

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

June 2024

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Welcome to our June edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

Our lead article, taken from Sojourners Magazine, is about Christian Unity, with a supporting article by Rev John Gilmore President NCCA, later in this issue. Speaking together on justice and climate issues is more important than ever.

We have updates from Kimba and also bring you the usual mix of articles from Morialta folk for you to enjoy, including a few book reviews for you to consider.

We have an article about random acts of kindness and a particular example of one experienced by Doreen recently.

We always enjoy photos of events and articles provided by you, the readers, to include in Vision, so keep them coming!

The **deadline for the next Vision will be 28th June**. Either drop your contributions in to Nicole at the Office or call/email Colin on 0427 122 106 or snout-n-about@bigpond.com

Go well.

Christian Unity still Matters

Adapted from an article by Adam Russell Taylor in Sojourners



Sometimes the church can feel hopelessly divided: disagreements around sexuality are splitting apart Protestant denominations across the world. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has further divided the Orthodox Church. The Catholic Church continues to face fallout over its handling of sexual abuse and schisms over Pope Francis' efforts to create a more inclusive church. But while the church's divisions tend to grab headlines, examples of unity within the body of Christ often go unnoticed. Christianity is so often known for what it's against, rather than what it is for.

“Christian unity,” does not mean “Christians should all just agree” or “Christians should ignore our real differences in doctrine and tradition.” Instead, “Christian unity” comes when our shared identity in Christ can generate trust and build relationships that bear real fruit, increasing cooperation within the church to address challenges in the world.

There are often many good reasons why Christians are not unified, including differing views on issues at the heart of our faith – interpretation of scripture, beliefs around the role of baptism, and vastly different governance structures. We also have differing views around abortion and sexuality. But Christian unity is still worth pursuing because it ultimately strengthens our collective witness, advancing ‘love of God and work of justice.’

One example is the annual conference of Christian Churches Together which draws a diverse cross-section of the church and also emphasizes the power of sharing faith stories. It builds relationships across Catholic, Orthodox, Mainline Protestant, and evangelical leaders and strengthens the witness of the church.

Another example is the Global Christian Forum – a gathering that “seeks to offer new opportunities for broadening and deepening encounters” between members of different of churches and inter-church organizations. It fills a gap in the ecumenical movement by attempting to bring churches that haven't always felt included or accepted in other ecumenical spaces to the table. The statement released at the end of their latest gathering put it well: “To share our personal stories is to witness to the resurrection of Christ together.”

Bearing witness to our shared experiences is an essential part of Christian unity. Story-sharing helps us see that while our doctrines and theology differ, we still share an ongoing relationship with Christ – a vertical relationship that then inspires and calls us into deeper horizontal relationships with others.

Ecumenism is not optional; it's essential for the credibility of our witness and the church's ability to affect positive change.

The relationships, trust, and mutual respect, that have been built and strengthened through CCT and GCF, can help to mitigate future conflicts. Imagine the impact a more united global body of Christ could have in addressing some of the most pressing global challenges, from the climate crisis to the growing migration and refugee crisis to the threat of authoritarianism and religious persecution and extremism. This will require that we lean into some of the harder conversations about what divides us, even as we centre on what binds us together. And by working together to address common concerns, despite our differences, we can spread God's love and advance God's reign of justice and righteousness.

Rev. Adam Russell Taylor is president of Sojourners and author of A More Perfect Union: A New Vision for Building the Beloved Community.



Mothers' Day at MUC

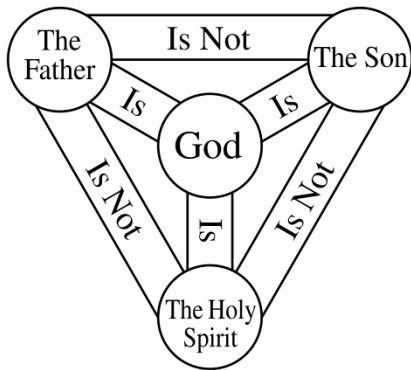
Anne Ind (Worship Leader), Judith Purling (Story Teller), Jan Sillett (Reader) supported the Rev Jenny Swanbury who preached. During the service, Judith described their experiences of adopting Kym and Michael from Vietnam in the early 1970s.

