

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

June 2022

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

Welcome to our June edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

This month features a reflection on “a God who is always on the move” by Diana Butler Bass.

Cynthia Story has contributed a follow-up piece on the “Ultimate Consequence” and Doug Hosking shared the good and the bad of travel in flooded Queensland.

Jenny Swanbury shares her thoughts on black swans.

We also bring news from Morialta, dates of coming events and a book review by Marie Elson.

The cut-off date for the next edition will be **1st July**. Either drop a copy in to Nicole at the office or call/email Colin on 0427 122 106 or snout-n-about@bigpond.com

Go well.

The Rock That Rolls

Adapted from *Freeing Jesus* (HarperOne) c. Diana Butler Bass, 2021



The Shining Cliffs at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico

I stood in the blazing sun in the Zen garden at Ghost Ranch, in Abiquiu, New Mexico, now a retreat centre of the Presbyterian Church, looking up at the Shining Cliffs, a massive formation dating back some 165 million years. “The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer,” proclaims the psalmist, “my God, my rock in whom I take refuge”. “On this rock I will build my church,” said Jesus. Indeed, scholars argue whether Jesus pointed to his friend Peter when saying this – or to himself. But other verses are clearer. “The rock was Christ,” said Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 10:4); and even Peter referred to Jesus as “a living stone . . . a cornerstone” (1 Pet. 2:4, 6).

As I stood in the silence, the words from that Larry Norman song came to mind: “He’s the rock that doesn’t roll.” Smiling, I prayed, eyes shut as if seeking deeper sight, feeling solidarity with the earth and God.

Then, a low rumble followed by a thunderous crash interrupted the silence. I looked to the sky, fearing a bomb at Los Alamos had exploded, searching the blue for a nightmarish mushroom cloud. There was, indeed, a cloud. Not in the sky, but lower. The Shining Cliffs were shrouded in red dust. The rumbling continued, and when the dust dissipated, I could see huge boulders tumbling from the top of the cliffs, as the sheer rock face collapsed. The earth literally quaked, not from within, but from massive stones smashing against the ground, as if hurled by angry gods.

When it was over, newly revealed layers of ancient red rock reflected the sun and at the base of the mount, a pile of crushed boulders awaited the next flooding rain, all in anticipation of a watery erosion that would turn them into soil and dust. What came down to earth remade the very earth on which it landed – the dynamism of creation, which never ceases its restless work to make the earth anew.

We humans have a habit of domesticating God. Christians turn Jesus into a static figure, the one who is “the same yesterday and today and forever.” Perhaps the thundering rock is too much for us. Yet God remains the One who “shatters,” as C. S. Lewis once remarked.

To read the Bible fairly, with open eyes, is to discover a God who is always on the move, the wind across the sands and the watercourses in the desert, embodied in a people who tend toward wandering, whose first prophets, Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, journeyed from Ur to follow a sacred call. The ancient Hebrew people were not terribly good at settling, their occasional stability interrupted by exile, displacements, and pilgrimage aplenty; they were a people who knew God in the wilderness.

This same restless movement is part of Jesus’s story. He was born on a journey away from his parents’ home, an immigrant to Egypt escaping political violence. As a man he was chased out of a synagogue by his own neighbours and found himself a peripatetic preacher and prophet. Even his last night and day on earth were not settled; he was tossed from one legal authority to another, and his final journey was a cruel pilgrimage to execution. This God – this Jesus — is met along the paths of spiritual and political upheaval.

Diana Butler Bass is an American historian of Christianity and an advocate for Progressive Christianity. Bass is author of 11 books and is currently an independent scholar who writes on American religion and culture. From 1995 to 2000, she wrote a weekly column on religion and culture for the New York Times Syndicate that appeared in more than seventy newspapers across America.

There will always be rocks in the road ahead of us. They will be stumbling blocks or stepping stones; it all depends on how you use them. (Friedrich Nietzsche)

Do Australians still help each other?

