



Pipeline

February, 2003

The Newsletter of The Wellspring Community Inc.
An Australian Community Inspired by the Iona Community

Leader's Letter

One of the fundamental commitments of Wellspring Community is to peace.

The time is overdue for us to make our individual voices and our common voice heard in every possible attempt to avert the threatened war against Iraq. Let us make our prayers for peace a daily commitment; let us write letters to our MPs and Prime Minister and sign petitions; and let us join with others in public protest.

It is quite possible that Iraq has produced 'forbidden' weapons. It is certain that Saddam Hussein is a powerful dictator who has oppressed his own people. Does that justify the US, Britain and Australia using their smart weapons to invade a foreign country and to seek to change its political system - especially when this is not supported by the accepted international arbitrator, the United Nations?

No war has been declared, yet military forces have been deployed in the area. This so-called negotiating from a position of strength is a bullying tactic which we seek to eradicate from our children's thinking. Mediation requires the parties to speak honestly and to listen to each other. We can be strong without being violent. Non-violence is a tough and demanding alternative to violent conflict.

As Martin Luther King said in the last Sunday sermon he preached, which was at the Washington National Cathedral on March 31, 1968:

"One other challenge that we face is simply that we must find an alternative to war and bloodshed. Anyone who feels, and there are still a lot of people who feel that way, that war can solve the social problems facing mankind is sleeping through a revolution. President Kennedy said on one occasion, "Mankind must put an end to war or war will put an end to mankind." The world must hear this. I pray God that America will hear this before it is too late. ... It is no longer a choice, my friends, between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or nonexistence, and the alternative to disarmament, the alternative to a greater suspension of nuclear tests, the alternative to strengthening the United Nations and thereby disarming the whole world may well be a civilization plunged into the abyss of annihilation. ... This is why I felt the need of raising my voice against that war and working wherever I can to arouse the conscience of our nation. ..."

Peace to you all

Anne

Pilgrimage: Seeking the Place of One's Resurrection

The Wellspring Community Pilgrimage to the Centre in late July/August is now briskly under way.

Neil Holm is preparing a series of monthly reflections relating to pilgrimage. These reflections are designed to help all of us commence the pilgrimage-whether we journey to the Centre or not.

Here is an extract from one of the reflections in the January mailing from Day 5. It is based on David Adam's book, *The Cry of the Deer*, Triangle/SPCK, 1987, pp. 47-55.

... Celtic Christians described *Peregrinatio* [Pilgrimage] as "seeking the place of one's resurrection."

... In many ways the Celtic Church took the Resurrection for granted, because they experienced in their lives and worship the real Presence of the Risen Lord. . . . If you asked the Celt where is Jesus now, the reply would be very similar to the one Procula received from Longinus in Masefield's play, *The Trial of Jesus*. She asked, 'Do you think he is dead?' and he replied, 'No, lady, I don't.' When asked, 'Then where is he?' Longinus replied, 'Let loose in the world, lady.' The Risen Christ is 'let loose in the world'.

He is now to be met, to be discovered in our world. He can still be found in the garden, or on the seashore. The Resurrection stories will only make sense if we still experience and affirm His Presence as a reality.

After a while the disciples went fishing again ...They returned to work. It was in that ordinary place, while they were working, that He appeared on the shore. Now He had been seen by individuals and groups; in the garden, on the road, at a meal in a living room, on the beach. Wherever they were, He came. [Compare Matthew 14: 22-36]

Too often we talk of Jesus as if He were a figure in history; we speak of what He did, what He has done, as if it were all over and finished with. We relegate Jesus to Palestine. But He is 'loose in the world'. With the Celt, we must learn to talk to Him rather than talk about Him. We must discipline ourselves so that we talk of Him in the present tense: "Jesus is ... ". It is good to make statements and affirmations about Him in the present. Celebrate the Presence in the Present. For He is the Resurrection and He is here with us now. Today, I arise in the strength of His Resurrection.

Adapted from *The Wellspring Community Inc. Pilgrimage 2003, Preparing for Pilgrimage*. For the booklet please contact Neil Holm: e-mail address: neil-margaret.holm@bigpond.com or Anne McPherson, Leader of the Community, e-mail address: AnneSMcP@aol.com.

VOLUNTEERING ON IONA

“That’s an Aussie accent! How come the voice of the Iona Community on Iona has an Aussie twang?” Most of the comments when I was answering the phone from the Abbey office were along similar lines. Or “how did an Aussie get to spend 10 weeks on Iona?” - mostly from day visitors who were green with envy.

