

# Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

May 2022

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## Welcome to our May edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

Welcome to the May edition. This month features reflections on “Change” by Vance Morgan and “Who is Jesus Today” by Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Frantz, plus some topical prayers for displaced people and world peace.

Cynthia Story has written on the “Ultimate Consequence” and we bring news from Morialta and dates of coming events.

The cut-off date for the next edition will be 27<sup>th</sup> May 2022. Either drop a copy in to Nicole at the Office or call/email Colin on 0427 122 106 or [snout-n-about@bigpond.com](mailto:snout-n-about@bigpond.com)

Go well.

## Everything changes, including us. Get used to it!

Adapted by Margaret Cargill,  
from a Patheos Blog Post by Vance Morgan, February 2022

**All that you touch, you Change. All that you Change, Changes you. The only lasting truth is Change. God is Change**

These are the opening lines in “Earthseed: The Books of the Living,” a collection of notebooks compiled by Lauren Olamina, the main character in Octavia Butler’s frighteningly believable vision of the near future, *Parable of the Sower*. Lauren is a late teen who lives inside a gated community with her Baptist preacher father, sheltered from the increasing social chaos and anarchy that surrounds them, caused by global climate change and economic crises. Precocious and hyper-empathic, Lauren seeks throughout the novel to create a vision of human reality, as well as that which is greater than us, that encompasses the terrors that surround her. She calls this developing vision “Earthseed”—the fundamental truth of Earthseed is that the most basic truth of reality is change.



When asked in an interview about the sources of Lauren’s creation of Earthseed, Octavia Butler said this:

**I asked what was the most powerful force I could think of? What one thing could we not stop no matter how hard we tried? The answer I came up with was “change.” Throughout the universe, the ongoing reality is change. Since change is the one inescapable truth, change is the basic clay of our lives. In order to live constructive lives, we must learn to shape change when we can and yield to it when we must. Either way, we must learn and teach, adapt and grow.**

In her Earthseed notebook, Lauren writes that we should “create no images of God. Accept the images that God has provided. They are everywhere, in everything ... The universe is God’s self-portrait.” If so, it is clear that God prefers change

to stability, loves freedom and creativity, and favours novelty over the familiar. The very process of life guarantees continuing diversification and change. God also favours process over finality, risk over safety, and imperfection over perfection.

If one focuses on the stories provided in the Gospels rather than on the doctrines and dogmas that have been fashioned over succeeding centuries, it is also clear that Jesus understood himself as an agent of radical change. The creators of “The Chosen”, a cinematic treatment of the life of Jesus whose third season is currently in production in the US, have found interesting ways to embed this aspect of Jesus and his message. In one episode, Peter complains about Jesus calling Matthew the tax collector to become part of His band of disciples. As Peter is protesting, Jesus reminds Peter that he wasn’t an obvious choice to be a disciple either. Peter responds, “But that’s different. Matthew is a tax collector.” Jesus turns to Peter and says, “Get used to different.”

**Get used to different.** That could be the bumper sticker for the past two years, as each of us has been forced out of our comfort zones and expectations in order to grapple on the fly with circumstances that no one was prepared for. Speaking only for myself, I have learned two things about change during the pandemic. I’m not as welcoming of change as I thought I was, and I’m more capable of change than I thought I was.

A common symbol of impending change in scripture is the appearance of an angel. An angelic visitation in scripture is always a harbinger of change, an indication that your world is never going to be the same again. Angels never show up simply to announce that “everything’s fine—keep doing what you’re doing.” Angels are always heralds of new beginnings, inviting us to adventure.

Angels announce new departures and the beginning of something whose end is not in view. And the first thing the angel always says is that we don’t need to be afraid of change and disruption. “Don’t be afraid,” the angel says. “Get used to different,” Jesus says in “The Chosen.” As Jesus says in the final pages of Revelation, “Behold, I am doing a new thing.” For those wanting to have a relationship with what is greater than us, these are good things to remember.



### Congratulations!

We send our very best wishes to Matthew and Lauren who recently announced their engagement.



