

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

August 2021

Morialta Uniting Church—follow us on Facebook or check out our website at www.morialtauca.org.au

“Beyond 2020 Vision” August 2021

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

Welcome to the latest edition of “Beyond 2020 Vision”.

This month we feature a number of thoughtful articles written or contributed by members of MUC, including a poem from two aging activists, and celebrate the achievements of two Indigenous women.

There is also information about several important events being promoted, as well as a short history of hashtags, as used recently by Rev Bob.

As always, ministry teams, groups, networks and individuals are encouraged to share your news with us. Photos of events and celebrations are always welcome.

The cut-off date for our next edition will be **3rd September**. Either drop a copy of your contribution in to Nicole at the church office or call Colin on 0427 122 106, or email him at snout-n-bout@bigpond.com.au

Go well.



“Jesus, Son of God”: What might we mean by that?

Adapted by Chris Ayles from an answer to a question in an online seminar by Brian D. McLaren - author, speaker, activist and public theologian.

Many traditional Christians connect the term *Son of God* with the virgin birth, as if God sent a divine or spiritual sperm to impregnate Mary, making God Jesus’s father and Jesus God’s son in an almost biological sense.

Other traditional Christians frame the term *Son of God* primarily in Trinitarian theology, with the Son a counterpart/partner with the Father and Spirit.

Some progressive Christians affirm Trinitarian theology as expressed in the historic creeds. Others downplay or modify it, and some reject it. Personally, I, and others, take seriously the patriarchal problems embedded in father/son imagery.

In my writings, I’ve focused on two primary lines of thought. First, the linguistic formulation *Son of God*. This formation pops up a few different ways in the New Testament – examples being James and John are called *Sons of Thunder* (Mark 3:17); in John 8:39 ff, the terms *Sons of God*, *sons of Abraham*, and *sons of the devil* are put in conversation. This usage resonates with our familiar aphorism, *like father, like son* (or *like mother, like daughter*). There’s a family likeness, a resemblance. In this light, *Son of God* is roughly synonymous with *reflecting the character of God*.

Luke 20:36 has a similar interplay between *children of God* and *children of the resurrection*. Of special interest, a blind Jewish man uses the term *son of David* (Luke 18, Matthew 20, Mark 10) to refer to Jesus, as does a Gentile/Sidonian woman (Matthew 15). Both seem to be saying, “You are a great leader like King David was,” with *son of* again bearing the idea of resemblance.

That understanding resonates with John 1:12, where we all have the capacity to become children of God, a theme we see also in 1 John 3:2. It especially makes sense of Matthew 5:9, the beatitude where Jesus says that peacemakers will be called children of God. People who make peace resemble the God of peace.

This idea of resemblance calls to mind an insight from Quaker theologian Elton Trueblood: the scandal of Christianity was not the claim that Jesus resembles God, but rather that God resembles Jesus: nonviolent, kind, merciful, healing, reconciling, inclusive, accepting. In other words, the life and teaching of the Son made us conceive of the Father in a radically new way.

Second, I find great value in Dominic Crossan’s explorations of the political meaning of the term *Son of God*. (*God And Empire* and *Excavating Jesus* are good places to start.) Crossan points to stone inscriptions still visible today that demonstrate that the Caesars were seen as *sons of the gods*. In this way, to call Jesus *the Son of God* is to say that his authority challenges Caesar’s.

We live in a time of resurgent nationalism, where the state and/or its leader are upheld by many as the absolute authority. To call Jesus *Son of God* can be a way of saying that we do not hold any human regime to be absolute. We believe there is a higher power, a higher authority, a higher wisdom, that relativizes any nation, any leader, any ideology, even any religion. We dare to believe that the love manifest in Jesus reflects the authentic nature or character of the Ultimate Reality, which makes Jesus a great teacher, an inspirational philosopher, and someone whose words and example should be followed indeed.

