PIPELINE

DECEMBER 2012

The Newsletter of the Wellspring Community Inc • An Australian Community inspired by the Iona Community

# Sharing Together in Sacred Community

## Letter from the Leader

In her book, *Dakota*, Kathleen Norris writes:

> *One of the first things I noticed on my long retreat . . . was how like an exercise class the liturgy seemed. It was sometimes difficult to rise early for morning office; at other times during the day it seemed tedious to be going back to church, but knowing that the others would be there made all the difference. Once there, the benefits were tangible, and I usually wondered how I could have wished to be anywhere else.*

Norris is telling her readers that the presence of community makes the difference between the daily offices during retreat being meaningful or being repetitive, mechanical and tiring. For her, the day's prayer times are for sharing the beauty of the words and joining in the melodies of the prayers and readings, psalms and songs.

We all experience something quite wonderful when we are in a worshipping community. Worship is made all the more meaningful when we hear others intone the phrases of liturgy with us and we support each other as we tremble together towards the highest notes of a tune or chant.

There is something wonderful about being in Wellspring Community, too. I spent 30 days in September/ October caravanning 9101 kilometres with my husband, visiting Wellspring Community folk along the way. We stayed in people's homes, or in our van in people's driveways, or in caravan parks, or in highway rest areas, so as to meet with individuals and groups – Bill, Marjorie, Jim, Wendy, Bernadette, Doug, Allan, June, Mac, Margaret, Stephanie, Alex, Roy, Lucy, Margaret, Roslyn, Alan, Kathryn, Pat, Pat, Lorraine, Brian, Winsome, Jack, Peg, Lynona, David, Michael, Marlene, Libby, Patricia, Jane, Heather, Jean and Neville.

Wherever I go, Wellspring folk speak about belonging to something significant, something that matters. Gospel justice provides for us a focus and a language that we readily and easily share. And it is lovely to travel as far as David and I did to meet and greet people who seemed like old friends because we share that focus and language.

What is particularly special about our Community is prayer. It is wonderful to meet people in person with whom, and for whom, we pray across the miles - and to know that they pray for us as well. It is very touching, very

***'Wellspring people speak about belonging to something significant, something that matters.'***

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humbling, very nourishing, to know that people in our Community make that gift to each other.

Prayerfully, in this issue of *Pipeline*, we give thanks for those who have served our Community and now step away from the roles they have fulfilled so well – Alan as Secretary, Jean as SA Contact person, and Bonita as Editor. These three dedicated and talented people have busy lives to give their attention, and may what lies ahead be filled with blessings for each of them and their families and friends.

Please send to me your original liturgies and/or prayers and/or reflections, and/or poems for our Spirituality and Worship resource. To be ready for release at the Gathering in April, the closing date for materials will be 15 January.

Hopefully, our publication will give individuals and groups something to share when meeting together and worshipping together within, and beyond, our Community, and contribute to making the experience of worshipping with others especially meaningful.

*Janelle Macgregor* (Day 29)

# *Thoughts from the (retiring) Editor*

This issue of *Pipeline* is about Community: living in community, our Wellspring Community, and about sacred community. Former leaders have contributed: Peggy Goldsmith and Neil Holm, Jill Robertson and Mary Gilchrist; we go from city to country, coast to the Centre; from those who travel to those who stay at home. It will come as no surprise that the articles in this issue represent the wide diversity yet unity of faith that is represented in our Community. Our current Leader, Janelle McGregor, reminds and confirms for us that it is both wonderful to meet with people in person and to know that they pray for us as well; to know and acknowledge that people in our Community are making this precious and free gift to one another. For this, we are touched, humbled and nourished.

In this issue we get a sense of the lived experience of community, as well as being challenged by what we might be in more practical and theoretical ways. Part of our life is historical; but our geography means that we are called to create something new in this land where we non-Indigenous 'newcomers' have not always felt 'at home.' I hope you will find some challenges, some answers, and some consolation in the following articles. My prayer is that together we might find new ways of supporting our sacred community, Wellspring.

***'My prayer is that together we might find new ways of supporting our sacred community, Wellspring.'***

Some thoughtful points have come up in the following articles, but we remember that we are at times fragile people who are doing the best that we can:

- What is my expectation of this Community? What is my contribution to the support and welfare of Wellspring?
- Are we serious about our commitment to Wellspring and to caring for all its members and friends?
- Do we belong to a community where we are affirmed and where we are encouraged to grow?
- We need to feel that the effort involved in being part of Wellspring is valuable to ourselves and to others. (Jill)
- How many of us belong because we are nourished by the Community while our engagement remains at the level of taking in rather than giving back? (Neil)

The key point that arises is how important it is *to meet with* people; we know that people are happiest sharing face to face and in small groups. So how do we 'make room' for those who are 'dispersed' and not near at hand. Are we good at ringing or emailing that 'stranger' and asking how they are? Are we caring for our isolated people?

I mention this point in particular as I find it harder to feel I belong to Wellspring now that I live away from a city region, and it is not as easy to meet with a Cell group or individual, so, as Jill says, 'there is little growth of the relationships in that way.' This 'isolation' is the chief reason for resigning from my earlier involvement as co-Leader and now as *Pipeline* Editor. I don't have access to resources as I had when I lived in Sydney. The church community here is conservative and focussed locally, with minimal awareness or passion for refugee, Indigenous, inter-faith, or environmental issues.

I know of former Friends in my region who ceased their association with Wellspring for reasons of isolation, the need to meet face to face, the need

***Pipeline* is the quarterly magazine of the Wellspring Community. Views expressed in it are not necessarily the policy of the Community, but the Community seeks the exchange of thoughts and ideas of Members and Friends as a basis for finding common ground.**

for deep personal interaction, and a need for seriousness.

This is my last issue as *Pipeline* Editor. In many ways I will miss the task, and the joy and excitement I experienced as I read each of the articles, and felt a connection with each of the contributors. Thank you to all who contributed so graciously whenever asked. Wellspring Community has some very talented thinkers, writers and artists, whose work only occasionally requires minor editing changes. Thank you, Neil, for again taking on the task, and I pray you'll also find joy, reward and challenge as I did.

However as Editor, I was often disheartened when there was very little interaction with our wider

Community, and I felt I was completely alone in doing *Pipeline*. I longed for someone *to offer* a poem, an article, a film or book review, a letter to the Editor, or even to argue about various ideas that appeared in Pipeline. It wasn't the pat on the back I longed for; it was to know there was someone else out there! I hoped to find a Community that wanted, desired, has a passion for, interacting and communicating with one another. I know that Wellspring people are doing great things, so I do encourage you to use *Pipeline* as a way of sharing and communicating with all of us. It is good to know what the individuals and groups across our wide country are doing, thinking – and creating. It's good to know 'You're there'.

