

All Bound Up Together

David and Sue Woods (Alice Springs NT, Day 10). For most of the past 30 years, Sue and David Woods have lived in small intentional Christian communities where hospitality and prayer were the central focus. They met, married, and raised their four children at St Joseph's House of Prayer in Goulburn NSW. In late 1998 they moved to Alice Springs to experience life in the Centre of Australia. This caused them to reflect on what they might contribute of their previous experiences in this place.

Living as a suburban family for the first time in their married lives, they started to seek links with other people who were searching for a place to pray and reflect on their own story as it connects with Australia's desert and its unique spirituality.

In 2003 the dream came to fruition when they found the property that has become Campfire in the Heart.

'My demons all ganged up on me recently

I meet with a group of Arrernte Catholic Elders once a fortnight. There are three aspects to our time together ... time for catching up. Another is to share a Gospel Story. These 'mainly grandmothers' are concerned that their children and grandchildren don't know the Bible and they want to be able to tell them the stories of Jesus in a more traditional way. The third aspect of our gathering is the work of translation ... finding words in Arrernte that bring the text to life.

Just after 9 am last Thursday, I set about picking people up for the meeting armed with tea, cups, milk, sugar and

an urn. My first visit yielded only one out of the four regular participants. Four others who wanted a ride into town took their place. We dropped them off and headed to the home of the elder who is the encourager of this group. (I call her my friend.) She wasn't ready ... she had had a rough night with one of her sons coming home drunk and creating havoc in the household, ending up back in gaol for breaking parole.

But there was another agenda. She was saying something that I couldn't quite work out. She had a stroke some years ago and among other things, it took away her native tongue leaving her only English. When tired she speaks with a slurred tongue. My attention to her words was going into overload, scanning voice and innuendo.

Finally the penny dropped. There had been a death during the week of one of the Arrernte Catholic women and she was saying that before we could have our meeting we needed to smoke and 'sweep' the church, cleansing the place of the spirit of the person that might be loitering and causing trouble. There needed to



David and Sue Woods

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be a ritual. The right people needed to be present, members of families related to the deceased in a particular way. A couple of other women were picked up and dropped off at Ngkarte Mikwekenhe (God of the blessed mother) the little church property on South Terrace, then there was the request to pick up three from a town camp. These women were elderly and not very agile. They couldn't get into the Kombi. No other choice than to go home and get a smaller car.

I grabbed some lunch for everyone at the supermarket and went home to get our little car. On the way my demons started getting the better of me. It seemed like this was going to take all day. What was happening to our plans? It was already 11.30 am and there was no guarantee these ladies were going to be home? Was it all a waste of time? I often do 60 kms in a day in the faithful Kombi, criss-crossing Alice Springs, picking up and dropping off. This day looked like it was going to be much more. I had to take stern control of the voices within. *'David, you have given this day over to this project. All it is costing you is a little extra fuel. They are the ones running this. Consider yourself a humble driver.'*

The reprimand started to take hold as I got home. I swapped cars, collected a fire drum, eremophila leaves (the kind use for smoking) matches, and enough tinder to start it all going and drove to the town camp where the three women lived, still doubting that they would be there. When I walked around the corner of their house, there they all were, sitting, talking together. I told them my business, that they were needed and who it was who needed them. They continued to chat in Arrernte without any particular movement. I waited. More conversation, then 'We must go!' and each one made their way to the car.

On arriving back, all seven Arrernte shook hands (as is the custom if someone has passed away) and talked of what they would do. 'We need fire and leaves.' I got them from the car. 'We need *walya*.' I had never heard that word before. It is a light branch with leaves that is used for sweeping away the bad spirits. My friend said,

'Wherever the deceased has been, that's where we sweep.' We lit the fire and processed around the buildings, first those with the smoke, then a line of us with the *walya*, sweeping away all the spirits in case they got cheeky. When all was complete we had lunch and a cup of tea. My friend was considerably younger than the others. It had been because of her insistence that this task had been achieved. When we first came to Alice, there were strong rules about smoking and sweeping after a death. Sometimes this gets just too hard without transport to get people and fire drums and leaves together ... and so the imperative gets lost and another little bit of the fabric of culture dies.

When we had finished our cuppa my friend said, *'We can read now.'* The Gospel reading for the following Sunday was about Jesus sending the people back to their homes after his long day with them, teaching and feeding the 5000; about sending the disciples out in their boat 'to the other side'; and about going himself up into the hills to pray. Then, in the early hours of the morning, how Jesus walked out on the water and found the disciples in trouble and the well-known quest of Peter, *'If it really is you, cause me to come.'* And Jesus said, *'Come!'* We explored the story ... our understandings and feelings ... explained words that were hard to understand ... shared Arrernte words that gave it more meaning. What did it mean for Jesus to say *'Come!'* (Petyaye!) to us? *'It means more to us when we talk about it in our language,'* they said. A deep and beautiful conversational dialogue in telling the story. At the end, we often practice telling the story in Arrernte, with each person putting in the parts they remember so that they can tell their grand children when they go home.

There was some organisational business we needed to attend to. The Apostolic Nuncio (Vatican Ambassador) was visiting from Canberra the following week to celebrate with the people the beatification of Pope John Paul II who came to Alice Springs in 1986 encouraging the aboriginal people to share their culture, saying,

'the Church herself in Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others.'

