

Lent for Wellspring

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As I sit here in shorts and t-shirt, I look out our window and see a range of flowers – pinks, reds, oranges; small and large and everything in between. I notice that plants that bloomed a few months ago are now green leaves. None of my father's orchids are currently blooming; they come and go with different plants flowering at different times from early spring to mid-summer. In the fruit shop different types of fruit available include the summer fruits of mango, peaches, paw-paw, cherries and so on are available in abundance whilst apples and oranges are in lesser supply. From flowers in the garden to fruits and vegetables and on to the weather, our lives flow with the rhythms of life and the world. These rhythms of night and day, the seasonal flow and of food production bring change and movement, interest and diversity to our lives. Rhythms provide structure on which our lives can mature and grow with the predictability and familiarity through the cycles of life. Activity and rest, action and reflection, celebration and introspection are some of the counterpoints of life's rhythms that provide balance and health.

“Lent is a season to pause, pray, reflect and find perspective as a community.”



Within the Christian life we have liturgical rhythms throughout the church's year; seasons that flow throughout our private and public life of devotions and worship. These seasons provide balance and flow and help us engage in the path of spiritual growth, matched with active mission and discipleship across the year. We follow the pattern of the life of Jesus moving between action and prayer-reflection. He was actively involved in ministry and mission and then stopped and prayed, often in the hills or a quiet place. Jesus moved between prayer and reflection with God, and active participation in the mission of God.

“Christians took this time to grow more deeply in faith”

The church's year provides a balanced form for Christians to walk through the story(s) of faith, to be active and celebratory, to be quiet and reflective. It invites different ways of engaging in the Christian life across the year in regular rhythms that provide a structure. We are currently in the season of Lent, a season of more

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introspective reflection and prayer. It is a time where worship becomes more subdued, quieter, and more prayerful. We ponder our life before God and nurture deeper spiritual awareness and growth within ourselves and one another. We seek ways of simplifying life and sharing some of our resources more fully with those who have greater need. All of these disciplines arise from the story of Jesus as he retreated into the wilderness for 40 days, living simply, being confronted by the demons and temptations of life and engaging in spiritual disciplines that would nurture his spiritual growth and faithful ministry.

The season of Lent became a time when new converts engaged in a deep preparation before baptism at Easter. Other Christians took this time to grow more deeply in faith through the disciplines of prayer, reflection, fasting and simplicity to focus themselves more fully on the way of Jesus and their relationship with God. In the midst of busy, stressed lives, Lent becomes a timely space in which to take a breath and step back a bit to contemplate where we are and how we are living. It is a season of reflection that provides a beautiful and timely balance to the activity and busy-ness of our lives, with the pressures of society, work, church and home.

Through this time of Lent I encourage the Wellspring Community to pause and reflect on the themes at the heart of our life as a dispersed, ecumenical community in 21st century Australia:

★ **Open to God** *reading the bible, prayer and reflection are foundational*

★ **Responding to Christ** *listening to stories, living responsively*

★ **Living in the Spirit** *being aware of God in all people and all creation*

★ **Justice and Peace** *both locally and globally*

★ **Spirituality and Worship** *in our Australian setting*

★ **Reconciliation** *between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians*

★ **Sustainability** *promoting sustainable living for all creation*

★ **Ecumenical and Inter-Faith relationships** *sharing truths and building trust across churches and faiths*

★ **Hospitality and Healing** *within community and society*

These nine themes offer rich material on which to reflect and gain perspective for our lives:

❖ Do we stop and open our hearts and minds to God?

❖ Are we responding to the stories of Christ and seeking his path in our lives?

❖ How do our lives accord with these themes and values and what might God be calling us into, individually and corporately?

Lent is a season to pause, pray, reflect and find perspective as a community.

As a community we might further use the seasons of the church year to provide us with a rhythm over which to lay the other elements of life – individual and corporate. We can use the liturgical seasons to help us move through different cycles of faith, ministry/mission and life. After a season of deeper introspection (Lent)

we have the season of celebration – Easter. The long Pentecost Season through the Australian winter and spring can include a Season of Creation and lead to the Sunday of Christ the King at the end of the Church's Year, a celebratory reminder that we are under the Reign of Christ/God which calls us onto a different path to the secular rulers, the economics and politics of the world at large. We then begin again at Advent, moving us through the stories of longing and hope to Christmas, the realisation of such hope. Epiphany in Australia is a season of light and the manifestation of God's presence in our midst, leading into Lent.

The Pipeline Editorial team have agreed that we would allow the liturgical, seasonal flow to provide a structure for our journal articles reflecting the spiritual and missional life of the Wellspring community. We will allow the seasonal movements to guide our thematic interaction with the life of Wellspring. There will be times of deeper reflection and times of celebration, seasons that are slower and more prayerful and those that call us forth into celebration, action, mission and active living before God.

In this season of Lent we therefore invite you to take disciplined time to stop and ponder, to reflect upon life, faith and the way of Jesus. Use the articles to trigger reflective moments and then walk or draw or write or sit and think prayerfully, seeking the wisdom of God. May grace, peace and love accompany you on the journey and spiritual enrichment and growth in God be the destination.

Still Room for Repentance over First Australians

When he met a Christian Aboriginal leader in 1983, Jim Houston (Eltham, Vic PDD 4) - who later became an Anglican priest – knelt before him to ask his forgiveness for what white people had done to his race. As Australia considers an amendment to the constitution to recognise indigenous Australians, he reflects on Australian attitudes to the

first Australians and what still needs to be repented of.

Participating in a public event during July 2015 NAIDOC Week, rekindled my thinking about Indigenous issues. In turn, this has triggered a broad reconsideration of my previous understanding.



First, I wonder how many of us have ever personally met an Aborigine and in what context? I mean a real meeting: handshake, hug - kiss. In 1983, working with the Australian Council of Churches as an advocate for multicultural mission (and well before my ordination), I was *paid* to meet my first Christian Aboriginal leader! It was traumatic. As I have since recorded in my memoirs:

“As he rose to greet me, a crippling surge of remorse welled up within me for all the trauma, dispossession and destruction wreaked on his people by my people. I knelt at his feet, overwhelmed, broken, weeping, a priest making atonement for his people’s sin but only able to stammer ‘Forgive, forgive’. It was my personal epiphany on the road to Damascus, fore-shadowing the nation’s apology by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd 27 long years later”.