#Timeforahome

<https://www.timeforahome.com.au>



Brian Ward (Mandy's dad) and Margaret Chittleborough from Pilgrim UC



Paul Goh (Justice & CALD Multicultural & Cross-Cultural CMC Officer SA Synod) with MUC members

Several UC members responded to the Moderator's call to walk in solidarity with other Christians and people of goodwill, calling on our government to end 8 Years of Harm. The walk began at Tarntanyangga/Victoria Square and ended at the Vietnamese Boat People Monument on the banks of the Torrens at the end of Kintore Ave.

No matter where we come from, or how we got here, everyone needs a **safe place to call home**. But for the past 8 years, successive governments have enacted policies against people seeking asylum, including the indefinite detention of everyone who arrived by boat after 19 July 2013.

While over 1000 women, men and children have been transferred to Australia for critical medical treatment and now

live in 'transitory' visa limbo, around 260 people are still being held in detention on PNG and Nauru. Of those brought to Australia, over 100 are held in locked immigration detention centres and so-called 'alternative places of detention'.

Countless Parliamentary and Departmental inquiries, UN investigations, reports by the Australian Human Rights Commission and numerous whistleblowers, including the government's own doctors, have repeatedly told us the same story of systematic abuse, violence and medical neglect of people held in detention facilities. Tragically, 14 people have died as a result.

One recent story describes how a couple, who met and married in Nauru, were brought to Adelaide with their daughter for medical reasons but kept separated. He was held in detention while his wife and daughter lived in the community without status. But at least they could visit him regularly. However, in July 2021, *in the middle of the night*, the father was woken and transferred to detention in Melbourne. His wife was refused permission to relocate with him. As no reason has been given to their supporters – it is difficult to interpret the separation as anything other than intentional cruelty.

Surely, after 8 years, it's time to free these women, men and children, and resettle them into our community, so they can be safe and **have a place to call home**.

Aging activists?

When I am an old woman I shall brace my knees,
'Gird up my loins' and go on marches.
I shall pull on my bright stars jumper
And carry signs, holding high my protest.
I shall chant slogans till I'm hoarse,
And converse with the caring ones.
I shall sit down on the pavement when I'm tired,
And engage perfect strangers in conversation
About working towards the kind of world Jesus had in mind.

I shall spend my super on good wine and café meals with friends,
Wear ear-rings from far-away places and hand-made shawls,
I shall mend the holes in my favourite clothes with lazy-daisy embroidery
And make up for the sobriety of my youth.
But maybe I ought to practise a little now?
So people who know me are not too shocked and surprised
When suddenly I am old, and start to go on marches.



Jenny Swanbury and Margaret Cargill, July 2021, on the occasion of a march in support of freeing asylum seekers from eight years of detention

[Adapted from "Warning", by Jenny Joseph, from *Selected Poems* (Bloodaxe, 1992)]

Small Kindness

Danusha Lemeris



I have been thinking about the way, when you walk down a crowded aisle, people pull in their legs to let you by. Or how strangers still say 'bless you' when someone sneezes, a left over from the Bubonic plague. 'Don't die' we are saying. And sometimes when you spill lemons from your grocery bag, someone will help you pick them up. Mostly we don't want to harm each other. We want to be handed our cup of coffee hot, and to say thankyou to the person holding it. To smile at them and to smile back. For the waitress to call us honey when she sets down the bowl of clam chowder, and for the driver in the red pick-up truck to let us pass. We have so little of each other, now. So far from tribe and fire. Only these brief moments of exchange. What if they are the true dwelling of the holy, these fleeting temples we make together when we say, "Here, have my seat," "Go ahead – you first," "I like your hat".

Danusha Laméris was born in 1971 in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She is the author of *Bonfire Opera* and *The Moons of August* and winner of the 2013 Autumn House Press Poetry Prize.

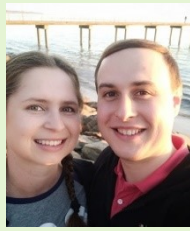
Article contributed by David Purling.

Matthew celebrated “the big 30”

On 21st July, while we were in lockdown, Matthew celebrated his 30th birthday.