### Thank you both!

Margaret and Jenny were thanked with flowers as they retired from duty as leaders of the Pastoral Care Team and Worship and Faith Education Team at Morialta.

They have both made significant contributions to the life of Morialta through their leadership and we are sure they will continue to be active within our congregation.

### Promise me...

“Promise me you’ll always REMEMBER you’re BRAVER than you are, and STRONGER than you SEEM and SMARTER than you think.”

*Christopher Robin to Pooh*



### Celebrating 40 years together!

Helena and Steve enjoyed a few days in Carrickalinga over Anzac weekend, celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary and catching up with Adam, Emily (Adam's fiancée) and Ian. Little did they know, forty years ago in the UK, that life would take them via Anchorage, Alaska to Austin, Texas and finally to Adelaide, South Australia, which now feels very much like home, after being here for almost 20 years!



### Fellowship news

*Margaret Clogg*

At our April meeting Ruth Pitt took us on a very interesting tour to the Eyre Peninsula. With a photographic display to enhance the talk, she visited the massive Lake Gairdner which is north of the Gawler Ranges and the Organ Pipes which are in the Gawler Ranges.

There were whales breaching at the Head of the Bight and an Oyster Experience at Port Lincoln. She did draw the line at Cage Diving with the sharks though!

We saw beautiful murals on huge walls in the country towns and stunning coastal scenery. Well done, Ruth.

At our next meeting on May 19th, physiotherapist Robin Townsend will give us “Tips for the over 65s”.

Everyone is welcome.



### Morialta hosts Dawoodi Bohras during Ramadan

During Ramadan, (1<sup>st</sup> April – 1<sup>st</sup> May), Morialta UC hosted the Dawoodi Bohras for their daily Iftar. Iftar is the meal served at the end of the day during Ramadan when Moslems break their fast.

While this is a great outreach for MUC and much appreciated by the Dawoodi Bohras, who also contribute to our funds, it doesn't just happen.

For the last 5 Sundays, members of the AV Team – especially Matthew and Lachlan Mackenzie – have been arriving at church soon after 8.00am to reset the AV equipment for the morning service. Carole Lyons was instrumental in making it happen and John Drew assisted members of the group with setting up and operating the AV equipment.

A big “thankyou” to all who gave of their time and talents to enable this outreach to happen.

### Packing Day

Packing Day will occur from June 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> at Athelstone UCA.

Please bring goods to our church foyer by **Friday June 3<sup>rd</sup>** at the latest. There is a comprehensive list of goods required for both the tropical and the inland sites.

Each year there is a shortage of babies', children's and men's clothing. No used underwear or school uniforms, please, by request. Goods must be clean and in good condition but need not be new.

Thank you for your help again, with this important cause.

*Margaret Clogg (Fellowship)*



## Heather Wilton (1930-2022)

Heather, with husband John, attended Magill Uniting Church from 1975 until, 1985, when they moved to Angaston.

Heather and John were married in Kent Town UC in 1959, and following John's ordination, they spent the first 10 years of their marriage working in the

Methodist Church of Fiji. Three of their 4 daughters were born during their time in Fiji, and when they returned to South Australia, they settled in St Morris.

Heather was a very talented artist and art teacher, with a wonderful sense of humour and a great supporter of Frontier Services. In fact, her paintings featured on Frontier Services Christmas cards for many years. Heather maintained a great interest in the overseas mission of the Uniting Church and she was a much loved and valued member of every group she joined.



The following hymn from the Methodist Hymn Book, sung at Heather's funeral, could easily have been written with Heather in mind. A remarkable, loving, caring and gentle friend.

