

THE new vine



UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Blackall Range Uniting Churches

(Kenilworth, Maleny, Montville and Palmwoods)

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WINTER EDITION, Issue No 30, SPRING 2023

THEME: A SMORGASBORD

EDITORIAL COMMENT

It's time for us to partake of our very own smorgasbord.

To help us, I was sent this photo which shows varied, nutritious, colourful, appealing food - and all with spoons inviting us to dip in. The invitation is to come to the table and take what we like/want, when we need it. We can ignore some dishes if we wish or be tempted to try something different for a change.

That is the same invitation offered with this issue of *The New Vine*. Just as at a fellowship tea, the dishes have been supplied willingly and lovingly by someone in 'our group' in the hope they will meet someone else's hunger and provide fuel and encouragement for their continuing journey. As we dip in, might we think for a while on this short prayer – or Grace if you will.

Life in God's presence is a smorgasbord of His love.
"Be present at our table Lord, be here and everywhere adored"



The New Vine food offered is an eclectic mix, just as in a food smorgasbord, and I am pleased to say there have been more than 25 different cooks generously responsible for producing what I have simply put on the table. So, please take and eat.

The food presented encouraged me to try to arrange the table a little differently this time. So, all the poetry dishes are placed together as are the travel items. The condiments are varied but have all been placed together too. This does not mean we have to eat from one end of the table to the other in one sitting – we can choose one thing at a time from each section, dipping in as often as we want.

And, as I think about it, there is yet more to our coming to the table.

Food has many qualities – its colour, taste, smell, texture, nutrient benefits and so on. I suggest that what follows in our *New Vine* menu has similar qualities if we but look for them. Each contribution, no matter how deep or shallow it may seem, most probably has an important truth within it, if we but try to read between the lines or behind the surface story. So, there may be value in our pausing after reading each article and asking ourselves some questions, such as –

- How would I summarise this article in one sentence?
- What message is the writer trying to impart?
- What message am I receiving?
- Where is the Risen Christ in this piece?
- How may this piece of the menu sustain me?
- Is there anything on this table that will guide my life?
- What invites me to go back for a second helping? Etc.

My deep felt thanks to all who contributed to the menu and my hope is that, from their efforts, we may all leave the table satisfied.

Bon appetit! GRAHAM

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LIENA'S LAST LINES

"This is the day the Lord has made,

We will rejoice and be glad in it.

O Lord save us;

O Lord grant us success"

Psalm 118 vs 24-25

"Liena's Last Lines". Sounds foreboding. When the Editor mentioned that he would title my contribution "Liena's Last Lines" as opposed to the usual "Liena's Lines", the tension was visceral. It is indeed my last contribution as minister of Blackall Range Uniting Church to *The New Vine*.

The sense of foreboding and the uncertainty of the future compelled me to reflect on the significance of now, the *now*. John O'Donohue (*Benedictus*) writes profoundly on the import of each day:

"Each new day is a path of wonder, a different invitation. Days are where our lives gradually become visible. ... We take on days with the same conditioned reflex with which we wash and put on our clothes each morning. If we could be mindful of how short our time is, we might learn how precious each day is. There are people who will never forget today."

He continues to write how today someone may find love, another discover a lump in their breast, and so each day may bring the unexpected which can change the path of our life-journey forever. And so, each one of us can pause and reflect on how today, indeed a moment in time can influence our lives - for always. It may be a telephone call or text, it may be a chance encounter, it may be a missed opportunity. The reality is life unfolds before us, yet we are not always sensitive to, or prepared for, the unexpected.

John O'Donohue warns - *"meanwhile, we dodder through our days as if they were our surest belongings. No day belongs to us. Each day is a gift."*

This is the wonder. Each day is a gift. Although the unfolding of each day may be unknown, and the unexpected, positive or negative may happen, and change our lives for ever, it is not to fill us with fear to live, neither to concede to fatalism, but to seize and savour each day-*carpe diem*.

The Psalmist urges us to rejoice in each day: "*This is the day the Lord has made!*" Yeah, it is indeed a gift. A gift from God who wants us to have a life, a life in abundance! And the Psalmist continues "*we will rejoice and be glad in it*" – it is inevitable. It is an invitation to live. It is an invitation to seize and savour each moment, to live sensitively, to live courageously, to live with joy, to live with love. Interestingly, the Psalmist then continues with the prayer: *O Lord save us; O Lord grant us success*". To save us from what? Perhaps from forgetting that each day is a gift; from the arrogance that we believe we are immortal; perhaps from the fear of facing a new day?

And the second petition: "*O Lord grant us success*", literally "*O Lord send prosperity now.*" I have always been reluctant to pray for success, for prosperity. Perhaps my reluctance has been influenced by the Western commercialised definition of success and prosperity. Yet, the Psalmist is praying for blessing, for the Biblical Shalom, and urging us to do so too - each day!

Psalm 118 is hedged with thanksgiving for God's enduring love: "*Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; His love endures forever*". It is because God's love endures forever, day after day, and beyond each day, tomorrow after tomorrow, that we can rejoice and be glad in each day – because regardless of how our day may unfold the love of God endures forever.

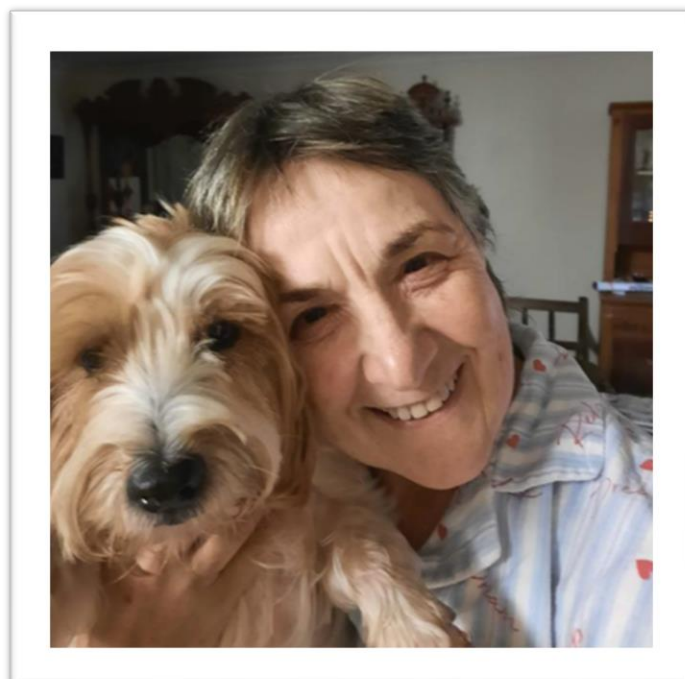
"Liena's Last Lines". Foreboding? No - an invitation to live and be glad in each day. To live with thanksgiving. For each day is a gift from God hedged by God's enduring love.

