

Morialta Vision ...in the Wilderness

– by the gift of the spirit we have not lost the way!

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

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Welcome to Vision in the Wilderness 8 – by the gift of the spirit we have not lost the way!

Colin Cargill Editor and Helena Begg Publisher

More groups are re-opening and this month sees the return of Gateways every second Friday evening (10th and 24th July) and the Friday Art and Craft Circle.

We received feedback that some of you are not overly happy with the title “Vision in the Wilderness” so we are asking for suggestions. It may be time to change as we enter a new phase of the pandemic. You will note that we have added a suggested by-line “by the gift of the spirit we have not lost the way” from the Basis of Union.

In this edition you can also view more craft work by our talented members, as well as the folks in Woomelang.

We include more COVID musical clips, plus a musical parody on climate change (with warning).

Your contributions, photos and articles are very welcome – less than 300 words will be ideal and hand written pieces are fine. Cut off dates for future editions of “VitW” are **July 17 and 31**.

My address for a letter box drop is 34A Moules Rd Magill or you can call me on 0427 122 106 or email me at snout-n-about@bigpond.com.au

Go well and stay safe.

Does the Church ever change its mind - interpreting the Bible?

Extract from an article by Rev. Dr. Ann Wansbrough

The church has indeed changed its mind – on slavery, disability, the environment, criminal sanctions and war, and for some, sexuality. These shifts were not about adopting the ways of the world, but rather recognition that the church had absorbed the cultural assumptions and violence of society. The church needed to reform. This ongoing need for reform was recognised in the Churches’ Decade to Overcome Violence, which challenged violence in all its forms.

The Bible reveals the Word of God. It offers us important guidance to the way we live our lives. However, it also contains passages that we cannot use unless we want to abuse. People of God in all ages have had to repent and learn of God anew.

We must think carefully about how we use Biblical material in debates on issues such as peace, workplace relations, law and order and sexuality. The Christian tradition is to learn from those who experience violence in our society; to ensure that how we use the Bible or theological ideas does not cause harm to people.

Continues in the next column...

Does the Church ever change its mind - interpreting the Bible?

Continued from the previous column...

We can no longer talk about the God who called on the Israelites to put men, women and children to the sword and burn their possessions. We can no longer use those parts of the Bible that suggest that some races are inferior to others, that the rich are blessed by God.

Ethical debates are not mere abstract discussions; people live or die as a result of moral stances on war, poverty, women, crime and sexuality. The God revealed in Jesus Christ reaches out with respect to people who have been excluded by the religious establishment as unworthy and sinful purely because of their personal identity – women, the blind, deaf or lame, lepers and people of other races. Jesus placed them at the centre of the Christian community.

We must therefore be extremely careful in the way we use the Bible. Our understanding of the nature of God, the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the ‘good news’ in the Gospels, demands that we never use the Bible in a way that could be experienced as violence, or interpreted as supporting violence. We must remember our history as a Church on the Way, a history which acknowledges that we must continue to learn the meaning of love, repentance and discipleship in the context of our time and place.

When reading the Bible, we need to be aware of the personal assumptions that we bring, and focus on the Bible’s big theme – finding salvation in Jesus Christ, expressed in love, forgiveness, grace, liberation, justice, peace and the goodness of creation. Evaluate everything else by this.

Don’t assume that the Church has always thought and acted in the same way about a particular issue. Do not use the Bible to reinforce violent attitudes and actions; ensure your use is consistent with the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

Be open to change, especially when change is consistent with compassion, human rights, and respect for people who are different.

Rev Dr Ann Wansbrough AM

Ann Wansbrough has been one of the Uniting Church’s leading theologians during the last 4 to 5 decades. Between 1990 and 2008 Ann was responsible for public policy research for UnitingCare NSW/ACT on a wide range of issues - including environment, unemployment, globalisation, asylum seekers, health, and women’s theology. She was also co-chair of the Social Justice Network of the National Council of Churches and served on the Uniting Justice Reference Committee for many years. In 2008 Ann co-authored a seminal paper on “The place of people with disabilities in the Uniting Church in Australia”.

A message for Fellowship members

At this stage, we are planning to resume Fellowship on the 18th August providing the current restrictions do not change.

I will keep you all informed about resuming, as information on changes becomes available from Synod.

Margaret Clogg



A big thankyou from Ralph Holmes

Rhonda Pech

Dad has asked me to pass on his sincere thanks for mention of his birthday in the Morialta Vision. He had a wonderful birthday, considering that many family and friends could only be with him on the day, separated by glass. He was overwhelmed by the number of cards, phone calls and people who took part in the surprise drive-by.

Rhonda didn't say if Ralph received a cheque from the Queen!
Editor

What happens when there's no-one there?

From Cynthia Story

It happens to all of us. We open the front door, no-one calls out to greet us, there is no-one coming from the next room. Weird.

We buy a cat, a dog, a bird, perhaps even a fish. And so when we open the front door, in the darkness there is a sound of welcome, by this we know we are not alone.