He received a small cake and coffee for breakfast via Uber Eats as a gift from Lauren, his girlfriend.



In the evening he had a surprise Zoom birthday party! Guests were Andrew in Brisbane, Katrina and Mitchell in Sydney, Lachlan and Nicole, and Lauren.

Sharon and Craig enticed him to come to the computer for the surprise. Katrina and Mitchell sat there on screen, eating the lime cheesecake they made for him!

Hashtags

Based on an article in the Conversation — November 2019

On Sunday 18th July Bob created two new hashtags during his sermon focusing on “the feeding of the 5,000” and “the women at the tomb”.

According to Eugenia Ha Rim Rho, a PhD candidate at University of California, a hashtag is a functional tag widely used in search engines and social networking services that allow people to search for content that falls under the word or phrase, following the # sign.

The use of hashtags, first popularized by Twitter in 2009, has become widespread in the last half decade. Nearly anything political with the intent of attracting a wide audience is now branded with a catchy hashtag. Take for example, social movements (#FreeHongKong and #Blacklivesmatter) or calls for supporting or opposing laws (#LoveWins).

Activists, politicians and media are using political hashtags to increase readership and to contextualize reporting in short, digestible social media posts. Such practice is a “good way to introduce a story or perspective into the mainstream news cycle” and “a way to figure out what the public wants to discuss and learn more about.”

Some of the more popular hashtags found on Christian websites include #nothingisordinary, #inspiremotherhood, #gospelcentredparenting and #coffeeandcrumbs. (Not sure what the last one is about!)

As Bob concluded – when the disciples suggested sending the people into the nearby villages to get food – Jesus said “No, you do something”. The message is clear, if you think something is amiss, or an injustice needs correcting – #youdosomethingaboutit.

And we could also add a hashtag based on David’s words from last Sunday – #ifitstobeitsuptome.

Bob’s second hashtag – if we have learned anything from “the women at the tomb” and Annabel Crabb’s ‘Ms Represented’ (ABC TV) is of equal importance – #listentothewomen.

Fellowship



At the July meeting, Margaret and Ray Clogg showed a photographic overview of their 2019 trip to Japan. They experienced the quiet beauty of the Northern Island of Hokaido before travelling by Bullet Train to Honshu Island and the bustling cities of Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka and Hiroshima.

They experienced rather ‘different’ weather conditions while staying in the mountains at Hakone, when Typhoon Hagibis crossed the coast and dumped over a metre of rain onto the area in a few hours. Little creeks soon became raging torrents of muddy water.

Hiroshima proved to be quite emotional when they visited the magnificent memorial to the WW2 bombed city.

They thoroughly enjoyed the Japanese culture, the beautiful scenery and the extremely kind and friendly people.

The next meeting on Thursday August 19th will be a trip to Beltana Gallery, Carrington Street, Adelaide, followed by lunch at the Norwood Hotel.

Please meet at the church at 9.30 for ‘car-pooling’ – Joan Wagner is taking names for the outing.

Edith Buss

A tribute from Cynthia Story

Edith had a beautifully, rich, true contralto voice. She always loved singing, and painting the Flinders Ranges in oils. Her ironic sense of humour was legend!

I first met her as a member of the 10.30 choir. I was the other contralto. The choir was small, but made up of enthusiastic long-time church choir singers – it becomes an addiction – and the friendships and memories from those days are golden!

On 10 July, those of us in the Morialta Uniting Church congregation who knew Edith, were pleased to accept her daughter Mara’s invitation to a celebratory lunch, 12 months after her death. It was a wonderful occasion!

The Tower Hotel had been a favourite haunt of Edith and Uldis for a Sunday lunch. Mara had asked Rev Bob to speak about Edith’s very busy life, committed to nursing, family, church – which included singing – and looking out for people she could help in any way. Her warmth of personality was remembered this lunchtime, as we listened to tales of her life, lovingly retold by family and work colleagues. Her capacity for caring was endless.