I wonder too where we gleaned our initial understanding of the Aborigines? For *some* of us older ones, probably from primary school textbooks conveying the prejudicial views of earlier generations. Here are some egregious examples from the 1970s, cited in a small book *Let’s End the Slander* that I compiled as a community educator with the new Racial Discrimination Act:

‘People who live together in tribes like the early Aborigines are called primitive people.’

‘The Abos, as they are often called, were and in some areas still are among the most primitive people on earth.’

‘Mentally the Aborigines stand very low on the scale of humanity.’

“Father, forgive”

The texts perpetuate the racial prejudice arising from culpable ignorance, in turn reflecting the ugly realities of hatred and fear dating back to the colonial period of conquest and near-genocide (Remember *The Secret River*). Only in the past few decades has a wide new perception of Aboriginal origins based on data

from prehistory, archaeology and anthropology made nonsense of the tired old stereotype about the inability of ‘Stone Age survivors’ to live in the modern world.

But it was this earlier understanding that had rendered unrealistic any thought of a Treaty between equals, which might have established ongoing rights to land and culture, as in NZ’s Treaty of Waitangi of 1840. Rather, our colonial task became simply to develop the land in the name of progress, implying our Christian duty ‘to smooth the pillow of a dying race’.

In the 1970s, during an educative tour (for my benefit, as it turned out!) of NSW country areas, I recorded two paradigmatic encounters. On explaining the implications of the new *Racial Discrimination Act* to the owner of a bakery in a large western NSW town, I received the rejoinder, “You can’t expect us to employ Abo’s! Nobody would buy anything touched by a black hand!” And at the end of conducting a half-hour talkback on ABC radio in a north coast area, a recently arrived retiree announced that, after hearing the views of her fellow-townfolk she had decided she couldn’t continue living in such a racist town. She was moving back to Melbourne.

That was a generation ago and we have all (except in many rural and remote areas?) moved on in our understanding of Aboriginal people and their cultures and situations. Thanks to Indigenous arts and media (painting, drama, dance, music, journalism, magazines, radio and television), the national understanding of the contemporary Aboriginal scene has been quite revolutionised. And the educational opportunities have been seized for entry into a wide range of professions. Teachers, community workers, health workers, artists, film makers, journalists, lawyers, doctors, a surgeon, clergy, academics and politicians come to mind, one of them a former national president of the Labor Party, while elite sportsmen and women abound in every field. For the younger generation of Australians (and newcomers), their collective

impact on the national scene has challenged the earlier, entrenched negative attitudes. I would like to think that the intensely multicultural character of our cities today has also boosted Aboriginal stocks by breaking down the WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) stereotype that had long been the Australian norm for exercising power.

But the crucial question remains: how widespread across the states and territories, the metropolises, major country towns and the thinly spread population of the far-flung regions do these newer attitudes prevail? Or across the wide age-range of the voters? It makes me somewhat apprehensive about the outcome of the proposed Amendment to our National Constitution. In my more introspective moments, I wonder about its prospects of success. What if it failed?

“What if it failed?”

It was my participation in the Keelbundoora Walk in NAIDOC Week that raised my hopes and injected a new dimension into my thinking about Aboriginal issues. The ‘Walk’ was in the grounds of the RMIT Bundoora Campus, sponsored by the Whittlesea City Council. The booked party of about 20 of us walked with Colin Hunter, a local Wurundjeri elder and born storyteller, who explained a great deal about the life, the food, the customs, and the Dreaming of the Aboriginal people of the area dating back 30,000 years or more - our Western history goes back a mere 6,000!

When she was a little girl his grandmother’s grandmother had told of the great log that one day came floating up the river, with bare vertical branches and clouds attached to them, and they saw the white ants crawl out and land - in 1835. Her father had been one of the welcoming party. Their Dreamtime stories told of the Yarra running through dry land now beneath Port Phillip Bay and also mentioned a spewing volcanic vent not far away from Bundoora.

I was particularly interested in the people's lifestyle and food, daily foraging on the productive land. While the men hunted kangaroos and possums, the women used their digging sticks to unearth root vegetables and gather essential food, items from many of the plants he showed us, that we could taste for ourselves. I tried some scaly fungus from sick-looking gumtree leaves - tasty! There were many plants with - edible rhizomes - creeping roots that send out shoots - some tasting like potatoes, some sweet, some acidic, some alkaline.

The people's knowledge of foods and their particular benefits and uses was profound. They appreciated much of what we might call plant chemistry, and knew about their value, antidotes and healing properties. During the hour-long walk I was struck by the sophistication of these ancient people, and their brilliant insights connecting life with nature, much of which we have never known or long lost.

"We have been the losers"

Some of the paperbark trees bore long, thin oval-shaped scars where in historic times the bark had been removed to form a canoe, or to wrap around food

cooked in the embers, like aluminium foil. Later, over lunch in the students' centre, he screened a short film of himself and his sons making (and launching) a traditional canoe.

We were shown several ancient manna gums, some 600 years old, one of which had had one of its massive low boughs looped back to grow over generations into a complete circle. It shaded 'women's space' - a birthing tree for generations.

How little we have absorbed about the depths of their interaction with the land and its flora, as well as its fauna, about their 'Songlines', the complexity of their clan system and the integrative concepts of their Dreaming. Even their interaction with the first settlers moving onto the lands that we now call Melbourne is lost to us.

We've certainly done the Yarra Aborigines a grave disservice in dismissing them as simple, primitive people. More sinister: since European settlement we have based our negative, destructive relationships with them on manifestly false and injurious stereotypes. We have been the losers.

"Mutual respect"

The other side of the coin is the wide range today of indigenous professional people in all States - which proclaims their equal gifting and abilities, once we have realised and in Christian terms *repented of* the cruel and racist pressures we put them under from the time of our ancestors' arrival in this land. Fortunately in the new multicultural Australia, with so many of our fellow-citizens now drawn from wide-ranging cultural backgrounds (with their children, amounting almost to one Australian in two) and who are not bound to the false and hateful stereotypes about Aborigines, a new day could be dawning for all us to live together in mutual respect.

As I have picked up somewhere along the way, 'A part of God is Aboriginal - but we have tended to imagine God as all-Anglo-Saxon'.

