

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

July 2024

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

Welcome to our July edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

Our lead article comes from Reverend Doctor Steve Koske (again!). Steve was previously minister at Brougham Place UC. His message is that we need to live our lives as evidence of the good news – **that love wins.**

We also bring you the usual mix of articles from Morialta folk, plus a mix of poems, prayers, reflections and news about planet earth.

The **deadline for the next Vision will be 2nd August.** 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.

Love wins

Adapted from a sermon by Reverend Doctor Steve Koski

An enraged father phoned the chaplain of his daughter's university because she had just informed him that she was not going to law school. Instead she was going to throw it all away and go do mission work for two years with Presbyterians in Haiti, caring for orphans. The father obviously blamed the chaplain. But the chaplain replied, "Now look, sir, weren't you the one who had her baptized? Didn't you take her to Sunday school, encourage her confirmation, support her going with the youth group on a mission trip? It's actually your fault. She believes all that stuff. Your daughter has taken this invitation to follow Jesus seriously. There was a long pause before the father said "But all I ever wanted for her was to be a good Presbyterian."



Soren Kierkegaard once said, "You know lots of people believe in worshipping, praising, singing about, and admiring Jesus. But do we accept his invitation to follow him?" It's easier to believe in Jesus than to follow Jesus. To quote Wendell Berry, "Our job is to practice resurrection, creating a ruckus for good.

Our lives are intended to be evidence of the good news **that love wins.** Is your life 'Good news' for those around you? As St. Francis said "Preach the good news at all times and use words only if necessary." True church growth is not about how many people attend worship each weekend. The true greatness of any local church is measured by how many people serve the marginalized.

Our greatest fear should not be that that people leave our church, our greatest fear should be that they stay in our churches unchanged. We don't go where there is need to make a difference. We go to the margins to practice resurrection, bringing life where there is death, hope where there is despair. Because here we will find Jesus. Jesus makes this clear in Matthew 25 when he says 'I was hungry and you gave me something to eat ... whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

Father Greg Boyle, founder of Homeboy Industries in Los Angeles, a large gang intervention and rehabilitation program, tells of a church that opened their doors to homeless immigrants and undocumented workers to sleep in



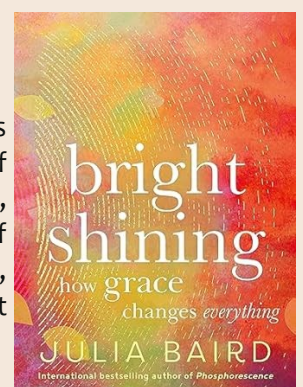
the church at night. One man came to talk to Father Boyle, he waxed nostalgic about having been baptized and confirmed in the church, how he had paid for the new carpet. He takes in the scene – gang members gathered by the bell tower, homeless being fed, folks arriving for the AAA meetings and English as a Second Language classes. The man looks around, shakes his head and says, you know – this used to be a beautiful church, a holy place. Father Boyle responded, "You know, some people think it's finally become a church and the holiest of places."

Friends, preach the good news (no words necessary) **that love wins.** May it be so!

How to be alive

Quote from "Bright Shining: How grace changes everything." by Julia Baird

"The best way to be alive – vividly, loudly alive – is to be conscious that every day we cross off the calendar is an enormous gift. To know we have a finite number of beats – none of us know how many – is to honour the beats we have, the time we have with each other, with our parents, our children, our siblings, our best friends, our lovers, our tribe, all of whom have pulsing hearts, all of whom are stepping alongside us, quietly pumping blood, in and out, in and out, in and out. To listen, truly listen, to another's heart is the most intimate act of grace."





The Little Para Singers Concert at Morialta UC

Sunday 21st July at 2.00pm - doors open at 1.30pm

The concert will be followed by afternoon tea in the hall.

Tickets \$20 available from the Office, at the door using cash or card, or online at Trybooking <https://www.trybooking.com/CSWRC>. Afternoon tea included in price.

The Little Para Singers is a community choir based in Modbury, South Australia. They provide quality musical performances for senior citizens groups, hospitals and other charitable organisations. The group sings three or four-part music (SATB) in both accompanied and a capella styles with repertoire from classical to modern including selections from musicals, spirituals, jazz, gospel and folk music.

Rev Leanne and Scott are members of the choir so why not come along with your friends to support them and the Morialta UC community.