Blessings to you all, and I wish you a safe, happy and holy Christmas season.

*Bonita Frank* (Day 27)

# *Christmas Reflections: Spirituality at Christmas*

Our lives are measured by birthdays and Christmases.

A birthday is a very personal anniversary. Mine happens to be on Christmas Eve.

In the church year Christmas is the anniversary which arouses memories and strong feelings.

We are thankful for the reinforcement of the peace, faith, hope and love expressed in God's gift of Jesus. We celebrate through our seasonal services. We endeavour to express these same feelings through our nurturing of our family and friendship networks, via gifts, cards, and supporting specific appeals for people in dire need. We welcome those whose visits to church celebrations are seasonal. Special food, music, holidays and the onset of summer mark the season for us in Australia.

For those of us aware of God's Spirit on a daily basis, the Christmas celebrations heighten that Presence.

There is still a special wonder that goes with celebrating the birth of this special baby and being aware of all he accomplished in a short ministry and the continuing effects of that life 2012 years later. That is truly awe inspiring.

. . .

For me the Christmas season brings into sharper focus the valuing of faith, family and friends, the fragility of life and relationships and the celebrating of all that nurtures life, growth, compassion, generosity, wisdom and peace. My granddaughter was married last year, and in August had twin girls who are both doing well. I wonder what life holds for them and what changes they will live through. The cycles of life are ongoing and to be celebrated.

> ***'The cycles of life are ongoing and to be celebrated.'***

The annual festival of Christmas acknowledges that Jesus entered the world like the rest of us. He used his brief time in human form to demonstrate love, to challenge injustice and destructive thinking and to defy the authorities trying to silence him.

Jesus' life, documented in the gospels and his continuing spiritual presence, gives me the opportunity to be the best I can be, to nurture and serve others, to grow in acceptance of others and to find peace.

Spirituality to me is acknowledging the life force that promotes forbearance, joy, exhilaration, energy, stamina and compassion.

I value my garden and working it. There is so much life in an ordinary suburban block, whether plants are nurtured or not.

Life goes on, and I take pleasure in making the most of my patch of ground. The spirit of life is evident in everything and everyone, and we are just specks in the universe.

There is so much to wonder at and appreciate. Spirituality to me is the God given life in all things.

. . .

Thankfully in my senior years I have established patterns of card sending, gift giving and meal sharing that I am comfortable with. Church services, open house or flight to a retreat to avoid it all have all been options. I have managed to discuss with key family

and friends issues of importance well before the season. The tinsel of the self-seeking commercial world is easy to dismiss.

My pattern on Christmas eve is to attend carol singing, followed by the midnight service and on Christmas day to attend the 9.00am service, followed by Christmas dinner at home for whoever is about.

In mid-December we have a 'Blue Christmas' service which respects and relieves any loss and grief weighing on our hearts.

Here is a quote from Michael Leunig's *The Lot* (Viking, An Imprint of Penguin Books 2008) that brings lovely clarity:

*All of us had a nativity scene which deserved the presence of an angel or two, the light of a special star, and the adoration of wise men and women, because every life at this particular moment is divine. Yet what life becomes as it grows, the shape into which it will be directed, lured or bullied 'for its own good' makes our innocent nativities extremely poignant. If our brains forget the details, our poetic instincts remember, and an eerie nostalgia may flicker with primal sadness and hope at Christmas time.*

*Whatever the biblical Christmas may mean, the story contains a strong and simple motif about the miracle of a child's arrival into the world, an emotional story which may well create a certain atmosphere in the heart, if not awaken a huge store of dim feelings about our birth, our mother and our family – the astonishing and perhaps deeply indelible sensations absorbed from the time we first appeared on Earth and settled into our mother's arms.* (p. 297)

Sadly, many experience feelings of abandonment, loneliness and alienation at Christmas time, but hope is known to thrive in adversity and improbable circumstances.

*Hope as a spiritual condition is what seems to matter most, and this is a deeper thing. 'Wherever there's life, there's hope' may denote that hope is life itself, or the very spirit of life – the magic natural element we call vitality, the thing we hope our children will have in abundance, not as a conscious emblem but as an impelling and joyous power in their bones and in their bellies. The sparkle in the eye, the fire in the belly, the lead in the pencil, the life force. Eros! …* (p. 301). For as the Bible says, *'Blessed are the poor of spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'*

I am thankful for the spirit of hope brought to us through the birth and life of Jesus. That is to be honoured and celebrated.

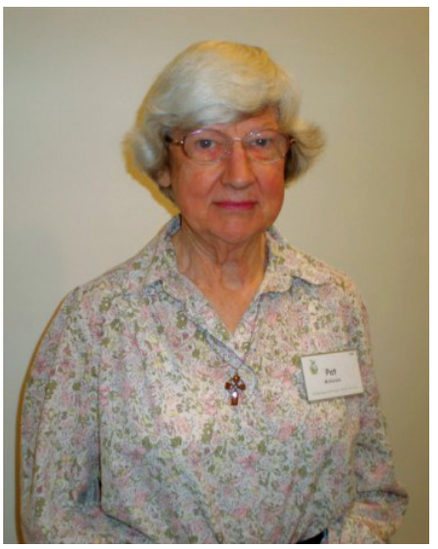
*Pat McKenzie* (Day 7)

***Dear God,***

***Give comfort and peace to those who are separated from loved ones. May the ache in their hearts be the strengthening of their hearts. May their longing bring resolve to their lives, conviction and purity to their love. Teach them to embrace their sadness lest it turn to despair. Transform their yearning into wisdom. Let their hearts grow fonder.***

***Amen***

**From *When I Talk to You*, Leunig, (Harper Collins *Publishers*)**



# *Congratulations Doug McIver*

On October 5, 2012, at Government House in Melbourne, Doug (Day 19) received a Premier's Award for Victorian Senior of the Year in the category of Healthy and Active Living. Doug is well known in Kyneton where he and wife, Jan, live. He is a Uniting Church Elder, Secretary of the local University of the Third Age, is involved in drama productions, community concerts, Lifeball and Cricket, stays fit with Tai Chi, and is active in the Transition Hub within his community promoting sustainable living and he presents a program on local radio. Very close to Doug's heart is the matter of justice for people suffering mental illnesses.

Not only is he an advocate for matters of justice for sufferers but he provides care and counselling and promotes the importance of a healthy diet. If you are passing Kyneton stop to say hello to Doug and Jan and listen to Doug's story.

It's inspirational!

# *Introducing our new SA Contact, Lynona Hawkins*

Having sung songs and used liturgies from Iona over the years and then had the thrill of visiting that special place, it was exciting to find there was an Australian community with a similar ethos, namely Wellspring. I have been connected with Wellspring for about 12 years, but it was the Perth Gathering 2011 that spurred me on to become a Member.