The Revd Jim Houston Vic, is a former Director of Cross-Cultural Ministry in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, and in the 1970s he was an Assistant Commissioner (Education) for Community Relations in Canberra (the forerunner of the Human Rights Commission). www.melbourneanglican.org.au/newsandviews/TMA/ The Melbourne Anglican - Page 21 August 2015

Aboriginal Reconciliation - Some local action, following the Ballarat Gathering

Indigenous Women's Butterfly Cave under Threat

Jenny Johnston (Yarrowonga Park, NSW; PDD8) has a deep yearning towards practical reconciliation. Here is a Lenten response.



I was inspired by Elaine and John Telford's workshop on Reconciliation at the Ballarat Gathering as well as the discussion in the Ballarat Art Gallery after seeing an amazing art exhibition there by young Indigenous students. The challenge was to find ways of standing with Indigenous people in our local areas.

During recent months, Awabakal women from the Lake Macquarie area (south of Newcastle) have been very distressed about the impact on their cultural heritage of a building development in West Wallsend, a suburb not far from the northern shores of Lake Macquarie. The immediate problem relates to the threat to the Aboriginal Women's Butterfly Cave, which was recognised by the NSW Government in 2013, when it was declared an Aboriginal Place. It was the first women's place to receive such recognition. A successful Aboriginal girls' wellbeing program, Sista Speak, has also utilised the Butterfly Cave for a number of years, to help girls connect with their culture, through local Aboriginal women role models.

The Appletree Grove Estate, which is being developed by the Roche Group, will see encroachment to within 20 metres of the Butterfly Cave, destroying the surrounding bushland and exposing the cave itself to damage from construction vibration. The women are deeply concerned that, if the cave itself survives the impact of the development process, access to the cave would be extremely difficult for the Aboriginal women and future generations.

Some Wellspringers have signed the petition "Save the Aboriginal Women's Butterfly Cave" and our local Hunter and Central Coast Cell Group members are writing to local NSW Government MPs and Ministers, in support of the Awabakal women's pleas.

Responding to the Ravages of Drought

Lent begins with Jesus experience in the harsh weather of the wilderness. This article is adapted by Neil Holm (Inala, Qld; PDD26) from a report by Deb Bennett in Crosslight (December 2015, p.8) and reflects on our responses to these contemporary challenges.

In recent months, the weather in Melbourne has lived up to the cliché four seasons in one day. While Melburnians have been inconvenienced by the threat of sunstroke and torrential downpours in the space of a few hours, for those living in the country the weather is no laughing matter. Recognising the impact of extreme weather on farming districts, the state government recently announced a \$27 million funding package for a range of support measures, including employment initiatives and counselling.

In response to these extreme weather conditions, the UCA's Presbytery of Loddon-Mallee held a seminar at Wycheproof where representatives of congregations spoke about the effect of the on-going drought in their communities. About 20 people attended, including a regional school chaplain, a Baptist minister, the community development officer of Buloke Shire Council, and a representative of the Rural Financial Counselling Service. It was a chance to share what organisations are doing and explore what more could be done to assist those affected.

Jim Foley, retired minister and Wellspring Friend (PDD19), attended the Wycheproof seminar as a presbytery representative from Castlemaine. His report on the day follows:

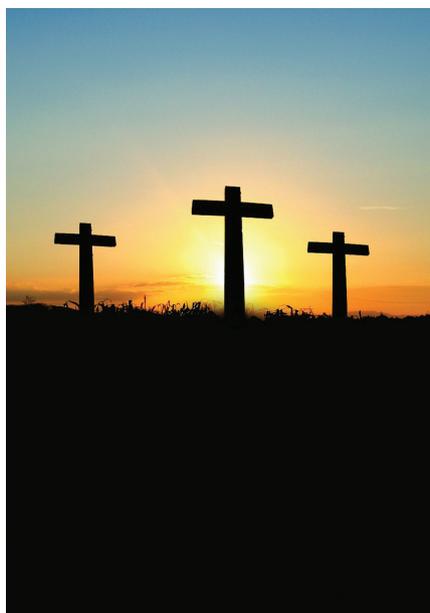
The area had been hard hit since 2000, when farmers suffered through seven years of what became known as the 'Millennium drought'. Extreme flooding devastated the area in 2011. The area is currently enduring drought conditions that have extended for the last three growing seasons.

People spoke candidly about the social and emotional impact throughout communities. A doctor spoke of 'a lot of sadness'. Someone told of the anxiety in communities about young families leaving and not coming back. Another farmer spoke of hope being given up for a harvest. There was talk of a ripple effect causing people to be on edge and niggly and an extra layer of stress around the place that included churches.

It wasn't all doom and gloom, however. Humour and a positive outlook were strong throughout the day. Someone raised a laugh by commenting that diminished harvests meant local sporting clubs had no problem fielding teams because there was not a lot to do on drought stricken farms at harvest time.

People spoke of 'wellbeing' barbeques, often coordinated by local fire brigades. There was talk of pampering days for women, of concerts and food voucher programs involving local communities and businesses to keep the money in the town. Some spoke of churches needing to think outside their church headspace to collaborate with community groups in programs rather than going it alone.

"Support is the key"



Everyone agreed that support was the key to managing yet another drought. This support could come in many ways, with finance being only one avenue. Supporting congregations could consider attending worship services in drought areas (and taking along lunch for a social time afterwards), writing letters, arranging weekends or longer breaks at someone's holiday house, and hosting city weekends.

St Margaret's UC, Mooroolbark, is a congregation in the outer eastern suburbs of Melbourne that built such a relationship. A congregation member had been a teacher in the country and was concerned by the devastation of people and communities caused by the Millennium drought. St Margaret's made links with the congregational group of Wycheproof, Birchip, Culgoa and Nullawil. It built relationships by sending Christmas cards and cakes. The people were surprised and delighted that a city congregation was interested in them.

St Margaret's church council decided that proceeds from their fete be sent to help. Over the next five years, St Margaret's forwarded a total of \$50,000 to the parish to fund ministry and maintenance. When they heard of where the proceeds were going, the response of people coming to the fete was wonderful. They had not known how to help people in drought-affected areas. The fete provided an avenue. Repeatedly, people would hand money to stallholders and say 'Don't worry about the change. Keep it.' The relationship has developed in the years since, with visits in both directions. The congregations have come to know each other well. Such support lets rural people know they are not forgotten.

If you are interested in linking with churches in drought-affected regions like Loddon-Mallee, please contact presbytery ministers Gordon Bannon 0417037450 or Judy Berridge 0409 258 230 or appropriate people in other Churches or States.