Edith, thank you for those memories!!



“Sing lustily and with a good courage. Beware of singing as if you were half dead, or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength.”

John Wesley

Indigenous women

During this year we have been publishing a brief history of some of the more famous Indigenous people who have influenced our nation. This month we focus on two of the many Indigenous women who have made great contributions.

Tanya Orman



Tanya Denning-Orman is a Birri and Guugu Yimidhirr woman from North Queensland. Tanya's mother married a British immigrant which exposed Tanya to international experiences and perspectives. Under the Aboriginal Protection Act, her family was removed from their traditional lands and Tanya was raised on Kanalu country in Central Queensland.

Tanya credits her career to her upbringing which led her to passionately pursue storytelling to empower those without a voice. Starting her career as a journalist and producer, Tanya Orman is now the channel manager for National Indigenous Television (NITV), a popular television station focused on Indigenous programming. As well as being one of the youngest TV executives in Australia, Tanya Orman chairs an organisation that leads the media industry on reconciliation issues.

Catherine Astrid Salome Freeman OAM

Kathy Freeman was born at Slade Point, Mackay to Norman Freeman, a Birri Gubba man, and Cecelia, a Kuku Yalanji woman. She attended several schools but was mostly educated at Fairholme College in Toowoomba, after she won a boarding scholarship.



She began athletics at the age of 5 and by her early teens she had a collection of regional and national titles in 100m, 200m, high jump and long jump. In later years she specialised in the 400 metres event where her personal best of 48.63 seconds currently ranks her as the eighth-fastest woman of all time. This was set while finishing second to Marie-José Pérec at the 1996 Olympics.

At age 16 she became the first Australian Indigenous person to become a Commonwealth Games gold medallist when the Australian women won the 100m relay. She won gold in both 200m and 400m at the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Canada and silver at the 1996 Olympics. And of course, all Australians remember her gold medal win at the 2000 Olympics in Sydney.

Freeman retired from athletics in 2003 and founded the Cathy Freeman Foundation in 2007. The Foundation works with four remote Indigenous communities to close the gap in education between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, by offering incentives for children to attend school. It partners with the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation (AIEF) and the Brotherhood of St Laurence.

More recently she has become involved in a range of community and charitable activities, including as an Ambassador for the AIEF and Cottage by the Sea (a children's holiday camp in Queenscliff, Victoria).



Synod Resourcing Expo Events September to November 2021

'Chasing the wind of the Spirit'

Commencing this September, the Synod is holding six expo events throughout South Australia.

These events are designed to be engaging, enabling and will act as a catalyst for the church. It will include speakers both from within and beyond the church in South Australia and a host of workshops and information that will help us all to take another step in pursuing God's plans for the church. In the regional areas, we will also take time to learn more from each other, sharing stories of challenge and hope.

The theme of 'Chasing the wind of the Spirit', speaks to God's activity already occurring around us and the Spirit calling us to follow to where God's mission is taking the church; making disciples to be part of God's mission in congregations and through connections with local communities. To quote Paul Dearborn, 'It's not the church of God that has a mission, it is the God of Mission who has a church.'

The Synod is planning six events commencing on September 18th with an Expo at Adelaide West Uniting Church before travelling to five regional areas in October and early November. (Port Lincoln 9 October, Port Pirie 16 October, Murray Bridge 23 October, Robe 30 October and Berri 6 November.)

It is imagined that these events will take on a 'fair-like atmosphere' warmly welcoming everyone. Food vendors and community groups are encouraged to participate with stalls during the breaks. These free events are open to church groups and individuals who may or may not be regularly involved in church. We aim to connect people while at the same time resourcing them in areas of interest and passion.

This is a milestone event for our Synod. It is not just another conference or meeting. It is an opportunity not to be missed. The church was never supposed to be just for Sundays, it is a pursuit of a higher purpose that connects with our world, an opportunity to identify and partner in God's mission locally.