So, wheresoever we may be on our life-journey, may we pray for one another and for others, each day:

*And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love,
18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people,
to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,
19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge –
that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.*

Ephesians 3 vs 14-21

Shalom LIENA



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Our perilous life and the hiddenness of God

In a recent Maleny Sunday Service I posed two questions for the congregation to consider from the Exodus story:

1. What causes God to want to dwell amongst his people?
2. And what causes God to be absent from his people?

In response to some feedback, I have been asked to add my two bobs worth to a possible answer. I am reluctant to be too quick to respond and to be too prescriptive, so at this time I will only address the second question.

From a Hebrew scripture perspective, the laments of the prophet Isaiah provide some instruction. Isaiah makes his case plain: *"Truly you are a God who has been hiding, the God and Saviour of Israel"* (Isaiah 45:15). Later God confirms Isaiah's worst fear: *"For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with great compassion I will gather you"* (Isaiah 54:7). If God is hidden, it is because he hides himself. He means to be hidden. This claim is useful because it recognizes honestly, and takes seriously, our lived reality. To quote Bob Dylan, God is not to be an errand boy, satisfying our wandering desires.

From a different context, Simone Weil, the French activist who witnessed the horrors of the Second World War, provides us with another insight: *"God can never be perfectly present to us here below on account of our flesh. But he can be almost perfectly absent from us in extreme affliction. This is the only possibility of perfection for us on earth. That is why the Cross is our only hope."* And then: *"The extreme affliction which overtakes human beings does not create human misery, it merely reveals it."*

Weil has in mind that affliction is a total uprooting of life in all its parts. Affliction she says is anonymous and strikes us by chance. Surely, the death of a loved one must stand at the forefront of this. That terrible moment of affliction is drenched with inescapability and powerlessness. The awful feeling of being abandoned by God. Recall the cry of Jesus on the cross: *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"* (Matt 27:46). Henri Nouwen responds: *"When God, through the humanity of Jesus, freely chose to share our own most painful experience of divine absence, God became most present to us. It is into this mystery that we enter when we pray."*

Our perilous life compels us to search for the intermittently hidden God who craves to be truly found.

PETER UHLMANN

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POETRY PEARLS

Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

In the last edition of *The New Vine*, Liena's Lines included this sentence: *Stand up, stand up for Jesus remains true today. However, my plea is for someone to write new words to this song, so we can march to the beat of love and not war.*

Twenty pages further in, in response, I wrote: *Now, there's a challenge! One verse each would be sufficient. Let's rise to the challenge. Send to me any time please.*

I wasn't dangerously flooded with responses, but those that came across my desk [or computer really], follow:

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
we cannot wait too long.
The world is fast imploding,
and we must take a stand.
His followers need to help him,
by doing what we can,
to live a life of action
based on his love and care.*

*Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!
Our love for Him is strong,
We read of His great story,
So we can all belong
With love comes grace and blessings,
Together praise and sing,
We will all love and serve Him,
Christ is our Lord and King*

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
let's open our hearts to love.
Loving Jesus and our neighbour
is what we're told to do.
We can start this very moment,
and live our whole life through.
Just asking God to help us,
as friend to me and you.*

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
his yoke will give us rest.
But loving those who hurt us
will surely be our test.
By being less judgemental
and more accepting too,
we'll surely please our Father
who will be happy too.*

GO ON! SING THEM!

The story I was told about the following poem was really quite simple – coming home one night after dinner, an echidna walked across the road in the car's headlights, and this was the response.

Of Ordinary Magic

*Who knows the ways of nocturnal lives?
What does it mean to shine a light?
How does vulnerability function?*

*This unfamiliar movement
On this mundane, banal home straight
In the cusp of this focussed beam*

*Toddling
Meandering
Ambling*

*I don't know why it moves me so
But I do know that we should stop.
That paying attention to shy monotremes
When they grant the briefest of audiences*

*Is to be humbled,
Is to be grateful,
Is to be indebted*

How could we be other?

Anonymous - after Mary Oliver



Home

*You don't always know where you are going
Till you know where you have been.
I know where I am going
And I know where I have been.*

*At last I'm going home
To that wonderful country I know
That little town far inland
Where the bush is singing for me.*

*I have been to many places
To the great cities of the world
To views that are outstanding
Meeting friendly people as I go.*

*But the trees are so really different.
And the buildings are so large
The people seem all rushing
Too busy to have a yarn.*

*My home town is different
All buildings seen so small
The butcher and the baker,
Milk from the corner store*

*Air seems fresh and clean
Even the dust tastes good
You meet old friends, or new ones
Time to have a chat, to fill the time.*

*At last I reach my old home
The chooks they welcome me
The woodshed needs a tidy up
But there's plenty of time for that*

*The kitchen still looks cosy
The scones are waiting there
With tea to wash them down
And time to sit and chat.*

*These are my dreams of going home
I hope my dreams come true.
I have been away a long time,
Sometimes dreams do not come true.*

*But going home, no matter when
The home is strong in my mind
That wonderful home of happiness
It will always be mine.*

COL HARDING

Cinquains

The Winter Edition of the New Vine challenged us all to have a go at writing a cinquain or two for publication. A cinquain being a Japanese poem form of five lines – made up of one, two, three, four words and one final word. While not totally inundated with responses, here are those that crossed arrived.

Stand!
Stand up!
Why must we?
Jesus calls us to!
Obedience

Remembering
I stood!
I went forward
I gave my life
Exhilaration!

Communication
Social media
Words run quickly
How do we engage?
Urgently

Everyone
Try love
Rather than war
Such love changes everything
Sing

Grace
God's riches
At Christ's expense
Love Joy Hope Peace
Grace

Evangelism
But how?
All too hard
Don't ever give up
Persistence

TRAVELLERS' TALES

Another Day in Paradise

Fishing the passage between Bribie Island and Donnybrook.
Joseph came fishing with me one day and went home a happy camper.
It was my turn another day.
God's Kingdom has many gorgeous places.
This is just one of them.



Singin' in the Rain

I asked Peter Callaghan if he'd give us a short comment on his recent visit to the UK which, in my way, I suggested we could call – *Singing in the rain*. Here is his response:

Singing in the rain but still managed a sunburn.

Just returned from the last two ashes cricket tests in Old Trafford, Manchester and the Oval, London.

Manchester, often referred to as 'murky Manchester' lived up to its reputation! Pretty much every day, or night, it rained.

That aside. Wow! What an experience watching the cricket live at the grounds in England.

The friendly rivalry was wonderful.

The Barmy Army was in full flight chanting and trumpeting "Smith, Smith. we saw you cry on TV" and chanting for every English player on the field . Broad, Jimmy, Ali, Stokes etc. and, on the very last day, as the test was on a knife-edge, chanting 'ohhhhhh' every time a ball was bowled.

In the breaks, we would be mobbed by Brits asking questions, wanting photos with us and delivering the odd 'sledge' too.