We prayed and gave thanks. It was getting late ... time to go. After various side tracks along the way ... an exchange of smokes and clothes. I arrived home just after 6pm.

What an extra-ordinary day.

A few days later, a small group of us, Australian, French, Arrernte and Warlpiri were talking about reconciliation, prompted by the theme of this issue. The Aboriginal people present found this very hard as they said there is no word in their language that really means the same as what we in English speak about as 'reconciliation'. It's a different pathway, just like there is no word for friend or enemy, it's about family and a bundle of relationships and obligations, a whole life of learning.

The conversation brought up Coniston, stories of the massacre and subsequent fear and killings. There's the current day question of why the Warlpiri woman with us was born on Anmatyere country and not her own land. The answer she gave, *'Coniston. My family were running away from all that killing.'* Yet since that time there have been some remarkable steps in 'reconciliation', like the niece of the policeman who was responsible for much of the killing bravely fronting up to the Warlpiri people and saying, *'What my uncle did was wrong. On behalf of my family, I want to say sorry.'* She put her life on the line with this action.

Some words of wisdom about reconciliation were spoken by a Little Sister of Jesus who has lived amongst the Aboriginal people here in the Centre of over 50 years:

'We need to be precise about what we are seeking forgiveness for.'

You can't reconcile with one side, it takes two.

It must be serious and felt from both sides.

It takes time.

There must be an action that is meaningful for the hurting party.

And it is very helpful for there to be an ongoing relationship between the parties.'

It's all about 'relationship'. So much of the relationship of black and white today is institutional, through agencies, helping on their terms. People making decisions from

afar. We need much more. We're all bound up together. We need an intimate, ongoing and growing friendship, a sharing that deepens our bond together, that will take us places that we are not sure of; that raises our fears and doubts and puts us in touch with the truth of who we are. Then

reconciliation begins to bite ... to have flesh and dwell among us.

If you have come here to help me, you are wasting our time.

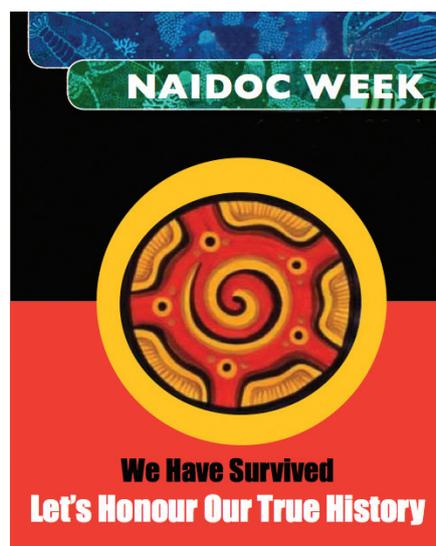
But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together. Lila Watson

Reconciliation in a Local Community

Several contributions explore local reconciliation. First, *Wellspring Contact People for Reconciliation, John and Elaine Telford (Hazelbrook NSW, Day 3)* share a recent reconciliation event. Second, *Val Bennett (Port Adelaide SA, Day 1)* who is active in reconciliation in her home city of Port Adelaide, takes personal look at reconciliation and the local indigenous people. Third, I have adapted some material from *Reconciliation Australia on Reconciliation Action Plans*. Third, I have taken some ideas from *TEAR* that might stimulate further thinking in *Wellspring* cell groups about supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people locally and in remote communities. (Editor)

Last week I was invited to attend a NAIDOC Week event at our local Hazelbrook Primary School. It was an opportunity to celebrate the incorporation of some Aboriginal culture into the life of the school and to chat again with teachers with whom we have worked over the past three years. Hazelbrook P.S. as part of their 'Sharing Knowledge' program has adopted the Blue Tongue Lizard as its totem and regularly invites Aboriginal storytellers to share stories about their relationship to the land and the significance of various sites in this World Heritage area.

Hazelbrook PS is one of a dozen schools in the Blue Mountains that our local reconciliation group has worked with over the past four years, encouraging their participation in the NSW Reconciliation Council's Schools Art Challenge. We establish the link between local Aboriginal artists and each of the schools, and each artist works with selected classes to create art on the chosen theme for



the year. e.g. 'You plus Me equals Us' was the theme for the first year. We then organise a local exhibition of the artworks and some of the art goes to Sydney for State-wide judging and an exhibition usually held in the Australian Museum.

Just one example of local level activities which can assist the reconciliation process.

Although national and state level resources are essential in providing the necessary support for appropriate educational and health programs across the country, it is usually the relationship and cooperation between local teachers, parents and students that makes the difference to outcomes for the students. One such program being trialled in 15 communities across west and north-west NSW is the 'Connected Communities' program – see details on NSW Government website www.dec.nsw.gov.au/. And another is the PACE (Parental & Community Engagement) program of the same department. And I recently read an article in the Good Weekend about a Cuban program being

adapted in some of these communities which helps parents acquire numeracy & literacy skills so they can better help their children's education.

I also find hope in reading and hearing about programs which encourage young people to reach their full potential – see some such programs on www.reconciliation.org.au.

(John Telford)

Reconciliation



Better World Arts, Port Adelaide

For centuries the Kurna Aboriginals were the traditional inhabitants of the area now occupied by the District of Port Adelaide. They foraged, fished and hunted for food and built shelters and campsites on the shores of the tidal swamps. Little evidence remains of their culture.