*Through the love of God our Saviour,  
all will be well.  
Free and changeless is his favour,  
all, all is well.  
Precious is the blood that healed us,  
perfect is the grace that sealed us,  
strong the hand stretched forth to shield us,  
all must be well.*

*Though we pass through tribulation,  
all will be well.  
Ours is such a full salvation,  
all, all is well.  
Happy, still in God confiding,  
fruitful, if in Christ abiding,  
holy, through the Spirit's guiding,  
all must be well.*

*We expect a bright tomorrow,  
all will be well.  
Faith can sing through days of sorrow,  
all, all is well.  
On our Father's love relying,  
Jesus every need supplying,  
in our living, in our dying,  
all must be well.*

## A goodbye poem

Anon

When I am gone, release me – let me go.  
I have so many things to see and do.  
You must not tie yourself to me with tears.  
Be happy that we had so many years.  
I gave you love, you can only guess,  
how much you gave me in happiness.  
I thank you for the love each have shown,  
but now it is time I travelled alone.  
So grieve awhile for me if grieve you must,  
then let your grief be comforted by trust.  
It is only for a while that we must part,  
so bless those memories within your heart.  
I will not be far away, for life goes on,  
so if you need me, call and I will come.  
Though you cannot see or touch me, I will be near  
and if you listen with your heart, you will hear  
all of my love around you, soft and clear.  
Then when you must come this way alone,  
I will greet you with a smile and “Welcome Home”.

## Fear

Khalil Gibran

It is said that before entering the sea a river trembles with fear.  
She looks back at the path she has travelled, from the peaks of mountains, the long winding road crossing forests and villages.  
And in front of her she sees an ocean so vast, that to enter there seems nothing more than to disappear forever.  
But there is no other way.  
The river cannot go back.  
Nobody can go back.  
To go back is impossible in existence.  
The river needs to take the risk of entering the ocean because only then will fear disappear, because that is where the river will know it's not about disappearing into the ocean, but becoming the ocean.

Kahlil Gibran (1883 – 1931) was a Lebanese-American writer, poet and visual artist. He was also considered a philosopher although he himself rejected the title.





## Who is Jesus today? Distinguishing the pre-Easter from the post-Easter Jesus

by Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Frantz

The pre-Easter Jesus is the historical Jesus before his crucifixion. He is the Jesus of history, the Jesus who grew up in the peasant village of Nazareth, who launched a public ministry that changed the world. Trying to unpack who this Jesus was as a historical person is a daunting task.

We have to remember the gospels were written some 40 – 70 years after Jesus' death. This is a significant time period. It is two to three generations, so imagine how the oral memories, stories, and testimonies about Jesus would have evolved.

The gospel accounts tend to blend together in a linear fashion – from his birth, his baptism, and his active ministry, culminating with his crucifixion and resurrection. The gospel stories are all post-Easter reflections on Jesus. None of the gospel authors knew Jesus in the flesh. While Jesus never thought of himself as divine, over the decades – and centuries – divine-like qualities were increasingly attached to him.

The pre-Easter Jesus was fully human, just as you and I are human. However, this doesn't suggest Jesus was ordinary. He was a remarkable human being. For us believers, it is important that Jesus was fully human and that he struggled with questions of life and death just like you and I do. For us to be able to identify with Jesus as people of faith, it is important that Jesus' suffering on the cross was real, that it "really" happened. Suffering love is the pinnacle value of Christianity.

The post-Easter Jesus is the Jesus of faith communities that rose up after the resurrection. This Jesus has continued to evolve over the decades and centuries.

In considering the post-Easter Jesus, what must it have been like to be followers of Jesus in the weeks and months after Easter Sunday? Whatever the resurrection was, it gave birth

to a new energy and new spirit that rose up in the followers of Jesus from the ashes of Good Friday.

To his most ardent followers, his spirit, his essence as a spirit person, remained alive to them in a compelling way. This experience of resurrection, however we understand it, varied from community to community. Within each community, the Easter experience was who Jesus had become for them. The bottom line was that somehow, over the months, even years, Easter happened.

One of the strongest arguments for the resurrection is the undeniable reality that, after the resurrection, Jesus' disciples were all changed. They were not the same persons. Peter, who had denied Jesus three times and gone off and wept, was now full of a confidence that could move mountains. John and Thomas, too, were now transformed and full of hope.