The closest friend, our Lord God, makes no sound, except the beating of our hearts. He is not just close by, near, behind or in front ... He is within us, and we only need to be aware of this to feel the strength and passion of His love.

Take heart, keep that phrase in mind, for when the coldness of the lonely sweeps through your soul, you need to have the warmth of His own self within yourself to find courage for your fight.

Jesus loves the little children of the world

From David Purling

With the world-wide growing rallying of "Black lives matter", I was mindful of a song we sang in Sunday School in my formative years. I also remember a painting hanging in our Sunday school room. Both the song and the painting must have had a profound influence on me. Both are theologically telling, quite simply but powerfully, who Jesus was. It follows that if we are "the body of Christ", then as the church our actions will speak louder than our words. Do you remember the song, and the painting? Did they have an impact on you?

"Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
red and yellow, black and white,
they are precious in his sight...
Jesus loves the little children of the world."



CONGRATULATIONS!

Our best wishes go to Doreen Matheson, who celebrated her 90th birthday last week!



My lockdown project cushion

The front is a copy on cloth of a 1936 painting by my great aunt Anne Dangar. It demonstrates the 'colour translation and rotation' theory of her French cubist mentor Albert Gleizes. The cloth copy was a gift for our golden wedding anniversary, so it was fitting to make a golden back to the cushion, we thought.

The pottery plaque on the wall was also made by Anne, one of a pair. This one reads "A lady never makes another feel inferior to herself morally, mentally or socially". The other plaque, now at a cousin's house, reads "Learn to speak low: all other graces will follow in their proper places". In a letter from the time Anne writes of making plaques with improving inscriptions for her two nieces, but that these "would do them no harm as Aunt Jane says they shriek".

Margaret Cargill

News from Woomelang

Woomelang is one of our regular users of the BOW services.

Jan Adcock reports that while not much is happening at the Woomelang Uniting Church, due to the COVID19 shutdown, the small congregation keeps in touch.

Jan also reports that the local Development Association won a grant that has financed the painting of eight field bins (see photos). The artists, who have worked on silos around Australia, developed the theme 'Endangered animals in the Mallee.' They worked from photos on their mobile phones, and used spray cans of paint, and occasionally a brush or a roller, to create these beautiful field bins. The bins have been placed around the town of Woomelang.



The beauty and wonder of compassion and justice

Mario Martini

What beauty will save the world?

It is not enough to deplore the ugliness that fills our world...

We must talk with a heart full of compassionate love, experiencing that charity which gives joy and enkindles the enthusiasm of all it touches.

We must radiate the beauty of that which is true and just in life, because only this beauty truly captivates and turns it to God.



Waves

In the city a voice is saying “Be sure to wash your hands and all will be well”.

The waves about to crash over the city are, in order, COVID-19; recession; climate change; and biodiversity collapse.



How do the first 6 months of 2020 compare with the 20th Century?

Author unknown

Perspective is an amazing art.

Imagine you were born in 1900. “The war to end all wars” begins on your 14th birthday and ends on your 18th birthday. 22 million people perish in that war and before you are 21 another 50 million have died during a pandemic of Spanish Flu.

On your 29th birthday, the Great Depression begins. Unemployment hits 25%, the World GDP drops 27%. Both the country and world economies nearly collapse before you are 33.

When you turn 39, World War II starts and another 75 million people perish between your 39th and 45th birthdays. Rationing continues until you are close to 50.

Smallpox was epidemic until you were in your 40’s – it killed 300 million people during your lifetime.

At 50, the Korean War starts and another 5 million people perish.

From your birth, until you are 55 you dealt with the fear of Polio epidemics each summer. You will know of friends and family who contracted the disease, and became paralysed and/or died.

At 55 the Vietnam War begins and doesn’t end until you are 75. Another 4 million people perish as a result. The Cold War and the ever-present threat of nuclear annihilation continues until you are about to turn 90. Fortunately you will have died before the excitement of the “Berlin Wall” turned to the new age of refugees.

While we all tend to think that events that happen in our lifetime are significant, spare a thought for those born in 1900. Perspective is an amazing art – refined and enlightened as time goes on.



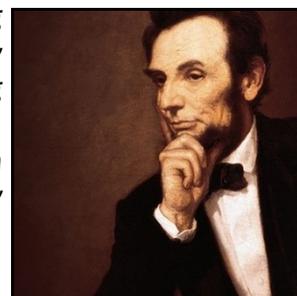
“History has shown us that courage can be contagious, and hope can take on a life of its own.”

Michelle Obama

Abraham Lincoln on Equality

“As a nation, we began by declaring that 'all men are created equal.' We now practically read it 'all men are created equal, except negroes.' When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read 'all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and Catholics.' When it comes to this, I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty – to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.”

Written in 1855!



Reimagining our housing

Adapted from an Article published in Eureka Street by Dr Cristy Clark (human rights specialist)

There are at least 116,427 homeless people across Australia on any given night. Around 7% will sleep on the streets, others will be in a shelter, couch surfing, in insecure boarding houses, or living in severely overcrowded housing. And it gets worse every census.