Although these were the first words in a recent (2005) book, I strongly disagree with them.

For the past 32 years my family and I have lived, worked, played and prayed in this interesting city built on a shifting swamp, known to the first Australians as Yerta Bulti ('land of the dead' or "land of grief") and to early European settlers as 'Port Misery'. We have experienced a growing awareness that this has been a place of both triumph and tragedy, a raw place. However, the mix of cultures shopping in our local stores is evidence to us that the Indigenous are very much alive and 'kicking' here. Nearly 30 years ago, after our move to Port Adelaide, we were asked to sign a petition to remove the Aboriginal Health Centre to another suburb "to preserve the value of our properties". The public swamped the Council and Kura Yerlo is still here today.

Australian Aborigines are very visible. Many hundreds live and work and study here. Their art and their cultural sites are many and varied. The Kurna Dance Company operated here.

The local Uniting Church has created Purruttiappendi Mai Yerta--a garden of healing featuring Narnu (Callitris Pressi), the endangered stately native pine of the Adelaide Plains, with a time tunnel depicting the life of the indigenous children who foraged and played on this land for thousands of years. At its opening we also staged the inaugural performance of a specially commissioned opera called 'Dancing Ngutinaï' composed by Port musician Chester Schultz with a local cast. Chester was also a spearhead in the successful campaign to retain a small portion of mangrove swamps on the Port River opposite our place. The birds, fish and dolphins are very happy with the result.

Street signs direct locals and visitors to Kurna walks and sites of significance, as do brochures at the Visitors Information Centre whilst Aboriginal culture and language are taught at some of the schools in the area. Port Adelaide has a thriving Aboriginal Arts Cooperative called Better World Arts which is internationally recognised.

The wonderful Tauondi College, nearly 40 years old, originally planned to provide education to prepare local and remote area First Aussies

for tertiary education. But it's o-so-much-more : a meeting place, a family history centre (can you imagine trying to trace your family after generations of displacement from your home land, your way of life, white man's law and stolen children?) Its Art Department is legendary, and its Café! And, of course, you can learn a lot plus get help with jobs and health problems. It's a crucial community resource.

Though we have disbanded our 'Journey of Healing in the West' group after 25 years because we can't do anything that our Aboriginal brothers and sisters can't do for themselves, we do not live in a reconciled paradise. Government agencies, local councils and some private enterprise funding is encouraging to Kurna interest. Sadly, the matter of Treaty between the Federal Government and indigenous people of this land has dropped off the radar again.

We step daily towards reconciliation as the right and responsibility of all Australians, not only the domain of Government agencies. And I pray daily that the "gap" will close. And I shop where there are Aboriginal staff or owners like our bootmaker ("Who's that Nana?" I hear my grandson ask).

Last year Wellspring SA held a very moving pilgrimage to many of the sites such as: Tauondi College, Lartelare garden, 'Glow' installation on Tjilbruke Dreaming Track (of the Emu clan), Garden of Healing, Passage of Time pavement mosaic, the Healing Mural, Better Arts, Bukki Yellaka Iamo Tarkarri at Outer Harbour, Yerlo Parri (Port River) also home to the Black Swan clan, Port Uniting Mural, Kurna Trail, The Snake Pit, Mudlannga Mosaic and Glanville Hall (at one time St Francis House for talented N.T. children including Charlie Perkins and John Moriarty). *(Val Bennett)*

Reconciliation Action Plan Program



Reconciliation Australia encourages community groups, organisations, and

businesses to develop Reconciliation Action Plans (RAPs). These plans document what the group will do to contribute to reconciliation in Australia. The plans outline practical actions the group will take to build strong relationships and enhanced respect between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and other Australians.

Put simply, the RAP program is about groups across Australia turning their good intentions into real actions.

Working with Reconciliation Australia

If Wellspring wanted to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan, Reconciliation Australia will support us by:

Providing advice, resources, up-to-date information and networking opportunities and regular workshops and events in our states.

Working with us as we develop our RAP, giving feedback on our draft plan/s, seeking official endorsement on our behalf and registering our final RAP on the website.

Guiding the development of our actions, timelines and deliverables to ensure they meet their program requirements.

Connecting us to the community, including the RAP community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations.

Helping us to report accurately on our RAP and to develop new RAPs when our current plan expires.

Promoting our contribution to reconciliation through their extensive networks and the media.

Measuring our positive impact through their annual RAP Impact Measurement reports.

An approach that works

The RAP framework is based on three key areas:

- Relationships.
- Respect.
- Opportunities.

More Information

For more information about Reconciliation Action Plans go to <http://bit.ly/RecAction>.

To view an Action Plan developed by Urban Seed (Collins Street Baptist Benevolent Society Inc), a Christian-based organisation that prioritises and assists marginalised people while developing broader, supportive communities in Melbourne, Geelong and Bendigo, go to <http://bit.ly/UrbanS>

Reconciliation: What Your Cell Group Can Do

Our cell groups never seems short on ideas. TEAR has produced some ideas that might stimulate further thinking about your journey of supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people locally and in remote communities.

