

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

March 2023

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

Welcome to our March edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

A key outcome from Spring into Action was for us to get to know the Dawoodi Bohra community who use our facilities. As a starter, Carole Lyons and Zulfikar Adenwala have written an article on the history of the Dawoodi Bohras for Vision.

There is also a short 'history of Lent' as a time of reflection and sharing, more about the Indigenous Voice to Parliament,

an on-going history of our chairperson, Bruce and information about "Squirrel Brain"!

You will also find an article by Cynthia Story, and contributions from Marie Elson, Rev Bob and Fellowship.

The cut-off date for the next Vision will be **1st April 2023**. 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.

Lent

Adapted from an article published in the Conversation by Joanne M. Pierce, Professor of Religious Studies, College of the Holy Cross, and a Post on Patheos by Rev. Dr. Mark D. Robert, Fuller's Max De Pree Center for Leadership

Lent is a period of fasting and prayer observed in preparation for the celebration of Easter. The word has Germanic links and comes from the Middle English word for "spring". Technically Lent covers the 40 days before Easter, not counting the Sundays, or 46 days including Sundays.

The facts about the origin of the Lent are not as well known. We do know that by the 4th century, a regular practice of 40-day fasting had become common in Christian churches. This was linked to the Gospel story (Matthew 4:1-11) where Jesus spends 40 days in the wilderness to fast and pray.

However, the practice of fasting from food for spiritual reasons is found in the three largest Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In all three fasting is intimately connected with an additional focus on prayer and the practice of assisting the poor by giving alms or donating food.

Although Christian practices in the Roman Empire varied from area to area, a weekly fasting on Wednesday and Friday until mid-afternoon became common practice. In addition, Lent was a time for new converts and candidates for Baptism, as well as the clergy, to fast before the rite, which often took place at Easter.

As Christianity spread through Western Europe from the 5th through 12th centuries, the observance of Lent did as well. In the beginning only a few Lenten days were total fast days, but gradually fasting for all the days of Lent became common. By the end of the Middle Ages a meal was often permitted at noon.

In time, all Christians came to see Lent as a season to be reminded of their need for penitence and to prepare spiritually for the celebration of Easter.

Later, many Protestants rejected the practice of Lent, pointing out that it was nowhere required in Scripture. These Protestants saw Lent, at best, as something completely

optional for believers, and, at worst, as a superfluous Catholic practice that true believers should avoid altogether.

Some bishops and theologians specializing in church law specified restrictions such as no meat or meat products, dairy, or eggs to be consumed during Lent. The idea was to avoid self-indulgence at this time of repentance for one's sins. Marriage, a joyous ritual, was also prohibited during Lent.

In addition, people also engage in the practice of "giving up something" during Lent. Often this is a favourite food or drink, or another pleasurable activity, like drinking alcohol or watching television.

Protestant churches sometimes added special Lenten Bible studies or prayer meetings to prepare members for a deeper experience of Good Friday and Easter. Lent was a season to do something extra for God, not to give something up.

Other activities include making amends with estranged family and friends, reading the Bible or other spiritual writers, and community service.

However, if you think of Lent as a season to earn God's favour by your good intentions or good works, then you have got a theological problem. God's grace has been fully given to us in Christ. We cannot earn it by doing extra things or by giving up certain other things in fasting.

Though practices may have changed, Lent in the 21st century remains essentially the same as in centuries past: a time of quiet reflection and spiritual discipline. Millions of Christians – Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, and Independent – have found that recognizing the season of Lent enriches our worship and deepens our faith.





Reflection Groups

Morialta UC is offering 4 Lent Reflection groups for discussion, reflection and learning, commencing the week of the 28th Feb.

Groups will gather as follows:

- Wednesday afternoons (1.00pm) at the church, meeting around studies in Matthew's Gospel

- Tuesday afternoons (1:30pm) at the church
- Wednesday mornings (10.00am) at the church
- Friday nights (7:30pm) at Rhonda's home

These last three groups will be using the Uniting World Lent Reflection material.

Signup and attendance sheets are available in the foyer for you to register your interest.



Bruce Ind

Bruce was born in Adelaide but spent the first 6 months of his life living in a caravan with his parents, while his father was acting Station Master at Yunta. When the posting finished the family moved back to Adelaide and set up home in the West Croydon-Croydon Park area.