God's mission is exciting and will take us to places that we never imagined.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Sulphur-crested cockatoos learn to open wheelie bins

Adapted from an article by Donna Lu in the Guardian Online

Australian and German ecologists have documented that cockatoos are learning to open and forage bins, with reported sightings of the behaviour growing across Sydney.

Before 2018, bin foraging was sighted in only 3 suburbs: Barden Ridge, Helensburgh and Sutherland. However, the ability to open bins had spread to 44 suburbs by the end of 2019.

The study's lead author, Dr Barbara Klump said that the behaviour spread more quickly to neighbouring areas than to suburbs farther away, suggesting the cockatoos were learning by observing others, rather than figuring out how to open bins by themselves.



Cockatoos attending a bin-opening workshop!

But researchers found only around 10% of the birds, mostly male, were capable of opening the bins. The other cockatoos waited until bins were opened to share in the spoils.

According to Klump, the process of a cockatoo swinging open a wheelie bin lid is "quite tricky both from a motor action and a physical strength perspective. It's a very complex and multi-step sequence that they have to learn."

The research also found differences in the cockatoos' bin-opening technique between different suburbs, arising from "local subcultures". The difference in technique was greater between suburbs than within a suburb.

The cockatoos also seemed to differentiate between red general waste bins and yellow recycling bins based on their colour. When observed, 88.8% of the time the birds opened the general waste bins.

It is not known for certain how the behaviour began, but it may have originated from cockatoos scavenging in bins that were overfull or blown open on windy days.

The sulphur-crested cockatoo is a highly intelligent species notorious for loud screeching and destructive behaviour. It is one of few known non-human species capable of dancing in time to music – google *Snowball, the dancing cockatoo*.

"Cockatoo" probably comes from the Dutch word "kaketoe" – a Eurocised adaptation of the Malay word, "kakatua". And for your next quiz night – a group of cockatoos is known as a 'crackle'. The interesting question is now whether it's continuing to spread.



Prayer Laudato SI' - On the Care of Our Common Home

Loving God.

Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them,

You created us in your image and made us stewards of all your creation. of our common home.



You blessed us with the sun, water and bountiful land so that all might be nourished.

Open our minds and touch our hearts. so that we may attend to your gift of creation.

Help us to be conscious that our common home belongs not only to us. but to all future generations. and that it is our responsibility to preserve it. May we help each person secure the food and resources that they need.

Be present to those in need in these trying times, especially the poorest and those most at risk of being left behind. Transform our fear, anxiety and feelings of isolation into hope so that we may experience a true conversion of the heart.

Help us to show creative solidarity in addressing the consequences of this global pandemic,

Make us courageous to embrace the changes that are needed in search of the common good. Now more than ever may we feel that we are all interconnected in our efforts to lift up the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

We make our prayer through Jesus of Nazareth.

Amen

LET YOURSELF REST

If you're exhausted, rest.

If you don't feel like starting a new project, don't.

If you don't feel the urge to make something new, just rest in the beauty of the old, the familiar, the known.

If you don't feel like talking, stay silent.

If you're fed up with the news, turn it off.

If you want to postpone something until tomorrow, do it.

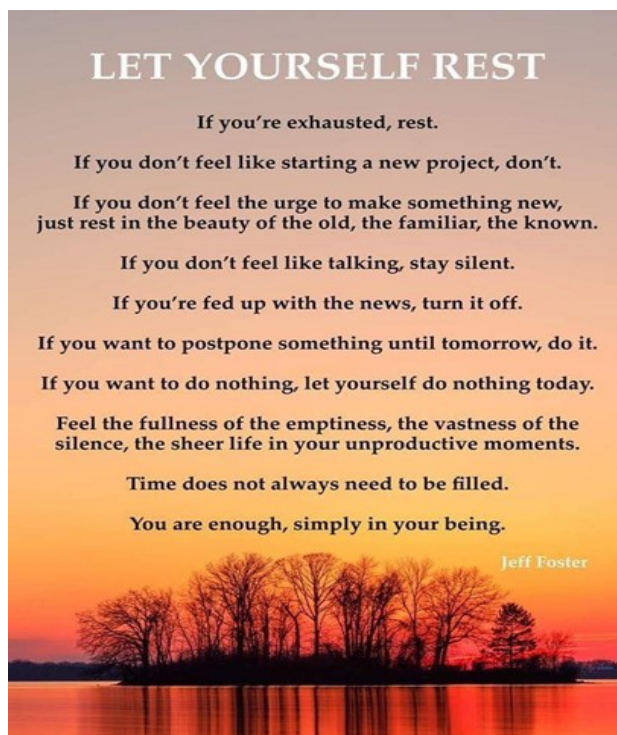
If you want to do nothing, let yourself do nothing today.