News from Church Council June 2024

- Our JNC (Joint Nominating Committee) is still working to fill our vacancy, but nothing is on the horizon at present.
- Leanne is not available to continue in supply after the end of July, and we are searching for further support – watch this space!
- The Resourcing Group we set up last November has submitted a final report, and we are now working to implement their two urgent recommendations in the first instance: an interim restructure of how Morialta manages our operations; and an in-depth consideration of reallocation of existing financial resources. Additional recommendations will be considered in future meetings.
- We have enthusiastically accepted the invitation for our congregation to take part in a project entitled 'Towards a net-zero church', facilitated by the Synod's Environmental Action Group. Colin Cargill will be setting up a group to do this work
- Following in-depth consultation with existing stall-managers, it has been decided that Morialta will run a modified 'Mini Magill Market' on 16 November 2024, featuring a limited number of stalls/activities as endorsed by Council and not including bric-a-brac. Watch this space for more details!
- Some leadership changes: John Secombe is now leader of the Audiovisual Leadership Team, and Margaret Cargill of the Worship and Faith Education Team, whose revised document 'Preparation of Services of Worship at Morialta UC to be Livestreamed – for Preachers and Worship Leaders' has been approved for distribution – see Margaret or Nicole for a copy.
- What to do in a medical emergency? Council wants to establish some guidelines – talk to us if you have suggestions!
- If you want to read the full agendas and minutes of Council meetings, they are available in a folder in the library – we are working on updating the collection!

Church Council: Bruce Ind, Margaret Cargill, Rhonda Amber, Carole Lyons, John Secombe, Chris Ayles, Helena Begg, Rev. Leanne Davis

Mark your calendars...

Other community building and fundraising events are in our plans for this year. Watch the news sheet for further information nearer the time.

Sunday 18 August: Community lunch followed afternoon of film clips of songs from the musicals.

Sunday 22 September: Guess who's coming to lunch

Sunday 13 October: Adelaide Male Voice Choir perform again at Morialta

Saturday 16 November: We will be holding our annual market at Morialta in a slightly reduced format - in particular we will not be selling bric-a-brac this year, to reduce the workload for all involved.

Please support these events and encourage your family and friends to come along and share in the fun!

Friendship Group

From Margaret Clogg

On Thursday June 20th, the Friendship Group met at Schulze Cafe Glynde (Lutheran Homes) for lunch. 15 members enjoyed lovely meals and good service together with a lot of fun and laughter.

Our next meeting will be Thursday July 18th at 10.00am and we will all be challenged with a Quiz Morning in the hall.

If you would like to stay for lunch after the meeting, please bring along your own sandwiches or soup.

Every-one is welcome to come to our meetings.

Forgotten women of history: Irena Sendler

Based on various sources including a reference shared by Jan Thornton



Irena Sendler was born as Irena Krzyżanowska on 15 February 1910 in Warsaw. Her father, Dr. Stanisław Krzyżanowski, was a physician, who died in February 1917 from typhus, contracted while treating patients whom his colleagues refused to treat in fear of contracting the disease, among them many Jews. After his death, the Jewish community leaders helped paying for Irena's education. She studied Polish literature at Warsaw University but as she opposed the ghetto-bench system that existed at some prewar Polish universities, she was suspended for three years.

As early as 1939, when the Germans invaded Warsaw, Irena began helping Jews by offering them food and shelter. Once the Warsaw Ghetto was formed, she started by saving orphan children. Irena used her papers as a Polish social worker and as a plumber to enter the Warsaw Ghetto. She joined Żegota (a Polish underground group to assist Jewish people) and was in charge of the Children's Division.

Along with her underground network, Irena rescued 2,500 Jewish children in Poland during World War II. They used various means such as hiding a child under the stretcher in an ambulance; using the sewer pipes or other secret underground passages; using a trolley to carry out children hiding in a sack. Irena also got permission to work in the Warsaw ghetto as a plumbing/sewer specialist and smuggled infants out in the bottom of the tool box. She kept a dog in the back of her van that she trained to bark when she passed a check point. The barking dog put off the soldiers and covered the infants' noises. Irena and her network made sure

that each family hiding a child realized the child must be returned to Jewish relatives after the war.

She was arrested on October 20, 1943 and placed in the notorious Piawiak prison, where she was tortured by having her legs fractured. She received a death sentence and was to be shot. However, unbeknown to her, Żegota had bribed the German executioner, who helped her escape. On the following day posters were put up all over the city with the news that she had been shot.