Bruce's 'church life' began in the nearby Gelland Methodist Church where he was one of the three Ind boys. His earliest memory of church is helping in activities around building 'the platform' for the Sunday School Anniversary. His other early memories of church are singing carols to 'old people' at Christmas and people smiling.

He attended Challis Gardens Primary School until year 7 when the family moved to Mt Gambier, where Bruce finished Primary School and moved to Mt Gambier High. Being part of scouts is one of his strongest memories of childhood – he was both a Scout Patrol Leader as well as a Cub Leader. After 5 years in Mt Gambier, the family returned to Adelaide and Bruce completed year 12 at Henley High School.

Bruce always wanted to be a teacher, having been strongly influenced by his Chemistry teacher and TV Professor Julius Sumner-Miller's "Why is it so?"

While he was studying to be a teacher his life took a major turn when he met the girl whose locker was next to his in Inorganic Chemistry. When Bruce discovered she was in between boyfriends he made his move and the rest – as they say – is history. Bruce and Anne were married in November 1975 and moved to their first teaching post in Whyalla in January 1976.

On returning to Adelaide in 1980, they purchased their home on Morialta Rd and became part of what is now Morialta UC. Bruce taught at Parafield and Norwood High before moving on to AMES to work with migrants.

As well as being Chairperson of Morialta UC, Bruce is a member of the Pastoral Care Team, convenor of Coffee and Chat, occasional Father Christmas, a member of Gateways and table and chair "setter upper" on Sunday morning before church. He was also a member of the Social Justice Team and currently has several roles within the wider Uniting Church. He has been a member of Assembly for many years, as well as being a member of both Synod and Wimala Presbytery Standing Committees and all that entails.

But Bruce is not just a 'church person'. He has made significant contributions to the community as a member of the Rostrevor Campbelltown Kiwanis Club where he has been secretary once, president twice and was awarded the George Hixson Medal in 2017. He has also been a volunteer for Guide Dogs SA/NT for 20 years, including 16 on the Board and he currently serves on the National Task Group of the Royal Commission into Disability.

His contributions to his church and community were recognised recently when he was awarded "The Morialta Community Award for February 2023". This award is made monthly to "someone whose business, work, or volunteer service in our community makes us proud."

If Bruce could change one thing in his life it would be for stem cell research to make it possible for him to drive a vehicle again. He would love to own and drive a Morris Minor Ute – no doubt with a Crows Flag flying from the bonnet!



Bruce being awarded the Morialta Community Award by the member Morialta, John Gardner.



Easter sights and sounds at Spicer UC

Spicer's biennial production of the Easter story has been attended by thousands of people over the course of its 25 year history.

You can follow the Easter story by coming to see the sights, hear the sounds, listen to the stories of those who were there. Wander through the market-place, walk along with the crowds like the disciples, experience the jeers and rejection and hear the words of Jesus.

March 29th, 30th, 31st
9.30am - 12noon

March 31st, 6.00pm

March 31st, 7.00pm

44a Fourth Ave,
St Peters

Will Parliament have obligations to consult 'The Voice'

The Langton/Calma report discusses the question of when parliament's "obligation to consult" the body might arise.

It suggests two triggers: when the laws in question are "overwhelmingly" related to Indigenous people, and when they are a "special measure" for Indigenous people as defined under the Racial Discrimination Act.

On the broader question of the Voice's role, the report says the purpose of the body — and its local components — is to involve Indigenous communities in government decision-making processes on laws that affect their lives.

The federal government has not endorsed the Voice model described in the report, but the prime minister has repeatedly referenced the 272-page document as evidence of the volume of publicly available detail about how such a body might function.



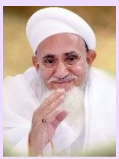
Tom Calma Marcia Langton

The Dawoodi Bohras of Australia & New Zealand

From Carole Lyons

Six hundred families of the Dawoodi Bohra community have found a home Down Under and have been leading peaceful and productive lives in Australasia since the early 1980s.

Arriving first in Sydney and then gradually spreading to different parts of the region, the community today has a pan-Australasian footprint, making it a valuable part of its vibrant and inclusive society.



The Dawoodi Bohras are a Muslim community living in over 40 countries across the world. Guided by their leader, His Holiness Syedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, Bohras are generally well educated, businesspeople and qualified professionals in various fields. With a distinctive culture, they strive to embrace modernity while staying true to their traditions and continue to be active, peaceful, and law-abiding citizens dedicated to the betterment of all humanity.