As the years and decades passed, the church became almost totally Gentile. There were two notable problems with this transition. First, the churches looked less and less to their Jewish roots as a source of identity and self-understanding. And secondly, more and more they began to read the gospels and the Christian story in a literal way. For progressive Christians, this continues to be a problem down to our modern day.

So, who is Jesus today? He is a blending of the pre-Easter and the post-Easter Jesus. He is a remarkable human being, an utterly captivating person who made an impression on his followers (and on his social-political-religious world) that death on a cross could not erase. So powerful is Jesus' impact on people that he remains – today – a living, transforming presence in the lives of his followers.

*The Rev. Dr. Jeffrey Frantz was a United Church of Christ minister. He has strong commitments to social-justice ministries and ecumenism. His books include *The Bible You Didn't Know You Could Believe In* and *The God You Didn't Know You Could Believe In*.*

## The poem of the helpless

We watch with bated breath  
on screens in faraway places.  
We go about our normal day,  
our minds on displaced faces.  
We care with hearts that beat as one  
as though the plight was ours.  
Alas what can the helpless do  
but watch it hour by hour,  
helpless, yes, but hopeless, no.  
Our thoughts and prayers we send.  
If words and thoughts were weapons,  
the suffering we would end.

Donna Ashworth,  
Art by Mona Schaffer Edwards



## Following Jesus: a life of faith in a postmodern world

Howard Zinn

"The struggle for justice should never be abandoned because of the apparent overwhelming power of those who have the guns and the money and who seem invincible in their determination to hold onto it.

That apparent power has, again and again, proved vulnerable to moral fervour, determination, unity, organisation, sacrifice, wit, ingenuity, courage and patience."

*Howard Zinn (1922 – 2010) American historian, playwright, philosopher, socialist thinker and World War II veteran.*



## Prayer for world peace

By Dr Jane Goodall –  
contributed by the Rev David Purling

We pray to the great Spiritual Power in which we live and move and have our being.

We pray that we may at all times keep our minds open to new ideas and shun dogma;

that we may grow in our understanding of the nature of all living beings and our connectedness with the natural world;

that we may become ever more filled with generosity of spirit and true compassion and love for all life;

that we may strive to heal the hurts that we have inflicted on nature and control our greed for material things, knowing that our actions are harming our natural world and the future of our children;

that we may value each and every human being for who he is, for who she is, reaching to the spirit that is within, knowing the power of each individual to change the world.

We pray for social justice, for the alleviation of the crippling poverty that condemns millions of people around the world to lives of misery - hungry, sick, and utterly without hope.

We pray for the children who are starving, who are condemned to homelessness, slave labour, and prostitution, and especially for those forced to fight, to kill and torture even members of their own family.

We pray for the victims of violence and war, for those wounded in body and for those wounded in mind.

We pray for the multitudes of refugees, forced from their homes to alien places through war or through the utter destruction of their environment.

We pray for suffering animals everywhere, for an end to the pain caused by scientific experimentation, intensive farming, fur farming, shooting, trapping, training for entertainment, abusive pet owners, and all other forms of exploitation such as overloading and overworking pack animals, bull fighting, badger baiting, dog and cock fighting and so many more.

We pray for an end to cruelty, whether to humans or other animals, for an end to bullying, and torture in all its forms.

We pray that we may learn the peace that comes with forgiving and the strength we gain in loving;

that we may learn to take nothing for granted in this life;

that we may learn to see and understand with our hearts;

that we may learn to rejoice in our being.

We pray for these things with humility.

We pray because of the hope that is within us, and because of a faith in the ultimate triumph of the human spirit.

We pray because of our love for Creation, and because of our trust in God.

We pray, above all, for peace throughout the world.

## The ultimate consequence!

Cynthia Story

I stand alongside the road for a long time, waiting to cross.



I should say – my wheelchair and I stand by the road. We wait.

I don't really mind – I can't expect every vehicle to slow down, and a smiling driver wave me across.

In the Old Testament – the waters of the Red Sea parted - I am convinced these special occasions can happen??