Adapted from National Church Life Surveys



Recently we observed “International Volunteers Week” at MUC, but how keen are Australians on community service?

Over the past few years, we’ve seen an ever-growing trend in advertising. “You”, the customer, are the most important person in the world. Some suggest we are becoming more individualistic and competitive, losing our sense of community. This has led to the criticism that Australian society is becoming more self-serving.

But is this true? Do Australians buy into self-centredness or is altruism still alive in our society?

In November 2021, an Australian Community Survey gave a group of ordinary Australians a list of 10 acts of service or advocacy. They were asked to tick which activities (if any) they engaged in, within the past year.

Results show that 75% of those surveyed had undertaken at least one of the 10 activities in the past 12 months.

Of those surveyed, 40% said they gave money to a charitable organisation. Just over a third (34%) said they took action to reduce personal impact on the environment.

Other actions taken included: visiting someone in hospital (23%); helping someone through a personal crisis (not sickness) (23%); giving some of your possessions to someone in need (21%); lending or giving money to someone outside

your family (21%); helping a stranger in need (15%); caring for someone who was very sick (15%); contacting an MP or counsellor on a public issue (8%); helping someone abusing alcohol or drugs (7%) and none of the above (25%)

Interestingly, donating to charity was more common in older age groups – 58% of people over 65; 42% of people aged 50-64; 35% of people aged 35-49; and 30% of 18-34 year-olds. Similarly reducing their impact on the environment showed the same older to younger trend (44%, 41%, 29% and 27%).

However, with other activities – helping a stranger, helping someone through a personal crisis or helping someone abusing drugs – the younger the age group, the more likely the person will have ticked that activity. As an example – helping someone through a personal crisis was highest in 18-34 year-olds (29%), followed by 23% in 50-64 year-olds, 19% in 35-49 year-olds and 18% in over 65’s.

Church goers also make a strong contribution to their community. A 2016 NCL Survey found that 64% of attenders were involved in unpaid voluntary work for a club, organisation or association (including church) over the previous 12 months. About 46% were involved in community groups such as community service, care and welfare groups (22%); sport and recreation groups (15%); school or youth groups (8%); and social action, justice or lobby groups (6%).

In the 2016 survey, an overwhelming majority (96%) of attenders had been involved in at least one listed charitable action over the previous 12 months. Again, the most common (76%) was donating money to charity or lending money to others outside their own family (51%). Around 40% had given possessions to someone in need and many church attenders (43%) also assisted ‘another’ by helping them through a personal, non-medical crisis.

Is it possible to forgive in a world full of evil?

Adapted from an article by Stan Grant presented on the ABC Religion and Ethics Report

“The fiercer the struggle against the injustice you suffer, the blinder you will be to the injustice you inflict” – Miroslav Volf, who is considered to be one of the greatest living theologians.

So, can the quest for justice blind us to our own injustice?

In chapter 7: verse 5 of the King James version of the Bible, Matthew writes: “Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye.”

Justice itself depends on us seeing with the eyes of “others”. As Volf says, “the will to embrace the unjust precedes agreement on justice.”

Consider the example of Archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa? He looked for reconciliation through truth. He would heal the wounds of apartheid through forgiveness.

Grant asks himself the question: “Is it possible to forgive those who have committed such crimes against you?” As an Indigenous Australian Grant is unable to separate himself from

his history. His family bears the scars of the crimes committed since European settlement.

But to the question “Can I embrace?” he answers “I must.” To the question “But does this not absolve the perpetrator?” he answers “No.”

Volf also asks: “When shed blood cries out to heaven, is not prophetic rage called for?”

Right now in Ukraine how can we speak of forgiveness and embrace? Do not the crimes of Vladimir Putin cry out for prophetic rage?

Yes. And yet...





Uniting Church SA Investment Fund

Adapted from the UC Invest autumn newsletter

In the words of the Moderator, Bronte Wilson, the UC Invest is an integral and important part of the ministry of the Uniting Church in South Australia.