Worship in our church

The Bohras believe in one deity, Allah; in the Holy Quran as the word of Allah and in the sacred mission of the prophets and their successors. They follow the tenets of Islam and adhere to prescribed religious practices including reciting the Quran, the five daily prayers and fasting during the month of Ramadan.

Bohras adhere to the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed and trace their heritage to the Fatimi imams who were the direct descendants of the Prophet through his daughter Fatima. The Fatimi imams ruled over large parts of North Africa during the 10th to 12th centuries, bringing about an unparalleled efflorescence of learning, art and architecture.

In Islam Muhammad is considered the last of a series of prophets (including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon, and Jesus), and his message both consummates and completes the "revelations" attributed to earlier prophets.

Dawoodi Bohras around the globe firmly adhere to the values of fraternity, peace and humanity. Bohras are thus active advocates of goodwill and philanthropy and seek to help and uplift the less fortunate through various philanthropic endeavours.

Protecting the environment is a pressing concern in the 21st century. The United Nations has called on the global community to act on crucial environmental issues both individually and collectively.

The global Dawoodi Bohra community is aligned with this cause and works towards sustainable consumption and environmental conservation. Under the banner of Project Rise—the community's global philanthropic initiative—community members around the world are participating in the 'Turning the Tide' campaign aimed at creating widespread awareness about the perils of single-use plastics and ridding water bodies and beaches of plastic pollution.

Dawoodi Bohra women are highly educated and valued members of society. Bohra women pursue various fields of education and manage to balance the aspirations of modern life without forsaking traditional values that they hold dear. They are both effective homemakers and thriving entrepreneurs and career women.

In addition to playing vital roles in all community initiatives, Bohra women engage in a range of standalone programs tailored specifically for the furtherance of female empowerment in causes which translate into holistic growth and development for the entire community as well as society at large.

Dawoodi Bohra began settling in Adelaide around the 1980s, attracted by its affordable cost of living and reputed educational institutions. Now more than 30 years onwards, the city is host to a thriving community of Bohras who continue to benefit from its vibrant milieu and actively contribute to the development of its local communities and neighbourhoods.

For further information visit <https://aus.thedawoodibohras.com>



The newness of it all

From Cynthia Story

I haven't written about my mental arguments with the traffic around the streets of Norwood and Kent Town for a long time.

I had been looking for a solution, a banishment of noise, a way of finding a silent path through the torrents of violent storms of traffic.

The speed limit along the main part of Norwood Parade has been changed to 40kmh. No, it didn't seem as if any driver took notice of that. For a long time, I did my best to think of the electric wheelchair as gliding along the footpath like a silver swan – the very image I'd construed for the beasts themselves.

I am realising now there is no answer! Not the sort I want.

Accepting is a big word now – we are asked to look wisely at something which worries us, and to do our best to reach out with both hands – accept and hold it tight.

I need to accompany this acceptance with a measure of love and concern. Only then will I be able to step outside myself and create an area of equanimity – to let the noise be nothing at all.

There is the necessity of saying goodbye to that frantic person who began to write about these times in a mixture of frustration and anger. Does she disappear entirely?

I am not sure.

Congratulations to Sandy Barker

From the SA United Church Netball Association

Sandy Barker (Morialta Uniting Church) was awarded SAUCNA Life Membership at the 2023 Annual General Meeting. Sandy continues to work tirelessly for the association as a Board member, Association registrar, chair of the umpires and winter subcommittees, umpire, coach and fill-in court supervisor. Members of Morialta UC and SAUCNA thank Sandy for her long and continued service to netball and the association. An amazing contribution to the lives of young people!



Special days

March 8th – International Women's Day is a global holiday celebrated annually on March 8 as a focal point in the women's rights movement. This year you are invited to imagine a gender equal world, a world free of bias, stereotypes, and discrimination. A world that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive. A world where difference is valued and celebrated. <https://www.internationalwomensday.com>

March 21st – Harmony Day was created in 1999 to celebrate unity and diversity. Originally an Australian celebration, it is now marked worldwide. Events in our area are at Burnside Council and include a free concert at the Burnside Ballroom from 6.30-8.00pm on Tuesday 21st March – book at <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/harmony-week-concert-tickets-470747467347> where you can enjoy music, food, dance and culture. There is also a free reading of Persian poetry on 23rd from 10-11.30am.