ACTion21 - An update from the ACT (Day 21)

After a year of my being a very slack convenor of the ACT group (says Jill) we had a helpful nudge from Helen Kilborn suggesting some dates when we could get together this year! That was all it took to shake us out of our lethargy – or me out of my lethargy – and organise a meeting.

We met for lunch on January 9th with 5 out of the 6 of us able to be there. Judith Dunbar was interstate at the time, but Helen, Marilyn, Marion, Ruth and I were able to meet. We discovered that Marion has now retired from school teaching and is planning to be on Iona in August and September to be a volunteer.

We then heard that Ruth and her family are going to the UK for Ruth to do some study and to have some holiday and that they will be visiting Iona when Marion is there! Small world again. Ruth has renewed energy for her study on the work of William Blake – it was good to hear her enthusiasm.

Helen has been busy with follow-up work from the National Gathering in Ballarat and is keen to see us



develop our internet presence as a community. Scheduled events for 2016 include a Wellspring Picnic by Lake Burley Griffin, Palm Sunday Rally, Wellspring AGM and National workshop meetings, an art as meditation activity, and a spring meditative walk in the National Rose Garden at Old Parliament House. We now have a ACT page on the Wellspring website with dates and activities. The next meeting will be a twilight picnic on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin, near Blundells Cottage, around 6pm on Saturday February 27th. Do join us if you are in Canberra!

Merilyn and I have been very involved in our local churches as they have been in need of a lot of lay leadership lately. Merilyn also produces her church's

quarterly magazine so that keeps her busy too.

Jill can see her church involvement getting busier this coming year as the Kippax Uniting Church ministers are both leaving by Easter and there will be a greater need for lay leadership until we are able to find some new people to fill those roles.

There are some excellent exhibitions on in Canberra at the moment (see below), Should you find yourself on Ngunnawal Country please make yourself known, do get in touch with some of us and we would be happy to meet up for a coffee.

Jill Robertson (Robertson; PDD21) and Helen Kilborn (Gundaroo; PDD21)

- National Gallery of Australia – **Tom Roberts exhibition** – until 28th March.
- National Museum of Australia – **“Encounters”** – Revealing stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (objects from the British Museum) – until 28th March also.
- National Library of Australia – **Celestial Empire** – Life in China 1644 – 1911 until 22nd May.

Helen and Keith Weavers on Iona VIABLE ALTERNATIVES REPORT

Helen and Keith Weavers (Belmont North, NSW; PDD9) report from a conference on Iona in September 2015 on worship, and then describe a worship experience focussed around The Song of Songs.

We were invited to attend the conference organized by the Iona Community's Wild Goose Resource Group. The invitation read:

‘Do we need a choir? Must there always be a sermon? Is ‘words, words, words the only way? Are pews inflexible? If we change anything will people be angry forever?’ These and other questions will be opened up as John Bell and Graham Maule, drawing on positive experience, suggest some viable alternatives.

Over 60 people from around the world, with a large group from Sweden, participated in 4 singing workshops: a Paperless sing, Big Sing, Songs of justice, Songs of love. The environment was explored, looking for signs of creation which embody our communal prayer, together with two services a day in the Abbey Cathedral. Time was spent in preparation for liturgy, Opening the Word, and exploring the Gospel stories in a new way.

Some of the input:

Words don't do everything. Our attitude remains that of consumers who are handed everything on a tray. We need to discover open space, to go deeper and run risks.

Is it important to understand everything in liturgy? While liturgy means ‘the work of the people’ in many cases it has become by one person, one gender. We remain committed to moving through gathering, engagement and response but is our only response the offering? We need to find more ways for people to respond. There remains a hesitancy to move about, to learn through different media, to use all our senses.

Where do we find deep conversations? Where in our church community can we confidently expect and enjoy such conversations? Is it with a person or a group? Do we allow trust/openness/safe place and deep listening or allow authority figures to dominate where the truth is denied?

Our view of God is largely dependent on the songs we learnt as children. For example we learnt about soldiers and being adversarial, as well as the scary God who sees and hears everything we do. The music we learnt colours our vision of who God is – do we take this into consideration in the songs we are teaching our children now?

We should value doing something uncomfortable.

There were many personal engagements, including Marie Dove, a Methodist minister who described the roof caving in on their beloved church pews and how the congregation discovered invigorated worship squashed together in the basement. They also discovered ways to use their buildings to further God's kingdom as "the Spirit hovered over the chaos". Other celebrations included a musical "Singing, dancing carpenter" which suggested that while Christ turned water into wine, the Church has spent 2,000 years turning wine back to insipid water.

Another was an impressive young man, Phil Mellstrom, recently appointed as Worship Development worker for the Church of Scotland. Here are some of Phil's 'thoughts' on developing worship.

You need to consider what you mean when you talk about worship. What is missing from the worship of the community? Is there a sense of the gathered, worshipping community and of the wider community that they are called to serve.

How does the language and rhythm of your worship translate/transfer into everyday life throughout the week? Everything that we do in our gathered worship informs our individual/personal habits. We need to teach people good habits and discipline.

Soren Keirkegaard says 'the function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays'. For prayer to have lasting effect and to become more than simply a 'shopping list' we need to model different types of prayer.

☆ *Praying for each other/those gathered and those unable to be here.*

☆ *Specific issues that are present and significant at the time.*



☆ *Praying for our wider community/ perhaps specific people who need support etc.*

☆ *Wider world issues eg. Refugee crisis.*

☆ *'Us' – finish with prayers for the best hope for that gathering.*

Mark 12 verse 29 "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength... Love your neighbour as yourself."

This can beg the question – what does our worship do for those outside the church?

Songs are a major source of theology for people – we need to think carefully about the balance of songs that we have and how that informs our worldview – narrow or wide?

If we only have songs that act as 'praise' do we have any grounding for when life, as life does, goes awry? If we only have songs that magnify and exalt, we risk separating or distancing people from God. If God has seemingly been missing from your recent life experience, you are struggling to find Him in the midst of where you are – how will constantly speaking or singing of a transcendent God who is high in the heavens allow people to relate?

Do we have a vocabulary in our worship that goes beyond the immediate? Are we giving people the chance and leading them in the ways of 'being still' and teaching them that answers do not always come quickly? Do they know how to persevere?

Are we singing songs of community or are we all in the same room singing "I" or "I will"?