Between games, the Cricket Australia Tour Office (CATO) had organised tours of Oxford and Windsor for the 100 or so Aussie contingent.

CATO also organised several functions to discuss game strategy, reflections on the game so far.

They hosted several commentators, current players, and past players.

It was a great pleasure to meet Glenn McGrath, one of the great Aussie bowlers and Ricky Ponting one of our best batsmen. They provided us with interesting reflections and insights into the game together with a few good stories about their time in the team.

Of course, Australia retained the Ashes (a small urn with a burnt wicket inside) albeit by default as Manchester was washed out.

The next Ashes series is in Australia in 2025.

PETER CALLAGHAN



Easter at Iona

We were introduced to The Iona Abbey by a lecturer of Bruce's, Rev. Dr. Douglas Galbraith, a minister of the Church of Scotland. (We were able to catch up with him and have lunch together in Edinburgh) The Iona Community was re-established in the ancient Abbey of St Columba, an Irish monk who came and re-introduced the Christian faith to the mainland of Scotland, England and Wales. In 1938 a visionary and a social reformer, Rev George MacLeod was driven by a belief that faith is grounded in action. In rebuilding the ruined accommodation at Iona Abbey, on the island of Iona, trainee ministers and unemployed workers from Glasgow lived, worked and worshipped together.

Our previous visit to Iona in 2008 was a relaxing and renewing experience as we participated in a well planned week of study, prayer, singing and personal reflection. So, we were looking forward to a similar experience as we prepared to spend Easter at the Iona Abbey. How wrong we were.

We arrived on Wednesday afternoon after an all day journey from Oban to Craignure on the east coast of the Isle of Mull, then a bus trip across Mull to Fionnphort on the west coast and a ferry ride to Iona. At the welcome to the Abbey we were told that all the Abbey participants would be involved in leading services throughout the weekend that would welcome Island residents and tourists.

We were asked to choose to be part of one of the three preparation groups. One was focussed on the visual arts, preparing and decorating the worship spaces, another was tasked with writing prayers and reflections to be used at the various services and the third was to take responsibility for planning the services themselves and leading the community through the various liturgies.

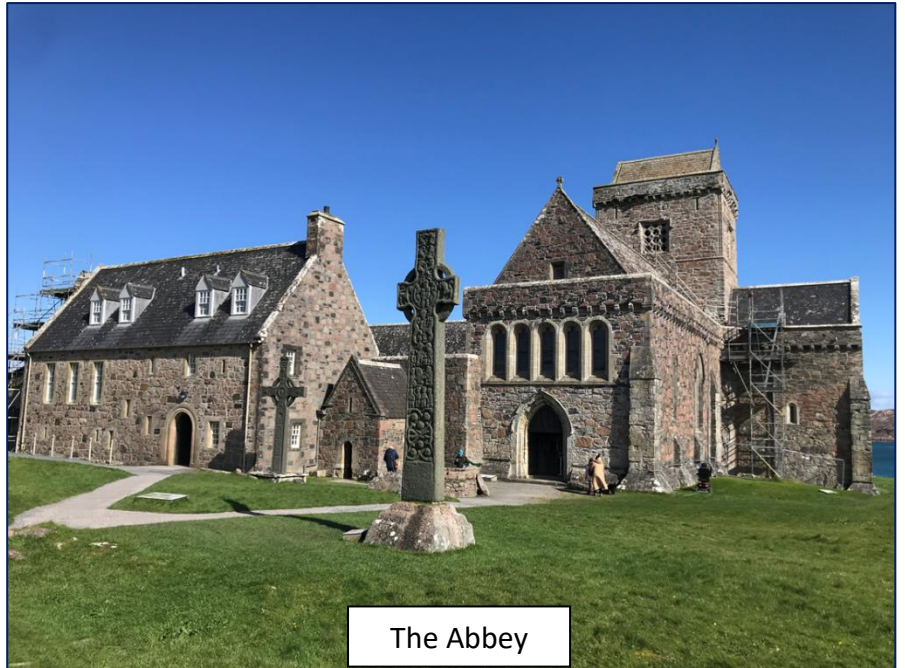
Heather chose to be part of the visual group, only to discover that while the leader and others in the group were blessed with creative imaginations for how things might look, they didn't have much idea how these ideas could become reality. So, she spent most of her time working out how to create banners, giant mobiles, bunting and prayer flags and teaching others what to do.

Bruce chose to be part of the team that shaped and led the services and found that not many people were comfortable with the 'up front' leadership of worship. Thus, he was asked to lead significant parts of the liturgy.

Most of Thursday was spent in planning services which began in the evening with a Maundy Thursday service. We gathered in the cloisters of the abbey for a foot washing experience, moving to the dining room for a liturgical reminder of the "Last Supper" and then moving back through the cloisters into the Abbey Church for a service of lament. The church was then stripped of all colour ready for Friday.

Good Friday morning was taken up with a Stations of the Cross service which moved around the Island, attracting a large group of visitors and local residents. The final station was erecting the cross in the Abbey Church. At 2.00pm we shared in a reflection on the words from the cross, then a shroud representing Jesus' body was removed from the cross and symbolically laid in a small chapel apart from the Abbey. To remind us of the way the disciples scattered, on Friday evening we were all encouraged to attend prayers in other locations around the village. We attended a Catholic retreat centre.

Saturday was a sombre day of quiet. It reminded us of the feelings of confusion, even devastation that must have been felt by the disciples and Jesus' friends. Apart from the times when we were involved in preparation for Sunday morning, we had most of the day to ourselves. At 11.30pm we gathered in the



Abbey Church for a vigil during which we recalled the events of the crucifixion and looked forward to the coming dawn of resurrection. (Heather found herself having to step into reading parts of the liturgy in place of one of the group who broke an ankle climbing the small hill at the centre of the Island)

While some of us arose early for a sunrise service on the beach, all the Abbey visitors joined with a large number of Island residents and tourists for a resurrection celebration after breakfast. We began at the small chapel representing the tomb, then finding the tomb empty we moved to the Abbey Church for a joy filled celebration of new life.

The weekend concluded with a fun filled concert involving many of the Abbey community.

The busyness of the weekend didn't provide the time we would have liked to reflect on the significance of Easter for us this year. However, as we gently made our way back to Glasgow and then to our onward journey, we began to appreciate the experience of being caught up in "re-living" the central drama of God's action in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Even as we have been writing this, we have found ourselves thinking about how we continue to live the new life that we have been given through all that Jesus did and said.

HEATHER AND BRUCE JOHNSON



Good Friday



"The Body" carried to the tomb



"The Body" lying in the tomb



Sunrise Service



The Resurrection

Atherton Wonderland

Being pressed by the editor to share something of my recent trip to the Atherton Tablelands, which someone referred to as "the Maleny of North Queensland". Here are a few snapshots:



We were resident in Yungaburra and my lasting impression of Yungaburra is the wonderful beautification of the village streets and their public promotion of their attractions having me repeatedly saying: "wow if only Maleny can do this". We also have the platypus, and having seen how Yungaburra promote their platypus on pavements and street signs - surely we could do more? However, the platypus before the pub threshold was the only platypus I saw in Yungaburra

– several times, no kidding only once!