My husband David is a Wellspring Friend and great support. We have four children (two interstate which means covering many kms each year to visit) and two grandchildren who are a constant source of joy. I work as a chaplain one day a week at Flinders Medical Centre besides being active in my local church. My passion is giving Quiet days and Retreats and I value being a part of the Ministry Team at the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre. In recent years I've travelled to Smoky Bay on the west coast annually to share with the women there. David and I are involved in assisting refugees through Circle of Friends. I also love gardening, patchwork and quilting and on occasion even get out the paint brushes.

In the photo below I am getting to know some Dublin residents on a trip overseas in 2009, during which we spent time volunteering on Iona, I in the Abbey Kitchen and David on the Maintenance Team. We both enjoy walking and have done some long distance walks in the UK. The Camino calls but if and when remains to be seen. I look forward to representing SA within the Wellspring Community.

*Alan Bawden*

Secretary, Alan Bawden, has stepped down from his role on Council. At its last meeting, Council affirmed Jill Robertson's note of appreciation. In part she said that we appreciated 'his willingness to have a go and step into the role when we were getting quite desperate for someone to do the job…. Alan has been a quiet, efficient, willing, wise and gentle person on the Council…' So thank you Alan, for doing a great job for us and for the Community for the last 3 years.

# *What makes your heart sing?*

That was the subject that stirred the hearts and minds of the Wellspring folk who met, on Saturday, 13 October, for their last meeting this year. We had started with the thought of exploring what our passions were and extended it a little. The passion could be a long-standing special interest, an organisation they support, poetry/music they've written - the list was endless. They were encouraged to link their choice with one of the areas that concern the Wellspring Community. As one person said, 'These presentations will provide an opportunity to demonstrate how the passions of our everyday lives connect with the Wellspring areas of concern'. They were also invited to bring a symbol of their chosen theme.

The South Australian group know each other fairly well – so we thought – until people started sharing the thing that they're passionate about and illustrating that in some tangible way.

David told of his commitment to Trees for Life, what that entails for him, the time that is required for growing the plants and what great benefits are derived in the community by such a project. He brought seeds to illustrate his passion.

Brian joined the environmental theme, producing a lovely flowering plant. He shared with us how much he enjoys growing and eating his own vegetables and fruit and growing lovely flowers and plants that are appreciated. Added to that is recycling kitchen waste which becomes mulch to feed the plants while conserving water and producing strong and healthy growth. For Brian this is consistent with God's command to care for the earth, respect it, replenish it and allow it to produce its fruit while promoting sustainable living.

What would make Jane's heart sing would be the inclusion of all people, regardless of gender. Her peace and justice theme has come about through a gradual commitment to a feminist approach within an academic career in Mathematics. Also her involvement in the introduction of gender inclusion language and the support for the ordination of women and people in same-sex relationships have all coloured her passion.

Heather, who is not always able to go out, spoke of the warmth and support she receives from the SA Wellspring group that she values as a caring community.

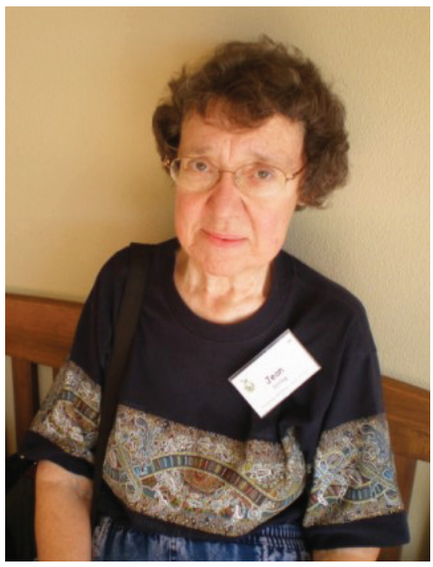
On the subject of community and hospitality Lynona brought a lovely patch-work quilt sharing how each piece is unique and adds to the other to make a beautiful whole just as people together can make a beautiful world.

The make-up of the Washington household absorbed us as Neville shared how, following two children of their own, he and Barbara adopted four other children from various cultures to share the richness of the hospitality of their household.

Reconciliation was pursued by Jack who has had a life-long passion for Aboriginal people. He made mention of his special Aboriginal friend, Lazarus Lamilami and of his 'whole-hearted vocational experience' as Co-Ordinator of Development Studies at Nungalinya College. He is very grateful to God for the opportunity to advance the cause of reconciliation.

Peg began to develop her passion for Social Justice as a child. This has continued throughout her life. Over 50 years ago she joined Amnesty International continuing to write monthly letters on behalf of those unjustly imprisoned. She concluded, 'I can only touch a "near edge" of the work for social justice in the world. AIan and my prayers are my "near edge"'.

In the same category, Jean's contribution is trying to assist refugees/ asylum seekers, particularly those in



Inverbrackie Detention Centre in the Adelaide Hills. She has visited them, encouraged them in English speaking and offered her friendship. Joining in 'welcoming nights' and participating in a packing day specifically for baby kits for new refugee mothers and attending a forum devoted to 'demystifying refugee visas' ('I'm still mystified'), are been part of this passion.

On the other hand Val is a 'conduit' working with new settlers and guest workers from the Philippines who arrive in Adelaide to work in the Port Adelaide area. They're considered 'Saviours of the Nation' by their own people as their work here means their families can survive back home.

Pat read to us a beautiful poem that she wrote that means a great deal in her life.

We were delighted that our National Leader, Janelle Macgregor was able to meet with us that day. Janelle concluded the contributions with devotions that summed up well the theme of the day. We felt we not only know each other a lot better, but a greater sense of community, one of the highlights of belonging to the Wellspring Community, has been further achieved.

*Jean Stirling* ( retiring SA Contact, Day 18)

# *Hearts of Compassion*

It is 40 years since I had my first very limited experience of community. At the kind invitation of the minister of Pilgrim Uniting Church in Adelaide, I was one of five young people, two women and three men, who took up residence in an empty UCA manse in 1972. There was no great selection procedure. Each of us was Christian, single, working, had an interest in community life, and a loose connection with the Taizè Community. We knew each other only casually and were accepted for this year long 'experiment' in communal living.

At the time it was a radical step at several levels; one being that it was a break from the tradition of a single person not shifting out of home until they were married; another was around men and women living in the same household outside of a committed relationship. There were no particular expectations or parameters put on us. Perhaps there was the thought that if 'the world' was doing these things, Christians, with the early followers of Jesus 'sharing everything in common', had a mandate. How naive.