The beautiful flower displays in the church and the foyer were the creation of Jan Sillett and Rhonda Amber. Thanks to Jenny, Anne, Judith, Jan and Rhonda for a special day.

The mystery of the Holy Trinity

On Trinity Sunday Rev Leanne related a story about a preacher who, when asked to preach on the Trinity, stood up and said "The Trinity is a mystery" and then sat down.

In his "Thought for the week" for Trinity Sunday Reverend David Fleming, a retired Anglican priest, tells how he was invited to preach and celebrate his sixty years as a preacher in his local church on Trinity Sunday. But instead of being allowed to just ramble on about his ministry, the local vicar asked him to preach on "What does the Holy Spirit do in relation to the Holy Trinity."



The words 'Holy Trinity' reminded Reverend Fleming of St Augustine who took 14 years to write his exposition on the Trinity, and in about year six, took a walk along the beach to clear his head. He saw a little boy ahead of him who had dug a hole in the sand and was scurrying backwards and forwards to the sea, filling his pail with water and tipping it down the hole. "Whatever are you doing?" Augustine asked. "Well," said the lad "I'm going to empty the whole of the ocean into that little hole." "Rubbish" said St. Augustine, "You will never pour the whole of the sea into that little hole" To which the child replied "Nor will you ever be able to explain the wonder and mystery of the Trinity, no matter how much you try."

And with that the child disappeared.

Bui-Doi

From 'Miss Saigon'; music by Claude-Michel Schönberg; lyrics by Richard Maltby & Alan Boublil. *This song was played at the end of Judith Purling's reflections on Mother's Day at MUC.*

The Vietnamese term 'Bui Doi' translates into English as "dust of life" and generally refers to anybody who belongs to nobody and at the time referred to usually mixed-race children who lived on the streets of Ho Chi Minh City.

They're called Bui-Doi

The dust of life, conceived in Hell and born in strife

They are the living reminder of all the good we failed to do

We can't forget, must not forget,
that they are all our children, too

Like all survivors I once thought

When I'm home I won't give a damn

But now I know I'm caught, I'll never leave Vietnam

....

These kids hit walls on ev'ry side,

they don't belong in any place

Their secret they can't hide it's printed on their face

I never thought one day I'd plead

For half-breeds from a land that's torn

But then I saw a camp for children

whose crime was being born

They're called Bui-Doi,

the dust of life conceived in hell and born in strife

We owe them fathers and a family

a loving home they never knew

Because we know deep in our hearts

that they are all our children too

These are souls in need, they need us to give

Someone has to pay for their chance to live

Help me try

They're called Bui-Doi

The dust of life, conceived in hell and born in strife

They are the living reminders of all the good we failed to do

That's why we know, that's why we know

Deep in our hearts, deep in our hearts

That's why we know

That they are all our children, too





An extraordinary Tuesday

From Doreen Matheson

An ordinary Tuesday started out with a trip to Norwood with daughter number 3 for some sundry items. As is customary, a side trip into Fella Hamilton occurred, ostensibly to see if there was a cardigan for my daughter as they were having a 20%-off knitwear sale.

Nothing appealed to my daughter, but, it may not come as a complete surprise, I spotted a lovely pink cashmere and woollen jumper for myself. Because it was over the tap-and-go

threshold, I had to enter my PIN, which at this point, I just could not summon. You're only allowed two wrong goes before your card is locked, so we were about to leave, jumperless, when a middle-aged man, who was accompanied by his wife, stepped in and said he would pay for it!

I protested – “You can't do that, it's too expensive!” but he insisted, saying he'd recently been electrocuted. His wife whispered in my ear that it was fine. “He's a good Christian man,” she told my daughter. Everyone in the store was flabbergasted, at the kindness of a stranger - especially me, who was briefly rendered speechless.