What we do not have is the amazing 500-year old curtain tree. I found it intriguing that, although the fig tree kills the host tree by smothering it, it does not feed from its sap. Makes me think of Paul using the metaphor of grafting in Romans 9-11 (Romans 11:17-21): the Gentiles are grafted onto the host tree Israel but they do not smother it or kill it, but feed from its "nourishing sap".

(For more information see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curtain_Fig_Tree).

Being a country girl I was in awe of acres and acres, kilometres upon kilometres of sugarcane, avocado trees, mango trees and also some lupins. What a fertile area – rich and wet! As we were travelling, I recalled my brother's words beginning of COVID that Australia has a strong food security base and no lockdowns will result in Australians starving. No wars either – much to be grateful for living in such a fertile country.



And the beach I am standing on in Mission Beach is the location where the local minister from Clump was taken by the proverbial crocodile in the Netflix mini-series *Irreverent*. If you have not watched it, do. Below the silly comedy lies a second layer of some truthful and useful insights into the life of a village church and its minister.

Invigorating was a brief swim, a very brief swim, in the chilly waters of the crater Lake Eacham, in the rain! Although we walked the circumference of 2.9km around the lake. More compelling is the unknown depths of the deep waters of Lake Eacham – full of mystery and unknown wonders – perhaps like the unknown depths of God's grace and love.



My first trip up to North Queensland was one of wonder and beauty. A friend advised me on the eve of my departure: You will love it there and will want to go live there, but remember it is not summer!

Till we meet again North Queensland! Shalom LIENA

Swinging Safari!

"Swinging Safari" "The Baby Elephant Walk" tunes which many of us have grown up with. However, never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would one day go on a "swinging safari" in South Africa and actually see a "baby elephant walk"!! An experience and adventure that I think I will have to put down as the highlight of all my travels.

I had heard of this inaugural Ultimate South African tour with a local photographer and a South African tour company back in 2018, but just pushed it aside. Later they advertised that there were a couple of spare places as there had been cancellations, and something just clicked in my head! Animals and photography are my passions, so the combination was just too much to resist. Booked and paid for our 2020 trip, never dreaming that the world would be shut down with covid!

Finally, the tour was up and running for 2023, and to make it even more exciting for me, Peter had decided to come as well. Having someone you're close to, especially your partner, to share experiences and sights with, adds a whole new dimension.

The trip was 3 weeks all up, but it was the first week or so where we experienced the game drives up in the north east of South Africa in an area they refer to as the Eastern Cape. The first lodge we stayed at was the Mantoben Lodge, a private one in the Manyeleti Reserve. No fences, so wild animals could meander between our glamping tents. However, we only saw monkeys and impala wander through, but heard the hyenas!

Our first drive was in the afternoon, along rough dirt bush tracks, but what a bonanza! We saw impala, kudu, vultures, hyenas, elephants, baboons, waterbuck, wildebeest, and to top it off, a black rhino! Our driver Michael had only seen one 4 times in the 7 years he's worked at the Lodge! There were three more drives over the 2 days, the morning ones starting 6.30am (around 4 – 6 degrees without the wind chill!) and lasting around 3 hours, and we added to our list ostrich, zebras, hippos, lions, a leopard and numerous birds!

We were then picked up at the western gate of Kruger (4.2 million hectares) and spent the day travelling east across the park, spotting many of the same animals, plus giraffe and cape buffalo, arriving at the Lower Sabie camp just on dark. Next morning drive was another highlight.....just on sunrise, we spotted a Sabel! Our guide hadn't seen one for 15years! We exited Kruger through one of the south gates and continued on through Swaziland to the Shayamoya Lodge near the Pongola Game Reserve. More game drives over 2 days where we saw many of the wildlife, some of which I had never heard of before, and a cruise on the Pongola Dam where we spotted more hippos and Nile crocodiles.

On then to our last reserve, Nambiti, staying at the Springbok Lodge. Our accommodation again was a glamping tent complete with bath, outdoor shower, airconditioning, and located out in the bush overlooking the reserve! Four wonderful drives over the next two days, one for 4 hours, over the open plains and up and down the hills of the 10,000 hectare reserve. Amongst many others such as stein buck, oryx, warthogs and nyala, we saw the slightly rare mountain reedbuck hiding in the long grass, and on our very last drive, finally, two cheetahs!!

Just writing this brings back a flood of emotions and memories! I was truly in my element. Hopefully some of these photos will give you an inkling of what we experienced. To observe the animals in their natural habitat, to learn about how they live and survive, each with their unique and inbuilt instincts..... I cannot for the life of me see how anyone can not believe in a Creator!

SUE CALLAGHAN



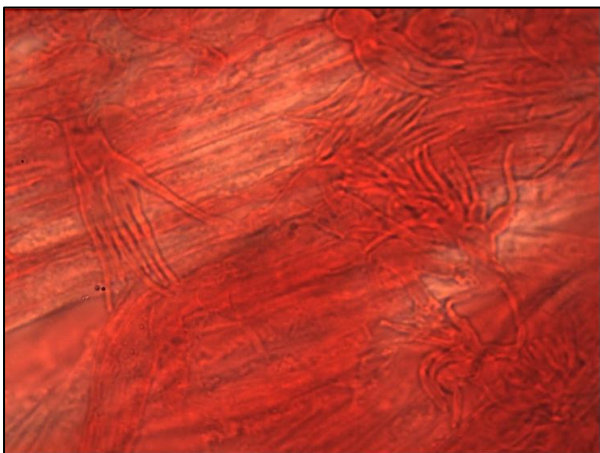


Hidden Treasures

Sometimes we feel we must travel to find treasures – exotic places, different cultures, new languages, historic relics. But then, occasionally, we stumble upon treasures that have been undiscovered, unnamed, hidden in plain sight, in our own backyards. I have experienced this on many occasions.

As you know I love fungi and am always on the lookout for them. Many times I have found ones that have not been named. Just sometimes, I look at them closely and the microscopic structures of their caps or stems blow me away with their beauty and uniqueness. Looking at this image, one could suggest it is some form of rock art in an ancient first nations cave. But no, it is microscopic detail of a mushroom like the one below. These minute multi-fingered hairs are actually on the surface of the stem and are a unique signature for this undescribed species. DNA tells me it is related to the Elegant Velvet Parachute mushroom (*Marasmius elegans*), but it is a distinct and distant relative, awaiting publication with a name. (Give me time, and I'll get to it!)

I am constantly amazed by the incredible diversity of life around us, and the challenge to care for it.