March 25th – Earth Hour is a time to switch off all your lights for 60 minutes between 8.30 and 9.30pm. You will be joining hundreds of millions of people around the world in more than 7,000 cities in over 190 countries. It is a symbolic gesture of solidarity to show that we care about our planet and its future.

April 2nd - Palm/Passion Sunday Peace Walk – Churches Together SA is one of the key sponsors of this event and you are invited to join friends from across the Adelaide area to show support for peace and justice. Watch the Newsletter for further details.

April 6th – Maundy Thursday – Morialta UC community will be sharing a meal at the Tower Hotel, with reflections and prayers.

April 7th – Good Friday – Our service will be in the church hall. This service will not be live-streamed.

April 9th – Easter Sunday – Worship will be in the church at 9.30am, or you can join us online.



Morialta UC hospitality recognised

From 'In Harmony' – The Newsletter of Adelaide Male Voice Choir

“In October the Choir presented a Sunday Afternoon Concert at Morialta Uniting Church, where the audience and hospitality were second to none.” And in a note from Bill Shaw, the director, they really appreciate their friendly links with Morialta Uniting Church.

The choir will return to MUC on 15th October, 2023 for another concert.

They also have concerts at St Augustine's Church, Unley Rd at 2.00pm on 21st May, at the Maritime Museum Port Adelaide at 6.00pm on 27th May and at Newland, Victor Harbor at 2.00pm 18th June.

Thought for the week

From Rev. David Fleming, a retired Church of England Minister, who lives in Littleport, Cambridgeshire – contributed by Marie Elson.

The Flemings stuck to the old tradition of keeping their Christmas Crib on display until February 2nd – 40 days after Christmas – which is the Festival of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Technically it is the last feast day in the Christian year that is dated by reference to Christmas. All moveable feasts from now on are calculated with reference to Easter. So as Christmas ends so does our display! The Festival of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple is described in the Gospel of Luke 2:22–40. According to the gospel, Mary and Joseph took the Infant Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem forty days after His birth to complete the requirements of the Jewish law. St. Luke explicitly says that Joseph and Mary take the option provided for poor people (those who could not afford a lamb; Leviticus 12:8), sacrificing “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.” This explains the picture above.

In the temple, the baby was spotted by Simeon, an old man who had been promised by God that “he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah”. Simeon understood that this baby was the promised one and then prayed what is now known as the Nunc Dimittis, which prophesied the redemption of the world by that same Jesus: “Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light to lighten the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel”.

The elderly prophetess Anna was also in the Temple, and she too offered prayers and praise to God for Jesus, and spoke to everyone there of His importance. Through those old folk Jesus is revealed as the Saviour of the world.

I’ve preached a lot of sermons about this important moment in the life of Jesus and somehow it never gets stale. Today, for me there are three things that stand out.

The first, perhaps it’s because I am 85, is the fact that Simeon and Anna were both old folks very near the end of their life and yet they were the very ones who were able to recognise, to worship and to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ. It is right and proper that we should make enormous efforts to encourage young folk to feel welcome and take their place in our worshipping communities, but it is also right and proper to recognise the witness and faithfulness that so many of the older folk are giving to keep the doors open and the lights on, and to make sure we meet their needs.

Secondly to remember that Joseph and Mary could only offer the ‘poor people’s sacrifice’. The child Jesus wasn’t born to a wealthy family, he came to a family that had to struggle. Making ends meet is never easy but it needn’t stop us from making do. I bet Jesus knew that as he grew up and in part explains why he didn’t make a great thing of our ‘rights and privileges’ but in looking out for one another, he honed in on our ‘obligations and responsibilities’. Perhaps we could all do with a bit of that at this particular time!

The third strand is Simeon’s words about Jesus coming as a ‘light’. We are sometimes our own worst enemies. We are followers of the Light and we are carriers of the Light. The Light that no darkness can ever overcome! But too often the headlines we see, read and hear are ‘overcome’ by darkness. Don’t be taken in. Reflect the Light triumphant. I don’t mean Conga through each day singing “Always look on the bright side of Life!” but I do mean “Every day may not be good. But there is something good in every day.” Remember it and rejoice.

Count your blessings today!

The Listener

By Pastor Steve Garnaas-Holmes, *Unfolding Light*.
Contributed by Rev Bob

Trees stand in awe.
The sky holds out its hands.
Rivers flow with tears of joy.
Stars have that look in their eyes.
The ocean waves and applauds.
The sun doesn’t stop its praise,
even for a moment.
Birds hold open their arms.
The desert surrenders everything.
Every living person sings their life.
Your heart and lungs,
they keep on praying,
even when you’re asleep.
You don’t hear any of this.
But the Listener inside you does,
and is dancing all the time.