Learn about and connect with the Indigenous people in your local area

- Find out about the Indigenous people in your local area.
- Visit places that are of importance to local Aboriginal people.
- Find out if there are opportunities to connect with local Indigenous people and to support what they are doing
- Find out the history of the land on which your church meets. Was it a government grant? Who held it before that?
- Make your church space welcoming for Indigenous people
- Acknowledge the original custodians of your land at any events you hold and display a plaque at your church, available from www.antar.org.au
- Display the Aboriginal map of Australia in your church foyer. Order from www.aiatsis.gov.au
- Make your church space or resources available to local Aboriginal groups
- Offer your church space for Aboriginal organisations for office use or events.

Raise awareness at your church

- Hold special services to raise awareness on significant days, eg Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC week, Anniversary of the Apology, International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples.
- TEAR Australia's Reconciliation Toolkit gives lots of resources for raising awareness as a staged process. Get it here: <http://www.tear.org.au/resources/reconciliation-resource-kit>
- Help your church learn from Indigenous voices in theology.
- Encourage regular prayer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities.
- Learn about the history of the church's involvement in Indigenous issues.
- Show the AHED DVD clip at your church, available at www.whywarriors.com.au
- Try some creative fundraising for the AHED project. Contact AHED for ideas and resources.
- Use the Australians Together resources for small group studies www.australianstogether.org.au

Join the TEAR Dhumba program

This supports a number of other Indigenous projects: <http://www.tear.org.au/dhumba/> You can even choose to partner with a specific project with TEAR's Transform Together facility.

Support the preservation of Aboriginal Languages and culture

- Learn an Aboriginal language from your area, or try some resources from www.ards.com.au or do an online course through <http://www.cdu.edu.au/acike/how-to-apply> to learn a Northern Territory language .
- Research your local libraries to find out what resources they have for children and adults on Aboriginal Australia. Suggest Black Ink Press books for children <https://www.facebook.com/blackinkpress> .

- Advocate for the Government to support bilingual education and language centres in Aboriginal communities.

Advocate

- Find out where your Federal MP stands on issues affecting Indigenous people locally and nationally by writing to them, meeting with them or inviting them to an event. Find their contact details and search their speeches for what they have said on Hansard at www.aph.gov.au
 - Check out the most recent Federal budget. How do Aboriginal leaders feel about budget priorities? See "Latest News" on the website of the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples: <https://nationalcongress.com.au/news-pics/>
 - Ask your MP to support the calls of Yolngu elders in the Yolngu Nations Assembly www.yolngunations.org
 - Advocate to your broader denominational structure to support Indigenous people better.
 - . Get involved in the campaign to recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Constitution and educate your church. www.recognise.org.au
 - Get email updates from the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples: <https://nationalcongress.com.au>
- ### Go on the journey with your wider community
- Support or host a local reconciliation group with the wider community www.reconciliation.org.au
 - Host a group to learn an Aboriginal language together
 - Host a screening of the Our Generation documentary www.ourgeneration.org.au
 - Find out if your workplace has a Reconciliation Action Plan. Find out more at www.reconciliation.org.au
 - Host a forum about the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Constitution and invite your MP.

Leader's Letter - Neil Holm

National Workshop

The National Workshop was held on Saturday 9 August from 11am to 4pm EST. There was good attendance with 36 people in person or engaged privately in prayer or in reflection on the issues discussed. Groups gathered in Brisbane, Sydney, the Blue Mountains, Canberra, and Perth. Individuals from Melbourne, Adelaide, Lake Macquarie, and Corowa joined in. Unfortunately, Tasmania encountered technical problems and were unable to join the teleconference sessions. Pat McKenzie reported that they had good discussions nevertheless.



A detailed program was prepared to guide the discussions in each session. The program is available on the website under National Gatherings and then choose Past Gatherings.

A full report will be distributed to all Members and Friends when reports from the various groups are collated. Feedback on the day and afterwards was positive and similar to Jill Robertson's comment on Wellspring Facebook: "Today was a great day - our first national talk fest with teleconferences 3 times during the day. The three of us in Canberra really enjoyed our day and had good conversations on the relevant topics and irrelevant ones too."

In the main, the discussions on formation and Open Space Technology were positive. Although there were some reservations about going down new paths, in general the sentiment was, "Let's give it a go!"

New Monasticism Consultation

Margaret and I were invited to attend a consultation on the New Monasticism on Bowen Island, near Vancouver, Canada from 10 to 13 June. We attended at our own expense.

It was a worthwhile time. About 35 people attended – about half from the host group, Grandview Calvary Baptist Church in Vancouver. There were seven of us from Brisbane – five from the Northumbria Community Brisbane plus the two of us. Others who attended came from a wide range of communities: Bruderhof New York; Reba Place Fellowship Evanston New York (represented by David Janzen who was also representing The Nurturing Communities Project on whose behalf he has visited scores of newer communities and has written *The Intentional Christian Community Handbook* (Paraclete 2012); Church of the Sojourners San Francisco; A Rocha (Canada's first Field Study Centre in Surrey), and Englewood Review of Books (a weekly book review published by Englewood Christian Church, Indianapolis). Several of those present had authored books in the New Monastic Library published by Wipf and Stock.

The organizers of the consultation believed that the New Monasticism offers resources to spur renewal in the Church. They aimed to gather authors and practitioners of new monasticism for the following reasons:

- Introduce people to one another who are already writing or practising in this stream in the context of a retreat where we have an opportunity not only to get to know one another better but to practice together this rhythm of prayer, silence and action.
- Further the conversation around New Monasticism with the goal of

helping this movement to mature and deepen, giving attention the theological underpinnings.