Irena had written the names of all the children she saved on paper that she hid in bottles she buried in her garden. After the war, she dug up the bottles and began the job of finding the children and trying to find a living parent. Sadly, almost all the parents of the children Irena saved died at the Treblinka death camp.

In 1994 four American students in Kansas were given a clipping from a 'U.S News and World Report' by their teacher which mentioned Irena in a story called 'Other Schindlers'. The students searched for information but it was not until they visited Poland in 2001 that Irena's story became known to the world.

In 1997, the students helped launch 'Life in a Jar' and when Irena first heard about the project, she responded "I can't find the words to thank you, my dear girls.... Before 'Life in a Jar' – nobody in my own country and in the whole world cared about my person and my work during the war ..."

In 2003 Irena Sendler was announced as the winner of the Jan Karski Award for Valor and Courage. A fitting tribute to a remarkable woman.

For more information go to <https://irenasendler.org>

Amazing Grace

Adapted from various sources including Julia Baird in "Bright Shining: How grace changes everything"

The man who penned the words to Amazing Grace, in 1772, was former slave trader John Newton, who later repented of his active oppression of other people, and agitated to have the slave trade ended.



Amazing Grace was written to illustrate a sermon on New Year's Day of 1773. It is unknown if there was any music accompanying the verses; it may have been just chanted by the congregation. It debuted in print in 1779 in Newton's and Cowper's Olney Hymns, but settled into relative obscurity in England.

In the United States, Amazing Grace became a popular song used by Baptist and Methodist preachers as part of their evangelizing, especially in the American South. It has been associated with more than 20 melodies. In 1835, American composer William Walker set it to the tune known as "New Britain". This is the version most frequently sung today.

One of Newton's biographers estimates the song is sung about ten million times a year and the Library of Congress has catalogued 3,049 recordings up to the year 2000.

Despite its origins, it became a revered song of the African American community, which is why it is so apt that the fourth stanza was not written by Newton but was added later in 1852! It is attributed to John P. Rees and was first used by Harriet Beecher Stowe, in her novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin", an anti-slavery novel. Stowe uses hymns in her novel to elicit sympathy for the abolitionist cause, to affirm the slaves' humanity (in contrast to their status as chattel property), establish their equality, and legitimate their emancipation.

The dream of freedom is that of the light of heaven, the way humans infused with grace would shine, 'bright shining like the sun'.

The fourth stanza

When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise,
than when we'd first begun.

Food for thought

About 1.3 billion tonnes (30%) of all food produced globally for human consumption every year is wasted! This results in more greenhouse gas production than the entire aviation industry! Fruit wastage is even higher with approximately 50% of all fruit and vegetables produced globally wasted each year.



Australia currently creates more than 7.6 million tonnes of food waste each year – enough to fill the Melbourne Cricket Grounds nine times. This is costing the Australian economy over \$36.6 billion despite 70 percent of it being perfectly edible. This also represents 17.5 million tonnes of CO₂ each year. (Note: If you drive an average car for 10,000 km/year you produce 1.47 million tonnes)

More than a third of Australia's food waste is generated in the home, so we all have a part to play. We often waste food because of confusion between 'best-before' and 'use-by dates' or because we're unsure whether leftovers are safe to reheat.

'Best-before' dates give you an idea of how long foods will last before they lose quality. Most products will last beyond their 'best-before' date if they are stored properly. Foods marked with a 'use-by' date must be consumed before or on that date.

If food has been hygienically prepared, cooled quickly after cooking (or reheating) and stored cold, reheating more than once should not increase the risk of illness. After each reheating, leftovers will be safe in the fridge for an additional 3-4 days. Because the quality decreases each time food is reheated, it is best to reheat only the amount needed.

When reheating leftovers, be sure they reach 74°C as measured with a food thermometer. Cover leftovers to reheat. This retains moisture and ensures that food will heat all the way through. Cooked foods that cannot be used within four days should be frozen for longer, safe storage. Reheat sauces, soups and gravies by bringing them to a rolling boil.

With the average Australian household wasting \$3,800 every year thanks to wasting food, it's worth the effort!

Check <https://earth.org/facts-about-food-waste/> or Google food wastage in Australia for more information.

Is extreme rainfall only down to climate change?