UC Invest offers competitive investment services to individuals, congregations and organisations associated with the Uniting Church.

In their statement of Profit and Loss for the year ended 31 December 2021, UC Invest declared a revenue of \$5.9 million with \$2.9 million paid to investors and \$2.3 million paid out in grants to Uniting Church SA. Administration costs were \$400,000.

As at 31st March 2022, benefits paid to investors in terms of fixed term investment rates were significantly higher than one of the large Credit Unions. UC Invest was offering 1.25% and 1.6% on a 12- and 24-month fixed term deposit, compared with 0.4% and 0.65% by the Credit Union with 50,000 members.

As well as supporting various groups and churches within the Uniting Church, UC Invest gave significant financial support to bushfire recovery and Uniting Care.



Uniting World End of Financial Year Appeal



"I alone cannot change the world. But I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." Mother Teresa

Together we can make ripples of change.

Ranjit and her family were in trouble. As a widow with a disability, the pandemic and its lockdowns left her and her sons on the edge of survival. When the family came to the attention of our partner, the Church of North India (CNI), they provided urgent food and medical supplies.

But the ripples didn't stop there...

UnitingWorld is a valued partner of the Australian Government, receiving flexible funding under the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP) to carry out poverty alleviation, gender equality and climate change projects overseas.

Each \$1 donated will attract more funding to reach more people. We have committed to contribute at least \$1 for every \$5 we receive from the Australian Government, which means right now your gift can go up to six times as far, helping us extend the reach of our programs.

Your tax-deductible donation will make a huge impact and transform lives. Please give generously.

<https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/endpoverty>

How accurate is your RAT? It's more than just looking for lines!

Adapted from an article in the Conversation by Ashwin Swaminathan, Senior Lecturer, Australian National University – 27th January 2022.

Getting the right answer from a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) is not as straightforward as reading one or two lines. RATs are a convenient diagnostic tool to detect COVID virus fragments in nasal secretions or saliva. They are designed to be self-administered and give an answer in minutes. Detecting infection early is critical to preventing spread and allowing persons at risk of severe disease to get timely access to close monitoring and new life-saving therapies. However, it is important to understand how to best use this diagnostic tool to reduce transmission and unnecessary disruptions to our lives.



Key concepts

There are three key concepts to understanding how accurate a diagnostic test is: sensitivity, specificity and pre-test probability (disease prevalence).

"Sensitivity" refers to how well a test picks up the presence of a disease – 80% sensitivity means that if 100 people with COVID are tested – 80% will be positive and 20 will give a false negative result.

"Specificity" is whether a test correctly identifies the absence of a disease – 98% specificity means that out of 100 people

free of infection 98 would test negative – and two people would have a "false positive".

The "pre-test probability" of infection is the likelihood a person has COVID based on their clinical symptoms, exposure history and/or the background community rate of infection. The pre-test probability ("disease prevalence") varies between households, workplaces and communities and provides context to a RAT kit's sensitivity and specificity.

The greater the exposure – the more likely a positive RAT means infection. If RAT is negative after known exposure – it is important to retest after 48 hours. If history of exposure is unknown or limited, then confirm a positive RAT with PCR to avoid unnecessary quarantine.

To get the most out of your RAT:

- follow the kit instructions closely;
- time your test – wait 48 hours after exposure and preferably repeat between 5–7 days post exposure;
- if your test result is a surprise based on your assessment of pre-test probability (you think there is a good chance of a false positive or negative result), then take appropriate precautions and repeat the test 24–48 hours later or have a PCR test done.

The full article provides different scenarios of real-life examples using a RAT. You can read the full article by typing "How accurate is your RAT? 3 scenarios show it's about more than looking for lines" into your search engine.



Black Swan
A rare bird – How Europeans got the black swan wrong (in May Beyond 2020 Vision)

I read with interest ‘A rare bird – How Europeans got the black swan wrong’ in last month’s Vision.