As I wait, I see the cars sweeping closer and closer – and I'm reminded of predatory animals - the way they slither along in pursuit of their quarry. Newer models are much lower, they creep close to the ground, their headlights like slitted eyes glowering with menace. They have no intention of slowing down, drawing closer – and closer... I feel the hot breath on my face as they roar past, and are gone.

There is another type – mostly silver elephant beings, charging with thunder, several levels above the sensitivity of my ears. There is an overwhelming sensation of being in the centre of a giant storm...

Have you ever thought when you pass close to a large motor vehicle, especially along the footpath in front of them, that their enormously pretentious and imposing “fronts with teeth” - great bull-bar arrangements loom over you – and you scan the tinted wind screens for sign of a driver, behind the steering wheel. You look frantically for the rumbling indication of the ‘being’ starting to lurch towards you, roaring so loud that any scream would be totally lost. And I am not even in the sight of the driver, far below his line of vision.

These ready-made nightmarish animals scream along beside me. I have every right to be where I am, but one day their screams and tortuous engine noise will drive me, and those travelling similarly, away!



## May 7<sup>th</sup> – World Fair Trade Day

This is a global celebration to showcase the small-FAIRTRADE scale producers at the heart of the fair trade movement and the contributions they make to healthy and sustainable communities around the world. When you choose authentic fair trade goods, your purchase casts a vote for small-scale farmers, producers, and artisans around the world. The movement empowers farmers to organize and earn a livelihood within the highly competitive global marketplace.

It supports what matters most – their family, communities, and the environment. Through organic and regenerative farming practices, small-scale farmers are able to feed 80% of the world's people on just a fraction of the land. Their agricultural practices have been shown to help reverse the trends of climate change. That's why supporting farmer organizations & the companies who partner with them is more important than ever!

## Refugee support at Morialta

Rhonda Amber, Church Council Secretary

If you have an interest in knowing more about the resettlement of refugees in SA – and what we can do as a church and as individuals, please join us in the church on **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May at 11.00am**. The discussion will include information about “Circles of Friends” and how to become involved, and “the Community Sponsorship Program”.

You can read more about Circles of Friends in the April edition of Vision and about the Sponsorship Program in the March edition of Vision.

## Prayers for the displaced people of the world

Adapted from SA Synod “Refugee Prayer Guide” December 2021 / Refugee Council of Australia and Red Cross websites

Joseph got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt... Matthew 2: 14.

Members of the Uniting Church in SA are encouraged to pray for refugees and asylum seekers – many unable to find welcome or a safe haven – either within their own countries or the new country they looked to for safe home.

To help us understand the size of the population of refugees and asylum seekers across the world – here are some comparisons.

Forcibly Displaced People Worldwide (mid 2021)		Comparison Populations
26 million refugees	20.8 million refugees under UNHCR’s mandate	Australia - 25.7 million
	5.7 million Palestinian refugees – UNRWA’s mandate	Queensland - 5.1 million
4.4 million Asylum Seekers		New Zealand - 4.8 million
3.9 million Venezuelans displaced abroad		South Australia - 1.8 million
48 million internally displaced people		Spain - 48 million
<b>TOTAL 84 million</b>		Germany - 81 million

A large percentage of all refugees and asylum seekers are children, many separated from their families. (Check data at: <https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics>)

### Where do refugees come from?

68% come from 5 countries – Syria (6.8 million), Venezuela (4.1), Afghanistan (2.6), South Sudan (2.2), and Myanmar (1.1).

### Where do refugees go?

39% are hosted in just 5 countries – Turkey (2.7 million), Colombia (1.7), Uganda (1.5), Pakistan (1.4) and Germany (1.2).

**Australia’s response to refugees over the last decade:** By comparison, Australia’s official refugee population was 56,933 – 45th overall, 50th per capita and 88th relative to national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Australia has sent 4,183 refugees and asylum seekers to Nauru or Papua New Guinea at a cost, based on Senate estimates, of \$9.65 billion over the 9-year period, not including \$40 million paid to Cambodia to resettle 7 refugees.