I would go back to this Table Tomorrow

In April/May this year I was fortunate enough to travel to Italy with two of my daughters, Joyce and Kate. We spent most our time in the south, following an itinerary Kate had put together. She loves to research travel and the time spent by her certainly paid off. We stayed in towns off the beaten track in airbnb and met some amazing people. The Aussie pub is replaced by the local square and nondescript back alleyways transformed late afternoon into cafes and small restaurants where the locals gathered to play music, dance and eat amazing food. I left Italy with amazing regard for the Romans - the buildings still standing today and the roads, testament to their ingenuity and ability. We travelled south to Polignana a Mar, a town perched on the cliffs above the Adriatic Sea, the home of the song Volare and the best gelato ever. Then off to Matera, where we stayed in the old part of the town called Sassi, a town inhabited since Neolithic times with its cave churches and where the houses are built on the steep hills, almost on top of each other. Ischia, an island in the Bay of Naples with Aragon Castle was incredible and Florence so beautiful. From Florence we walked part of the Cinque Terra, a fabulous walk through five villages. We all left Italy with memories of a welcoming country, warm friendly people living, it seemed, much simpler lives than we do. Certainly a much slower pace, giving time to tend amazing vegetable gardens and enjoy life.

SUE McCLEARY



Rome Pantheon



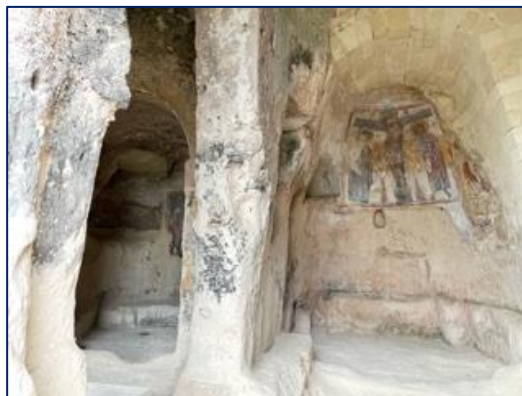
Cinque Terra Vernazza



Best gelato ever



Matera Castle



Matera Cave Churches



Ischia with Aragon

Following the example, use words starting with the letters of Peter's name to describe his character.

Pentecost Preacher	P	
Enthusiastic	E	
Tenacious	T	
Encouraging	E	
Rock	R	

PETER

Peter heals a crippled man -

"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk—and he went walking and leaping and praising God".



Find the 7 differences between these 2 pictures and then colour one of them.



Pick out each word in this collage with a different colour



B	H	I	H	N	H	S	R	I	G	T	U
C	G	Z	T	C	G	I	E	S	W	E	M
O	F	D	O	M	Z	W	T	O	F	P	M
R	R	P	N	I	R	D	E	H	N	A	S
N	A	M	D	E	L	P	P	I	R	C	B
E	S	S	T	L	I	R	V	T	U	S	H
L	G	D	N	S	I	X	Y	S	M	E	M
I	E	L	T	S	O	P	A	G	A	J	G
U	Q	L	O	L	P	C	E	L	K	E	A
S	E	N	Q	X	R	U	E	M	N	S	R
S	H	A	D	O	W	D	X	T	Q	U	K
S	R	X	D	A	U	P	I	T	N	S	W
I	E	A	M	L	K	L	W	N	W	E	R
O	E	Z	N	R	E	H	C	A	E	R	P
T	P	Y	Z	S	S	Y	H	X	E	G	U
T	A	U	F	N	O	T	X	A	V	A	A
D	I	F	M	S	W	C	X	M	O	A	X
E	P	Y	P	C	K	I	H	Q	X	O	R

APOSTLE
CORNELIUS
CRIPPLED MAN
DORCAS
ESCAPE
GENTILES
HEALED
JESUS
PENTECOST
PETER
PREACHER
PRISON
SANHEDRIN
SHADOW
TWO EPISTLES



CONDIMENTS COLLECTION

Another Old Song/Hymn *[All things bright and beautiful]*

When someone sent these photos and words to me in an email, although it was titled *Nature's colours and Thinkers' words*, for some reason the old song came into my head.



Compassion is language the deaf can hear and the blind can see.
~Mark Twain~



Don't wait for people to be friendly, show them how.
~Henry James~



It's nice to be important but it's more important to be nice



Never look down on anyone unless you are helping them up
~Buddy Hackett~



When I was young, I admired clever people. Now that I am old, I admire kind people
~Adam Herschel~



The most important trip you may take in life is meeting people halfway.
~Henry Boyle~



A Smorgasbord Taste of the Kingdom of God

Recently our Connect Group completed a short study on the Kingdom of God. In the true style of a smorgasbord, it was only a taste, not a five course A la carte meal! At one session we considered seven quotes about the Kingdom of God, each written by a different writer. Here are the quotes in random order: like a smorgasbord, take your pick of what appeals to you.



1. The kingdom is where the king reigns. If he is reigning in my heart, then the Kingdom of Heaven has come to me.
 2. There can be no Kingdom of God in the world without the Kingdom of God in our hearts.
 3. "I have tried drugs and a little of everything else, and there is nothing in the world more soul satisfying than having the kingdom of God building inside you and growing."
 4. The only significance of life consists in helping to establish the kingdom of God.
 5. "Give me one hundred men who love only God with all their heart and hate only sin with all their heart and we will shake the gates of hell and bring in the kingdom of God in one generation."
 6. "The whole point of the kingdom of God is Jesus has come to bear witness to the true truth, which is nonviolent. When God wants to take charge of the world, he doesn't send in the tanks. He sends in the poor and the meek.
 7. "The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. It happens quietly. It happens inevitably. Don't underestimate God's power."
- A. TOM WRIGHT is an English preacher, academic, theologian, teacher, and writer. An Anglican, he was one time Bishop of Durham. Today he continues his academic work, plus an extensive online ministry of theological training and devotional broadcasts. Wright is passionate that God's kingdom is far different from earthly, human kingdoms.
- B. JOHNNY CASH was a world-renowned singer song writer in the country and western tradition, with a long and checkered background as a popular entertainer. Cash had a church upbringing under the strong Christian influence of his mother. Although his life was laced with periods of addiction and rehabilitation, Cash did not abandon his Christian faith which he upheld until his death.
- C. ERIC LIDDELL was a Chinese-born Scottish athlete and later a Christian missionary. Liddell was passionate about his faith and openly acknowledged Jesus as Lord of his life, right down to his running career. In the 1924 Olympics he refused to run in the heats for the 100 metres, his best event, because they were held on a Sunday. Liddell constantly affirmed that Jesus reigned in his heart.
- D. JOHN WESLEY, founder of Methodism, had a preaching career that spanned the length and breadth of England, going into the highways and byways with the message of salvation from the grips of sin. He also spent time in the southern states of the United States of America on preaching missions. He was passionate about working with and training other preachers.
- E. ALISTAIR BEGG is the senior pastor of Cleveland's Parkside Church, Ohio, a position he has held since 1983. He is the voice behind the Truth for Life Christian radio preaching and teaching ministry, which broadcasts his sermons daily to stations across North America through over 1,800 radio outlets. Although Begg is a compelling orator, he never loses sight of the fact that the kingdom happens silently and inevitably.
- F. LEO TOLSTOY was a Russian aristocrat, regarded as one of the greatest authors of all time. In 1884, Tolstoy wrote a book called What I Believe, in which he openly confessed his Christian

beliefs. He affirmed his belief in Jesus Christ's teachings and was particularly influenced by the Sermon on the Mount, and the injunction to turn the other cheek, which he understood as a "commandment of non-resistance to evil by force" and a doctrine of pacifism and nonviolence. In his work *The Kingdom of God Is Within You*, he criticized Church doctrine, and was eventually excommunicated from the Russian Orthodox Church