What an extraordinary Tuesday!

Kindness

Adapted from an article by Cherie Gilmour posted on X

Launched in 2015, 'Periscope' app allowed users to watch broadcasts of other people's lives. Some people would walk with their dog in a mountainous forest; others would talk extensively on their subject, and when protests or fires broke out, Periscopers would be there, hashtagging away while millions tuned in. But, as Coburn Palmer wrote in a 2015 article in *Inquistr*, the possibilities offered by these kinds of social media platforms generally go unfulfilled: 'Live-streaming apps have the potential to increase citizen journalism and revolutionise the way traditional news outlets operate, but so far have been mainly used to showcase the contents of users' refrigerators.'

With the introduction of each new platform, the way we engage with social media changes. Facebook brought us the word 'slacktivism': *supporting a cause with little effort involved*. Instagram spread hashtags like COVID at a kid's party and TikTok brings a never-ending stream of frenetic videos.

And then there's #randomactsofkindness established by Harrison Pawluk, a 22-year-old Australian. He films himself giving flowers to a woman sitting alone enjoying coffee, and the video is viewed by over 65 million. Turns out, she felt #dehumanised by the whole thing.

While the Internet can be a seething cesspool of vitriol, the presence of heart-warming videos of people randomly slipping \$20 into someone's coat pocket is largely welcome. But is this actually kindness? If an act of kindness happens and no one is there to film it, did it really happen?

Is it possible that a TikTok 'celebrity' with 3.2 million followers, intent on building a personal brand, is doing #randomactsofkindness for selfless reasons?

But why should kindness be selfless anyway? Perhaps he's inspiring others to be kind while reeling in the sponsors. But it just feels like a tokenistic gesture that reaps personal rewards.

Recently, I was at a drive-thru coffee, experiencing one of those hellish car trips with my kids. When I got to the window to pay, the girl announced it was free, courtesy of the car before me who'd donated their free coffee from a loyalty card. This person didn't know me. I could have afforded to buy the next thirty people coffee myself. But the small act of kindness landed. No one witnessed it except the people working at the shop. The driver drove off, no one around to admire them for their good deed – certainly not an audience of millions.

There is something inherently noble in the countless kindnesses that go unwitnessed. An act of kindness should be an exercise in turning our focus outward, towards others, unfettered by any thought of what we might receive in return. Kindness must surely be grounded in sincerity rather than being performative or acquisitive in nature – its goal being to bring happiness to others rather than to benefit ourselves, to make others feel valued and respected, and in doing so to effect positive change in our communities.

Nevertheless, I do miss the good old days when livestreaming was a peek in someone else's fridge!



Friendship Group

From Joan Wagner

At our meeting in May we shared witty sayings and quirky greetings, remembered from our parents in times past.

This was followed by a time of reflection on 'Spiritual Nudges' which had spurred us into a loving action at a time of need to all people to show God's caring love for them.

We then shared lunch of two delicious homemade soups and crusty bread. Then those who could stopped to sort and pack the generous Packing Day gifts which were then delivered to Athelstone UC to be dispatched next day to the Northern Territories.

Our next meeting, Thursday 20th June, we will meet at Kafe Schulz, Lutheran Homes, Glynde, for lunch at 11.30am. All welcome, bookings to Margaret Clogg if not already indicated.

Visit to Kimba – halfway across Australia

On 6th May, 6 members from MUC travelled to Kimba to meet with members of the Kimba UC over a meal and enjoy an after dinner discussion.

The warmth and openness with which we were received more than made up for the long drive. On the way, we had stopped at Port Wakefield for coffee and ‘treats’, and the Wadlata Outback Centre in Port August for lunch – arriving in Kimba around 4.00pm.

We were greeted by a very friendly group of people who are both committed to the church and the wider community, making it a very positive experience. They are a congregation of around 25 people and they are doing a fantastic job with their lay resources. It was also good to see the age profile of the leadership group.