Adapted from an article by Andrew King, Kate R Saunders and Kimberly Reid, Monash University, published in the Conversation



In late February and early March 2022, persistent extreme rainfall caused severe floods across much of the east coast of Australia. Much of southeast Queensland and northeast New South Wales had the wettest week since at least 1900.

The floods came towards the end of a third consecutive La Niña summer. Persistent heavy rainfall, associated with large-scale moisture transport in the atmosphere interacting with a trough, caused the flooding.

A blocking high pressure pattern in the Tasman Sea prevented the weather system from moving to the east. This caused the rain to continue and supported the formation of an east coast low, which brought rainfall to the greater Sydney region in early March.

The rain fell on already soaked surfaces, which worsened these floods and set up the conditions for subsequent floods in Lismore and other parts of the east coast.

There are two necessary ingredients for extreme rainfall to occur – an abundant supply of moisture and ascending air. Heavy rain can occur when moist air rises, cools and condenses. Air can be forced upwards by obstacles such as mountains and by low pressure systems. As the atmosphere warms it can hold more moisture – about 7% more for every 1°C of warming. This means climate change has increased the moisture-holding capacity of the atmosphere.

In the prolonged heavy rainfall of February-March 2022, the duration of the weather patterns was a major factor in the flood impacts. It's unclear how big a role climate change played.

Heavy rain events that cause flash flooding and pass in minutes or hours are often limited by how much moisture is available to fall as rain. A warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture, so these short duration rain events are intensified in a warming world. Recent research shows that in Sydney there has been an increase in sub-hourly heavy rain intensity of about 40% over the last 20 years.

For persistent heavy rain that tends to cause river flooding, the limiting factor is more the positioning of weather systems and whether they stall. As a result, the climate change signal in these events tends to be weaker and more variable across the world.

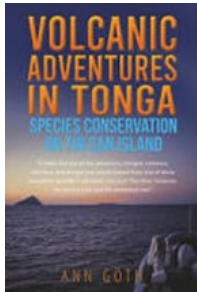
Different lines of evidence should be considered when thinking about the climate change role in extreme rain events. For the multi-day east Australian heavy rainfall in early 2022, these lines of evidence point in different directions.

Robust statements on the effects of climate change on extreme events improve the public discourse and are crucial to planning for weather and climate extremes in a warming world.



Volcanic adventures in Tonga: Species conservation on Tin Can Island by Ann Göth

Book review by Margaret Cargill



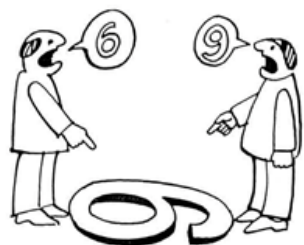
This 2023 book tells the fascinating story of a 17-month visit (1991-2) by the author and her partner to a remote, volcanic island of Tonga. Their aim was to help conserve an endangered ground-dwelling bird species called the malau, which buries its eggs similarly to our brush turkey, but near volcanoes to use the warmth of the soil to hatch the eggs.

The island is Niuafu'ou (New Coconut Place), far to the north of 'Eua, the island where the Cargill family lived in 1984 and 1987-9, but related to it because the people of Niuafu'ou were evacuated to 'Eua by the Tongan government after a massive volcanic eruption in 1946. Some hid and remained behind, and others got permission to return later, and the present population lives in villages that share the names of many of the villages we knew on 'Eua. Niuafu'ou is known as Tin Can Island because there was no proper landing stage, and for many years mail was delivered by sealing it in a can that was thrown overboard for swimmers from the island to retrieve.

That description may suggest just how isolated the island is, and the kind of difficulties our author encountered in her quest. Many incidents and descriptions in the book brought back memories for Colin and me of our years on a small Tongan island, even though our issues were less severe. The book consists of 30 short chapters plus sections of commentary bringing the story up to date (182 pages in total), ideal for dipping into or for an extended read. Warmly recommended!

Eye witnesses and facts

Anonymous



How do you know when a fact is a fact? Does it need to be written in a scientific paper? Is an expert's word enough? What if that fact is repeated for years and published by reputable sources, until it just becomes lore?

Twelve people sit in a circle randomly passing a basketball to each other – no one knowing if it was going to be passed to them so all are concentrating visually on the ball. A man dressed in a gorilla suit walks into the middle of the group stands for a few seconds and walks out.

After the passing session ended – they were asked who saw the gorilla – you guessed it – not one of them – so even EYE witness answers can be absolutely wrong – that is a FACT!