I have always been drawn to black swans. Our family lived in close sight of black swans where they lived on the River Murray Ramco lagoon. From our verandah we could see swans, pelicans and many other water birds. We children played by the lagoon building huts, exploring the cliffs and other adventures and when the water was deep enough, we went swimming. In fact, we learned to swim in the lagoon, but that’s another story. We were also somewhat aware that Aboriginal people would have lived in these places.

In late September last year I decided to revisit the lagoon. As usual in my frequent visits to this significant part of the country and my life, I could see the river and lagoon from the road at the top of the cliffs. I drove past the Lutheran Church, down the hill and stopped to remember and to soak in the environment. Here I stayed awhile in front of our childhood home built on a fruit block almost a century ago with

limestone blocks from the nearby cliffs. This is where our parents lived for 48 years. Our neighbour from our generation was at home where he has lived all of his life and I shared a happy time sitting, drinking tea and chatting with him and his wife on their verandah. I have always been drawn to verandahs, but that too is another story. Overlooking the lagoon the three of us were intrigued at the sight of so many swans on the lagoon and no pelicans. ‘Perhaps the pelicans have flown to Lake Eyre’ was the comment.

I drove to the other side of the lagoon and here to my surprise saw numbers of groups of adult swans with partly grown youngsters. It looked like a large swan nursery or kindergarten. Were they too old to be called cygnets? It was a joy to see.

Love of the black swan compelled me to have a black swan embroidered on my ordination stole (pictured above). It was my secret delight, and at one stage in my earlier life in creative imagination I pictured flying away on the back of a black swan when finally leaving this life.

Yes, ‘A rare bird’ Vision article is enlightening and helps us to see our often unaware or unconscious views in life. The article also prompted my remembering of the swans and of the place of the first half of my life.

Jenny Swanbury

The Consequence – surely not!

Cynthia Story

I decided that I will not give in to, or be overcome by, the angry noise of road traffic – so close – but a legal distance from my sphere on the footpath. Why should my wheelchair and I disappear into non-existent beings?

This part of the world is also my rightful world. The scented leaves on green trees with their various branch patterns that delight my eye – and the highlight of birdsong, sometimes loud and raucous, threatening to equal the voices of the menace below!

I love the freshness of wind on my face – even mixed with drops of safe rain... with sun... moderate in summer.

Besides all these really important factors, can leave my home on my own – I have freedom and am in control of my life!

So... what to do with the din of the racing jungle on the roads? How am I to change the angry and menacing cloud of locusts?

Can my imagination work them into sweeping birds – silver gliders – coloured flames racing along above the offenders ... the roar immediately turning as silent as a snowfall? Imagination stretched???

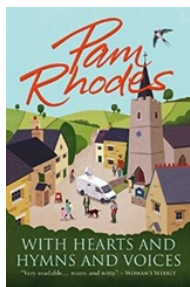


Is this going to be too hard, even for my fertile imagination?

But this vision of quiet snowfall appeals to me. Gentle and mystical – to bring peace and calm – and quiet.

Such a mind change will not be easy – but possible.

Book Review



With Hearts and Hymns and Voices by Pam Rhodes – presenter of the world's number one religious television program for many years.

When the BBC "Songs of Praise" team decides to broadcast a Palm Sunday service from a small idyllic Suffolk village, not everyone is happy.

The vicar, Clive, is amiably absent-minded, but his practical wife Helen gets on well with the television team - perhaps a little too well, where the charming, enigmatic Michael is concerned.

Charles, the Parish Council chairman, is deeply opposed and resents the enthusiasm of other villagers - including his wife Betty. As the outside broadcast vehicles roll in, the emotional temperature rises.....

For all those who enjoy watching "Songs of Praise", this is a 'must read.'

It also gives an appreciation of what has to go on 'behind the scenes', to prepare a half hour program.