- G. ALBERT SCHWEITZER was born with an all-encompassing world view. He used skills and knowledge as a theologian, organist, musicologist, writer, humanitarian, philosopher, and physician. His philosophy of "reverence for life" guided his tireless humanitarian work. "The saga of his life and work provides one of the greatest sources of inspiration to the world's efforts to create better conditions for the people."

YOUR TURN: Can you match up the quote with the correct writer. A few clues have been inserted to help you. Anyway, enjoy the smorgasbord. And maybe find some quotes of your own. There are lots. You'll find the match up quotes and writers further on.

THE TUESDAY CONNECTORS:

MALCOLM AND NANCY, JOHN AND MAVIS, MARJORIE, MURRAY AND ROBYN

How did you go? Answers on page 22.

-----oooOooo-----

Paddy Murphy's Baptism

Paddy was a drinker at a local pub in Cork and after a morning spent drinking, he took his usual pathway home along the river. He came to an abrupt halt after rounding a bend and discovering Father Michael hip deep in the river with several parishioners gathered along the bank watching and listening to him. Before Paddy could back away, Father Michael called out to him –

"You there, Paddy. Have you found Jesus?"

"No!" he answered and Father Michel waded out of the river and strode towards Paddy asking, "Well, would you like to?" "Well, I suppose so." stuttered Paddy, and Father Michael took his arm and led him into the river. After a short prayer Father Michael took hold of Paddy's shoulders and pushed him under the water. Paddy thrashed about for about a minute and then Father Michael pulled him up and shouted at the spluttering and fast sobering Paddy.

"Well, Paddy. Have you found Jesus?"

"No" choked Paddy and Father Michael quickly submerged the protesting Paddy beneath the water again. After a little longer under the water, Father Michael again raised Paddy and shouted at him, "Paddy! Paddy! Have you found Jesus?" A half-drowned Paddy turned to Father Michael and spluttered, "NO Father!"

Father Michael, now slightly annoyed with Paddy, grabbed him roughly and shoved him below the waters once more. Wanting to encourage Paddy to co-operate, he held him below the water very firmly and for an even longer time. Dragging poor Paddy to his feet by his collar, Father Michael bellowed in Paddy's ear

"Now, Paddy, did you find Jesus?"

Poor Paddy shook himself and now completely sober seriously said to Father Michael "Father Are you quite sure this is where He fell in?"



"Have you found Jesus?". It's a good question, isn't it?

My name is Kathy Young and I attend the Montville Uniting Church. At the end 2021, I was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer and by the beginning of 2022 [1st], I was in Buderim hospital having a double mastectomy. I was not worried or upset as I saw this as an exciting chance – a chance to stop, slow down and stop talking – listen instead. I felt that through all the years of raising children, working, and doing sports runs, etc., I talked to God but didn't listen to Him speaking to me, guiding me. All those lost opportunities and peaceful, quiet interludes. Time was my master and God was being "fitted in". Goodness, how ignorant and rude of me. The God of the universe gave His Son to save me to show the depth of His love and I was "fitting Him in?"

That was such a shameful realisation – I was paying lip-service at a time of my choosing [again not God's]

I prayed about it sincerely and God answered me – every day, He answered me. I recuperated sitting on my back verandah, reading the Bible and books by Max Lucado and *The Jesus I never met* by Phillip Yancy. I was lucky to have been given two copies of Yancy's book and I lent them around with a request for one to be passed on and the other to be returned to me. BUT, I am so pleased that both books went on to people in great need and God worked His will and love through them. Books can be replaced, His Word cannot.

I knew God was with me in these times as I would get goose bumps and a feeling of God's love and completeness. A bible verse or a song would sometimes run through my head bringing waves of comfort and cause me to smile and laugh.

I learned a lot during these times with God and continue to do so. Every day. I continue to learn, going to church and some days get that same tingly feeling up my arms and I know He is there and He has a message for me. It is wondrous and makes me smile. I am so happy.

So, yes, I have found Jesus and I wasn't half drowned in the process, like poor Paddy.

Thank you Lord for everything, for cancer helped me find a pathway to God – and, I am still cancer free now!

KATHY YOUNG

-----oooOooo-----

Answers to Kingdom of God Smorgasbord

The kingdom is where the king reigns. If he is reigning in my heart, then the Kingdom of Heaven has come to me. **Eric Liddell**

There can be no Kingdom of God in the world without the Kingdom of God in our hearts. **Albert Schweitzer**

"I have tried drugs and a little of everything else, and there is nothing in the world more soul satisfying than having the kingdom of God building inside you and growing." **Johnny Cash**

The only significance of life consists in helping to establish the kingdom of God. **Leo Tolstoy**

"Give me one hundred men who love only God with all their heart and hate only sin with all their heart and we will shake the gates of hell and bring in the kingdom of God in one generation." **John Wesley**

"The whole point of the kingdom of God is Jesus has come to bear witness to the true truth, which is nonviolent. When God wants to take charge of the world, he doesn't send in the tanks. He sends in the poor and the meek." **Tom Wright**

"The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. It happens quietly. It happens inevitably. Don't underestimate God's power." **Alistair Begg**

Bob's Bit

These items look down on Bob Grice from his study wall – so he added them to the smorgasbord.

MARTIN LUTHER

I have held many things and lost them, but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess.

BILLY GRAHAM

The secret strength of a nation is found in the faith that abides in the hearts and homes of the country.

JAMES DOBSON

There is a certain sweetness to sending a loved one on to be with the Lord, even though the loss is incalculable.

Marriages that lack an iron willed determination to hang together at all costs, are like fragile Roman bridges. They appear to be secure and may indeed remain upright --- until they are put under heavy pressure.

How potent is a lifelong demonstration of morality in all its forms by parents whose very lives reveal their fidelity and commitment to one another and to Jesus.

I believe the most valuable contribution a parent can make to his child is to instil in him/her a genuine faith in God.

If the family is going to prevail, it will be because husbands and fathers accept their God given responsibilities for leadership in the family and lead them in paths of righteousness, integrity, honesty and decency, to love their children and care for those who depend on them.