A collective community or congregational voice is hugely important. (Printed with permission)

In conclusion "sometimes what appears to be the wrong way or the wrong box can prove Jesus' words "Behold I make all things new".

May we be gifted with what we need.

Song of Songs

An installation or a service?

Entering the Abbey church on Iona at 9pm on a dark and cold night.....

Noses are assailed by the sweet smells of pot pourri, scented candles, incense.....

Our eyes take a while to adjust to the candlelight.....

Where to sit? Ushers inform us that we can feel free to move about – here's a map – but seating habits die hard: some available seats are set against the medieval walls – some have Bibles on them.....



On low tables draped in scarlet are sliced pears, pomegranates, almonds, more candles; on low tables draped in scarlet – there is an invitation to graze.

At the crossing is a single bed, draped in brilliant red satin cloth, complete with pillow. Lifting our eyes through the candlelit gloom, we see another bed placed in front of the Iona marble Communion table. A red satin drape swirls and flows its way from the floor, across the bed and over the table, then under the silver cross. Two large candle stands seem to stand guard either side of the bed....

Sweet violin music wafts through the space as a classical violinist plies his trade.....

A large easel is spotted in the North Chapel covered with butcher's paper. Light is coming from the south west corner where five desks are lit by five office lamps, with blotters, white gloves, ink and quill pens.

Six people move about opening Bibles, some on seats, others on lecterns – opening at Song of Songs before starting to mutter verses from the book. They mutter to the walls, to

the chairs and to people sitting still. "I hear my lover's voice, he comes running over the mountains, racing across the hills to me." "How beautiful you are, my love! How your eyes shine behind your veil."

Suddenly four data projectors beam words onto the walls and into the tower. Song of Songs in its entirety on a loop system. Eerily the words scroll up slowly over the ancient walls on four sides of the Abbey church, then disappear to start again.....

A bell is tolled.....

Jo and a male volunteer stand on chairs on opposite sides of the nave and read all of Song of Songs as if speaking only to each other.



The muttering of verses resumes....

The bell tolls again.....

Movement is encouraged around the Abbey church and into the cloisters.

Words of love are being written in red wine in the Chapter House.

More words of love are being written on the easel in the North Chapel.

Set up as a Scriptorium, queues form at the desks in the south west corner, where people clad in white gloves sit to write out a verse from Song of Songs to keep.....

John starts singing songs of love in the North Chapel as the mutterers cease.

Another bell tolls....

The mutterers close all the Bibles with a loud bang.

The violinist resumes his sweet music.....

Installation by the Wild Goose Resource Group (John Bell, Graham Maule & Jo Love) with volunteers. Report by Helen Weavers (who was a mutterer).



GREEN GRANNY and the GROOVERS

The 3G Column is dedicated to celebrating the deep green movements in Wellspring both small and large, serious and silly. We plan to use Pipeline, the Website and Facebook to spread redemptive green stories, beginning with Savernake. Articles, ideas and stories to Joy Connor (Leura, NSW; PDD2).

Called to take care of God's earth or Turning the litter tide

Every year 11.2 billion cans and bottles become landfill or litter in Australia. Wellspring's Lisa Wriley is doing something about it. "I do have a strong sense that I am called to take care of God's earth and that I am a part of it." says Lisa, Her day job is at the Total Environment Centre, which has been fighting to protect Australia's air, water and green spaces for over 40 years. Bringing back the "cash for containers scheme" has been her passion over the last six years.

After 1970 the advent of aluminum cans and plastic bottles ended the old refund on glass bottles (except in South Australia). Now, despite recycling, **every minute 15,000 bottles and cans are littered in Australia**, damaging our ecosystems and filling landfill.

Lisa works with a coalition of concerned groups called the Boomerang Alliance

(www.boomerangalliance.org.au). Their efforts are turning the tide. The NSW government has announced that they will bring in a container deposit system in 2017 and it is now Labor party policy. The Alliance needs community support to combat lobbying by big international drink companies for a rival scheme, which will only remove a small percentage of the litter.



Lisa has had a strong sense that we can all make a difference since she was a child. She was inspired by a board game she loved called Conservation, which taught about saving resources, picking up rubbish and caring for wilderness.



Wellspring Council has endorsed the cash for Containers Campaign. Everyone can personally endorse the campaign at www.boomerangalliance.org.au/orgsupport

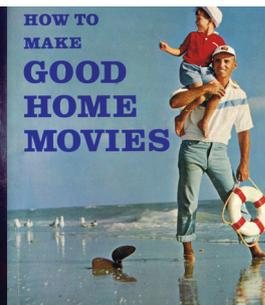
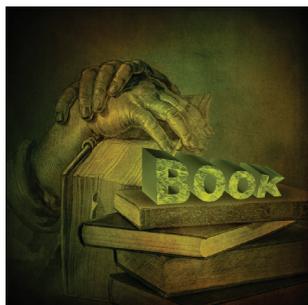
NSW Wellspringers can write to NSW Premier GPO Box 5341, Sydney NSW 2001, and simply let him know that you or your Wellspring group or your church support #cashforcontainers.

Queensland contact - Boomerang Alliance to by.hutcheon@boomerangalliance.org.au

Victoria contact - AFROCAB (Australians for Refunds on Cans and Bottles) Peter Cook 03 5968 2824

Sorry - no active campaign in WA or Tasmania at the moment - but Conservation Council of WA (conswa@ccwa.org.au) and the Tasmanian Conservation Trust (Phone: 03 62 343552) and Environment Tasmania (03 6281 5100) are all members of the Boomerang Alliance (volunteers needed!)

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.

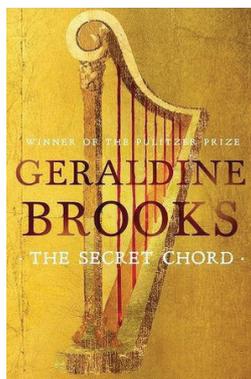
BAMM: BOOKS

Book Review of 'The Secret Chord', by Geraldine Brooks. Peggy Goldsmith (Woodford, NSW; PDD3)

Geraldine Brooks, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for 2016 and the ABC Boyer lecturer 2011 and now honoured in 2016 with the Australia Day award of Order of Australia (AO), was a former journalist from the western suburbs of Sydney. She is now a novelist living in the United States where she has written several books -- *Caleb's Crossing*, *People of the Book*, *Year of Wonders and March* -- all popular successes. Her latest book *'The Secret Chord'* about the biblical King David, pictures a harp on the cover. It suggests that music is a key to this shepherd boy-become-king, a flawed and troubled king, yet one who is all important to Western culture and religious history.