Find more on ‘Unfolding Light’ at www.unfoldinglight.net

And can it be that I should gain?

The words to this hymn were written by Charles Wesley, to celebrate his conversion, which he regarded as having taken place on 21st May 1738. Wesley had tried to follow what he thought was a calling in America, but had returned to his homeland after a depressing experience as a 31-year-old.



Wesley was in fact not a committed believer until many years after his initial efforts in spreading the Christian message. After graduating from Christ College and signing up for duty in the Anglican Church, he and brother John (a preacher) went to the American continent to work in the Georgia colony. Charles’ authoritarian ways did not sit well with the colonists, however, leading to a short tenure in the new world.

Soon after his return to England, Wesley had a faith- and life-altering experience at Aldersgate in London with Moravians, who showed him the void in his beliefs.

Historians believe this may be one of two hymns that he wrote soon after his conversion. His thoughts convey how stirred he felt, realizing that the Christ’s life intersected with his own. It was from the valley of depression, lifted to the peak of existence, that Wesley was spurred to write these words that Spring of 1738.

Do you suffer from Squirrel Brain?

Adapted from a post by Greg Smith on Patheos January 2023

Most people who have driven a car in the US will have experienced a squirrel run in front of them, notice the car, and try to figure out which way to run. Caught in the headlights trying to figure out which way to go they dart back and forth, spastically changing directions in their indecision.



Everyone has had these moments; Squirrel Brain emerges out of a sense of threat. The fight, flight, or freeze reflex kicks in, but your brain cannot decide which thing to do. At best, Squirrel Brain can ruin your day. At worst, it can get you squished.

Squirrel Brain is also the inability to decide what to do with resources. Out of a sense of threat, squirrels bury, unbury, and rebury their nuts to an obsessive level. *Squirrels can lose as much as 25% of their cached nuts to thieves – mostly other squirrels. Squirrels fail to recover up to 74% of the nuts they buried. And most of the nuts they dig up, are nuts that they steal from other squirrels!*

An example of Squirrel Brain would be the pandemic panic that we witnessed (and participated in) at the beginning of COVID. Everybody rushed to buy packs of toilet paper. We buried so many nuts – bottles of hand sanitizer – that much of it expired before we could use it. This manufactured scarcity convinced others that they, too, needed to hoard resources or steal them from others. Our societal Squirrel Brain caused a lot of problems. Whether the threat is real or perceived, sometimes everyone acts out of Squirrel Brain.

What are some ways to counteract this feeling of disconnectedness in the face of fear?

We can try the ‘Theory of the One Thing’. Instead of scrambling from here to there trying to get a hundred things done at once, stop and focus on one thing. Do that one thing well, and then move on.

In the 1991 comedy ‘City Slickers’, Curly gives Mitch some advice about the One Thing.

“Do you know what the secret of life is?” Curly asks. “No what?” Mitch replies. With a mysterious look in his eye, Curly holds up one finger. “This?” Mitch looks confused. “Your finger?”

Curly answers, “One thing. Just one thing. Stick to that and ignore everything else.”

Mitch says, “That’s great, but what’s the one thing?” With a gleam in his eye, Curly replies, “That’s what you’ve gotta figure out.”

So here are a few tips for how to counteract Squirrel Brain, and figure out the One Thing:

1. **Develop a routine and stick to it.** Monks often call this routine their ‘[Rule of Life](#)’.
2. **Take some time for yourself.**
3. **Try reading the Bible** but instead of focusing on the words, listen for the voice of Christ, who is the Word.
4. **Embrace ‘Contemplative Prayer’ as a way to focus less on the problems at hand.** Centre your prayer on things like your heartbeat, your breath, and just being with God in this present moment.

The fact is that Squirrel Brain is going to happen no matter what you do. However, there are ways you can focus on the ‘One Thing’ to limit those Squirrel Brain times.

Invite a friend to church

Adapted from NCLS survey

While relationships were the most important factor in people responding positively to an invitation to Christmas service, the data also shows that Australians are just as open to a general invitation to a weekly church service. Around 30% of Australians would be likely to accept such an invitation with 16% saying they were certain and 14% saying they are likely. Another 15% were unsure.