The book is available in the church library and I hope all readers enjoy it as much as I did.

Marie Elson

Kids Under Cover

Adapted from KUC website

Kids Under Cover is 'a not-for-profit' organisation dedicated to preventing youth homelessness. It was established in 1989 by Ken Morgan, a well-known Melbourne identity, who felt compelled to respond to the findings of the Senate National Inquiry into youth homelessness, known as the 'Burdekin Report'.

Ken himself was a homeless teenager after his mother died unexpectedly and he found himself sleeping on a park bench in Sydney's Kings Cross. Woken by a local policeman on the early morning beat, Ken appeared dazed and confused. The officer took pity and sat down beside him. Three hours later Ken's life had been changed forever by a complete stranger who had shown Ken that there were people who really did care. Ken has never forgotten the message of hope delivered on that significant day. In turning his life around, Ken continues to honour the commitment he made all those years ago to pursue philanthropic interests.

After hearing about the disturbing findings in the 'Burdekin Report', Ken began raising funds to build a house for homeless young mothers. This, coupled with Ken's passion to increase the support offered to young people facing homelessness, instigated the birth of 'Kids Under Cover'.

Although Ken retired from the 'Kids Under Cover' board in 2012, he remains an active advocate for preventing youth homelessness.

Kids Under Cover build relocatable, one- and two-bedroom studios, with a bathroom, in the backyard of a family or carer's home. The extra room relieves overcrowding, eases tension and provides young people with a secure and stable environment. The studio remains in place for as long as it's required. 'Kids Under Cover' will relocate a studio up to four times during its lifetime, to help other families in need.

One way that 'Kids Under Cover' raises money is providing a hassle-free alternative to selling your old car. By supporting 'Kids Under Cover' you will also help prevent youth homelessness in Australia. They pick up your vehicle, auction it off, and the proceeds from the sale will help fund their work in preventing youth homelessness. Plus, your vehicle donation is 100% tax deductible!



Margaret's faithful Toyota Corolla departing Moules Rd to 'help' homeless kids.

Fellowship News



At our May meeting, over 20 people came to hear our speaker, physiotherapist Mrs Joan Townsend, share with us 'Tips for over 65s'. She invited us to share our personal concerns and provided helpful advice.

She also demonstrated, by lying on the floor, various techniques for getting up from a fall, and challenges in negotiating steps. We were given handouts of 'essential skills' to help remember a variety of other techniques.

Joan stayed on to share a provided lunch and phoned later to thank us for our warm hospitality and gift of appreciation.

We look forward to our next meeting on June 16th, when we will go to the planetarium at Mawson Lakes to see the marvels of the universe, followed by lunch at the Mawson Lakes Hotel.

Joan Wagner

Beyond the Garden Gate – 15th June



A Forum to assist local Churches to look at broader ways to engage in the health and well-being of God's Creation, as local churches and as an ecumenical community working together.

Changed the church light bulbs? Reduced water consumption? Recycle bins filling? Added solar panels? So, where to from here?

Churches Together Justice and Peace, the UCA's Environmental Action Group, Anglican Creation Care Network and Catholic Council for Integral Theology have drawn together a diverse panel of theologians & biblical scholars, ecology practitioners, farmers and youth leaders, so that together, we can listen and learn, and understand deeper ways of engaging as individuals and Churches.

Morialta Uniting Church on Wednesday 15th June from 6.30 to 9.00pm or join the online stream

Register on line at <https://form.jotform.com/213467728854064>

Donation from \$10

Or telephone 0475 016 789 or contact Colin Cargill

God calls us to care for all life.

Faith in Action: Witnessing life in Palestine – 22nd June

A forum for Churches Together to listen, learn and understand more about Palestine & Israel through the work of Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network (PIEN) and eye witness accounts of current day Holy Land.



Wednesday 22nd June at Burnside City UC – 6.30pm for 7pm – 9pm. Register at <https://form.jotform.com/221298448009864> for face to face & streamed.