Kimba Uniting Church

The church is a lovely well-kept building, despite a pernicious leak in the roof, with a large well-equipped hall connecting to the warm and intimate worship space. The hall can be used for social gatherings as well as for extra seating for special services and funerals as it opens into the rear of the worship space.

Although they are a relatively small congregation, the ‘peripheral belonging’ by previous members and other people willing to work in the Op Shop (40!) was impressive. Like most smaller communities, many in the community still expect their funerals to be conducted by the church, even if they are not currently attending or contributing financially.

Our meeting and meal together were both warm and friendly and we had very positive discussions on what may be possible into the future. The word ‘inclusive’ featured heavily in conversation about the church – more even than in our conversation! The Kimba folk were also delighted to be able to put names to faces they recognised from the live streaming.

We noted that the hardest times for them to maintain their schedule of services and other commitments is at seed time and harvest. Perhaps that is when we can be of greatest support.

We need to work at further developing our relationship with the Kimba congregation. The way in which this develops will need to be part of a big conversation. Kimba’s membership of Wimala Presbytery sets it apart from the majority of congregations on Eyre Peninsula and must add to their isolation.

After our meeting, John Secombe and Peter Trudinger recorded Kimba folk doing bible readings and these will be used in MUC services during June.

We left Kimba with much food for thought, and wondering how can MUC help Kimba, not only through Live Streaming, but possibly in other ways as well. We came away confident that we can continue to grow our relationship, conversing via zoom meetings, based on the friendships begun during the visit.



The big galah

We are pleased that Kimba are in conversation after being so long without a minister, and we look forward to growing our relationship with them.

Update from Kimba by Brett Francis, 31st May

I wanted to let you know that our conversations with a prospective ministry agent are progressing well. Part of me is a little sad we couldn’t progress our idea further this time.

We will remain friends and hope to contribute ideas, photos and viewpoints to the church without walls project of yours.

We are likely to still use this format on occasions. We are very excited to have our own ministry agent to keep up the enthusiasm and bring new ideas.

I hope that you have luck with your conversation and you are able to engage a person who works for you.

Our door is always open should any of your group be travelling through, and I personally hope to get along for another service at your church.



Kimba silo art



UCA’s President Sharon Hollis’s anniversary message

From the UCA Assembly

A video message from President Rev Sharon Hollis to mark the 47th anniversary of the Uniting Church in Australia is available.

In the final message of her Presidency, Rev Hollis reflects on some key things she has seen and heard as she has moved across the Uniting Church over the last three years.

She challenges the Uniting Church with the “unfinished business” of its Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and invites us to continue to

reflect on what it means to be a covenant-keeping Church. She expresses delight at the faithful ministry of Uniting Church communities everywhere. She calls on the Uniting Church to continue embracing its deep diversity.

“We are one church across a great diversity of beliefs and practices, ways of being and doing and thinking about what it means to be the Uniting Church. That is what a Uniting Church should be...”

She gives thanks for the privilege and “deep joy” of her role.

The message was filmed at Christ Church Wayville in South Australia. The video is available at

<https://vimeo.com/944657458?share=copy>

“Now More Than Ever” theme for Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week 2024

From Rev Jenny Swanbury

Blackwood Reconciliation Annual Walk to Reconciliation Park the former Colebrook Home at Eden Hills marked the start of Reconciliation Week this year. Held on National Sorry Day, Sunday 26th May, the Walk and activities at Reconciliation Park connected Indigenous and non-Indigenous people commemorating the Stolen Generations.

This year’s Walk marked 100 years since the first removals of First Nations children under United Aborigines Mission in Oodnadatta in April 1924 and the beginning of a journey via Quorn to Eden Hills at the former Colebrook Training Home for Aboriginal Children in the 1940s. This year also marks 30 years since the beginning of the Blackwood Reconciliation Group, with the start of listening, learning and relationship building needed to form ongoing relationships.

The event at the park included Welcome to Country and speakers who had grandparents, parents or they themselves were taken from their families and people. One speaker was a third-generation stolen person. Speakers emphasized the need for deep listening – truth listening and truth telling before reconciliation can really take place. A plea was made to stop new babies being removed from their mothers. One speaker emphasized the need for records of the children who were in institutions to be released. The records are their stories and needed by their people.