Since then, the desire for community has taken me on a fascinating journey that I could never have predicted all those years ago. For a time it came in 2 year steps around South Australia.

Then, in 1982, a giant leap to Goulburn, NSW where I joined St Joseph's House of Prayer, married Sue, stepped into the Catholic Church, shared in the growing up of our children and discovered more and more about myself, of prayer, work and hospitality.

In 1998, we made another giant leap ... to Alice Springs. Here, for the first time in our married life, we lived, like everybody else, in a 'normal house in suburbia'. The girls went to school and Sue and I worked in the wider community. We connected with a number of people who shared a similar pathway of faith. We met together regularly for prayer and Scripture reflection. Then, after 5 years, there grew in us the desire to live something deeper, something that called on the formation that we had received over the previous 30 years. 'A place of retreat, where people could come together to reflect on their lives' in the Centre of this amazing land.

And so Campfire in the Heart was established. The purchase of the property is another story. But, it is significant to note that members of the Wellspring Community were here in Alice at the time of the purchase and prayed us onto this land.

What is our sense of community in this place?

Over the past 9 years, Campfire Reflection on Wednesday evenings has developed into a wonderful celebration of life. There is a core of around 6 of us who host this gathering. Each night brings a 'surprise' of people, at times a few, at times up to 30. We never know who might come and it is a wonderful opportunity for visitors to the Centre not only to engage with locals, but also to share where they come from, why they are here, and a little their own story. No matter who comes, there is always a sense of welcome and belonging.

> ***'We find such a longing in searching people … to share a sense of community.'***

At Campfire Reflection, we are always accompanied by the fire that feeds our souls ... the wood that offers itself in sacrifice to give us light, the active flame that stirs our passion, the consolidated embers that provide heat for our comfort and cooking the food that nourishes our bodies, then the smoke ... at times bothersome and at times a reminder of the Spirit with us ... rising like incense.

We are privileged to have as a dear friend, Margie, an Arrernte Elder who has come consistently to our Wednesday evening gatherings. Margie's presence links us with the Land and the wider Eastern and Central Arrernte Community. There are many times when Arrernte Elders and their families come to Campfire in the Heart, gathering socially or around the translation of Scripture and the responses in the Mass. Each time we meet, we step into the wonders of cross cultural communication and discovery. It is a great blessing.

Fire and the light of candles also draw us together for Christian Meditation on Monday evenings; Morning Prayer; monthly Labyrinth Walks; Quarterly Quiet Days and three 5 Day Retreats each year bringing people together around a desire to deepen in their spiritual life. We find such a longing in searching people, no matter what their religious or faith background, to share a sense of community.

Our community connection is not limited to Alice Springs. Beyond Alice, there are the networks and individual relationships that we have been a part of for many years who have lived an

*Margie and David 'translating'*

*Damper, Kangaroo Tail, Sweet Potato ... Communion*

intentional community experience. Some are still together while others carry the dream into their lives.

Since coming to Alice, we have discovered others who also seek community. One such community is Wellspring. It is so encouraging for us to receive email notes from members on our monthly prayer date and we are always happy to welcome people when they come to visit the Centre. Two very special annual Wellspring visitors are Allan and June McLaren, who have gone beyond the 'visitor' status to become honorary members of Campfire in the Heart, if not adopted family and as such, when they come, get involved in the daily prayer and work, cleaning up the shed, building rock borders, planting flowers and vegetables, baking cakes and making jam. We are very blessed by this relationship.

A recent Campfire Reflection drew us into one of those 'tentative' cross cultural conversations with Indigenous people. At the end of the evening, the question, Where do we go from here? Good feelings, but still so much 'un-knowing'. I asked, 'What can we do to keep the conversations going and get to know each other better?' The response came from a Warlpiri Elder, 'Be caring neighbours.'

> ***'Be caring neighbours … act with a heart of compassion.'***

My mind went immediately to the Good Samaritan story and Jesus' connection with the man who asked, 'What must I do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus answer, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength and love your neighbour as yourself.' 'Who is my neighbour?' the man asked ... and so unfolded the story that we know so well.

This story spoke to me in a fresh way about the Samaritan, who simply did what was needed. He responded to the 'invitation' that he came across. No fuss, no bother. He thought, 'Here is a man in need, and I have the resources to help him.' If we enter the story further, we can perhaps imagine ourselves eaves dropping on their conversation, those tentative first words, discovering each other's story, getting to understand, holding their unknowing, growing in relationship.

*David and Sue*

The picture of what makes community changes all the time. The residential style of community that we lived for many years is very challenging, but a wonderful experience of depthing and searching through our lives. Today, our community is broader, but equally challenging. Through embracing the networks of friendship and care around us, and sharing together in spirit through our story, pathways open to be able to respond to the needs and invitations that present themselves.

We feel greatly blessed by those with whom we share the dream, the hope and the vision. We hold each other in that which we know and we hold each other in that which is still to be known.

The challenge ... that we find within us the grace to be a caring neighbour ... to listen and hold each other's story ... and to act with a heart of compassion.

*David Woods* (Day 10)

*The Centre*

## www.wellspringcommunity.org.au

Jill Robertson has organised a renewed website. The result is a colourful and attractive site awaiting, like a blank canvas, our further input and use. *Pipeline* looks splendid in colour, and you'll find other things there like the Gathering brochure and next year's Belonging form.

Alex Scutt (Day 22) is our webmaster. He is very clever and can make a lot of things happen. In our present age, having a dynamic website is important. If you have photos, news, or other writings you'd like to post on the site, please contact Alex. We would particularly like to refresh and expand our Links because they help to broaden our profile. If you know of any Australian websites that might be suitable for inclusion on our site, please let Alex know. So, thank you Jill – and thank you Alex – and please let Alex know your ideas for utilising this very valuable resource. (Alex's email: scuttaj@bigpond.com)

*Alex Scutt and Stephanie Hogg*

# *Sacred Community*

Faced with the subject of Sacred Community, I naturally set myself to wondering about what that really means and whether I belong to any. This opened up a wide area of thinking for me about what community means and what sacred means (as you do when writing about something) and then set me wondering whether or not God had to be involved in a sacred community.

My thoughts are ones of recognising that as I have given my life to God and seek to be a disciple of God's every day, then any community I am involved with becomes one where God is involved. I can't shut God out of any group I belong to as God is not likely to want to wait outside until I have finished with that group and am willing to pick up God's companionship again! It sounds so silly when put like that doesn't it? But how often do we consider that certain parts of our lives are of God and others are secular?

I set to thinking about how many recognisable communities I belong to and came up with this sort of list: *family; friends; meditation partner; soul-friend partner; church community (local and national); small bible study group; Wellspring; hobby society.* They are all groups that are important in my life.