- Reflect on how the practices of Monasticism can be incorporated into the daily lives of people who may find these practices challenging to take up (eg. people working in demanding jobs, people with young families, people with irregular schedules, etc.) as well as into our Educational Institutions and the Marketplace. At the same time, we want to hold some aspect of this commitment to the "abandoned places of the empire" (one of the 12 Marks named in the book *Schools of Conversion*).

- Consider what other books need to be written at this point in time to contribute towards the renewal of common monastic practices and thereby towards the renewal of the church's mission to bring life to the world.

- Reflect on how to keep networking people together across the globe who are pursuing this vision.

These aims broadly guided the discussions at the consultation. On a practical note, in addition to the New Monastic Library mentioned above, we came across the following resources:

- *Cave, Refectory, Road: Monastic Rhythms for Contemporary Living* by Ian Adams (Liturgical Press): A new mode of Christian living is springing to life as groups of individuals and families living in the same geographic area or connected virtually share a simple rule of life. *Cave, Refectory, Road* explores how traditional monastic life is helping to shape a new flowering of Christian community today. It traces the roots of new monasticism and draws on the classic elements of monastic life to suggest how this ancient wisdom,

learning, and spiritual practice might be reinterpreted for new settings.

• *St. Benedict's Toolbox: The Nuts and Bolts of Everyday Benedictine Living* by Jane Tomaine, Morehouse Publishing, May/2005: Though it was written nearly 1500 years ago, the Rule of Benedict still offers the practical tools for living a Christ-

centered life today. Here in *St. Benedict's Toolbox*, readers will find a primer on how to use these tools in their own tumultuous lives. Each chapter examines one aspect of the Rule, from ways of praying to ways of embracing humility, and offers suggestions for prayer, reflection, journaling, and action. As they

learn to use Benedict's tools, readers will discover the power--and the timeliness--of this ancient way of life.

A full report of the consultation is being prepared and I will distribute it when it arrives. Margaret and I submitted our reflections on the Consultation. These reflections are included below under Engagement.

BAMM: BOOKS, ART, MUSIC, MOVIES



BAMM is a place where Members and Friends reflect on their recent viewing, hearing, creating, and reading in ways that engage the central concerns of the Wellspring community.

BAMM: BOOKS

In the Absence of Treaty by Michele Harris (*Concerned Australians*, PO Box 281, East Melbourne, Vic 8002, 2013) is a book that belongs to Val and Norman Bennett (Port Adelaide, Day 1) who loaned a copy for review. The following notes are compiled by Neil Holm from the book and from the *Concerned Australians* website.

This is part of a series of books that voice the concerns of many Aboriginal peoples of the Northern Territory living under the Intervention and Stronger Futures legislation. Other books and publications by Concerned Australians can be found at <http://bit.ly/ConcAust>. They include

- Loss Of Rights (2010)
- This Is What We Said (2010)
- Walk With Us (2011)
- NT Consultations Report 2011 (2011)
- Children of the Intervention (2011)
- Opinion: NTER Evaluation 2011 (2011)
- Cuts to Welfare Payments for School Non-Attendance Requested or Imposed? (2011)
- A Decision To Discriminate (2012)
- Survey of Aboriginal Adults residing outside the Northern Territory on The

Intervention and Stronger Futures Legislation, Constitutional Change and Treaties (2014)

I am not sure who Concerned Australians are but well-respected Australian leaders who have launched the books include Rosalie Kunoth-Monks, Jeff McMullen, Alastair Nicholson, Graeme Mundine, and John Falzon.

The purpose of the book is to record the events surrounding the changes to regulations in the Community Living Areas and the Report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights. It explores the current inadequacy of the process used in engaging with Aboriginal people. Decisions are made without access to independent advice which results in control slipping away from them. It provides concise but incisive account from recent reports about the reasons for the ongoing and growing frustration of many Aboriginal people

in the NT. There is heavy reliance on quotations from pertinent documents which makes it a somewhat 'dry' account.

The book reports on four areas of concern: Land; Community Living Areas; The Report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights; and Consultations. In doing so it hints at possibly the only solution - treaties.

BAMM: ART

Inklings : Doubt, Faith and Everyday Life – Australian poets, writers and artists at work. Edited by Mac Nicoll, 2014 is reviewed by Jim Tulip (Woodford NSW, Day 3). *Inklings* is available for \$ 25 [which includes postage] from Mac Nicoll (Princes Hill Vic, Day 4), 110 McIlwraith Street, Princes Hill. Vic. 3054 or on email at macmarg@optusnet.com.au

In my local Uniting Church at Leura in the Blue Mountains we are changing



the furnishings of the sanctuary from what was the robust, heavy timbers of Methodist inheritance to the finely crafted and thin abstract lines of a modern artist working in the brighter colours of Australian red cedar with silky oak inlays. Some worshippers, however, wonder how the Holy Spirit can find expression in such a change.

It is the same with the other arts, especially literature and painting. *Inklings*, Mac Nicoll's third anthology of writers, poets and painters, all Melbournian in one way or another, offers a focus for this question in a very stimulating way. Abstract paintings on the back and front covers highlight a love of colour that conveys a message, a message expressed throughout the 123 page text as one of joy and grace in being, or having been, people of this time and place - this very special place in, and of, Australia.