Narrated by Nathan the prophet in a way that gives moral authority to the story, the book reveals Nathan's love and guidance of David to the end. He nonetheless is able to see the flaws in David. He celebrates David's bringing together all the warring tribes. David is seen as a

great strategist with a vision of what could be achieved both through his armies in war and also in peace. He inspires his soldiers, riding out in



front of them, showing his valour. They love him for it. Creating dialogue between the various tribes would be a new way.

David becomes a wise counsellor, hearing people out, and giving advice to army generals on the one hand and to the common people on the other. David has great charisma and charm. Sadly it is lost in his last days. David's final vision was the

building of the Temple in Jerusalem, never achieved in his lifetime but by Solomon, the youngest of his sons.

One of the attractive things is that the stories are so familiar. One has heard them since childhood read aloud or to oneself. From time to time one of the psalms is recounted in the book. We are, however not spared the horrors recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. Brooks has great capacity to fill out the human side of these familiar Bible stories of David's numerous wives and exploits. We feel the experience of all that is taking place. We are there. Why *'The Secret Chord'*? You'll have to decide that for yourself.

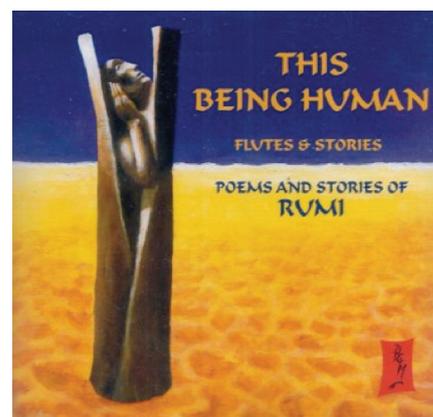


BAMM: MUSIC

CD Review by Helen Kilborn: This Being Human - flutes and stories. The poems and stories of RUMI by Ashley Ramsden 1998

This Being Human, a collection of 21 Rumi stories and poems performed accompanied by flutes, oud, tabla and double bass. Spiritually uplifting and inspiring creativity this CD is in my favourites collection. Listened to repeatedly, it washes away all cares and worries and transplants me to the land and people of Rumi's era,

somehow simultaneously exotic and familiar. This is one CD I never tire of. As expected the stories of Rumi e.g. the Lost Camel and White Cow are full of meaning and life's lessons. Ashley Ramsden is an Australian trained actor and the director of the School of StoryTelling in the UK.



BAMM: ART

For reflection: submitted by Jill Robertson (Dunlop, ACT PDD21)



LibraryThing

by Helen Kilborn



LibraryThing is a column in each edition of Pipeline. Helen Kilborn (Gundaroo, NSW, PDD 21) will keep us up to date with the latest in Wellspring resources, as Wellspring seeks to share our resources: human and material.

There have been three more interesting looking books added to the loan

collection this quarter; all are in the Holm collection:

Abundant Life (Searching for new framework) - Sallie McFague

The selfless self - Laurence Freeman

Augustinian Meditation - Paul Maloney

Also added is a new tag - Free Book - these are books that are looking for new homes free of charge. Once you have finished with the book, pass it on to someone else. No need to return it to the original owner.

To access the LibraryThing collection go to <https://www.librarything.com/catalog/WellspringCommunity>. If you would like to add your own book please contact Neil Holm or myself for login and instructions. Alternatively send me a list of the book's author, title and ISBN and I will add them for you.

This month's loan offering is the audio book *New Great Themes of Scripture* - Richard Rohr.

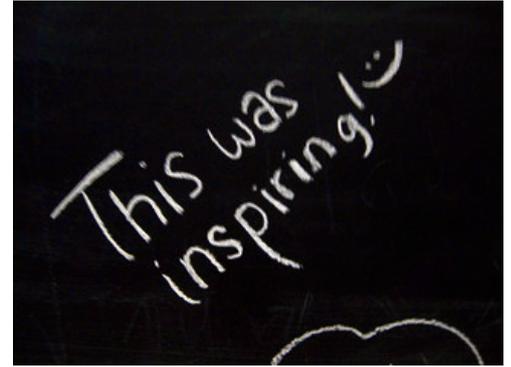
David Sloane reviewed this Audio CD for us in Pipeline December 2014 mentioning that he plays this set of 10 CD's over many times and always hears something he has missed before.

Rohr uncovers nine prime ideas that gradually unfold through both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures: shame and separation; sacrifice and non-violence; law; grace; the re-definition of power; mystery; fear and intimacy, the paradox of the cross, and the process of transformation and mutual indwelling.

If you are interested in borrowing this set of CD's please contact Helen Kilborn.

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.

New Member:

Julie Smout (Maylands, WA; PDD12)



I was born in Perth into a committed Methodist family and our faith was a constant part of my life. When I left MLC I studied and practised Nursing at Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital, Perth. In 1974-75 I volunteered to nurse in West Timor in very basic conditions,

The Timorese lack of materialism changed my values for the rest of my life. Later I studied Midwifery at Hornsby then came back to Perth to work at King Edward Hospital for Women. I expanded my horizons studying Religion and Youth work. Then I worked as a School Chaplain in a low socio-economic area.

I experienced some severe challenges to my health and had to take medication to allow me to keep up with the many commitments in my life. As this happened I felt God calling me to devote myself to Him. But as a single woman with nursing experience and the only daughter, with my family growing older I stepped into the role of carer for them for many years. During this time I continued studying Spirituality and Spiritual Direction. When my mother died last year at the

age of 95 I felt God's guidance and presence supporting me. I am a strong supporter of Day Spring Church in Perth, which is an ecumenical centre for Christian Spirituality. I enjoy regular meditation and Bible study at group meetings.

I joined Wellspring many years ago and it has been a wonderful focus for me. As I grow in my relationship with God I am seeking his guidance and increased connection with members and friends in our Wellspring community.



Claim the Dates

Seminar on Meditation and the Environment - Ecology, Economy and Meditation 22-24 April 2016.

Three NSW Wellspring friends have expressed interest in this seminar, maybe you would like to join them at Kincoppal-Rose Bay, School of the Sacred Heart, NSW.