Feel the fullness of the emptiness, the vastness of the silence, the sheer life in your unproductive moments.

Time does not always need to be filled.

You are enough, simply in your being.

Jeff Foster



Spacious Christianity

Adapted from an article by Rev. Dr. Steven Koski, Minister of First Presbyterian, Bend, Oregon USA.

At First Presbyterian, you will meet people at many different places theologically and spiritually. And we love it that way. We want to be a place where our diversity brings us together and where conversation takes us all deeper in our understanding of God. We call this kind of faith "Spacious Christianity." We don't ask anyone to sign creeds or statements of belief. The life of faith is about a way of being in the world and a faith that shows itself in love.

Spacious Christianity is a way of wisdom and practice in the footsteps of Jesus of Nazareth. This path is a commitment to the complexity of community, to the paradox of both, and to transformation of soul, mind and body, and to the flourishing of a just and whole earth. The Jewish and Christian Scriptures are our sacred guide along centuries-old paths that lead us into the universal love of God.

Spacious Christianity invites us to tell our stories and welcome questions as we delight in the larger Mystery that draws us into a future that is more than we can ask or imagine, living lives of hope, healing and purpose.

Before First Presbyterian, Rev. Dr. Steven Koski was minister at Brougham Place UC, North Adelaide. The website for First Presbyterian is <https://bendfp.org/>

Article contributed by Margaret Cargill,

We need to build a society that champions economic justice

Adapted from an article by David James in Eureka Street

Australia is a rich country and has a large number of well-off people. There are currently 1.8 million millionaires in the nation, which is about 7% of our total population. In fact, Australia makes up only 0.33% of the world's population but boasts 3.2% of the world's millionaires! According to the Global Wealth Report, Australia tops world rankings for median wealth at \$314,238. Yet despite this prosperity, there is an intractable gap between the rich and the poor. People in the highest 20% hold nearly 66% of all wealth, while those in the lowest 60% hold only 17%.

Such inequality continues to be a major social justice issue and must be the concern of alternative media, such as Eureka Street and Faith groups. Whereas mainstream media tends to reflect the interests of its wealthy, middle class audiences, alternative media can draw attention to the difficulties of those less financially fortunate.

As Australia's wealth has risen, the effectiveness of its social safety nets has come under increasing scrutiny as being inadequate to meet basic needs, especially for those renting. It is the job of Faith Groups and alternative media outlets, like Eureka Street and church media, to look at ways to create a less uneven and more caring society.

To support Eureka Street, a free on-line publication, go to <https://www.trybooking.com/au/donate/eurekastreet>

Dates for your diary

While all these events are still scheduled for the dates listed, the situation may change as COVID restrictions change.

Saturday 14th August – Exploring Ecotheology with Rev Dr Jason John at ELC - 9.30 to 4.00pm CANCELLED

Sunday 29th August – Guess Who's Coming to Lunch 12.30pm
Are you ready to emerge from hibernation after a cold winter and a lockdown? If you are - then please join with others to share hospitality, a meal and conversation.

If you would like to be a guest or a host, please contact Judith on 8365 9362 or email judithpurling@bigpond.com

Friday 3rd September – Wilks Oration 2021, Concordia College CANCELLED due to interstate border closures.