Governor the Honourable Francis Adamson and SA Attorney-General the Hon Kyam Mayer spoke. Dusty Feet Mob from Port Augusta danced to the late Archie Roach’s “They took the children away” and (in language) “Amazing Grace how sweet the sound” – particularly chosen for healing. Local primary school choirs sang. Belair Bonython kindergarten children sang their own composition “Colebrook Song”. There were listening stations and Sea of Hands installations, weaving and children’s bush games.

As was said, on Sorry Day and in Reconciliation Week we are all reminded that forming ongoing relationships and seeking justice and the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people must continue.



Memorial plaque with “sea of hands”



“Weeping mother” bronze at Reconciliation Park

More about Grace

From “Bright Shining: How grace changes everything”
by Julia Baird

Australian journalist and writer Stan Grant, in a speech made after he withdrew from ABC’s Q&A, invited the nation to live and think a different way. To live according to the Wiradjuri concept of yindyamarra winhanganha, ‘the wisdom to live with respect in a world worth living in’. He said: “To those who have abused me and my family, I would just say if your aim was to hurt me, well, you’ve succeeded, and I’m sorry. I’m sorry that I must have given you so much cause to hate me so much, to target me and my family and to make threats against me. I’m sorry. And that’s what yindyamarra means. It means I am not just responsible for what I do, but for what you do. It is not just a word. It is sacred. It is what it means to be Wiradjuri. It is the core of my being. It is respect. It is respect that comes from the earth we are born into. From God, Baiame.

If I break that, then I lose who I am. I am down right now. But I will get back up. And you can come at me again, and I will meet you with the love of my people. My people can teach the world to love. As Martin Luther King Jr said of his struggle, ‘We will wear you down with our capacity to love.’ Don’t mistake our love for weakness, it is our strength. We have never stopped loving and fighting for justice and truth, the hard truths to speak in our land. That, right there, is grace. It exists even alongside, and in the thick of, trauma. Sunlight piercing a cloud.”

The reverse Prayer of St Francis

Contributed by Chris Ayles – Author Unknown

Dear Lord, make me a channel of disturbance.

Where there is apathy, let me provoke,

where there is compliance, let me bring questioning,

Where there is silence, may I be a voice,

Where there is too much comfort and too little action,
great disruption.

Where there are doors closed and hearts locked,
grant me the willingness to listen.

Where laws dictate and pain is overlooked,
when tradition speaks louder than need...

Grant that I may seek rather to do justice than talk about it.

Disturb us, oh Lord, to be with, as well as alienated,
to love the unlovable as well as the lovely.

Lord Make me a channel of your disturbance.

Editor’s note: We published this version in the February 24 edition of Vision but it seems no one on Church Council remembered, not even Margaret Cargill who contributed it! So here it is again.

New in the library

Lessons in Chemistry by Bonnie Garmus

Reviewed by Michele Bennier

Among the new fiction books in the library is *Lessons in Chemistry* by journalist and author, Bonnie Garmus. Fear not dear reader, you do not need to understand chemistry to enjoy this tale!



A fascinating and 'unputdownable' story of chemist/scientist Elizabeth Zott who is undertaking research for the Hastings Institute during the male-dominated workplace environment of the 1960s. Her career takes a surprising turn hosting an unexpectedly popular cooking show, albeit with chemistry references, after she is sidelined by her unscrupulous and sexist boss at the research institute.

Elizabeth is ultimately led back to the research she loves after some unexpected and surprising revelations.

Along the way we meet her partner Calvin, their dog Six-thirty, friends, neighbours and colleagues whose characters are all woven expertly through this delightfully quirky book.