These groups all comprise relationships that are characterised by some or all of the following: *love, respect, trust, hope, familiarity, relaxation, expectation, hospitality, affirmation, intimacy, warmth.* The list will probably grow as I think some more about this, but I think you will get the drift of my thinking.

I can say without doubt that they are all groups where I recognise God to be present. They are precious to me and to be treasured, protected and taken seriously. They are groups that deserve my time and energy. They are groups where I am affirmed and grow, if things are working well. They work well when the other people in

the community also have the same definition and expectations of what the community means as I do. Are we on the same wavelength? I only meet with the person I am calling my soul-friend about two or three times a year. However, that is a realistic expectation of our relationship and works well. But, if I don't hear from my close family members on a much more regular basis, then I feel let down, forgotten and hurt.

> ***'… if these attractions are not sustained, and do not grow, then we will not flourish.'***

The small group I belong to associated with my local church is a newish group – only having been in existence for about a year. This means that we are still at the stage of getting to know and trust each other. There is respect, hospitality, hope, warmth, but I guess we are still on the journey to complete trusting or intimate sharing. These levels of community take time to develop.

Putting these ramblings into my thoughts about Wellspring Community helped me to think about how I see Wellspring as a sacred community and how that feeling of community is sustained. This is really quite a hard question isn't it?

Do we have the same expectations as each other as to what is realistic in this community? At the moment, I have very little face to face interaction with anyone, so there is little growth of the relationships in that way. The spiritual connection through prayer is one of the ways I feel part of the Australia-wide community and I really love praying for people each morning. However, being an extravert at heart, I like to be involved with people directly, so am missing that part of it. Our local group in ACT is finding it hard to find common meeting times, which actually hinders any growth of feeling of belonging, any knowledge of how to support one another and any chance of deepening our intimacy in any way. To rectify this, I am modifying my expectations and instead of hoping to get everyone together, I will be happy to have just two or three people to relate to at a time. Maybe that way we can still grow our community here.

I then had to ask if I am expecting too much from a group like this as some of these needs are being met elsewhere in my life. As being part of a sacred community takes time and energy, we have to decide which ones are going to be priorities in our lives.

Writing this piece for *Pipeline* makes me think about why some people have decided to leave the community. If we are to take it seriously, then we need to experience a balance of giving and receiving in our community groups. We need to feel that the effort involved in being part of Wellspring is valuable to ourselves and to others. It is a struggle with such a far-flung community isn't it? However, I believe that if we don't retain a feeling of support for one another, then we will lose more and more people as they are putting their undoubted energy into other relationships and other communities that are more rewarding.

What drew us into this community in the first place? Each of us will have a different answer, but if these attractions are not sustained, and do not grow, then we will not flourish. We have a big injection of encouragement and challenge every two years at our National Gatherings, and I certainly find these occasions ones where I put a high priority on my use of time, energy and money. I certainly look forward to meeting up with members from other states at this time as well as gaining from listening to our guests.

So, I think we all have to face up to the question of how we keep ourselves sustained and energised as a sacred community. I hope I haven't just muddied the waters!

Grace and peace

*Jill Robertson* (Day 21)

# Wellspring Community

Disciplined daily readings and reflections, prayers for others dispensing with distance across the Continent

Shared stories and tears, our intimate circle

Support for dreams and projects others have, interest in our dreams too

A sharpening of focus, an honest comment, practical outcomes for refugees, for the outsider

Respect for each other's differences, a check on our own

Sharing of food and drink, tears and laughter, acceptance of sadness and horror, no end in sight, care for the carers

Dignity, grace and liveliness, pleasure in each other's company

Delighting in People News and *Pipeline*

Gathering in the name of the Holy One, discerning the Way, strengthening commitment.

*Peggy Goldsmith* (Day 3)

# *The Wellspring Mysteries*

We've had much discussion about what it means to be Members and Friends of the Wellspring Community. I answer that we are servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries (1 Cor 4:1). I contend that within the broad scope of God's mysteries, God has entrusted us with a particular gift, a special flair, a unique orientation, a specific insight that God has deemed necessary for Australians to encounter among all the other manifestations and understandings of God. As servants and stewards we are accountable to Christ. Wellspring is for Australia, not just for us and our comfort. I suspect that after 20 years we still do not know the nature and the value of what has been entrusted to us but if we are stewards we are required to answer, 'Have we been faithful to what has been entrusted to us? Have we managed this mystery, this jewel, in the manner that is expected? Have we been serious about the Wellspring Community? When we reflect on our behaviour have we been a serious people?'

***'Have we been faithful to what has been entrusted to us? Have we managed this mystery, this jewel, in the manner that is expected? Have we been serious about the Wellspring Community?'***

In the indigenous context, Noel Pearson asks himself and his people, 'are we a serious people? . . . Do we have the seriousness necessary to maintain our languages, traditions and knowledge?' Wellspring does not have the long heritage of Aboriginal Australia and we have not given much attention to our language, tradition and knowledge. We do not have a language that is truly our own, nor a set of unique traditions, nor a fully developed lore. However, if we have been entrusted with a particular manifestation of God's mysteries it is our responsibility to develop them.

There are two contexts where seriousness is vital and these contexts are relevant to Wellspring. First, seriousness is vital when people live in hard places. Compared to Indigenous Australians, Members and Friends of Wellspring do not live in hard places. Nevertheless, many of us dwell in hard churches and in social surrounding that are not welcoming to the Gospel. To be at home in a hard place requires a serious people with a strong rationale. Second, seriousness is vital when people are trying to transmit language and culture in an alien setting. If Pearson's analysis is right and if Wellspring is serious about supporting people in hard places and if we seek to transmit important ideas (language and culture) to the broader Australian community, we will not succeed without a clear rationale, a well-understood culture that defines Wellspring, and a language that clearly expresses our ideas.

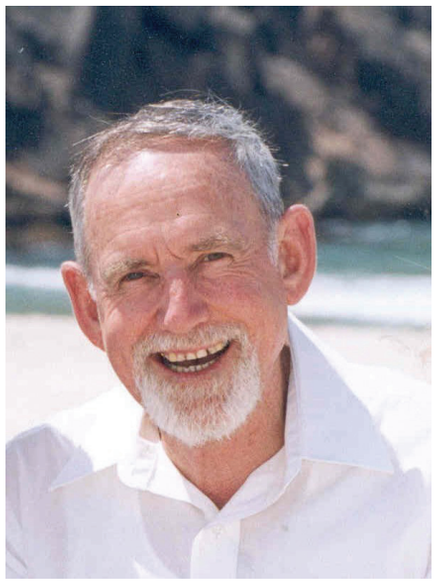
Let's reflect on our rationale, our culture, and our language. What do we stand for? What is our vital spark? What is our essence that distinguishes us from all others? What is the particular ground of our being as a community? What is the foundation upon which our house stands? What shared words do we have,

what shared meanings, what shared understandings? What symbols represent us? What rituals empower us and transform us? What songs do we hold central to our being? What books, films, and art speak for us and to us?