Sunday 19th September – Adelaide Male Voice Choir at MUC
2.00 to 4.00pm – provided COVID restrictions allow.

Quiz Night is being planned for October

Market possibly on 20th November



2021 is the International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour

Child labour is defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.

'Be Slavery Free' is questioning why there are an estimated **160 million children** still trapped in child labour, with **79 million in hazardous child labour**. These numbers might be even higher due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Child labour can also be a gender issue, as the gender of the child will impact on the issues of child labour. In some traditions, it is said that the place of women is at home, therefore a girl will never be sent to school. For example, in certain regions of Côte d'Ivoire, many girls have never been to school. Some of these girls are found later in households in large cities like Abidjan, as housekeepers, waitresses in restaurants or street vendors. Some of them join extended family members managing farms in cocoa producing regions, where they are involved in all kind of works including cocoa production.

In other cultures, young girls are promised to marriage from an early age. Often even at birth. As a result, these girls will never go to school. Being deprived of an education usually means a child is enslaved in poverty for life.

You can help end child labour by donating to Be Slavery Free at <https://beslaveryfree.com/donate>

Historic apology and Us

Jenny Swanbury

Mayor of Bundaberg, Queensland, Jack Dempsey, made history in Australia on 30th July 2021 when he apologized for the practice of forced indentured labour from Pacific Islands in Queensland cane fields, a practice ‘equivalent to slavery and abhorrent’. He says Queensland’s sugarcane industry was built on the back of slavery.

This system lasted from mid-19th to early 20th century with the Islanders often taken by deception or kidnapping. Men and boys and later women and children had to work long hours in desperate harsh conditions, mostly without any wages at all. Many died doing so.

In apologizing Mayor Dempsey said, “Today I wish to extend a sincere apology on behalf of the Bundaberg region community for the abuse which occurred in ‘blackbirding’ people from Vanuatu and other Pacific Islands to work in the Queensland sugarcane industry.”

The formal apology to the region’s South Sea Islander community coincides with Vanuatu’s Independence Day and comes as Bundaberg Regional Council enters a sister city agreement with Luganville in the Pacific Island nation. The mayor says this is an agreement for voluntary seasonal labour in a ‘relationship based on respect, courtesy, fairness and trust’.

Why the interest in the apology for me personally, and for Morialta Uniting Church and friends? Firstly, this is part of our Australian history and for me personally because I was living on a sugarcane farm in Bundaberg in the early 1980s. I was a member of the Bundaberg Uniting Church and part of the Bargara Uniting Church family. The bell at Bargara church came from an earlier South Sea Islander church almost across the road from where I lived. I became aware of the area history and stories, including that many South Sea Islanders were buried along the fence lines of the farms where they worked.

Many Queensland South Sea Islander descendants today want recognition for their contribution to the sugar industry. Many had come from Vanuatu.

Vanuatu has been in our minds this year when Morialta hosted World Day of Prayer in March with the service prepared by combined churches in Vanuatu, and then in June our Mission Sunday ‘UnitingWorld 7 Days of Solidarity’ included The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu: ‘Abundant Life for Us All’.



Cathedrals: a forgotten model for church growth

Adapted from an article by The Reverend Doctor Jane Shaw in *Church Times* July 2021

Cathedral congregations and communities in the UK are growing, and attendances at services have increased by 13% between 2009 to 2019. And besides worshippers, cathedrals engage the spiritually curious and the wider society in many other ways.

Throughout the 20th century, cathedrals increasingly opened their doors to the broader community, became patrons of the arts, and enlarged their educational and civic engagement.

Yet, despite the strong witness of cathedrals, a proposal for 10,000 new lay-led churches – effectively church-plants in people’s houses — was recently supported. This includes doing away with “key limiting factors” such as competent clergy and much-loved church buildings. Many people have

expressed surprise, others have run the numbers to show that the model is simply not viable.