Dreaming of a harmonious earth

Brian McLaren shares his vision of a restored Earth where humans live equitably with the Earth, other humans, and the more-than-human world. Contributed by members of Gateways

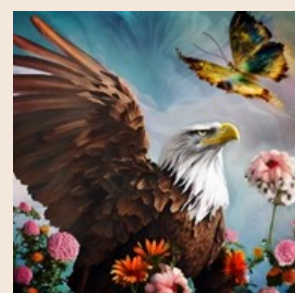
This is my dream, and perhaps it is your dream, and our dream, together: that in this time of turbulence when worlds are falling apart, all of us with willing hearts can come together ... together with one another, poor and rich, whatever our race or gender, wherever we live, whatever our religion or education.

I dream that the wisdom of Indigenous people, the wisdom of Jesus, St. Francis, St. Clare and the Buddha, the wisdom of climate scientists and ecologists and spiritual visionaries from all faiths could be welcomed into every heart. Then, we would look across this planet and see not economic resources, but our sacred relations ... dolphin and humpback whale, swimming in our majestic indigo oceans, with gull and frigate bird soaring above them beneath the blue sky. We would see all land as holy land, and walk reverently in the presence of meadow and forest, feeling our kinship with all our relations – the bald eagle, the box turtle, the swallowtail butterfly...

In my dream, the reverence we feel when we enter the most beautiful cathedral we would feel equally among mountains in autumn, beside marshes in spring, surrounded by snow-covered prairies in winter, and along meandering streams in summer. In my dream, even in our cities, we would look up in wonder at the sky, and a marriage between science and spirit would allow us to marvel at the sacredness of sunlight, the wonder of wind, the refreshment of rain, the rhythm of seasons. At each meal, we would feel deep connection to the fields and orchards and rivers and farms where our food was grown, and we would feel deep connection to the farmers and farmworkers whose hands tended soil so we could eat this day with gratitude and joy.

In my dream, our life-giving connection to each other and to the living Earth would be fundamental, central, and sacred ... and everything else, from economies to governments to schools to religions ... would be renegotiated to flow from that fundamental connection. In my dream, we would know God not as separate from creation, but as the living light and holy energy we encounter in and through creation: embodied, incarnated, in the current and flow of past, present, and future, known most intimately in the energy of love.

Brian D. McLaren is an author, speaker, activist, and public theologian and a former college English teacher and pastor.



Rituals are important and we still need them

Adapted from an article by Michelle Langley, Griffith University, published in the Conversation

Each December, Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa are ceremonies our ancestors have practised for as long as we can remember. These are all example of traditions which are often accompanied by rituals.

A “tradition” refers to the passing down of customs and beliefs from one generation to the next. A “ritual” is a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order.

For example, while celebrating birthdays is a tradition, blowing out the candles on a cake is a ritual. Similarly, while getting married is a tradition, exchanging vows is a ritual.

But it is not just in grand gestures that humans practise rituals; some are so embedded into our lives we no longer recognise them. The way we make tea or coffee in the morning is a ritual we enact daily.

Tracking the origins and development of rituals is difficult. Thus far, the best evidence for ancient rituals is the deliberate burial of loved ones. The oldest example is found at Mt Carmel in Israel, where some 130,000 years ago a Neanderthal woman was laid to rest by her community.

Rituals and traditions also involve musical instruments. Bone flutes dating back around 42,000 years have been found in Western Europe. How long people have used the human voice, clapping hands and stomping feet remains unknown. The oldest story dated using scientific methods is the Aboriginal Gunditjmarra people’s story of the Budj Bim volcano eruption, which occurred 37,000 years ago in what is now south-western Victoria.

Rituals play an important role for a number of reasons. They help reduce individual and collective anxieties, especially when we ourselves, our family, or our whole community is facing uncertain times or crisis. By praying or singing together we feel connected and supported and our anxiety is reduced. Parisians were moved to sing together as they watched their beloved Notre Dame Cathedral burn in 2019.

Rituals also help reduce anxiety by allowing us to feel control over our surroundings. Cultural rituals that welcome an infant into the family and community help them feel they’ve done everything possible – including drawing on supernatural protection – to ensure their child’s wellbeing. Rituals also bring people together to celebrate important life milestones. Births, graduations, marriages and deaths are all marked by rituals and traditions across the globe.