Volunteering on Iona was a special privilege that Keith and I enjoyed in the year 2000. I took long service leave from my nursing position and Keith had supposedly just retired. I worked as front office assistant with the administrator, who was also librarian and gardener, Joss Brace. My duties included answering four incoming phone lines, computer work, enquiries from the public, photocopying and general office duties. Keith worked in the Abbey church as Abbey church assistant with David Hawkey, working with candles, chairs, books, people and services.

How did it happen? Contact by phone with the Iona office or Staff Co-ordinator (01681 700404) who sends out a Volunteer (Vollie) pack (can be done via the Internet www.iona.org.uk) The application form has three options to choose for placement;



from general, kitchen and housekeeping assistants, driver, maintenance assistant, gardener, children’s and craft workers, shop assistant, front office or Abbey Church assistant. Positions change from year to year and people from 18 to retirement are encouraged to apply, although dependent children can’t be catered for. The process needs to start about September for the following year, when the Vollie packs are made up and posted out. Referees are contacted by mail with a questionnaire. Applicants need to be available for a minimum of 6 weeks and need to supply possible dates available. Volunteers are re-imbursed for bus/ferry travel from their arrival in the UK and return to point of embarkation, plus a small allowance each week, board and lodging provided. One and a half days off are given a week, not always consecutive. Accommodation is in bunk rooms, ours was a room with double bunks in Cal Shuna, a lovely cottage in the village which we shared with 12 others.

There are about 25 volunteers on Iona at one time, working with about 20 workers from the resident group who are there for 1 - 3 years. Volunteers are there to look after the guests, 50 in the Abbey with another 50 in the MacLeod Centre each week. Guests arrive on Saturday afternoon and leave on Friday morning each week during the season from March to October.

Vollies work hard, but get to join in morning and evening services, weekly ceilidhs and discos in the village hall and at meals get to meet fascinating people from all over the world! Living on Iona for 10 weeks for me meant living with people from many countries, experiencing different aspects of spirituality in worship and discussion, having huge fun in volunteer meetings and parties, walking for many hours on the pilgrimage and on days off, exploring Mull when I had walked Iona many times, swimming, visiting Staffa, meeting the locals and learning to live with nature as we walked everywhere in all weathers!!! Wonderful people, amazing sunsets, sharing and leading worship, singing in small groups in the Abbey, learning crafty things, buying books, learning about other people’s spiritual journeys - an unforgettable experience.

Helen Weavers



Lovely day at the Abbey



Keith extinguishing candles – over 100 candles – what an atmosphere



Cul Shuna – home for 14 volunteers in the village



Henry (UK Volunteer) washing windows in the Abbey Refectory



Helen (Aus. Volunteer) with Joss who as administrator, librarian and gardener

GETTING TO IONA

The island of Iona is not a turn off the highway while touring Scotland. From Heathrow, make your way to Glasgow (by plane, bus or train) the day BEFORE you are due to arrive on Iona. Next stop is Oban by bus or train. Travelling to Oban by train has two parts - a seat can be booked via the Internet before leaving home but you still need a ticket - purchased from the railway station and best done the day before. Purchasing the ticket may take some considerable time. The journey takes three hours - 9 am to midday. The Oban to Craignure (on Mull) ferry is within walking distance of the train station where tickets are purchased. Bookings aren't required unless you are taking a car. The ferry journey takes approximately 50 minutes.

On arrival at Craignure, the buses await the ferry arrival - make sure you get on the Fionnphort bus. Volunteers will have already notified Iona staff of date of arrival so the bus company are aware of the numbers arriving. Travelling across Mull by bus takes 1 hour 20 minutes.

At Fionnphort, tickets for the Iona ferry are purchased in the café next to the wharf with the ferry crossings more or less continuous in the summer (depending on the weather), the journey takes 10 minutes. Volunteers are met on arrival with their luggage taken via the van and you begin the first of many walks.

Phone numbers: British Rail: 08457 484950 Scottish Citylink buses: 08705 505050 Caledonian MacBrayne Ferries 08705 650000.



Exchange Ministry in Scotland

Returning to one's homeland for an extended time after a number of years inevitably leads to reflection on change. In the second half of 2002, I had the opportunity to spend three months in Scotland, where I did an exchange ministry with a Church of Scotland minister, Colin Anderson, in Inverness. It was especially interesting to be part of the Church of Scotland again, thirteen years after leaving it.

It was a very good, very busy time, ministering in two churches, linked only through sharing a minister. Inverness is a highly "churched" place, with 7 congregations within easy walking distance of each other. This situation has become a vivid illustration of the difficulties faced in so much of the Western world: a long and rich past history of Christian worship and outreach, and a present of aging congregations, steeped in their own story. They are still, often, quite active, but facing an uncertain future.