So why do people accept an invitation to attend:

- 30% replied that they would attend if they felt that it was important to the friend or family member who invited them;
- 16% replied they would attend if they could be confident that they would feel welcome;
- 13% said they would attend if the church was doing good work in the community, such as supporting vulnerable people;
- 12% said yes if the church was convenient for them to attend;
- 11% said they would attend if the church was inclusive of people of all sexualities and genders;

- 11% said yes if the service was short and would not take up much time;
- 7% would attend if they had an opportunity to informally talk with other people at the church when they visited;
- 7% also said yes if their friend or family member explained to them what happens at a church service.

However, 47% said none of the above would encourage them to attend a service with their friend or family member.

But getting an invitation may not be that easy. A recent National Church Life Survey found that the proportion of church attenders who have invited someone to church had fallen from 41% in 2016 to 33% in 2021.

It seems many Australians have little chance to be invited at all, with around 26% of Australians noting that they don’t have any close friends or family who attend church. Because of the importance of relationships, the difficulty in inviting those with no connection to church is clear.

The evidence suggests that churchgoers inviting their friends and family to church is the most effective way to draw in and welcome new church attenders.

Invite a friend – they may just come!



Fellowship News

The Fellowship year started on a 38 degree day so our "Picnic in the Park" became a "Picnic in the Church Hall". 17 members gathered to share a lovely evening filled with fun and friendship. After our picnic tea we celebrated Arlene's 80th birthday with coffee and cake.



At our next meeting, on Thursday March 16th at 10.00am, Janet Woodward, Secretary of Uniting Church Fellowship and Mission Support, will speak to us about the possibility of changing from a formal Fellowship Group to a more informal Friendship Group.

Everyone is welcome to join us at any of our meetings!

Margaret Clogg

Vision Survey



Over the next month survey forms will appear at Sunday morning tea and coffee, at Fellowship, at Gateways, at Coffee and Chat, at Art Circle and every other regular group meeting at Morialta.

You are invited to complete a copy of the survey and place it in the box in the foyer.

Adding your name is optional – we only seek honest answers!

Thanks for your support.

Helena and Colin

If God is...

“If God is the source of life, I worship God by living.

If God is the source of love, I worship God by loving.

If God is the ground of being, I worship God by having the courage to be more fully human; the embodiment of the divine.”

John Shelby Spong

Peace - not as the world gives.

From “Demanding Peace – Christian responses to War and Violence” by A.E. Harvey



Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you (John 14.27).

Our difficulty with this phrase is that in our Western culture there is no convention of ‘giving peace’. Our greetings and farewells are hellos and goodbyes; they make no mention of peace. We wish our friends good luck, a safe journey, a quick recovery; but in English it sounds odd to wish them peace. Hence the artificiality of the little ceremony which most Christians are now encouraged to perform in church — ‘Let us give one another the sign of peace.’ We exchange a handshake or an embrace. But in the language of our culture this would normally mean something like ‘How do you do?’, ‘I am glad to see you again.’ The word that does not seem appropriate is ‘peace’.

The same was true of the Greeks and Romans. ‘Hail’ and ‘Farewell’ are the nearest English equivalents to the greetings they normally exchanged with each other. To them, as to us, ‘peace’ would have sounded strange in this context. They would have been as puzzled as we are by the notion of the ‘world giving peace’. But the Jews, like most semitic peoples, had a different convention. In greetings and farewells they said, as they still say, shalom, ‘peace’. And this for good reason. Peace, in their culture, was regarded as the highest of earthly goods. To live at peace with foreign nations, at peace with other groups and communities, at peace with your friends and neighbours — this was one of God’s greatest gifts, the most



creative and desirable condition of society, something worth having at almost any cost — even, at times, at the price of a slight compromise with strict truth or honesty. Peace was what God willed for his people and included in his blessing: ‘May the Lord look kindly upon you and give you peace’ (Num. 6.26). And peace was what Jewish people instinctively wished for one another when they met: ‘Peace be to you and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have.’ (1 Sam. 25.6 NRSV).

So, in the culture within which Jesus lived, to ‘give peace’ was as natural as it is unnatural in ours. There would have been nothing strange in talking of the world ‘giving peace’. If you lived in that world, you would hear people ‘giving peace’ every day.

Note from the Editor –

Namaste – the Hindu word used when bringing your palms together and making a slight bow also literally means “Greetings to you.”



Malo e lelei – the Tongan greeting can be translated as “Thank you for being alive”. If you meet someone who is working you can say **Malo e ngaue**, or singing **Malo e hiva**.

Salamat – used in many Islamic nations means "Peace and blessings". Indonesians use Selamat pagi (morning), selamat siang (middle of day), selamat sore (evening) and selamat malam (night). They also greet according to what a person is doing, so **selamat makin** is used when you see a friend in a restaurant. Many languages have similar greetings such as **Bon appétit** (French) and **En guete** (Swiss German).

To say good bye to friends after dinner in Zuri Deutch (Zurich German) is **Schlaf gut mitternand** – literally sleep well altogether!

Wonders of creation

Adapted from the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

In a first for animals, clams have been found to make their own antibiotic.

Natural antibiotics typically come from bacteria or moulds. But a study has found that some clams make their own erythromycin – the first animals reported to possess this ability.



The spotted hard clam (*Meretrix petechialis*) has a mucus-covered outer lip that contains specialized antibiotic-producing cells. These may protect the clams, which lack adaptive, lymphocyte-based immune systems, from disease. The scientists found no sign of erythromycin-producing bacteria in the clam's tissues; instead, they noticed its DNA contained an erythromycin-making gene that resembled one used by bacteria but differed enough that the invertebrate version might have evolved independently.

The researchers found the gene in all the clam's life stages. Its genome also contains other genes needed to produce erythromycin, and a related species of clam possesses these antibiotic genes as well. The findings suggest scientists can engineer cells in other animals to produce their own antibiotic.

The unrecognised value of grass

Summary of article by Bianca Lopez, Pamela Hines and Caroline Ash published in Science Vol 377, Issue 6606

Meadows of Neptune seagrass (*Posidonia oceanica*) were once widespread throughout the Mediterranean but are threatened by climate change and human activities.

Grasses are highly diverse, yet only six or seven grass species provide most of the calories that humans consume. Domestication of grasses as crops began some 10,000 years ago and continues today to optimize the genetic basis of traits useful for crop cultivation. Techniques to maximize yields and utility of staple grain crops still dominate modern agriculture. In addition to cultivated fields and pastures, grassy ecosystems (both Poaceae and Alismatales) cover large swaths of the planet, forming terrestrial grasslands and submarine meadows. Grasslands create and stabilize fertile soil; store carbon; generate oxygen; and provide animal habitat, building materials, and food. Even so, these species and systems are often undervalued. Land-use conversion and climate change pose threats, as do climate change mitigation efforts that prioritize carbon stored in trees over that stored in grasslands. Nevertheless, grasses could offer solutions to many of our societal challenges, if only we would fully recognize their diversity and value.



How the internet started, (according to the Bible)

From an impeccable source!



In ancient Israel, it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a healthy young wife by the name of Dorothy (Dot for short). Dot Com was a homely woman, broad of shoulder and long of leg. Indeed, she was often called Amazon Dot Com.

And she said unto Abraham, her husband, "Why dost thou travel so far from town to town with thy goods when thou canst trade without ever leaving thy tent?" And Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load, but simply said, "How, dear?" And Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages saying what you have for sale, and they will reply telling you who hath the best price. The sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)."



Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums. And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all his goods at the top price, without ever having to move from his tent. To prevent neighbouring countries from overhearing what the drums were saying, Dot devised a system that only she and the drummers knew. It was known as Must Send Drum Over Sound (MSDOS), and she also developed a language to transmit ideas and pictures – Hebrew to The People (HTTP).

And the young men did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly take to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Sybarites, or NERDS. And lo, the land was so feverish with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of drums that no one noticed that the real riches were going to that enterprising drum dealer, Brother William of Gates, who bought up every drum maker in the land. Indeed he did insist on drums to be made that would work only with Brother Gates's drum heads and drumsticks. And Dot did say, "Oh, Abraham, what we have started is being taken over by others." And Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel, or **ebay** as it came to be known.

He said, "We need a name that reflects what we are." And Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators." "YAHOO," said Abraham. And because it was Dot's idea, they named it YAHOO Dot Com.

Abraham's cousin, Joshua, being the young Gregarious Energetic Educated Kid (GEEK) that he was, soon started using Dot's drums to locate things around the countryside. It soon became known as God's Own Official Guide to Locating Everything (GOOGLE)

That is how it all began. And that's the truth. I would not make up this stuff.

Warning: Please do not google this story or check with SNOPES fact checker – they will lie to you.