Pearson argues that seriousness comes only to those who are determined and disciplined. These words imply a deep engagement, a strong commitment, and an active involvement of body, mind, and spirit. How many truly engaged people do we have in the Community? How many of us belong because we are nourished by the Community while our engagement remains at the level of taking in rather than giving back?

IF (and this is a big 'if') we are not sufficiently serious, if we lack rationale, language, and culture, if we are not deeply engaged, disciplined, and determined, what can we do about it? Perhaps other communities can guide us. In order to transmit at least some aspects of rationale, language, and culture, other dispersed Christian communities require a period of intentional engagement with the rationale, language, and culture of those communities.

The Third Order of the Society of St Francis has a 3-year program of discernment and formation. Particular language is used to describe this process. The interested person first becomes an Aspirant for perhaps 6 months, then a Postulant for a further 6 months, and then a Novice for 2 years. At the end of 3 years the person becomes a Franciscan Tertiary. An Aspirant focuses on the nine prescribed areas of the Rule, learns some discernment techniques, and spends time reading about St Francis. Aspirants and Postulants write monthly reports to their formation counsellor. Aspirants move to Postulants when they have developed an approved personal rule of life that is consistent with the principles of the Order and the Rule. Aspirants and Postulants work regularly with a Spiritual Director. During Postulancy the postulant or the formation team



may end the process. Novices deepen their engagement with the Society by studying Franciscan spirituality and the life of St Francis and by participating in the sacramental life of the church. At all stages in the process the individual engages wherever possible with the local Franciscan fellowship.

The Northumbria Community has a 3-stage novitiate process. Stage 1 is a Community Introduction Retreat. The individual learns about the Northumbria Way of Living. Those who actively explore the Way of Living are called Postulants. The retreats are usually held at the Mother House over four days. The Community invites individuals to join the Novitiate or to continue as a Friend. Entry to the novitiate is not automatic.

The Novitiate is conducted by distance learning under the guidance of a Mentor. There are 12 modules that are normally spread over a year. They focus on discernment, not knowledge. Each module focuses on an aspect of the Rule. In addition to completing the modules, the Novice Companions are expected to use the Daily Office, meet with others in the Community as much as possible, and spend a week volunteering each year at the Mother House or undertake an approved pilgrimage.

At the end of Stage 2, the Novice Companion may receive an invitation to become a Companion. Entry into Companionship is marked by a dedication liturgy and blessing for the welcoming of new Companions. The new Companions are given an illustrated personal copy of the Rule. In addition to a commitment to prayer and to the Rule, Companions are expected to be available to the Community, to join Community teams, actively support others, and become Mentors where appropriate. They are also required to be accountable at least annually to at least one other Companion, renew their vows each Easter, attend local Community groups, and support the activities of the Mother House.

The Community of Aidan and Hilda allow for individuals to become Friends who simply support and keep in touch with the Community. Alternatively, they begin Stage 1 Becoming an Explorer that involves studying the Way of Life, choosing a Soul Friend, and drafting a personal Way of Life. The individual applies to become an Explorer which is a year-long process that involves clarifying and applying the personal Way of Life and meeting with others in the Community. After a year the Explorer reviews progress to decide whether to continue as an Explorer or to apply to become a Voyager.

In addition to prayer and engagement, the three communities described above also require a serious financial commitment. For example, the Northumbria Community expects Companions to contribute about £1 per day.

This brief survey of a few similar communities reveals that they may require greater determination and discipline than we do. They require a greater degree of seriousness. Their rationale, language and culture seem to be more highly developed than ours. They clearly differentiate between, in our terms, Friends and Members. They require a degree of intentional formation that we do not. If the Wellspring Community is to flourish, if we are to be faithful

stewards of the mystery that has been entrusted to us, we may need to be more serious about our rationale, language, and culture. However, if we decide to explore these ideas more deeply we will need to heed a warning posed by Dave Andrews to the 2012 AGM of the Australia and New Zealand Anabaptist Association: take care that any conditions associated with becoming engaged or involved with a community do not shut out the poor and marginalised.

Where do we go from here? We can go in two directions. One direction is toward a simpler, pared down community, with less accountability, only one category of association, and with a renewed focus on Celtic spirituality. Another direction is along the ways I have proposed. We need to make this basic decision about direction: bare bones or more elaborated process of formation. I think we must find time at the Gathering to set our direction and then to plan the next stages carefully.

*Neil Holm* (Day 26)

## *Pipeline* Editor

At our November Council meeting we welcomed Neil Holm as the 'new' Editor of *Pipeline* for 2013 and beyond. Neil was a National Co-Leader of Wellspring Community 2003-2007 with Peggy Goldsmith. At that time he was also editing *Pipeline*.

Amongst Neil's many teaching and educational leadership roles, he also edited the international *Journal of Christian Education* for 10 years. Thus, he brings to his renewed role of *Pipeline* editor well-practised publishing skills and a wealth of knowledge of our Community.

Thank you, Neil, for your ongoing support of Wellspring Community.

## New *Interim* Council Secretary

Welcome! And thanks and appreciation to Stephanie Hogg (Day 22 - see photo p. 8) for accepting co-option to the role of Secretary between now and the next AGM. Being new to Council, and a Friend of Community, Stephanie won't be taking a place on the Executive at the present time. Stephanie will contribute to the prayerful and consensual nature of Council and bring new insights. She joins State Contact Person, Bernadette Madden, on Council, as a voice from Victoria.

Former leader and present Council member, Mary Gilchrist, will step into a vacancy in the Executive until the AGM. Thank you, Mary!

# *St Paul's Rest Area*

I knew we were on the right road when I saw a sign 'St. Paul's Rest Area' 60km from Balranald. Then at 50km I saw on a farm gate 'Hell's Gates'. Maz Berry (Day 23), Peter McGowan, a fellow parishioner of mine, and I had just travelled 800km from Sydney to meet up with Robin and Bronwyn Pryor and 12 other people, mainly from Victoria, for a 5 day Desert Retreat to Lake Mungo, western NSW.

The theme 'Sands of Time' was apt as we were definitely 'off the beaten track'. Mungo National Park is a 27,847 -ha archaeological and geomorphological site of world importance. Lake Mungo is one of 17 dry lakes which constitute the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area, declared in 1981. The stark, silent, desolate and sometimes eerie landscape of sand, sparse but resurgent vegetation, and spiny, hard, pitted, crinkled and fluted dunes and

*Lake Mungo, western NSW.*

ridges can look more like a moonscape. (Robin's notes)

It was excellent how Robin and Bronwyn had planned time for prayer, silence, shared reflection and general chit-chat mixed with being alone, walking, climbing, and rostered meal preparation/clean up. It was wonderful just to stop 'and know that I am God'. Our highest temperature was 35°c and we went quite low on a couple of nights.