MAX LUCADO

Never underestimate the power that comes when a parent pleads with God on behalf of a child. Who knows how many prayers are being answered right now because of the faithful ponderings of a parent ten or twenty years ago. If what we are doing in this fast-paced society is taking us away from prayer time for our children, we're doing too much. There is nothing more special, more precious, than time that a parent spends struggling and pondering with God on behalf of a child.

If you want to make a difference in your world, live a holy life. Be faithful to your spouse---be the neighbour who acts neighbourly. Be the employee who does the work and does not complain. Pay your bills. Do your party and enjoy life. Don't speak one message and live another. People are watching the way we act more than they are listening to what we say.

Growing old can be dangerous. The trail can be dangerous and the pitfalls are many. One is wise to be prepared. You know it's coming. If growing old catches you by surprise don't blame God. He gave you plenty of warning. He also gave you plenty of advice. Your last chapters can be your best. It could be that all your life has prepared you for a grand exit. God's oldest have always been among His choicest.

Jesus is praying for us ---Jesus has spoken and the devil listens. The devil may land a punch or two. He may even win a few rounds, but he never wins the fight. Why? Because Jesus takes up for you – Jesus at this very moment is protecting you --- and God will never let you be pushed past your limit --- He'll always be there to help you come through it.

BOB GRICE

Karl's Korner*Reading the Bible*

How do you approach the Bible? When I went to Sunday School so long ago, it seemed that people somehow thought that God wrote it. Later the impression left with me was the "official" one that it was "God-inspired", whatever that meant. The upshot of all this was an approach based on faith in not only God but the "wisdom" and authority of those who were supposedly experts in this field of knowledge, such as it might be.

Over the last few decades this approach has been rejected by much of society. The so-called enlightenment has caused us to treat ever more information with scepticism which has both good and bad consequences. The church seems to be locked in the past in its faith in its experts. This, despite its own history of failures to address the new – Galileo, the divine right of kings, etc. So, what should we perhaps do? How might we present the Bible to those both inside and outside the church as a valuable (If not salvific - i.e. leading to salvation) document?

So, as I noted above, my initial approach was informed by the religious education I received together with the attitude of my father who saw it as educational but ultimately a matter for me to "make my own mind up" about. This approach largely remained but over the years questions arose which the church seemed only to be able to "sort of" answer in what I might call "theological" terms. Some years ago, however, I thought I'd see what philosophy was all about and get an idea of the key ideas attributed to each of the main philosophers. One who is relevant to this discussion was Derrida whose key idea I put as "the death of the author" by which I think he meant that once a document – book, essay, etc. – is published, the meaning of the contents is wholly determined by the reader. What does this say about our reading the Bible?

Another event that bears upon this topic was when I, along with other workmates, was required to attend what was portrayed as a communications course which, as it turned out, was training in answering the telephone. (In some ways this was ironic since we only spoke to a particular "customer" and had done this for half a century.) But I took one insight away from it. The presenter said something along the following lines:- "Do you realise that in a phone conversation 80% of the communication that takes place is NOT in the words spoken?". If that is so, what percentage is conveyed in our reading of the Bible by the text? One wonders just what the 80% consists of. Context? Society? Political situation? Personal situation? Etc., etc.?

The other day I started reading "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" by F. Nietzsche who was (in)famous for declaring "God is dead!" as a personal response to that "enlightenment". But he also added "and we have killed Him!". The book was an English translation and the translator tried to give an overview in the introduction. What struck me was a feeling that I'd really like to read it in the original German (if that's even possible) because what I can only describe as the "flavour" of certain words seemed likely altered by the translation. Yet, if my reading of this text is correct, Nietzsche saw Jesus as one of his "Supermen" in that Jesus created and identified himself as "truth". (The term 'supermen' refers to being more than – above - just a human being.)

All of these insights have made me cautious in espousing the dogma of the church. I simply feel I cannot know precisely what is meant by the Bible's text at times. One can read it literally, allegorically, historically, theologically, as well as from several perspectives. Each such perspective gives new insights but not the whole picture. Yet, taken as a whole, it becomes a living document full of guidance and insight into our daily lives – a sort of "Manual of Humanity". Should we present the Bible as such to the world rather than dogmatically insisting that God wrote it by some means? I'm not saying that this is true – only that it might be more digestible.

What do you think?

Turn your Eyes Upon Jesus

While in Darwin this year I had to lead a couple of funerals. One of them was not really a funeral. It was a memorial service for an older man from Arnhem Land who had some family and friends living and working in Darwin. They wanted a service to remember and give thanks for his life before his body was taken back to Arnhem Land for a full funeral service. I had a meeting with the man's oldest son and we arranged the outline for the service and then with e mails and phone calls we got the order of service sorted. (Or so I thought).

The morning of the service about 60 people came to the church where I was working. I followed the printed order of service that we had agreed on and they had arranged to have printed. It all went well and after saying the benediction I went to the back of the church to meet with those who had come to the service as they left. No one moved. The oldest son of the man whose life we were remembering came to me and said a certain lady wanted to sing a song and dance. I said that would be good. The lady sang a beautiful Christian song and danced as she sang.

I assumed that would be it but the son came and said there were some people who wanted to talk. I decided I had better get back up the front again. Forty minutes later we had heard a number of stories from an ex-politician, to friends, to a younger son. It was all good. My problem was what do I now do to conclude this section of worship? I did not want to repeat the Benediction I had said earlier.

I had the order of service in my hand and one of the songs we had sung was:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Look full in his wonderful face
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of his glory and grace.*

I thought these grieving people need to hear these word again. In their sadness and loss, they needed to look to Jesus and find comfort and hope. As I began to say the words of this chorus, I had one of those Ah Ha moments, an epiphany, and suddenly realized this was true for all of us in every situation in life. All the things in life that so easily distress us, cause us pain and hurt, in all that we obsess about, we need to look to Jesus, be in awe and wonder at the fullness of who Jesus is, then all these things will grow less important as we live in the light of his glorious presence and receive Christ's undeserved abundant love.

Now I have been singing this little chorus for over 70 years. It only took that long for me to see this wonderful new revelation. Let me encourage you to **Turn your eyes upon Jesus.**



GEORGE WOODWARD

-----oooOooo-----

Maleny's Cuppa Craft



We are still meeting on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month from 9.30am until 11.30am at the church. Our small group would be very happy to welcome anyone who has UFO's (Unfinished Objects) in their cupboards. We are also working on a joint project for the Christmas festival.

LORRAINE HOWE

Now, Here's A Twist

During NAIDOC week, Liena read a version of Psalm 23 as written by an Aboriginal pastor – Ron Williams. I always find it interesting to read/hear prayers and/or bible translations in English written through the eyes of someone whose culture is different from my own. I looked for him.