So why not consider cathedrals as another model for church growth in the UK? Cathedrals appeal to people who would probably never go near a church-plant. They cater to “passengers” – which many of us need to be at times. When someone is taking the first steps towards faith, or tentatively coming back to church after a period away, quiet anonymity can be essential. When we are tired and worn out, we just need to be in a sacred place without people badgering us to be on the coffee roster. Furthermore, cathedral music is good, the preaching usually thoughtful, and the liturgy well done.

Cathedrals also present a different model of mission: one that’s about throwing open the doors and welcoming everyone into a wide range of activities. People can enter via many different pathways: the arts, pilgrimages, talks on pressing issues, and outreach, service, and social-justice programmes. These activities develop the broader cathedral community, and, from them, a person’s curiosity about “church” can grow, leading to deeper engagement.

Cathedrals, like UK parish churches (*and large Australian city churches*) exercise a ministry of presence, serving the whole community. Growth is not just for the sake of growth: it is intimately tied to pastoral care, service, love, and social justice. It is imperative that cathedrals and parishes work together to offer alternative ways to reach the spiritual seekers, the “nones”, and those on the margins.

Jane Shaw is Principal of Harris Manchester College, Professor of the History of Religion, and a Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford.

A misdirection from the Judge?

Colin Cargill

Tonga is known as the Friendly Islands but things are not always friendly between the locals.

In the late 1980s we lived on the small island of 'Eua with a population of 4,000 humans and 14,000 pigs. An ideal place for a "pig vet" to spend a few years.

The pigs lived in special houses in the villages but during the day they were free to roam, choosing either to scavenge the reefs for fish protein, or bushland and gardens for vegetable protein.

Pigs are a major crop pest in Tonga and disputes involving pigs and crops were common.

One afternoon the students and I were called to examine a pig which had been caught in a neighbour's pig trap by the hind leg, dragging it up into the air. Sadly, the pig was too heavy and instead of remaining suspended in mid-air, it had crashed head first onto the hard ground, severely damaging its neck. Slaughter and home consumption was the prognosis.

The dispute ended in the island's courthouse and I was called as an expert witness. Tongan law being based on English Law, I was not allowed inside until I was called. So, I was seated on the courthouse step in front of the open door, able to hear all the proceedings while being fed bananas, paw-paw and coconuts by the local policeman's wife until it was my turn.

After a lengthy session, during which I was asked as many irrelevant questions as relevant ones, His Honour turned to the prosecutor and defence counsel and informed them that as they had already taken up much of my valuable time, he was going to dismiss me. He then turned to me with all the gravity of an undertaker saying "thank you Kolini for giving us your valuable time, you may relieve yourself now!"



Welcome Amelia

Jing, Mike and Kenny have recently welcomed a baby daughter and sister, Amelia, into their family.

Photo from David Purling

Looking ahead

August 23rd is International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. Although we think of the slave trade ending during the mid to latter part of the 19th century, it continues to day in more subtle ways.

September 1st is World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation

September 1 to October 4th is the Seasons of Creation when the Christian family unites in a worldwide celebration of prayer and action to protect our common home.

As followers of Christ from around the globe, we share a common role as caretakers of God's creation. We see that our wellbeing is interwoven with its wellbeing. We rejoice in this opportunity to care for our common home and the sisters and brothers who share it.

This year, the theme for the season is

A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God.

One useful resource for you to watch is the video series produced by UCFAMS and the EAG – **Lessons from Covid-19 for the Climate Emergency** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2KelfQhz4XY-sjDb-dcJjg> OR just type **UCFAMS video**

September 5th is Teachers Day – when we give thanks for those teachers who guided us on our way.

September 21st is International Day of Peace. The theme for 2021 is 'Lets Shape Peace Together'. 'Peace Day' was established in 1981 by the UN General Assembly to commemorate and strengthen the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and all peoples.

September 29th is International Day to raise 'Awareness of Food Loss and Waste'. It is estimated that Australians waste 7.3 million tonnes of food per year – equivalent to about 300kg per person or one in five bags of groceries. Food waste accounts also for more than 5% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions.