distancing challenging community
Stay connected at your peril
Fear mistrust and judgement grow.

Yet in the midst beauty calls out strong
Reminding to return the gaze of Love
Such peace and freedom we are given
If only we take time to notice and savour.

Behold the paradox that joy and
suffering do exist
Remember times of awe and wonder
Every moment every breath such gift.
Ah...Breathe again and be grateful
notice small and present hope.



Networks which parallel our areas of concern. Maybe we should advise them to avoid the potential separation into silos!

As part of my response to Neil's challenge to focus on interdependence of concepts and ideas, I want to mention some local and international movements working to rescue our world from the impending disasters on several fronts. The ANU in Canberra, led by academics such as Bob Douglas (a former Wellspring friend), has set up the *Commission for the Human Future* (CHF), which in the last month issued its first major report entitled "Surviving and Thriving in the 21st Century." On the CHF website you can read the media release of 22 April and the full report. An article in *The Conversation* on 22 April by Professor John Hewson, chair of CHF, gives an excellent summary of the ten catastrophic risks facing humanity as defined by CHF.

An international parallel to CHF is the *Wellbeing Economy Alliance* (WEAll), a global collaboration

of movements "to transform the economic system into one that delivers human and ecological wellbeing." The governments of Iceland, Scotland and New Zealand have now adopted the achievement of a Wellbeing Economy as the guiding force behind their annual budgets. It is worth noting that each of the three countries has a woman as their leader! One of the active members in this international movement is the Quakers. Please explore the website of WEAll.

The coronavirus pandemic has prompted several writers to link the risks to humanity's future to decades of inaction by neo-liberal governments. Writing in the *New York Times* on 13 April the Harvard philosopher Michael Sandel asks the question *Are we really all in this together?* Medical leaders in the ICAN movement to ban nuclear weapons have drawn links between the exorbitant costs of weapons of war and the endemic starving of funds for the most basic of health needs.

Finally, I want to draw attention to some theologians who are contributing to this movement towards interdependence and connectedness. In their new book *The Seventh Story: Us, Them and the End of Violence*, Brian McLaren and Gareth Higgins describe how six negative stories keep our world spinning towards violence, while the seventh story of open heartedness and love as taught by Jesus can change the direction of a world headed for catastrophe.

In an article in the *International Review of Mission* in November 2019, Sabrina Muller from the University of Zurich describes the "Fresh Expressions of Church and the Mixed Economy," begun 15 years ago in the UK, which are bringing hope of a renewed vision of the Christian church's approach to a hurting world. The conclusion is that we can all learn from the pioneering experiments of churches in other countries, which break away from the constraints of structures of the past that are no longer relevant in our contemporary world.

Reflection on George Henry Morling

Jim Kime (Day 11)

Contemplative prayer. As I hear people talk about it and read what is said my thoughts go back to 1958 when I became a theological student at what is now called Morling College. The college is named after the Principal who welcomed us to train for ministry in Baptist Churches. He was George Morling, something of a revered legend in my generation, who saw our training in the theological disciplines as only one part of our formation to be ministers. He, in his own life, modelled a man of God with a combination of robust study with an intense deep personal seeking after God within.

We saw him in that regard as a mystic for whom God, focused in the person



of Jesus, was absolutely real. Not only that but his sense of the communion of saints was such that he felt close to saints of the past who shared his inner searching after God. To the large amusement of us his students, he would talk about them as if they were still living. We would chorus, "Before our time, Principal."

He spoke to us about his devotional life involving meditation, contemplation and adoration.

For him, meditation was rumination on a portion of scripture. He took seriously the Lord's own words found in John 5:39. "These testify about me." So his meditation was concerning, "what does this help me to understand of Jesus?"

Contemplation followed. A contemplation of Jesus in the light of the meditation. It might have been an enlargement, a refinement, a correction but always building up into a more complete image of Jesus, the Messiah and Immanuel.

This naturally flowed to adoration. Gazing with the eyes of faith at God, revealed in Jesus. Words, either

spoken or thought would be few but could be “Oh my God, Oh my God” What a great privilege to have known this man and to have been taught by him. I and the few of us who still remain, owe so much to him, a great gift of God to his church.

My pattern of devotion is quite different, but like his it does begin with the Bible and like him it comes with an awareness of God who dwells in the high and holy place and also with the one whose heart is contrite and lowly. As he said, “A balance of transcendence and immanence.”