An affordable, habitable, accessible and culturally appropriate home is a foundational human right. People need access to essential amenities (water, sanitation and energy), essential services and security of tenure.

People must be able to enjoy the essential acts of living (eating, sleeping, socialising), safe from being moved on, subjected to violence, or threatened.

While COVID-19 has underscored the significance of inadequate housing, it has also demonstrated how quickly governments can act when they feel compelled. Moratoriums on evictions were enacted at speed. Governments worked with banks to stop foreclosures, and supported additional accommodation for people sleeping rough.

While these were temporary measures to protect community health, now is a good time to reconsider our entire framework for housing policy. Instead of treating housing first and foremost as a human right, we have allowed it to be commodified – housing is treated primarily as an economic good that can and should be traded for profit.

Policies, such as negative gearing, have resulted in house prices skyrocketing – losing touch with CPI and average full-time earnings. While some people have profited, many have been locked out of homeownership.

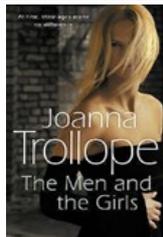
One third of households now rent, with little long-term security of tenure, or protection from excessive rents, or arbitrary eviction. This cohort are second-class citizens when it comes to something as essential as housing, while another group have been denied access altogether.

Fixing this problem may mean that house prices fall, but as a society we can ensure that everyone has a place to call home.

Book Review

The Men and the Girls by Joanna Trollope

Life long friends James, a teacher, and Hugh, a television personality, consider themselves extremely fortunate to be living with attractive partners 25 years their junior.



While the men and the girls indeed seem blessed, the age time bomb is ticking away. With the arrival of Miss Beatrice Bachelor, a razor-sharp spinster, the relationships start to tie themselves in knots!

With warmth, wisdom and wit, Joanna Trollope takes a long hard look at the gaps between generations, and cleverly circumnavigates them.

Jill Kerr

Silence and Love

Christ says: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12).

We need silence in order to welcome these words and put them into practice.

When we are agitated and restless, we have so many arguments and reasons not to forgive and not to love too easily.

But when we "have calmed and quieted our soul", these reasons turn out to be quite insignificant. Maybe we sometimes avoid silence, preferring whatever noise, words or distraction, because inner peace is a risky thing: it makes us empty and poor, disintegrates bitterness and leads us to the gift of ourselves.

Silent and poor, our hearts are overwhelmed by the Holy Spirit, filled with an unconditional love.

Silence is a humble yet secure path to loving.

http://www.taize.fr/en_article12.html

An Indigenous view of History and Place

"You people of European descent tend to think of events occurring in a timeline. An event that is distant on the timeline is distant from you. But we Indigenous peoples think of events primarily occurring in a place. Whenever we are near that place, we are near that event, no matter when it happened. For us places hold stories. Places become sacred because of the stories they hold."

Jim Bear Jacobs

Editor's note: Jim Bear Jacobs is a member of the Stockbridge-Munsee Mohican Nation, an American Indian tribe located in central Wisconsin. He has degrees in Pastoral Studies and Christian Theology and has served various churches. He is a cultural facilitator in the Twin Cities and works to raise the public's awareness of American Indian causes and injustices.

Music clips to enjoy

The longest time Quarantine edition

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LpAKcQufacc&list=RDgEo9M4-BrJA&index=10>

Yesterday COVID-19 seemed so far away

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoQJerrMcwA&list=RDgEo9M4-BrJA&index=11>

Part 2 of Confounds the Science (SEQUEL) by Don Caron
Warning: may contain political statements you do not share!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaWeYqotUJs>

Your generous gifts are transforming lives – Thank you

From Act for Peace

Act for Peace supporters are helping transform lives around the world.

In Vanuatu, your gifts are helping people like Risa to train as Church Champions. Risa now teaches her own community on how to prepare and respond to disasters, like the recent Cyclone Harold.

Omar and his family fled the violence of war in Syria to find safety in Jordan. Your gifts are helping his family, and families just like his, build a new life.

In Ethiopia, you're helping refugees receive emergency medical assistance. You're also helping to provide emergency transport, food and accommodation for refugees at a shelter run by Sister Munbere who works with our local partner.

Mohammad is a teacher in Afghanistan and believes every woman has the right to an education. Your gifts are helping girls in Afghanistan overcome the barriers they face going to school; giving them a brighter future.

Despite the drought and lockdown in Zimbabwe, Nyevero and her husband Johnny have been able to grow their own food and become self-sufficient thanks to the training made possible by your gifts.

Heartfelt thanks from Risa, Omar, Sister Munbere, Mohammad, Nyevero, Johnny and many others like them.

Act for Peace is the international Aid Agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

You can contact them at <https://www.actforpeace.org.au/> to give a donation.

Beware of the exhaust!

While driving in Pennsylvania, a family caught up to an Amish carriage.

Attached to the back of the carriage was a hand printed sign...

"Energy efficient vehicle: Runs on oats and grass. Caution: Do not step in exhaust."