An interview with the author was broadcast on ABC Radio's *Conversations* program on Thursday 20 May 2024, in which she said that she wrote the first chapter of the book, instead of the piece she was meant to be writing for a deadline, after a workplace meeting with ten male colleagues, in which her ideas were effectively hijacked by the team bully. Some years later after her book was published, at a writer's event one of those ten men approached her remorsefully, holding ten copies of her book, with an apology for not standing up for her. She signed each one politely but in the tenth wrote just three words. Ask me if you would like to know what they were!

2024 Wilks Oration with Richard Denniss

Executive Director of the Australia Institute, Dr Richard Denniss, as guest speaker on the topic "Unequal Australia: What went wrong and how we fix it."

Dr Denniss is a prominent Australian economist, author and public policy commentator, and previously an Associate Professor in the Crawford School of Public Policy at ANU. Come for live music, drinks and nibbles before the oration, stay for supper afterwards.

Thursday 20 June, 7.00pm - 10.00pm at Effective Living Centre, 26 King William Road Wayville

It is not just music becoming more violent

Adapted from articles by Corbin Foster (Data Scientist) and Wikipedia

Last edition, we printed a piece about more aggressive lyrics in music by Jenny Swanbury. However, it is not just music where the use of aggressive and violent language is also becoming common. We now find it in many media articles. Instead of using words such as 'disagree' or 'refute,' words like 'slam' or 'blast' are used. Politicians no longer disagree or refute a claim; they blast or slam their opponents.

The last of the just

By André Schwarz-Bart

Quoted by Richard Holloway in "Waiting for the Last Bus: Reflections on Life and Death"

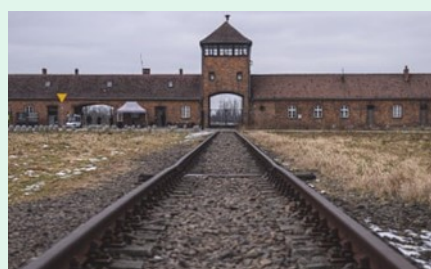
At the end of Schwarz-Bart's novel it is 1943, Ernie Levy, with his girlfriend Golda and a band of children he has been protecting, are on one of the death trains to Auschwitz.

One of the children has just died: Ernie said, clearly and emphatically, so that there would be no mistaking him, 'He's asleep...'

Then he picked up the child's corpse and with infinite gentleness laid it on the growing heap of Jewish men, Jewish women, Jewish children, joggled in their last sleep by the jolting of the train. 'He was my brother,' a little girl said anxiously, as though she had not decided what attitude it would be best to take in front of Ernie. He sat down next to her and set her on his knees. 'He'll wake up too, in a little while, with all the others, when we reach the Kingdom of Israel. There, children can find their parents, and everybody is happy. Because the country we're going to, that's our kingdom you know.' 'There', a child interrupted happily, repeating the words rhythmically as though he had already said, or thought, or heard them several times, 'there, we'll be able to get warm day and night.' 'Yes,' Ernie nodded, 'that is how it will be.'

'There,' said a second voice in the gloom, 'there are no Germans or railway-trucks or anything that hurts.' A woman digs her fingernails into Ernie's shoulder... 'How can you tell them it's only a dream?' she breathed, with hate in her voice. Rocking the child mechanically, Ernie gave way to dry sobs. 'Madame,' he said at last, 'there is no room for truth here.'

It turns out that there are times when it is impossible to accept the utter finality of death. A child's death is one of them. There is no room for truth here. There is only room for the impossible act of consolation.



The sentiment of a word like slam (blow, burst, roar) is unmistakably aggressive, even violent. To slam someone infers violence. When a politician responds to criticism he/she blasts their critics. Blast also infers violence – think of crash, eruption, explosion.

Sadly many media outlets are using these words frequently. A quick skim of recent headlines in US media reveals that words like slam and blast are used 4 times more frequently by Fox News than in the Guardian and 8 times more frequently than in the New York Times.

<https://mediahelpingmedia.org/ethics/offence-and-journalism/>

How to keep fruit, veg and herbs fresh longer

Adapted from an article by Senaka Ranadheera, The University of Melbourne in the Conversation.