Of the two churches where I was involved, the Old High was the oldest and most historic church building in Inverness, built on the site where Columba was believed to have preached to the Pictish king and converted him. It retains a central role in the civic life of the city, an old building with a very old tower. It can seat over 1,000 people and actually seats about 100. The other church was the "daughter" church, founded in the 1870's (historic in Australian terms), a smaller building, but with a full congregation and active Sunday School, but threatened partly because of its lack of historicity

There is a feeling of vulnerability and uncertainty among all the 7 churches. But alongside this there was still a much greater feeling of being part of Christendom in a way that is quite different from Australia. The church still has a role within society and seems to have some importance in people's lives even if they are not active church-goers. Prayers are still said at the Court and at the City Council, for, of course, the Church of Scotland is the Established church. Inverness is, admittedly, part of the Highlands, and different from lowland Scotland around Edinburgh and Glasgow, but there is a sense of tradition which is strong. Tradition is of course a great richness, but it can bring with it a heavy weight.

I was the first woman minister either of these congregations had ever had. I was also the only woman minister in the whole Presbytery (the geographical area administered by the church). I was not therefore a "man in black", with a broad full dog collar (often worn all the time). I wore my light ecumenical alb and coloured stoles. I was, at first, apprehensive about how people might respond to my somewhat different appearance and ways of doing things. However they were genuinely welcoming and very positive. There was only one occasion when I came up against any kind of suspicion over my gender and appearance, and that was as I was greeting people coming to a funeral and got a look of disapproving surprise from someone out-with the church.

The experience made me suspect that perhaps too often some of the "problems" the church faces anywhere are more because of the institution and leadership and lack of nerve than because of the people in the pews. While I was there, the Church of Scotland decided again not to elect a woman Moderator. They have yet to be bold enough to take that step. The decision generated a great deal of frustration and anger.

Another noticeable difference was in the amount of talk about ecumenism, which is little heard where I am in Sydney. In contrast multi-cultural and inter-faith issues were non-existent.

In many ways ministry is very similar, with the daily pastoral work and the preparation of worship, and it was good to be aware of connections of faith around the globe. However I came “home” to Australia with renewed appreciation for the Uniting Church with its Basis of Union’s emphasis on being a pilgrim people, and a people on the way. We may lack the long tradition in our own land, but we carry a lighter weight on our shoulders.

Mary Pearson

Sentences for Australia Day

Sacred Story/ Sacred Land — Eugene Stockton

We are coming adrift from the religious culture which formed us....

We Australians are moving away from our heritage of European Christendom with its more exuberant cultural expressions in architecture, art, music, literature (what I like to call ‘the religious culture of four walls’, as demanded by a climate far different from our own). But, more importantly, we are being distanced from the core of that religious culture and the result is a painful uncertainty....

A common reaction in recent times is for our spiritual search to turn inwards....

An over-emphasis inwards may be, in many cases, a retreat from real life. I believe the balance needs to be redressed by strongly re-affirming our link with our forbears (sense of sacred story) and with our setting (sense of sacred land).

...Without a highly developed sense of sacred land and sacred story, any talk of Australian spirituality is superficial or delusory.

Welcome

Ingrid Clanchy, Concord West NSW 02 9743 3856 (Day 17)

Doug & Judith Lawrence, West Camberwarra NSW 02 4421 6632 (Day 28)

Elizabeth Vreugdenhil, Black Forest SA 08 8293 4778 (Day 20)

- new Friends of the Community, and

David and Joy Crawford, Hazelbrook NSW 02 4758 6455 (Day 2)

have become Members.

Prayers

Ross Kingham and his wife Val who lost their home, along with so many others in Canberra on Saturday, 18 January.

Jenny Johnston as she continues her treatment.

Peter Millar and his program in New Zealand from mid-February to early April.

Jill Robertson who tore the ligaments in her foot while an adult volunteer at the National Christian Youth Convention in Newcastle.

Judith Watkins and husband, Steve, as they return from their honeymoon to start a new life together.

The core/steering groups that have begun to meet in **South Australia, Western Australia and Victoria** to plan and support the growth of the Community in these states.

The Council and Members of the Community as they discern new directions and leadership for the Community.



Prayer - Presence

Know that God is with you.
Discover that God is with you.

‘God unseen yet ever near
Thy Presence may I feel.’

The Presence is to be enjoyed.
Let God take over.
Be aware of him and rest in His Presence.

‘Lord you are here. Help me to know it.’
‘Lord you are love. Help me to receive you.’

Adapted from David Adam: *The Cry of the Deer*, Triangle/SPCK, 1987, pp. 19 - 20.

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