I found he was a Western Australian aboriginal pastor whose obituary in [The Sydney Morning Herald](#) of 23 November, 2009 [he died in 2003, 20 years ago] started with these words:

"In the same week R.M.Williams died, another R. Williams, an indigenous bush pastor, also died. About 800 people packed the Great Hall of Parliament House, Canberra, to say goodbye to Pastor (uncle) Ron Williams, one of the best-known and respected Aboriginal leaders in Australia.

The tributes and the eulogies delivered spoke of his winsome smile, his gentle disposition, his disarming personality, and his ability to touch the lives of all, from diplomats to drunks, junkies to jetsetters, abused women, prisoners and those who had lost hope. Above all, they acknowledged his unswerving Christian faith."

When his grandfather [who had raised him] was killed in a fight and his body found on the local rubbish dump, Williams took to drink and drifted. In 1958 a Methodist preacher, Frank Cole, gave Ron a Bible and a picture of Jesus holding a lamb. Ron identified with the lamb and responded by asking Jesus to make his life better and give him hope. He changed and never drank again.

He spent two years in the first Aboriginal Bible College in Gnowangerup, Western Australia; became a pastor and missionary, serving in the United Aboriginal Mission (UAM) in the Warburton Ranges for 7 years; in 1977 he became the Principal of the Bible College.

His Aboriginal wife died after a long illness and he married Diana, a white American corporate executive who left her affluent life to work among Australian Aborigines. The union was not without its tensions and required huge adjustments on both sides. For Diana, a product of the Chase Manhattan Bank, efficiency and timing were imperatives. For Ron, Noongar time was flexible, to put it mildly. To Diana, money was necessary to have an ordered existence. For Williams, it was something you gave away to those who needed it more than you did.

But together, they travelled thousands of kilometres over many years visiting Aboriginal communities, leaving a legacy of hope. People's lives were transformed; reconciliation - divorced from its political emasculation - became a matter of the heart; Christianity, often perceived as a "whitefella religion", became personal for many Aboriginal people, and small, struggling Aboriginal congregations were strengthened. Ron Williams was widely regarded as a father in the faith and a leader in reconciliation. Among the Aboriginal people he was known as "Kurta kurta" – everybody's brother.

Here is the rendition of Psalm 23, by Rev Ron Williams, Bush pastor, 1940-2003

*My big fella boss up in the sky is like the father emu.
He will always look after me and take me to green grass,
And lead me to where the water holes are full and fresh all the time.
He leads me away from the thick scrub
and helps me keep safe from the hunters, dingoes and eagles.
At night time when I'm very lonely and sad,
I will not be afraid, for my Father covers me with His feathers like a father emu.
His spear and shield will always protect me.
My big fella boss always gives me a good feed in the middle of my enemies.
In hot times he makes me sit down in a cool shade and rest.
He gives me plenty of love and care all of my life through.
Then I will live with my big fella boss like a father emu,
that cares for his chickens in good country full of peace and safety,
Forevermore and evermore.*

Now, here's the twist!

The story above is history, but there is a very topical follow up. Ron and Diana's only child was Lydia. In 1999 the family moved from Kalgoorlie to Canberra where Lydia began her soccer career. At 35, she is still one of the goalies for the Australian women's soccer team, the Matildas. She first represented Australia at 17; was the first woman to play more than 100 games for Australia; and has just finished her third world cup. Indeed, Lydia has played in the Australian, American, English, and French football leagues.

Not bad for a kid from the bush.



-----oooOooo-----

A Matilda's Story

A woman was out walking her dog in a local park when she came across two boys, about 8 years old, kicking a football. She overheard one say to the other – "I wonder what the boy Matildas are called?"

What does this really say?

-----oooOooo-----

Maasi Creed

When I was talking to Liena about Ron Williams' Psalm 23, she mentioned that it reminded her of an African Creed. Some digging in Wikipedia brought this result:

*The **Maasai Creed** is a creed composed in 1960 by the Maasai people of East Africa in collaboration with missionaries from the Congregation of the Holy Ghost. An early publication of the Maasai Creed appears in Fr. Vincent J. Donovan, "Christianity Rediscovered", in which Donovan tells of his work among the Maasai through which they came to their own understandings of Christianity.*

The Creed:

We believe in the one High God of love who created the beautiful world and everything good in it. He created man and wanted man to be happy in the world. God loves the world and every nation and tribe in the world. We have known this God in darkness, and we now know God in the light. God promised in his book the Bible that he would save the world and all the nations and tribes.

We believe that God made good on his promise by sending his son, Jesus Christ, a man by the flesh, a Jew by tribe, born poor in a little village, who left his home and was always on safari, doing good, curing people by the power of God, teaching about God and man, showing that the meaning of religion is love. He was rejected by his people, tortured and nailed hands and feet to a cross, and died. He lay buried in the grave, but the hyenas did not touch him, and on the third day he rose from the grave. He ascended to the skies. He is lord.

We believe that all our sins are forgiven through him. All who have faith in him must be sorry about their sins, be baptized in the Holy Spirit of God, live by the rules of love and share the bread together, to announce the good news to others until Jesus comes again. We are waiting for him. He is alive. He lives. This we believe. Amen.

A simple and straight forward statement of faith.

OUR OBITUARY

VALE JOYCE BUTTERFIELD

Joyce was a regular contributor to this journal, with a poem in almost every edition.
She was also a loyal and regular member of the Maleny Christian Meditation Group.
On the morning she died, this was the daily devotion from the World Community for Christian Meditation. It spoke to me of Joyce and the last time I spoke with her.
It also raised the perennial question about believing in coincidences.

One of the great connections that meditation makes for us is a connection with a sense of our own death, of our own mortality. In this spirit of detachment and attention, meditation greatly transforms the quality of our life. Meditation is simply an acceptance and an entry into the mystery of dying. Dying is nothing less than letting go. All our life is really a lesson in learning to let go, and we learn to let go by stages, in different ways. All our life is a preparation for this ultimate letting go, the moment of death, in which we are meant to be ready, to be prepared. Anyone of you who has ever been with someone when they have died will know that that moment is a moment of tremendous significance. The whole of our life is focused in that moment.

(Aspects of Love 1 by Laurence Freeman OSB)

-----oooOooo-----

*Grief and sadness touched the Church with the loss of our dear Joyce
And now we're conscious of her unfilled place
But the memories she gave to us will last beyond her voice
We are so very grateful for her grace.*

*She was a wife and mother, a carer and a friend
She spoke kind words and gave a ready smile
Her faith and wit were with her until the very end
She lived her life so fully, with such style.*

*She made homes in Cloncurry, Brisbane, then Maleny
To be outdoors and gardening was her pleasure
The peace, the calm, the plants were pleasant company
But I'm sure she'd say her family was her treasure.*

*Thank you, Joyce, for all that you mean
To generations now and those unseen
We're inspired to be faithful and do good
Even though it's hard to write poems like you could!*

FROM: MEDITATION GROUP FRIENDS PER BARBARA