Mac Nicoll calls the anthology by the title *Inklings* and subtitles it *Doubt, Faith and Everyday Life*. He explains the word *Inklings* as 'the word {that} conveys to me the sense of a hint, a sneaking suspicion, a glimpse, a touching of the depths, a pointing to a deeper experience, an experience of transcendence.'

I venture to suggest that underlying this modesty there are the near 50 years that Mac and Margaret Nicoll have been in the Church of All Nations in Carlton giving them a strong basis of faith and devotion, one that may be equally true for the other contributors to the anthology. They all show a freedom of spirit and mind, artistically speaking, and a grounding in life-long Christian experience. The 'self-descriptions of author and artists' at the end of the book is rich with Australian history, culture and religious personalities.

There are some striking differences in the contributions. Abstract paintings interplay with local scenes. Powerful colours differ with line drawings. Verse with rhymes finds itself set off against free verse. It is good to have this variety, often confronting.

Margaret Nicoll, widely known and loved for her Melbourne scenes, here moves into abstraction in several paintings that express the deep emotion and exploration of insights that have been part of illness. Her painting *'After the Fires'* captures the haunting spectral effect of burnt trees through dark blue depiction approaching abstraction. Yet they project as present and iconic. Wes Campbell also turns scenes such as *'September 11, 2001'* into a largely abstract yet intensely felt allegory of crucifixion. His *'The Yawning Jesus'* leaps off the page with cartoon-like originality and sharpness of meaning. Alec Stevenson's *'Wondering'*, on the other hand, responds to Australian innocence with sunlight qualities that flow throughout his several offerings, also iconic yet opposed to the darkness of burnt-out landscapes. Both are equally Australian. Those who work in line drawings, as do Lloyd Vidler, Ray Averill and Tom Slater are part of a growing catalogue of our accepting simple places and buildings as places, if not quite of veneration, yet truly touching our hearts and minds with their values.

Free verse, a twentieth century escape from rhyme and stanza and a rediscovering of the music of prose and the rhythm and power of phrasing, has been a blessing for spirituality. Clare Boyd-Macrae's *'Treading Water - 1996'* is a serious lyric counterpointing Wes Campbell's *'The Yawning Jesus'*. Her *'Elusive God'* could well be a signature expression for the anthology. It is a prose poem that confesses *'God is hard to find'* but ends with *'I wish God talked back to us more clearly, I wish God was easier to find'*. Her *'Inklings'* here appear on one page, her *'Villanelle for Good Friday'*, a highly formal poem, on the page opposite. Daphne Roberts, too, is a fine writer, capturing moments when

prayer and poem are one and the same thing, a rewarding quality and achievement. Julie Perrin remains a leader among writers rejoicing in having freedom of expression and a subject such as the Australian context. Ken Rookes puts his life at Willowra, and his teaching art to Aboriginal children there north-west of Alice Springs, to good use in his free-flowing and thoughtful sequences.

Mac Nicoll has been able to draw upon friends who happen to be outstanding members of Australia's Christian community. It makes for a happy experience in reading and meeting respected figures talking intimately and often prophetically. It is good, then, to find a tribute to Robin Pryor and to read his own contribution to

Inklings:

Veiled Hints

*Veiled hints of Presence
in this ancient land:*

*Creator hiding
in wind blown lake bed,
Spirit lulling
in cool Spring breeze
the Word encrypting
in deep layered sands.*

*Australian geophany here –
not strident
but subdued;
not voiceless
but whispering;
not pulpit pounded
just touching a heart string;
almost unnoticed
but blood-pulsing in life.*

**What strength of mind and spirit
find voice here!**

BAMM: ART

Amy Daniel (Singapore, Day 31) shares one of her poems: Celebrating Spring! It was written some time after she chanced upon a field of wild daffodils while walking alone in the early Spring outside a Benedictine monastery in the Ardennes in Belgium [See <http://users.skynet.be/hurtebise/>]. The daffodils evoked William Wordsworth's poem,



Amy Daniels

one of her favourites. Amy struggles with mystifying health concerns. She wonders if it might be possible for some Wellspring members to pick or buy some daffodils on her behalf - and to pray for her as we do so. She writes about her poem:

I wandered lonely as a cloud...

When all at once I saw a crowd,

A host, of golden daffodils...

Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

I was thrilled. Excitedly I picked as many as I could carry in both arms, and the Hospitality Sister put them in a vase at the altar in the chapel. Every year after that, I would buy daffodils every Spring while I lived in Europe and relish them with girlish glee.

The feeling of being so exhilarated and thoroughly invigorated by God's Creation is still etched in my memory. Do remember I live in the tropics now. No more four seasons. No winter and therefore no Spring either. Yet my love affair with daffodils prevails even though they are unavailable to me now. It is my experience of transcendence!

It is quite a blessing to be able to evoke such memories while trying to cope with horrendous news of commercial planes being shot down from sky, and Palestinian hospitals being bombed. Only transcendence fosters balance?

My poem demonstrates how my experience of Spring evoked from within me a new appreciation for God's Creation. It has proved to be life-transforming. Praise be!

Daffodil

Who made you, dear daffodil,

Perfection in yellow that melts my heart

And takes away its weight and gloom?