Farmers always aim to harvest produce when it's at an optimal condition, but both pre-harvest and post-harvest factors will affect freshness and quality even before you buy it.

While we cannot control these factors, we can control what happens post-purchase. Before you buy, check the product for bruising and damage. Moisture loss through damaged skin speeds up deterioration and also makes it easier for spoilage microbes to get in.

Once home, don't wash your produce before storing it as a lot of it will have been washed commercially. In fact, if you wash your produce and don't dry it completely, the added moisture can speed up decay in the fridge. Wash it just before use to remove dirt and pathogenic bugs but use plain tap water only. No vinegar or baking soda.

Correct packaging and correct location are very important to manage moisture loss, decay and ripening. The three main storage options are on the counter, in the fridge, or in a "cool, dry and dark place", such as the pantry.

Bananas, onion, garlic, potatoes, sweet potato and whole pumpkin will do better in a dark pantry or cupboard. Don't

store potatoes and onions together: onions produce ethylene which makes potatoes spoil quicker – the high moisture in potatoes spoils onions.

Don't store fruits such as apples, pears, avocado and bananas together, because these fruits release ethylene as they ripen, making nearby fruits ripen (and potentially spoil) much faster. That is, unless you want to ripen your fruits faster.

All leafy greens, carrots, cucumbers, cauliflower and broccoli will do best in the low-humidity drawer (crisper) in the fridge. You can put them in perforated plastic bags to retain moisture but maintain air flow. But don't put them in completely sealed bags because this can slow down ripening while trapping carbon dioxide, leading to decay and bad smells.

Some fruits will also do best in the fridge. For example, apples and citrus fruits such as oranges can keep fresh longer in the fridge (crisper drawer), although they can stay at room temperature for short periods. However, don't store watermelon in the fridge for longer than 3 days as it will lose its flavour and deep red colour.

Most herbs and some leafy vegetables – like celery, spring onions and asparagus – can be kept with stems in water to keep them crisp. Keep them in a well-ventilated area and away from direct sunlight, so they don't get too warm and wilt.

Experimenting at home is a good way to find the best ways to store your produce and of course growing your own herbs and micro greens can also be handy, too.

Vaccines save lives – 154 million in 50 years

Adapted from an article in the Conversation by Meru Sheel, Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney and Alexandra Hogan Mathematical epidemiologist, UNSW Sydney

Although anti-vaxxers are in a minority, the danger of their stance is evidenced in the fact that vaccines have been a miracle for human survival. A study by World Health Organization has found vaccines have saved an estimated 154 million lives in the past 50 years from 14 different diseases. Most of these have been children under five, and around two-thirds under one year old.

In 1974 the World Health Assembly launched a program to vaccinate all children against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), measles, polio, tuberculosis and smallpox by 1990. The program was subsequently expanded to include several other diseases and in some countries, additional vaccines such as Japanese encephalitis, meningitis A and yellow fever were included.

Because of vaccines, a child aged under ten has about a 40% greater chance of living until their next birthday, and a 50 year old has a 16% greater chance of celebrating their next birthday.

Since 1974, the rates of deaths in children before their first birthday has more than halved and almost 40% of this reduction is due to vaccines.

The effects have been greatest for children born in the 1980s because of the intensive efforts made globally to vaccinate children for measles, polio and whooping cough. Some 60% of the 154 million lives saved would have been lives lost to measles.

The study also found that vaccination programs have had a much greater impact in low- and middle-income countries where there are weaker health systems.

However, low or declining vaccine coverage can lead to epidemics which can devastate communities. An overall decline in measles vaccination is cause for concern because very high levels of vaccination coverage (more than 95%) are required to achieve herd immunity against measles. Even in Australia, the coverage for childhood vaccines, including measles, mumps and rubella, has declined.

This study is a reminder of why we need to continue to vaccinate. If we want to continue to save lives, we need to keep investing in vaccination locally, regionally and globally.



More on Unity

From Rev John Gilmore President NCCA

There are some aspects of the life of church communities that do not come easily. One of these is unity.