We were led into contemplation by the introduction to Dadirri – deep listening quiet, awareness, stillness, waiting. In the words of Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr, 'Dadirri recognises the deep spring that is inside us. We call on it and it calls to us. ...Our Aboriginal culture has taught us to be still and to wait. We do not try to hurry things up. We let them follow their natural courses – like the seasons. ...Within this deep spring, which is the very Spirit of God, is a sound. The sounds of Deep calling to Deep. The sound is the Word of God...Jesus...'

We stayed at the shearers' quarters with double bunks, ate outside under shade cloth, took our own water with us. We were gently moved 'beyond our role as observer, becoming part of the landscape, the story, the emerging memories, the cosmic scheme of things. Learning from deep ecology that all landscape has a presence

*These dunes are moved at 3 metres per year by the wind.*

and a memory, and that landscape records and speaks out what has taken place, it impacts on the sensibility of the people who live there, journey there, and there develops a symbolic relationship between the person, the land, the Spirit, and the memories landscape has of others' footprints, heartaches and joys as they passed that way.' (Robin Pryor)

25,000 to 40,000 years ago the lake covered 135 square km and was about 10m deep. It was one of a series of freshwater lakes along Willandra Creek. The lakes dried up about 14,000 years ago. They are an extraordinary rich source of fossils. The remains of extinct creatures have been found. Carbon dating has indicated that Aborigines inhabited the area at least 40,000 years ago making it the site of the oldest known human occupation in Australia. Two burial sites were found in 1969 and 1974.

***'What is God calling each of us to do at this time of our life?'***

The DNA of the male Aboriginal showed that he was directly descended from a migration out of Africa into Asia about 70,000 years ago. Aboriginal Australians thus descend directly from the earliest modern explorers – those who migrated via Asia to this land. Indigenous Australians have survived radical changes and severe climate conditions over thousands of years.

Sitting in the presence of such awareness one had but to be still and silent. It was a truly awesome experience. Creation is continuing and we are but one speck of the sands upon which we were walking, said to be laid down about 120,000 years ago. Actually the sands on the eastern side are moving east up to 3m per year.

The liturgies were very meaningful and appropriate. There were some

*Watching the sunrise.*

*Walls of China.*

wonderful stories, reflections and deep sharing each day and we were left with the questions: How do we create a desert space of silence and stillness in the busyness of our daily life? What is God calling each of us to do at this time in our life?

Yes, it was a rest area for us all and new friendships were made and then Paul called us to get up and get on with it. Yes, you too can have this experience in 2013. Contact Robin and Bronwyn Pryor for a copy of their 2013 Calendar of Events:

Email: robron@pryor.org.au

website: http://dadirri.pryor.org.au

*Mary Gilchrist* (Day 11)

# *Fresh Expressions of Church at Modbury, SA*

On 15 February I was one of the group from Wellspring who visited Modbury Uniting Church. We gathered in a room of a recently extended multi-purpose complex adjoining the church. We met with some members of their congregation and Rev Tony Goodluck, who has been the minister there and at Para Vista since late 2008. After enjoying a shared evening meal together, we heard from them about their church.

The emphasis of this church is reflected in their key phrase: 'Church and community working together – encountering the sacred in everyday life.' Their church council is intentionally 'a permission-giving group' which is open to new initiatives. We heard about some of their activities and how they have been developed.

We also heard about some of their people, particularly two women. One is Amel Manyon from South Sudan, who with her family has belonged to this church for the past eight years and who was ordained as a minister of the Uniting Church on 18 February. The other is a member of their church council who is now studying theology and who came to the church through their Candlelight Reflections (described below), as a result of a letter-box drop.

At intervals of 6 to 8 weeks, gatherings of their Sunday Forum are held in different private homes. There is a shared meal followed by a presentation of the topic for this occasion and then by extensive lively discussion. The wide range of topics chosen by participants has included 'Divine intervention – myth or mystery?', 'Euthanasia,' and 'Why is ANZAC Day so sacred to the Australian people.' In August each year the church also offers a series of four public Winter seminars, held in the church on Sunday evenings, with talks by invited speakers followed by opportunity for questions.

Their International Women's Group began in response to the English language needs of Sudanese refugee women and now includes women and children from many different countries. Their weekly program, which is now in its tenth year, is run by a large number of volunteers, without any paid staff. As well as opportunities for learning English, sewing and computing (and other useful skills from time to time), the day includes lunch, with a crèche and help with transport if needed, and thus develops a feeling of community. (In our area, the Sophia group at Cabra provides an English language

*Sudanese women & children (source: Google)*

program for refugee women along similar lines, and I understand that they have a long waiting list.

We ended the evening by sharing one of their Candlelight Reflections which are normally held on the first Monday evening of the month. In 2007 an initiative by two people led to an unprecedented step by their council. They funded seven church members to attend the weekend workshop at Nunyara with Kathy Galloway, the then Leader of the Iona Community. This inspired explorations which led to the development of the Candlelight Reflections which has now become part of the church's regular program with up to 25 people attending. Participants sit in the darkened church in a circle around an arrangement of lighted candles and listen to the words of the reflection interspersed with intervals of silence and quiet recorded music. The reflections are prepared and presented by two gifted church members. They cover everyday rather than 'religious' topics in the belief that this can promote access to the sacred for all people, since God is present in the everyday. On this occasion the topic was 'Belonging'. Two booklets, each covering twelve of these reflections, are available online without charge through the UCA Mission Resourcing Network/Fresh Expressions/Candlelight Booklet.

This was an inspiring evening. Above all, it gave us a wonderful glimpse of the ongoing activity of God's Holy Spirit through this church.

*Jane Pitman* (Day 14)

*[Article originally written for 'The Weaver', Newsletter of Cooperating Parishes of Colonel Light Gardens and Edwardstown, April 2012]*

# *A few principles for a deeper community life*

*[Yves and Ursula were Friends until the beginning of this year, but did not continue their commitment to Wellspring as, in part, they found it did not meet their expectations. Yves was seeking a truly radical community, one that stood apart from conventional Australian society, one where all members or friends took the Rule and/or their commitment seriously. Neil Holm's article, in reflecting on the seriousness members of some intentional Communities make to their 'Rule', provides a picture of what, perhaps, Yves was seeking in joining Wellspring.]*

In our western society, and especially in Australia, we value individual freedom and individualistic values so much that our understanding of what is truly community has shrunk terribly. I will try to describe here a few principles which for me are essential in our attempt to rediscover the meaning of community.