**War zones and territorial disputes:** Currently there are 21 ongoing conflicts – 4 territorial disputes (Russo-Ukraine, Nagorno-Karabakh, Kurdish-Turkey, Israel-Palestine); 6 civil wars (Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, South Sudan); 2 Interstate conflicts (US-Iran, India-Pakistan); terrorism in at least 11 states (Myanmar, Tigray, DRC, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Tanzania, Tunisia, North Korea, Philippines, Venezuela).

**Pray** for wisdom for those in authority who make decisions that impact refugees.

**Pray** for leaders to tackle the root causes of the refugee crisis and for countries around the world to share the challenge and to seek ways to build new futures.

**Pray** for countries in crisis dealing with political unrest, war, violence, kidnapping (especially of young girls and young boys) – many are displaced or have to flee to save their lives.

**Pray for communities and organisations helping refugees** – Many organisations, churches, communities and individuals work tirelessly to care for refugees and asylum seekers.

**Please pray that all would be given wisdom and energy.**



## Our Vision for Australia

*From the Assembly of the UCA*

We see a nation where each person and all creation can flourish and enjoy abundant life.

The Uniting Church in Australia believes the whole world is God's good creation. Each person is made in God's image and is deeply loved by God. In Jesus, God is completing the reconciliation and renewal of the whole creation.

Our vision, grounded in the life and mission of Jesus, is for a nation which:

- is characterised by love for one another, of peace with justice, of healing and reconciliation, of welcome and inclusion.
- recognises the equality and dignity of each person.
- recognises coexistent sovereignty of First Peoples, has enshrined a First Nations voice and is committed to truth telling about our history.
- takes seriously our responsibility to care for the whole of creation.
- is outward looking, a generous and compassionate contributor to a just world.

**This is our vision and hope for a just Australia expressed in seven foundational areas.**

Each foundation includes witness from the Bible, UCA statements, a snapshot of the current situation, key actions to advocate for and questions to encourage conversation or put to local candidates.



### Renewal of the Whole of Creation

We seek the flourishing of the whole of God's creation and all its creatures.

We act to renew the earth from the damage done and stand in solidarity with people most impacted by human-induced climate change.

Government, churches, businesses and the wider community work together for a sustainable future.

### A First Peoples Heart

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, nurtured and sustained by God before invasion, are celebrated at the very heart of what it means to be Australian.

First Peoples' sovereignty is affirmed, First Peoples have a voice in the decision making of our country and are living out their right to self-determination.

As First and Second Peoples, we walk together, creating socially just and culturally safe relationships, listening and learning from one another.



### A Welcoming, Compassionate and Diverse Nation

We are a nation of diverse cultures, languages, faiths, ethnic groups, abilities and experiences.

We celebrate and value the strength of this diversity. We see this diversity reflected in our leaders, key decision makers, institutions, industry, sports and media.

We are a compassionate nation, where every person who seeks refuge is treated fairly and made to feel welcome and safe – regardless of their country of origin or mode of arrival.

### An Economy for Life

Our government makes economic decisions that put people first: decisions that are good for creation, that lift people out of poverty and fairly share our country's wealth.

The economy serves the well-being and flourishing of all people.

### An Inclusive and Equal Society

We live together in a society where all are equal and free to exercise our rights equally, regardless of faith, cultural background, race, ability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity.

We defend those rights for all.

### Flourishing Communities, Regional, Remote and Urban

We live in communities where we are connected and we care for one another.



### Contributing to a Just and Peaceful World

We are a nation that works in partnership with other nations to dismantle the structural and historical causes of violence, injustice and inequality. Our government upholds human rights everywhere, acting in the best interests of all people and the planet.

*If you would like to read the seven foundations – click on <https://uniting.church/a-vision-for-a-just-australia/> or contact the office for a printed copy.*

## A rare bird – How Europeans got the black swan so wrong

Adapted from an article by David Haworth in the Conversation June 2021



The black swan is an Australian icon and the official emblem of WA. It is also the namesake for Perth's Swan River, where the British established the Swan River Colony in 1829.