Libraries

"When trouble strikes, head to the library. You will either be able to solve the problem, or simply have something to read as the world crashes around you."

Lemony Snicket

Doug's Queensland Adventure

Doug Hosking recently returned from a visit to Queensland. The departure from Adelaide and the flight to Brisbane were uneventful but other parts of the trip were a mix of setbacks and warm reunions.

In Brisbane Doug caught up with friends, including Dr Chris Kennedy and wife Rosemary, Joan Macleod, John and Val Mavor, Frank and Adele Dingle – all being exRabaulites. (exRabaulites are people who have lived and worked in Rabaul, PNG.)

Staying in the Kennedy's 4th floor apartment in New Farm, Doug looked out on some of the numerous piles of flood-damaged goods on the footpaths around Lower New Farm.

The next day Doug received the first of his holiday setbacks. The Tuesday Brisbane – Cairns train was cancelled. Then he discovered that there were no sleepers available on the Wednesday train, so he had to be content with sitting up for the overnight journey.

However, Tuesday brought a ray of sunshine when Queensland Rail confirmed that a sleeper berth was available and after an 80-minute wait, the booking was confirmed.

Still the changes to his travel plans did allow Doug to visit Bribie Island where he went for walks, visited the museum and was introduced to WORDLE.



Doug finally departed Caboolture Station on time on Wednesday at 5.35pm and enjoyed a dinner of roast lamb and vegetables, followed by fruit square and custard. Berths were made up and Doug settled in for the long overnight journey.

However, carriage lights came on at 4.50 am followed by an announcement – “Sorry to inform you, we are back at Bundaberg”. Overnight flooding and damage to track and signals had closed the line. Passengers would proceed by coach. Doug had not realised that the train had been going backwards for the last few hours.

The galley (which had been cleaned and shut down) was reopened for coffee, and later a cheese and ham toasty. So much for a flash breakfast Doug had looked forward to!

However, as a bonus, Doug met more people who had worked in Rabaul and on Manus while waiting.

The trip to Cairns consisted of 3 separate coaches: Bundaberg to Mackay, Mackay to Townsville, Townsville to Cairns with meal and toilet stops. On the way, they passed 3 fully laden coal trains (2 diesel engines at the front; another in the middle), 2 empty coal trains and several freight trains.

Doug arrived at Cairns station at 5am on Friday and was relieved to be greeted by the hotel receptionist with “Your room is ready. Have a shower, have breakfast, then have a good rest.” He did and cancelled his Barrier Reef trip.

Fortunately, with all the rain outside, he was able to spend a restful afternoon watching the Test Match.



The Sky Train to Kuranda provided great views and even though it was very hot and humid – even the locals were complaining – Doug wandered through the village. When he returned to the station for refreshment, he discovered

that his car attendant/waiter was named Ci and born in Papua New Guinea. Ci had been adopted by an Australian family when he was very young and his adoptive grandparents lived in Tea Tree Gully.

They got on famously, speaking a mix of Tok Pisin and English, and later Ci's supervisor took Doug aside to say how he (Doug) had made Ci's day. Ci also made Doug's day by having him upgraded to Gold Class for the journey back to Cairns. Doug had a whole carriage to himself and enjoyed the “goodies” given to the Gold Class passengers.

For Doug it was like a reunion as well as a tour of North Queensland. About half the congregation at the Anglican Church in Cairns on the Sunday were Islanders. Even the priest had formerly been a didiman (agricultural worker) at Keravat, near Rabaul.

After a visit to the Yacht Club for lunch with more friends from Rabaul, Doug returned to the hotel and was happy to watch cricket while the rain bucketed down outside.

Doug's return to Adelaide was uneventful and being home, as well as no heavy downpours, was good.