The seminar focuses particularly on the relationship between ecology, economy and the human contemplative dimension. In a world of growing disconnection, where the human person is increasingly identified merely as a

'consumer' and in an era of grave ecological crisis, it is urgent to seek a deeper understanding of ourselves and our role within the planetary context.

Speakers: Laurence Freeman, David Tacey, George Browning, Susan Murphy, Mark Diesendorf and Jacqui Remond.

Contact: Australian Christian Meditation Community <http://www.christianmeditationaustralia.org/>

Helen Kilborn - phone 0402245303

**Member (AM) in the General Division of the Order of Australia
Australia Day 2016
Mr Alan Douglas Hewitt**



“For significant service to ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue, and the Uniting Church in Australia”

Service includes: **New South Wales Ecumenical Council:** Honorary General Secretary, 2012-14.

Member, Peace and Justice Commission, since 2000.

Chairman, Commission for Christian World Service, Australian Council of Churches, 1976 – 1988, and member of the Commission 1966 - 1990

Board Chairman, National Council of Churches in Australia, Strathfield Russian Home for the Aged, 1985 - 2009.

Coordinator, NCCA ‘Pilgrimage to the Heart’, 1998 - 2000

Volunteer, National Council of Churches in Australia ‘Christmas Bowl’, 1966 - 2006.

Member, Christians for Peace, Newcastle, since 2007.

Co-Deputy Leader, Wellspring Community, 2007-2011.

Chairperson, Church Council, Strathfield-Homebush Uniting Church 1998 – 2006; member 1977 - 2006

Wesley Uniting Church Hamilton/Broadmeadow, Member, Church Council (Convener, Mission and Strategy committee), since 2008.

Secretary, Faith and Unity Committee, Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, 2008 to current; committee member since 1999.

Hunter Presbytery of the Uniting Church in Australia: member of Presbytery 2007 to present

Convener, Youth and Tertiary Ministry Committee, 2008 to 2014

Member, Social Justice Committee, since 2007.

Presbytery Representative on the Newcastle Ecumenical Working Group, current.

The Wellspring Community congratulates Doug, and Isabel (Hamilton, NSW; PDD9), on the recognition bestowed by this award, and gives thanks to God for what he, and they, have done in partnership and dialogue with so many other people.



FAIRTRADE ACTION GROUP



John Martin (Robina, Qld, PDD 26) details the consequences of Wellspring affirming our commitment to Fair Trade.

Wellspring Community has taken the step to be recognised by the Fair Trade Association as a Fair Trade Faith Group. In order to maintain that status there are certain minimum requirements.

1. 'At least two Fair Trade Products are used as part of the group's activity'. This means that wherever we gather, whether at a national wide Gathering or in our local cell groups we use Fair Trade tea, coffee etc. as the default option.

2. 'Fair Trade is promoted to members of the faith community. This should include:

- a) Use of Fair Trade promotional materials
- b) At least one Fair Trade focused event is conducted by the Faith Group per year.'

The words quoted above are from the Fair Trade Association 'Guidelines for faith groups'. For more detail visit the website www.fta.org.au

How we interpret 2 (a) and (b) is largely up to us. Different states or cell groups may interpret these in ways which suit their own situation. Most important is that we stay focussed on our commitment to Fair Trade as a Community and as individuals and that we seek innovative ways to promote Fair Trade.

With so many issues calling for our attention it is easy to let our focus become blurred where really it is easy these days to make sure the tea / coffee / chocolate we put in our shopping trolley bears fair trade label.

Jesus told the Parable of the Sower because he knew it is easy for people to lose the initial enthusiasm. (Luke 8:4-8). Let's be the good soil when it comes to our fair trade focus.

Dancing Partners within / without

Lynona Hawkins (Eden Hills, SA; PDD30) makes a Lenten offer to use her expertise, experience and gifts.

As we enter the Season of Lent there might be some interested in working through:

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

Psalm 23:4.

This is a retreat I have written for the Lenten journey which is available by contacting the Stillpoint Spirituality Centre: stillpoint@internode.on.net Cost \$20.

These words, from what is probably the Bible's most well known and loved psalm, have brought comfort and solace to people throughout the ages. As we undertake the journey through Lent, we connect with Jesus as he travelled the road through the 'valley of the shadow of death' on his way to Jerusalem and the Cross. 'The valley of the shadow' not only refers to



the end of a person's life. During the course of our lives we experience many deaths. Some are huge, shattering, life changing events, from which we struggle to recover. Others we seem to be able to accept as an expected part of living. Then there are the difficult memories from which we often find it hard to break free.

As you embark on this Lenten journey you might find yourself re-visiting painful losses or re-living events you have tried to bury in the past. Yet you might also find, as you take time to reflect, that some deaths have actually been the catalyst for new growth and

ways of living, that out of the ashes have come resurrections of new life. And if this is not yet your experience, there is still the possibility of healing and wholeness. It is not the desire of this retreat to dwell on loss but to learn from it, to find new and creative ways to live into a hope-full present and future.

In this retreat you will journey with Jesus and his disciples through the events leading up to Easter. As you consider the parallels in your own life, you will be invited to enter a time of remembering, contemplating, praying and listening.

In the last issue of Pipeline I offered to give a Quiet Day to any groups in the East who might like to participate in one during our trip to Sydney & Brisbane in April.

That offer is still on but we will now be travelling that way in May instead. Please contact me; lynona@bigpond.com. (08) 8278 3870 if you are interested.

Leader's Letter

Love will be our Easter Calling



Neil Holm

In his introduction to this issue, Geoff Stevenson invited us to take disciplined time to stop and ponder, to reflect upon life, faith and the way of Jesus.

I was stopped by Elizabeth Smith's hymn *Love will be our Lenten calling* (TIS 684). The hymn continues "love to shake and shatter sin, waking every closed cold spirit, stirring new life within, till the quickened heart remembers what our Easter birth can mean."

We are called to receive God's love, to receive other's love, and to love others. Love is demanding and difficult. Love is the commitment to act for the well-being of another or others. Love takes a courageous path that challenges people to be better and to reach higher. Love challenges every aspect of the lover's life and the life of those loved. Love challenges lovers to raise their eyes and look to higher, more profound things that offer spiritual, emotional and physical enlightenment – things that liberate.¹ When we think of loving others we often avoid particularity. We generalise. We avoid the detail or minutiae of loving. To maintain close, detailed focus I want to begin by considering love as described above in the context of marriage. In the Bible, in Genesis and Matthew, we

read that a man leaves his mother and father and clings to his wife and they become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked and they were not ashamed.