The NCCA website describes us as being engaged in a 'quest for unity'. It does seem a little strange that unity is a quest, as we all find our faith and identity in Jesus Christ. One can say that in this we have unity.

So then how can this be a quest? It is clear that there were unity struggles in the early church. The letter of Paul to the Ephesians includes the statement **'Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace'** (Eph 4:3). Already one of the priorities had become keeping the unity. The rationale for doing this is also set out in Ephesians 4: 4-6: 'There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to



one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all'. These words are a wonderful and deep call to the basis of our faith.

Unity is a quest born not out of a program or particular need, rather it flows from the basis of our identity in the Body of Christ.

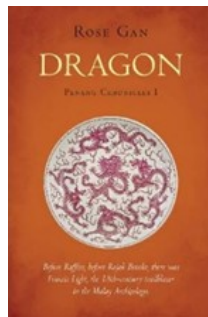
There are other matters and quests that at times we all focus on that are not as important as our unity in Jesus Christ. The Ephesian invitation applies to the life of the church at all levels: local, denominational and beyond.

For all of us connected to the NCCA the quest continues with the 11th National Forum in June in Adelaide. We invite your prayers for this event as, through a variety of steps, we will seek to discern how we continue to live out our collective desire for unity.

Dragon by Rose Gan

Reviewed by Jan Thornton

I've always been fascinated by Colonel William Light, South Australia's first surveyor-general, who planned Adelaide. But I have questions about the man, who remains a tantalising enigma. Where did his drive, courage and work ethos find its foundation?



Rose Gan has put together a book which goes a long way to explain where much of William's character originated and has produced a new hero for me to ponder over - Francis Light - the father William last saw when he was only six years old. Beginning in the mid 1700's the novel, *Dragon*, is an absorbing narrative taking the reader from England throughout Southeast Asia in a series of breathtaking adventures. This is the first book in a series which Gan is producing. Subsequent books will encompass the lives of not only Francis, but also his talented children, including William.

Francis, raised believing himself the illegitimate son of a country squire, achieved extraordinary successes due to his intelligence, ability to control both situations and people, and his impressive courage. Despite the intolerance and bigotry of his time, Francis became a powerful force in the 18th century Malay Archipelago. He became the naval officer/explorer/colonial administrator who founded the thriving and multi-racial community we know as Penang.

His astonishing life is portrayed by Gan in a fast-paced tale of adventure, and it would be easy to believe she has wildly

exaggerated Francis' successes and the unexpectedly terrifying situations he faced. But Gan is a former teacher of history and her research for this book, has been extensive. This historical drama progresses at breathtaking speed. She brings real characters to life - Dutch, Chinese, Indian, and English - and returns a man, long forgotten, to the spotlight he deserves. Even the best writer just couldn't make all this story up!

This is an elegantly seductive read and the blend of derring-do, swashbuckling raids and unsophisticated treatments of tropical diseases, contrasts vividly with steamy, languid Malay days, riches beyond belief and an expanding love story. I'm amazed it's taken so long to bring this adventurer to the world's attention.

Whilst never forgetting his origins, Francis always sought opportunities to better himself, and fearlessly set out to make his impact on the world. Despite being intolerantly judged by today's 'woke' generation, we must concede that people like Francis changed the world in the 18th century, producing a blueprint for what we enjoy today.

Gan's book is compelling. It rapidly draws the reader in and can make whole days disappear within its pages. It's the perfect book to take on holiday. And if you visit Penang, find the cemetery where he's buried. Walk the streets where Francis once held sway. Look at what he achieved. Marvel how far he travelled, from modest beginnings in Dalingshoo, a village in Suffolk, to become so powerful in Asia.

Dragon by Rose Gan will immerse you in history, romance and adventure.



Vision editor...

Through some unfortunate clerical error, Colin is sent to Hog Heaven!

(Larsen cartoon amended and submitted by Carole Lyons)

Fun fact!

Your shadow is confirmation that light has travelled over 150 million miles unobstructed, only to be deprived of reaching the ground in the final few metres, thanks to you!