*Was it God who created you?
Were you fashioned petal by petal
- Where did God find the time?*

Or did God just say,

"Let there be daffodil"

And suddenly, quietly you came to be

Bringing to this diverse world

Another layer of silent mystery?

I wonder if you realize

You symbolize for me

The miracle of coming to be.

BAMM: MUSIC

I Am Mountain *Gungor*

A review of I am Mountain in the Queensland Anglican magazine alerted me to this music. The reviewer said that Jonathan Inkipin (Toowoomba Qld, Day 26) had used the "haunting melodies and gorgeous lyrics to help us experience the beauty of creation" at a recent Anglican Quiet Day. (Editor)



Jonathan Inkipin



I Am Mountain

Another reviewer describes this album:

Part of what defines the Christian Music genre is a sort of saccharine sweetness. It's pleasant at first, but

in large doses the feelings evoked can seem false. Very little Christian music reflects the real messiness of life and relationships, or our attempts to follow after a God we believe in. Inevitably, verse 3 or 4 generally rights all wrongs and restores everything that is broken in our musical stories. I get why this happens. Our faith is all about reconciliation, and it's something we long for.

But we don't always get to see that, do we? Sometimes relationships don't heal. Sometimes the friend dies even though we're all praying for them. We have faith that all this works out in the end, but today that check is uncashed.

I am Mountain is a messy, unresolved record of utter joy, jubilation, hope, and doubt. It is a volume of music that is both refreshingly undefined by popular norms and packed with melodic hooks that hop on a carousel in your mind. This is a record that talks about God, yes, but it also talks about love, philosophy, loss, the search for meaning, cosmology, and coping with the existential burden of self-awareness. In the same way our lives are multi-dimensional, this album reflects the depth and texture of a life well lived. (<http://bit.ly/GungoR>)

Another reviewer:

The opening title track sets the scene, painting the magic and mystery of a life that is at once transient and eternal:

Momentary carbon stories

From the ashes, filled with Holy Ghost

Life is here now, breathe it all in

Let it all go, you are earth and wind

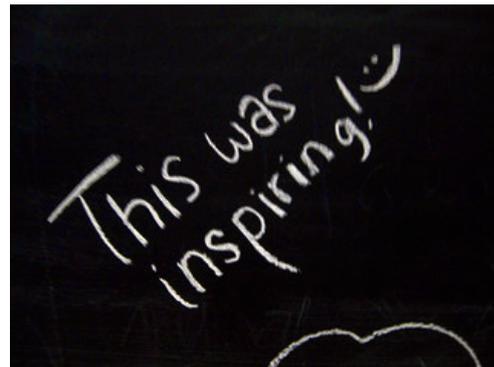
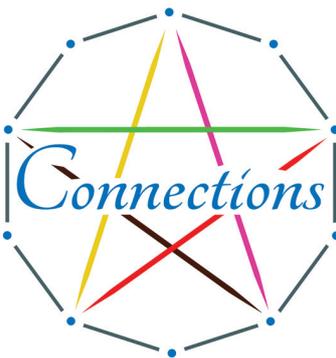
The rest of the album touches on many subjects, ranging from a retelling of a Greek myth (*Beat of Her Heart*) to America's obsession with military might (*God and Country*). And what other Christian artist would sing about being an apophatic mystic (*Long Way Off*)?

(<http://bit.ly/GungoR2>)

To sample Gungor's music go to <http://bit.ly/GungoR3>

ENGAGEMENT

IF YOU WANT ME TO ENGAGE, THEN TELL ME THE PURPOSE, TELL ME THE GOAL, AND GIVE ME IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK ON HOW I AM DOING.



Engagement: Members and Friends will have an opportunity to engage with or respond to ideas that were addressed in the previous issue of *Pipeline*. Engaging with the ideas of others, respondents will affirm and / or commend the ideas and also take the opportunity to recommend other points of view.

Engagement with the Bowen Island New Monasticism Consultation, June 10-13, 2014

In this Engagement, Neil and Margaret Holm engage with the recent consultation on the New Monasticism.



Margaret and Neil Holm

The consultation prompted us to reflect further on what we understand by monasticism and its connection with the Wellspring Community. Before proceeding with the reflection, it is important to note that the Wellspring Community is a dispersed ecumenical parachurch community that seeks to be a blessing to, and to be prophetic towards, each of the Christian denominations to which each member belongs.

Our understanding of monasticism is based mainly on what we know about Celtic monasticism. By Celtic monasticism, we mean the form of monasticism that existed before the

Synod of Whitby in 664 and the Synod of Herford in 672. Before these synods, the Celtic church was loosely structured around monasteries but was also characterised by wandering monks who spread the good news of Christ and who established new Christian communities. These synods resulted in a dominant ecclesiastical structure in the UK: a hierarchical and regional diocesan structure that bound clergy to the diocese. This structure restricted the wandering monks to the monastery and to the control of the abbot.

We are far from scholars of Celtic monasticism. Our ideas are shaped mainly by the Melvyn Bragg novel *Credo* and Ian Bradley's study of the native Christian faith in *The Celtic Way*.