They become one flesh. They cling together. They embrace. They retain individuality but become one flesh. They become a social unit, a system of interdependent parts. They become a family. The text implies that in marriage they become truly human. In marriage they more fully express mutuality and equality. This new relationship carries no guarantee of abundant happiness, perfect goodness, or continuous and reciprocated affection. Even at those times when a husband, for whatever reason, wishes



for freedom from family responsibility and routine, he remains part of his wife. Even at those times when a wife wishes that her husband was far, far away, they remain part of each other. They remain one flesh, they remain family, they remain a household whether they are friendly or angry, happy or unhappy. Sometimes even divorcees, especially when children are involved, will concede that, although the anger and pain may remain, the sense of being a unit continues. Both partners acknowledge that there remains a degree of interdependence.² How do these principles translate into our other loving relationships at church, work, within Wellspring Community, or within our local community?

The Bible quote above made reference to being naked and not ashamed. This may be true in a physical sense. However, and perhaps more importantly, it is true in a metaphorical sense. When two people love they should not be afraid of being naked in other ways. There should be an intimacy, a willingness to share thoughts, feelings, and perspectives. This kind of intimacy sometimes involves risks of being misunderstood and misinterpreted. Can we extrapolate this intimacy to other relationships? Is this part of the process of "waking every closed, cold spirit"?

The notion of the embrace illustrates this relationship. In an embrace two parties come together, two different parties, two individuals, and they become one. In an embrace neither party overpowers the other. There is an exchange of mutuality. Reciprocity takes place. There is an exchange of difference. Sometimes the differences are not easily reconciled. They must be discussed and negotiated otherwise there will be no "stirring new life within."

An embrace preserves and transforms the identity of the self. An embrace affirms the otherness of the other as identity in its own right. The identity of the other party is partly received into the ever changing identity of the self. The embrace, being fully present to the other person, is the essential element in reconciliation between foes. For each party to make an impact on the other's social world they may need to practise enlarged thinking where they actively try to take into account the perspective of the other person. They engage in moral conversation when they try to reverse perspectives to try to reason from the point of view of the other person and to hear their voice with sensitivity.³

Husbands and wives are different people who have different perspectives. Recent research showed that although there are gender differences, on average they are neither consistent nor inflexible.⁴ There is some truth in the adage that men are from Mars and women are from Venus but it does not apply in every case. Likewise, Deborah Tannen's *You Just Don't Understand*, is sometimes right and sometimes wrong.⁵ She argued that women have a unique conversational style. They seek to show involvement, connection, and participation. Men use speech to indicate independence and position in a hierarchy.

Gender differences, even if not universal, have been discussed for some time. Chesterton argued that most women are caring, hospitable, and attentive to the needs of others. From their perspective, most men are selfish beasts. Likewise, as men become aware of the great sensitivity of women, they begin to regard this as excessive or in Chesterton's word "mad." But, Chesterton avers, only when men and women first begin to admire each other do they begin to criticise each other.

This criticism is part of the commitment of love to act for the well-being of another. It is part of the courageous path that challenges people to be better and to reach higher. It is part of the challenge to raise our eyes and look to higher, more profound

things that offer liberation. Well-founded criticism is an expression of love that shakes and shatters sin.

For many of us, a friend is someone who likes us but does not love us. A friend enjoys our company as we are. A friend does not try to change us. There is a sense in which a friend is blind to our faults. However, love is not blind. A lover likes us, enjoys us, but a lover wants the best for us. A lover will stoutly defend us against outsiders but in private a lover sees our faults, sees our sins, and understands our frailties. A lover is not content to leave things as they are. A lover sees us when we are evil but does not despair. A lover continues to love us while seeking to transform us into becoming a more beautiful person, into becoming a more loving person. The lover has a "quicken heart that remembers what our Easter birth can mean."⁶

This same principle applies in our relationship with our local community, with Wellspring Community, with our nation, with our environment, and with the world. With loving eyes, we see the great good, the glorious beauty, and the radiance of the object at which we are looking. At the same time, we see its flaws, its failings, and its limitations. We see sin and evil. We see degradation. Because we love, we are not content to leave things as they are. We do not despair. We are not overcome by pessimism. Instead we

move forward with optimism seeking to remedy the wrongs, to overcome the failings, and to transform what is ugly into that which is beautiful.

Inspired by Elizabeth Smith, my prayer for all Wellspring Members and Friends during this season is :

Loving God,

Through your son, Jesus Christ our Saviour, you showed us how to love.

May love be our Lenten calling.

Inspire us to love in ways that shake and shatter sin.

Through your love, may our love wake every closed, cold spirit.

May our love stir new life deep within all our relationships, all our communities, and every aspect of your marvellous creation.

Quicken our hearts that we might comprehend at the deepest, most intimate levels what our Easter birth can mean.

1. Geoff Stevenson, *Reflection Notes*, 31/1/16

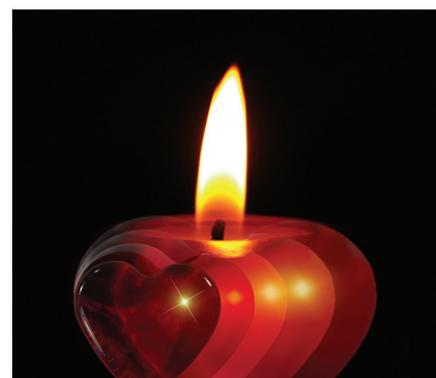
2. Alvaro da Silva (ed), *Brave New Family: G.K. Chesterton On Men and Women, Children, Sex, Divorce, Marriage and the Family*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990, pp.92-93

3. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace*, (Nashville: Abingdon 1996) p. 143, 212.

4. B.J. Carrothers and H.T. Reis, "Men and women are from Earth: examining the latent structure of gender", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 2013, 104(2):385-407. doi: 10.1037/a0030437.

5. Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand*, (New York: Morrow 1990)

6. cf. G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Peabody: Hendrikson 2006) pp.62-67



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NEXT ISSUE: June 2016.

Editorial Panel: Eric Smith, Neil Holm, Jim Tulip, Geoff Stevenson.

Deadline for material is Monday 2 May 2016. We welcome contributions on any topic, but for the next issue contributions on a topic that reflect Wellspring's Pentecost perspectives will be especially welcome. Send to:
pipeline@wellspringcommunity.org.au