Churches Together SA (previously SA Council of Churches)

Adapted from CTSA website and Newsletter

CTSA supports the wider Christian community, by celebrating the oneness in our diversity, and promoting ecumenical understanding as God's people. We journey together, exploring faith and life matters, growing in our friendship and spiritual life through drawing on our Christian Scriptures and the teachings of Jesus. We seek to express our spiritual understanding, through promoting justice, seeking peace and living with compassionate care for all creation.

If you would like to support Churches Together SA and also help the environment – why not buy a Churches Together SA

Market Bag for only \$5. Bags can be collected from CTSA Office, 5/7 Gray Street, Kilkenny during office hours (9am – 3:30pm Monday – Thursday).

If you would like to pay cash, please contact admin@churchestogethersa.org.au beforehand.

You can also support CTSA by making a donation online at <https://checkout.square.site/buy/IQ2X4SNTDMS5HPM6ODNC6U6H> or calling 0475 016 789.



Religious Freedom Debate – marginalises religious minorities

Adapted from an article by Jonathan Foye published in Insights July 21

Ordained Uniting Church minister Rev. Dr Elenie Poulos recently published her PhD dissertation, *The politics of belief: the rise of religious freedom in Australia*. The thesis draws on Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the religious freedom debates that have taken place in Australia over the past 35 years.



The dissertation finds that the debate about religious freedom, once about the rights of minorities, has since been used to legitimise ongoing discrimination. Elenie was interested in why and how religious freedom became such a hot topic in public debate.

Elenie's academic background is in linguistics, so it was fairly natural for her to explore this by looking at how we talk about religious freedom in public and political discourse and how this has changed over the years. The thesis was based on four articles written for publication in academic journals.

Elenie found that there are three discourses of religious freedom in Australian public debate that emerged over three phases:

- the 'religious diversity' discourse – phase one (1984-2010);
- the 'balancing rights' discourse – phase two (2011-2014);

- the 'freedom of belief' discourse – phase three (2015-2019).

All three discourses are present to varying degrees at all times, but one is clearly dominant in each phase.

To identify these discourses, Elenie asked 3 questions: What is the threat? Who do we need to protect? And what is being freed?

Elenie wanted to explore whose voices were being heard, how they were framing religious freedom and whose voices were being lost or marginalised. What she found was that the 'freedom of belief' discourse has effectively marginalised the voices of minority religious groups in the public discourse of religious freedom.

"The idea of religious freedom once focussed on protecting people from minority religious groups from discrimination, prejudice, harassment and vilification (the 'religious diversity' discourse). But religious freedom has become a powerful tool to legitimise ongoing discrimination against LGBT+ people and undermine progressive social politics. The ongoing debate has marginalised the needs of people from minority religious groups.

"How we talk about things matters. If we want to build a society where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to flourish, then we need to be careful to ensure that our language supports and contributes to this in positive and hopeful ways, even when we disagree."

Rev. Dr Elenie Poulos' PhD dissertation is available online via Macquarie University.

Talanoa Meeting – NCCA Assembly

From the Australian Catholic Bishops Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace



On Friday, the 27th of May, the National Council of Churches held a 'Talanoa' Assembly featuring Rev. James Bhagwan, who provided an insightful update from the Pacific Ecumenical Community.

Rev. James is an ordained minister of the Methodist Church of Fiji and General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) since 2018.

He uses his ministry to advocate for climate justice, with particular emphasis on the ties of the people of the Pacific with the ocean, and for ecumenism and interreligious dialogue. He believes that Christians have a key role in

advocating for environmental issues and uncovering practical solutions to environmental challenges. This includes speaking truth to power at all levels and the changes every individual can make in their own homes, workplaces and churches.

The Assembly title "Talanoa" referred to a word shared by Tongans, Samoans and Fijians. It is a generic term referring to a conversation, chat, sharing of ideas and talking with someone. Talanoa can be formal, as between chiefs and his or her people, and it can be informal, as between friends in a kava circle. Talanoa is also used for different purposes; to teach a skill, to share ideas, to preach, to resolve problems, to build and maintain relationships, and to gather information. The goal of talanoa is to provide an inclusive and participatory setting for everyone to share knowledge and experience, leading to mutual understanding and better decision making.