Like him I am moved to dwell on the thought of the communion of

saints, particularly when I am in a communion service. I am moved to think that just as I am eating the bread and drinking the wine in remembrance of Jesus, I am, in a sense, doing it not only with those in the service but with all the saints of all time and places. Sometimes I imagine drinking with Aiden and Cuthbert at Lindesfarne, sometimes with Francis of Assisi, sometimes with Martin Luther, or William Carey or Martin Luther King. And sometimes with a poor unknown uneducated faithful follower of the Lord who out of poverty has given their all for Christ. I feel unworthy to be in such company,

but such is the amazing grace of God that I am.

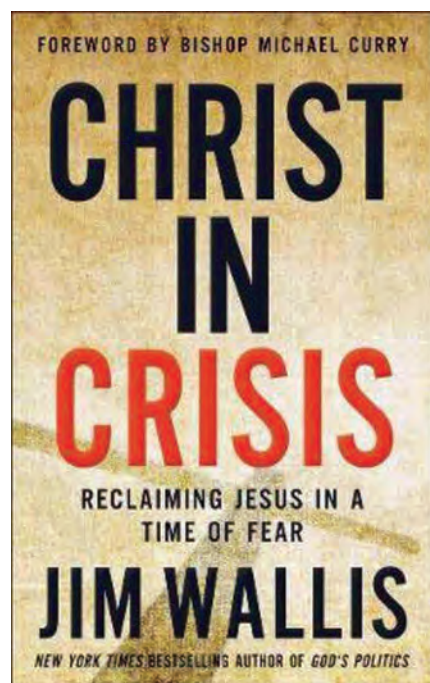
And recently I have found a place for adoration. I call it my thin place, a place with a coastal view of exquisite beauty. But in my mind, far more beautiful and far brighter than our Australian sun, I see the glorious throne of the Almighty, surrounded in the clouds of mystery. But there, standing where he can be seen is our Lord, in whom dwells all the fulness of the godhead bodily. In my imagination I find a place among the great throng around the throne and with them bow down and cry in awe and adoration.

Book Review



Christ in Crisis: Why We Need to Reclaim Jesus by Jim Wallis. Published by Harper Collins, 2019.

John Martin (Day 28)



My copy of this book arrived at the time of the murder of George Floyd. His name would now be added to the book's list of just some of those who have died as a result of police brutality in the US.

Jim Wallis and Bishop Michael Curry led a group of Christian 'elders'

in a 'retreat' from Ash Wednesday to Pentecost, 2017 where they formulated the 'Reclaiming Jesus' change to Declaration. (<http://www.reclaimingjesus.org/>). Among the Declaration's 23 signatories are Tony Campolo, Richard Rohr and Ron Sider. The book roughly follows the Declaration's six statements of belief with their corresponding rejection of what is happening in the US.

Wallis claims that the book is about Jesus, not about Trump. And that definitely is the case with the focus on Jesus as he is revealed through the Gospels. But without Trump the book may not have been written.

The Foreword is written by Bishop Michael Curry (remember the preacher at the royal wedding?)

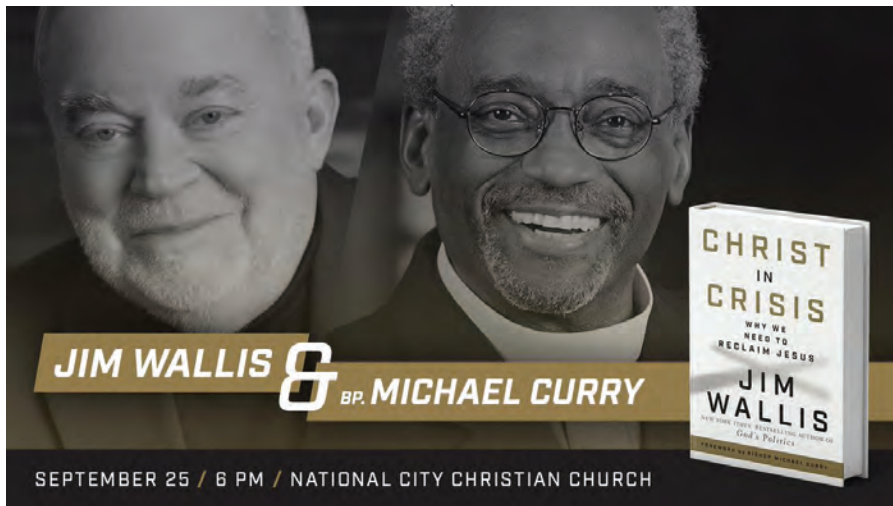
The book was published in 2019 and therefore sufficiently into the Trump Presidency to portray an accurate picture of that man's leadership style and how it is challenged by the Gospel.