For us, the important themes are the nature of community and the idea of *peregrinatio*. Communal values that reflected strong family and kinship ties characterised the Celtic monasteries. Soul friends (spiritual directors, gurus, confessors, confidential counsellors) were an important part of this structure. Led by abbots and linked their own family group, monasteries were often scattered over a wide area of influence. This often led to the

development of an integrated unit of daughter monasteries. (*Evens, Past Life – Present Mission: the relevance of Celtic Christianity to urban mission*, https://www.aidanandhilda.org.uk/.../Book_PastLife-PresentMission.doc, p. 11)

In some ways, we see the Wellspring Community as a distant relation of this form of monasticism: a kind of dispersed family group spread over a wide area that is in some way integrated through the shared influence of the Rule of the community.

The practice of *peregrinatio* extended the spread of the Celtic monasteries. This practice of wandering pilgrimage frequently led to the mission and evangelism in particular places with the result that a new group of followers of Christ was established in that place. It led to a dispersal of each monastery that in some ways characterises the dispersed nature of the Wellspring Community.

Peregrinatio originated in the 4th century, with a rapid development in the 5th to become a central principle widely practised within the Celtic Church by the 6th century. In order to identify the unique characteristics of this form of wandering pilgrimage, it is important to identify that it is not

pilgrimage per se. . . . It was regarded as a spiritual and practical challenge for Christians and its key characteristics were its wandering nature, pilgrimage with a personal and spiritual aim, and for many either mission or evangelism or both. (Evens, p.12)

In the Celtic model, monks were sent out in twos and threes to establish 'colonies of heaven.' The manner in which they established these colonies has inspired the Wellspring Community. The missionary monks did not seek impose a cultural and religious conversion on those they encountered. They brought a gentle and sensitive approach as they shared the good news of Christ. They tried to understand and respect the beliefs of the people as they sought to incorporate them into the Christian family. The Celtic missionaries sought to bring the people into the body of the Church, allowing them to contribute their 'ingredients,' their particular qualities that would enhance the nature of the whole. These encompassing, hospitable, and egalitarian communities reflected the manner in which they had been evangelised. This process of welcoming and learning from the 'stranger' contributed to a Celtic church that recognised the potential contribution of values like "the sense of the divine presence in nature, respect for the physical environment, the strong understanding of community and attachment to culture and learning, the stress on morality and active charity." (Bradley, p. 75)

These Celtic mission ideals inform the Wellspring Community. Although we do not use this precise language, we seek to create 'colonies of heaven' where we are -- by living actively as disciples of Jesus. In so doing, we contribute to a world (and to Australia) where

We respect and value others. In our words, we seek that "we (and all people, (particularly the poor and

marginalised) live at peace and with justice."

We respect the physical environment: "We seek to grow in spiritual practices that develop an Australian spirituality that allows us to worship God in ways that fit the diverse, and in many ways unique, Australian environment."

We do not seek to impose cultural and religious conversion on others: "We are reconciled to God, to each other, and we work for mutual respect and recognition between Aboriginal Australians and all other Australians."

We are aware of the divine presence in nature: "We lead sustainable lives in God's incredibly complex and beautiful Creation that we respect, love, and care for."

We try to understand and respect the beliefs of others: "We respect, value, and learn from other Christian traditions and other faiths."

We seek to practice active charity: "We are generous in our dealings with everyone we meet by offering hospitality to friends and strangers alike and bringing healing through prayer and practical action."

The Wellspring Community aspires to the six characteristics outlined above yet, as with many other communities, we struggle to translate ideals into practice.

The value for us in this reflection is that it highlights several issues:

- We might sharpen our practice if we adopted the concept of creating 'colonies of heaven' where we are.
- We might deepen our spirituality and our expression of community if we allowed the concept of soul friends to become integral as it was in the Celtic monasteries.
- We might practice a shadow of *peregrinatio* if we began to regard the cells of the Wellspring Community

as tiny monasteries or base Christian communities. From these bases, members of the Wellspring Community might regard other members of the Community who live in locations isolated and distant from any cell as extensions of the cell. Each cell would then be responsible for ensuring that the isolated members remain integrated within the Community and feel that they are supported and encouraged. This kind of integrated responsibility is not widespread within the Community.

- We have one other reflection on the consultation. One of the great blessings of the consultation was the daily 5 pm prayer in the awesome chapel. This was a beautiful, gentle, and worshipful time and we were surprised that, for a group that aspired to embody some of the practices of monasticism, few attended.

- We are very grateful for the invitation to be part of the consultation, for the generous hospitality, and for the opportunity to encounter a wonderfully talented, gifted, and truly Christ-centred group of people. In return, we would like to share a song that has become the focal song of our community:

For you, deep stillness of the silent inland

For you, deep blue of the desert skies

For you, flame red of the rocks and stones

For you, sweet water from hidden springs.

From the edges seek the heartlands

and when you're burnt by the journey

may the cool winds of the hovering Spirit soothe and replenish you.

In the name of Christ,

In the name of Christ

(repeat - last time, sing 'in the name of Christ' 3 times)

(For you, deep stillness of the silent inland by Robin Mann and Julie Perrin).

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NEXT ISSUE: December 2014. The theme of this issue is "An Equitable Society: A Lost Cause?" What are our dreams or fears about the future of healthcare, housing, and education in Australia? How can we move closer to a Kingdom view on these core social issues.

Art and book and movie reviews on this theme welcome.

Editor: Neil Holm neil.holm.wellspring@gmail.com, phone 07 3372 2562.

Deadline for material is Monday 3 November, 2014 Contributions on any topic are welcome.