An excellent title for an ecumenical assembly of churches and church members!

Take care how you live your life

"Take care in how you live your life. It may be the only Bible some people may read." In the words of Maya Angelou, "Each of us, famous or infamous, is a role model for somebody, and if we aren't we should behave as though we are – cheerful, kind, loving, courteous. Because you can be sure someone is watching and taking deliberate and diligent notes." I don't know about you, but that makes me want to read my Bible for some guidance in how to live that way!"

from "Kissing Fish: Christianity for People Who Don't Like Christianity" by Roger Wolsey



Congratulations!

Bob and Merv were recently awarded certificates of appreciation by Campbelltown City Council, in recognition of their 25 years of service removing graffiti.

Happy Birthday!

Brian recently celebrated his birthday while in the Modbury Hospital Rehab Ward. Brian came down to the café in a wheel chair to celebrate with Rev. Bob, Rhonda, Margie Cheel, Keith and Kathy Truscott.



Brian is now at Lutheran Homes Glynde Nursing Home respite area, and he would love to see anyone if you have a half hour to spare. If visiting, you will need to have had your flu injection for this year and proof of your vaccinations and the flu injection. Visiting times are Monday to Friday 10am to 12noon and 1pm – 3pm.

The right religion?

“Many Christians believe that Christianity is the ‘right’ religion. ... The reality is, it does not matter what religion you confess. If it isn’t helping others ... who cares what you call yourself.”

Professor T Marquis Ramsey, Institute for Divinity Research, Thomasville, North Carolina

Dates recognised by Morialta

Worship and Faith Education Team



June 19th – 25th – Refugee Week

The theme for 2022 is “Healing”. Australia and the rest of the world have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to hit the reset button on how we behave towards one another. Mainstream and refugee communities alike can draw upon shared hardship to heal wounds, to learn from each other and to move forward. Healing can occur through storytelling, through community and also through realisation of our intrinsic interconnectedness as individuals. Use the Refugee Week website to find resources and events that will facilitate this healing and subsequent rejuvenation. Let us make 2022 much more than just a footnote in the pandemic years, let us heal together and emerge a more fulfilled and connected society.

June 22nd – 45th Anniversary of the Uniting Church

A day when we celebrate the coming together of Methodists, Congregationalists and Presbyterians into ‘One Church’ family.



**WE ARE A
MULTICULTURAL CHURCH**

July 3-10th – NAIDOC Week

The theme is ‘Get Up! Stand Up! and Show Up!’ We all must make a genuine commitment and support and secure institutional, structural, collaborative, and cooperative reforms. It’s also time to celebrate the many who have driven and led change in our communities over generations – they have been the heroes and champions of change, of equal rights and even basic human rights.



‘Getting Up, Standing Up, and Showing Up’ can take many forms. We need to move beyond just **acknowledgement, good intentions, empty words and promises, and hollow commitments.**

The relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians needs to be based on **justice, equity, and the proper recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ rights.**

‘Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!’ with us to amplify our voices and narrow the gap between aspiration and reality, good intent and outcome.



July 17th – One Great Sunday of Sharing

The declaration that the Uniting Church in Australia is a multicultural Church for

all God’s people sets us on a journey of continual discovery and renewal. *One Great Sunday of Sharing* helps us to keep this focus at the heart of our common life in the UCA. It is held each year on the 3rd Sunday in July, or another date best suited to the local setting.

Uniting Church congregations, faith communities and fellowship groups are invited to come together to share stories of being both guest and host, in personal life, in relationship with other cultures, and of our experience of being Christian in a multicultural Church and a nation that is both multicultural and multifaith.

It is an opportunity to spend time together with people whose culture and background is different from our own.