In each of the eight sections, Wallis draws first upon wise Biblical and

theological scholarship to set the scene. This is followed by a reflection on life, especially in the US at the present time.

The eight sections cover: The question of who is my neighbour; the creation of humankind in the image of God; Pilate's question, 'What is Truth?'; the question of power and servanthood; the triumph of love over fear; what belongs to Caesar; non-violent peacemaking and discipleship where Matthew 25:31-46 is expounded at length. Wallis reveals that this was his 'conversion text' which brought him from a fundamentalist upbringing through social action to Jesus Christ. (It is also the passage we used at Noelene's funeral service) All this is in the important context of salt and light and hope, drawing on the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount.

While bemoaning the fact that too few sermons are preached on Sermon on the Mount and the Final Judgement, Wallis holds this Biblical material up against the social and political issues being faced in the US today from



refugees to the environment, from black lives matter to abortion, and more besides.

Every section comes back unashamedly to Donald Trump and his Presidency. Wallis appeals for Christians not to go left or right but to go deeper, words taken up by our own Tim Costello. Going deeper is reflected in a life of

prayer and action based on Biblical justice.

The book covers many areas of life where the present political regime in the US has a negative effect on people, the poor, African Americans, Muslims and immigrants. There are lots of ideas and stories of how people are being involved. But not

everyone can be as hands on as is Wallis and his Sojourners community in Washington DC. (Wallis has been arrested 24 times). I would have liked to have seen some mention of how we can all be involved in bringing justice to the world's poor through the prices we pay for the goods we consume.

There is much we can learn from this book. Sadly, it doesn't take a lot of effort to translate to our situation where Black lives matters, refugees are rejected, the environment is trampled and the big end of town is pampered while the poor are squeezed even more.

This is classic Wallis who for 50 years has been speaking, acting and writing for the principles of Justice based on Jesus Christ and the prophets. As well as the major issues featured Wallis points to signs of light and hope in communities in the US.

Marie Standen's refugee advocacy recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours

By Ilsa Cunningham

(Marie Standen is Day 3)

The Tampa incident in 2001 spurred Marie Standen into action.

Disgusted by the way the government was treating refugees, she wrote a letter to the Blue Mountains Gazette asking if anyone else was appalled about the upsurge in racial prejudice and wanted to get together to make a difference.

Her letter struck a chord. In December, the first meeting of the Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group was held in Lawson, attended by more than 100 people.

"We were astonished, and from that meeting the group has grown," Mrs Standen said.

In the 2020 Queen's Birthday Honours, the Faulconbridge resident was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for service to refugees, and

to the community of the Blue Mountains.

"I must admit it's a great honour, there isn't any doubt about that," she said.

The 89-year-old is enormously pleased with the group's accomplishments over the years.

They visit refugees in Villawood Immigration Detention Centre, and through extensive fundraising they have been able to help refugees settling in the community with the cost of education, paying bills, or replacing worn out clothes or shoes, or when their children might be in need of new glasses.

"I don't know how they manage on the little money we give them," Mrs Standen said.

"\$20,000 a month we're paying out in support. The Blue Mountains



community is very generous and kept us afloat. Now we're being supported from all over."

The group has grown to a membership of about 800, with hundreds of supporters on top of that attending the group's fundraising functions.

The group also supports Ocean Twelve, a cricket team of Tamil

refugees. They are the conduit between refugees on struggle street, desperate for a set of wheels and a program at Blaxland High School where students repair old cars.

"I'm most proud of the fact that after 19 years it [the group] is still operating and I'm proud of the fact I had the gumption to do something in the first place," Mrs Standen said.

"Mind you, when you stick your neck out there are lots of people who want to chop it off. I've had lots of threats but they have never eventuated to anything."

There were threatening phone calls and emails, but Mrs Standen "rode through the unpleasantness."

"I'm surprised there's not more," she said.

Mrs Standen became interested in the plight of refugees in the early 80s, when Vietnamese refugees were arriving in Australia by boat, fleeing their country after the end of the Vietnam War. She was the deputy principal at Fairfield High School at the time, later going on to take the reins as principal of Katoomba High from 1988-1992.

Her work with the refugee support group has been possible thanks to a supportive local community.

"I've made an awful lot of friends; people who I wouldn't have met and I have worked with them and it's been great," Mrs Standen said.

But she says there's much work still to be done.

"I'm disappointed that we have not been able to change government policy so we treat our refugees with humanity."