But this post-colonial history hides a much older and broader story. Not only is the black swan important for many Aboriginal people, it was also a potent symbol within the European imagination.

Native to Australia, the black swan (*Cygnus atratus*) is found across the mainland, except for Cape York Peninsula, and populations have also been introduced to NZ, Japan, China, the UK and US.

Black swans are significant totems for many Aboriginal people and incorporated within songlines and constellations.

The Noongar (WA) and the Yuin and Euahlayi (NSW), even tell ancestral stories about white swans. In the Noongar story *Maali*, the swan is proud and boastful of its beauty, and has its white feathers ripped out by *Waalitj*, the eagle, as punishment. In the Yuin story the swan, *Guunyu*, humble and quiet, is attacked because the other birds are jealous of his beauty. In the Euahlayi story, two brothers are transformed into swans as part of a robbery. Later they are attacked by eagles as an act of revenge. In each story, after the swans have their white plumage torn out, crows release a cascade of feathers, turning the swans black, except for their white wing tips. Their red beak still shows blood from the attack.

These stories acknowledge the possibility swans could be white – even though it's unlikely First Nations people observed white swans in their surroundings prior to British settlement.

This contrasts starkly with the European assumption that, having never seen a black swan, they couldn't possibly exist.

Hence when Dutch ships began visiting Australia's west coast in the 1600s, encountering black swans must have been like seeing a unicorn emerge from the forest. Later the black swan migrated from myth to reality, joining kangaroos and platypuses as awe-inspiring wonders from the distant southland.

The fact that Europeans were wrong about the existence of the black swan, provides a lesson about data based on observation. To verify that all swans are white requires the observers assessing all swans – because a single black swan will disprove the theory. In science this is called a 'black swan event' and mathematician N. N. Taleb argues that organisations and individuals should be robust enough to cope with "black swan events": consequential but unexpected moments in history.

After the introduction of black swans into Europe they took a while to establish populations. It was speculated that because black animals were considered bad omens, like witches and devils, they were often killed.



French West Indian psychiatrist and political philosopher, Frantz Fanon, views the colonial world as a "Manichean world", in which white and black, and good and evil are starkly divided. These divisions have been deeply implicated in the histories of colonialism and racism – often with devastating consequences.

*The philosophy of Manichaeism is an old religion where everything is divided into good or evil and you see things in black and white.*

**David Haworth is a Senior Research Officer at Monash University.**

## Special dates in May and June

### 27<sup>th</sup> May - 3<sup>rd</sup> June - National Reconciliation Week.

The theme for 2022 is "Be Brave. Make Change." This is a challenge to all Australians - individuals, families, communities, organisations and government - to Be Brave and tackle the unfinished business of reconciliation so we can Make Change for the benefit of all Australians.



29<sup>th</sup> May - Reconciliation Sunday is a day for churches to focus on how things they can do to bring about true reconciliation between all Australians – First People, Settlers, Migrants and Refugees.

### 18th - 22nd May National Volunteers Week

This is Australia's largest annual celebration of volunteering. The theme for 2022 is Better Together. Volunteering brings people together; it builds communities and creates a better society for everyone.



### 15<sup>th</sup> May - International Day of Families

This was established by the United Nations in 1993 as a way to raise awareness of issues faced by families throughout the world. The day is a way to recognise that family structures have undergone many changes due to social, economic and demographic factors. The annual event provides a way to highlight the important role that families hold in communities and raises issues that may affect families.

### June 5th - World Environment Day.

The theme for 2022 is "Only One Earth". The aim is to highlight the need to live sustainably in harmony with nature by bringing transformative changes – through policies and our choices – towards cleaner, greener lifestyles.



World Environment Day

People are urged to reimagine, recreate, restore and to recognise that for too long, we have been exploiting and destroying our planet's ecosystems. Only with healthy ecosystems can we enhance people's livelihoods, counteract climate change and stop the collapse of biodiversity.