A wider body. The first condition for a true experience of community is our awareness that as human beings we belong to a much wider body whose laws we have to adapt to. As single persons, we are only tiny parts of this wider body. As humanity, we are no more than one species among many; no other species depends on us but our survival depends on most of the gifts we receive from nature, whether it is for our need for energy, water, air, food which the sun, minerals, plants and animals provide for us. This wider body, the cosmos, is the garden of our growth, the kingdom of our God, who invites us to practise love and justice. We need to integrate all of our activities into natural cycles, we need to respect life and give back to our surroundings as much as we have received from them. In one word, we need to live in harmony with God, mankind and nature. And harmony inevitably means self-limitation: to take one's place, no more or less.

Love for all. The principal community with which we are meant to live is a community we have not chosen: our local community is the place where we

*Cabin Numbugga*

live, but usually we have not chosen its inhabitants. It is why we have to learn to live with them, not only avoiding conflicts or limiting our exchanges to what is suitable for us, but attempting also to build a common future for this community. We need to be part of this wider body in the same way as single organs or parts (like the finger, the knee, the ear) need the whole body for their survival where each part is an important contribution to the life of the whole. Learning to share our life with people we have not chosen means learning the art of non-discriminating loving. In monasteries monks and nuns have tried to follow this difficult path.

Consensus is the base and the cement of the local community. We need to learn how to create consensus. It is a way to be focused on priorities, and to detach from subsidiary personal desires. Consensus allows the community to control its future. What cannot be the subject for consensus will be controlled by third forces, by the wider economical context or by major centres of power. At the beginning, consensus is minimal. It is meant to widen and deepen when the community becomes more aware of the means for creativity it provides. Consensus is based on a wider perspective about what life should be and what the local community can become. Qualitative and ethical principles need to be discussed because they become the guides for choices. Justice, equity, ecology, solidarity with the weakest, sharing of knowledge and wealth can become the leading values for local development and evolution. Consensus generates more depth of meaning, more maturity, more awareness.

The commons are the collective wealth of the community. The commons are the goods which cannot be owned nor accumulated by individuals, groups or corporations. It is obvious that not all goods diminish when they are shared; some of them even multiply: Firstly there are the goods which cannot be divided nor privatised like the great laws of nature and its cycles, or like the common natural resources, such as land, sun, air and water. Secondly there are the goods which take shape when they are shared, like peace, justice, love.) Thirdly there are the goods which multiply when shared, like creativity, knowledge, education, wisdom, spirituality. Only the fourth category, material goods, is not a part of commons because the consumption of these goods prevents their being consumed by others, and should be limited to strict necessity. It is fascinating to notice that the more goods circulate freely, the more they touch different people. The more a community shares, the more its members enjoy material, emotional, intellectual, spiritual wealth.

Generosity. Another basic principle of community life is the awareness that most natural and social resources are free. Water, air, sunshine are given by nature. Nature provides the energy and nutrients which allow food to grow in our gardens. Parents raise their kids without presenting them with a final bill. Teaching and knowledge are provided openly by the society in schools and universities. The only resource which costs is the work which is necessary to make these resources available: water at the tap, food in our fridge, teaching, knowledge in our books. Work costs because it has to provide our respective subsistence. Its cost does not depend in fact on the duration of work itself but on the total duration of our global survival (our life). If our survival is the only thing we have to earn, it means that, as soon as it is ensured, we should offer our time and creativity freely for the good of our community. This statement seems a complete utopia, yet every day we implement this rule more often than we think.

A better commitment to community life is based on more being and less having! A form of everyday practice of simplicity in the Spirit of the Gospel.

*Yves de Morsier* (former Friend)

For more details, see Community and self-limitation under the following link: www.desertcreekhouse.com.au/waysoflife/0etot.pdf

# *Future Directions Conversation*

As we approach the 2013 Gathering, it is appropriate to continue the dialoguing which commenced prior to the 2011 Gathering regarding the future of Wellspring Community. Time will be allocated at the 2013 Gathering for a *future directions* conversation. The agenda for the conversation will arise out of feedback received from the survey on the reverse of the *Belonging* 2013 form.

A particular focus in 2011 was 'leadership'. In 2012 we have 209 names in the Prayer Diary - 47 Members, 159 Friends, 3 Complimentary Friends. That is, Members 23%, Friends 77%. The Constitution currently requires that office bearers be Members. Of current members, most have already served on Executive or Council, or as Contact persons. Some Members are now over 80 years of age, and/or are suffering physical or other limitations. Consequently, *Members* is a diminishing pool out of which future leaders might step.

Many Friends don't seem to know much about being a Member of Community and the role of the Prayer Diary in daily life. Also, it is my experience that questions about the Member-ship by Friends generally relate to three matters - money, Iona and extent-of-commitment.

Money! The suggested financial commitment of 1% of income for Members has discouraged some Friends from becoming Members. Some members pledge more, some members pledge less. The other aspect of money is what we spend our money on. We spend our money on our publications (*Pipeline*, Prayer Diary and Directory) and communications (meetings, rural phone link-ups). We currently have an employee who assists with maintaining up-to-date records and preparations for Gatherings, and the travel costs of leader/s to visits to states are paid/supplemented.

Iona! The origin of Wellspring Community is firmly located in the Iona Community. Some people have become Friends without understanding the Iona connection. The Iona Community, like ours, is a geographically dispersed community. When attention is given to the Island of Iona instead of the Iona Community, the significance of our Community's primary and Gospel grounding in peace and justice issues becomes blurry for some people.

Extent-of-commitment! Wellspring folk are busy people – we are out there acting for peace and justice or, if less mobile in church and society, praying for others in their efforts for peace and justice. Members don't 'do' more than Friends. The extension of their commitment to Wellspring Community is to the Rule as described in the three disciplines (see my letter accompanying the Belonging 2013 form). Prayer and reflection enriches Members' participation and are the cement which bonds the mosaic of our Community.

Thank you for belonging to Community in 2012 and thank you for taking part in the survey!

*Janelle Macgregor*

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**NEXT ISSUE:** The theme for the March 2013 issue will be **'Great Expectations and the Common Good'**. Contributors can bounce off Laura Tingle's Quarterly Essay or her online discussion http://www.themonthly.com.au/great-expectations-laura-tingle-discusses-her-quarterly-essay-5397 or they can take a literary bent - what does Dickens' *Great Expectations* have to say about the common good? Or setting aside the political or the literary, writers can look at the Biblical understanding of *Great Expectations*: what great expectations do we find in the Bible and how do they relate to the common good?

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**Deadline for material** is Monday, 4th February 2013.