Memories of a Dear Friend - Lois Campbell

by Helen Menzies (Day 16)

Lois Campbell

Born 20 November 1934

Died 14 May 2020

Lois and Bob Campbell were long time members of Wellspring Community, and so when she came into Iona Village in the western suburbs of Brisbane, only four months after my arrival, we forged a very close friendship.

After reading *With Love to the World* in the morning, we would ring each other and chat about it. Maybe a hymn we hadn't sung before....

We loved the same TV programs especially with indigenous actors: *In Control*; *Redfern Now*; *Mystery Road*. Another favourite was *Harrow* because it was set in Brisbane where we both live.

Trips to her beloved suburb of Graceville, to the lovely Regal Cinema, where we laughed over *Tea With the Dames*. She knew so many people there it was just meet and greet. Once we went to the Eldorado Cinema where we decided the carpets were mouldy, and longing for a cup of coffee we found the coffee machine had broken down. So Lois said "Let's have a chocolate coated ice cream!". We wondered afterwards what we felt

about the movie *Dunkirk*. We were disappointed that we had not seen more of the little boats.

Together we enjoyed some lovely concerts at Kenmore Uniting Church. We also worshipped together for the World Day of Prayer in various locations.

Oh the amazing, generous gifts! Last year she gave me a lovely birthday gift with card saying: "Happy 90th Birthday". Then she rang me and said it was only your 89th wasn't it? Two days later a copy of *Dark Emu* and another card saying "Happy 89th!"

Lois introduced me to Kombucha, what a lovely refreshing drink.

Today as we have shared in the live-streamed service for the departure of

her human life, we were reminded over and over again, what a wonderful mother, grandmother and great grandmother she had been. I shared the arrival of each little one, and what she would buy them and their birthday gifts. This was especially meaningful to me as I may never have any great children.

She was still so close to her siblings and extended family and talked on the phone frequently with them.

I can't finish this without mentioning her special relationship with her many dear Aboriginal friends and her compassion and caring for refugees.

We will all miss her greatly from Wellspring Community too.

Vale Lois. Shalom Helen.



Looking at the Way Forward for the Wellspring Community

Helen Weavers (Day 9)

It was indicated at our AGM that ways forward are being considered. This task is also currently happening in the Iona Community, which was the original inspiration for the foundation of the Wellspring Community. Those who have been to Iona as guests or as volunteers would be interested in the latest issue of *e-Coracle*, the on-line magazine from the Iona Community.

It is a long, complex issue (45 entries), set out under the following headings:

1. Iona Community Common Concern Networks (similar to our Areas of Concern)
2. Members, Associates and Friends
3. The Movement
4. Poetry, Prayer and Blessing

Under 'The Movement' @ No. 25 is an article I put in (endorsed by our Wellspring Council) entitled "Closer Connection to the Iona Community: response to Moving Forward" (an

article by David Osborne in an earlier issue of *e-Coracle*). He also has an article in this issue @ No. 26.

The link is <https://iona.org.uk/2020/05/25/e-coracle-may-2020/>

As part of the continuing review of the future of the Wellspring Community

the Council is exploring possible closer links with the Iona Community. In their own review the Iona Community is encouraging new relationships with what are described as their Sister Communities in other parts of the world. Wellspring Community is one of these.

A PRAYER from Dorothy McRae McMahan

Dear God

Moving with your Spirit is not always easy.

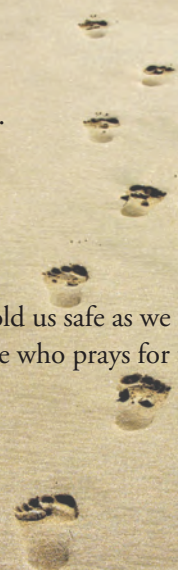
The way forward is not as clear as we would like it to be.

It sometimes feels safer to stay where we are, and then the ground goes from under our feet and we know that we have no option but to move.

Give us love for each other on the way, O God.

Show us your footsteps on the path, Jesus Christ, and hold us safe as we go. Holy Spirit, who is our comforter, our grace, and the one who prays for us, even as we cannot find the words. Amen.

*From 'Prayers for Life's Particular Moments'
by Dorothy McRae-McMahon.
Desbooks 2001*



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NEXT ISSUE: September 2020.

Pipeline Committee: Geoff Stevenson.

Deadline for material is Friday 11 September 2020. Theme for the September issue is "**Connections** - Stories of connection and relationship (friends, strangers, the Earth and God)".

Please email material for that edition to [Geoff Stevenson geoffs81@gmail.com](mailto:geoffs81@gmail.com)