Without rituals and traditions, it is unlikely that humanity would have advanced to its current state of cultural and technological development. And with extreme weather events and conflicts continuing to displace people all over the globe, rituals will act as an essential social glue that holds our communities together.



When words seem paltry

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

When words seem paltry, people often sing of grace. For example, when former US president Barack Obama was invited to speak at the 2015 funeral of the victims of the mass shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, he was at first reluctant. Going to speak to families after mass shootings when Congress had repeatedly refused to act on gun control, especially after the 2012 shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, was painful.

He had thought that after Newtown, when 20 six-year-olds had been gunned down in this fashion by a deranged young man . . . The closest he ever came to losing hope about his country was when modest gun safety laws were defeated in Congress.

When it happened again in Charleston, Obama initially said he would go south but didn’t want to speak, given that nothing he had said previously had brought about any real change. But then he agreed to provide the eulogy for his friend the Reverend Clementa Pinckney, a state senator who had been

killed in the shooting. Aware of the inadequacy of any words he might utter, Obama decided to speak about grace.



At the funeral, Obama told the congregation how he’d ‘been reflecting on this idea of grace’. To even think about grace at a time when many would contemplate vengeance,

he said, would require an open mind but also an open heart.

He mentioned his correspondence with Marilynne Robinson and her notion of grace as ‘that reservoir of goodness beyond that we are able to do for each other in the ordinary cause of things’. He went on: ‘If we can find that grace, anything is possible. If we can tap that grace, everything can change. Amazing grace.’

Then the first African American president of the United States paused for a long moment, and began to sing, as the clergy around him and the crowd before him rose in unison to join in, to weep and sing and hope ... He ended by saying, ‘May we find ourselves worthy of that precious and extraordinary gift as long as our lives endure.’

The dual role of the Bible in a contemporary world

Adapted from a post by Rev. Brandan Robertson in *Patheos* contributed by the late David Purling



The Bible holds a dual role in our contemporary world. On one hand, it stands as the bedrock of Christian faith, shaping its beliefs and practices for millennia. Yet, on the other hand, its

Bronze-Age morality increasingly faces scrutiny, prompting many, including some Christians, to distance themselves from its problematic aspects. While the Bible may still make appearances in liturgy and homilies, its status as the primary source of inspiration and theology is fading among many believers.

However, it is essential to remember that the Bible emerged from the voices of an oppressed and marginalized people, intended to empower and uplift those facing adversity. While the moral compass of 2,000 years ago necessitates periodic re-evaluation, there is need to reframe the Bible as the subversive, pro-liberation document it once was.

An inspiring example of this reinterpretation is evident in communities where innovative and progressive approaches to Biblical texts have flourished. These communities revere the text while embracing the freedom to reinterpret it, giving voice to previously silenced characters, imagining unheard perspectives, and aligning the text with contemporary ethics and spirituality. For them, the Bible serves as a foundation, but not as the final word on matters of faith and ethics. It becomes a resource chest, a medium for healing and intrigue in the lives of modern believers.

If we deny ourselves (and others) the freedom to re-evaluate, reform, and rejuvenate the Bible's narratives and teachings for the modern world, many laypeople will have minimal

engagement with the Bible. Consequently, they will lose touch with our ancient tradition and miss the opportunity to be shaped by the profound power of Scripture.

My point is simple: we need to encourage disillusioned or uninspired Christians to engage with Scripture imaginatively and artistically, restoring the Bible to the core of our understanding of Christian faith, engaging in dialogue with our faith ancestors, unearthing the silenced voices of marginalized groups within the Bible, and continuing to write the story of Scripture in our modern era.

The Bible represents the "voice of God" filtered through the finite perspectives of our ancient ancestors. It invites us to draw upon its wisdom and flaws as a foundation while embracing new revelations of God in our modern era. Allowing the voices of women, ethnic minorities, religious minorities, queer individuals, and others in the Bible, to speak afresh to the modern church. This may entail agreements or disagreements with the voices in Scripture as we know it. We can reimagine the beliefs and faith expressions of the communities to whom Paul wrote, granting them the same authority traditionally ascribed to the Apostle, thus creating an inspiring, inclusive understanding of Christianity through the ages.

Most importantly, this approach will anchor our faith in a collection of writings still revered by billions worldwide. It empowers us to counteract the misuse of Christian faith for harmful purposes, effectively wielding the Bible's "two-edged sword" (Ephesians 6) to promote healing and inspiration, while opposing the weaponization of Scripture by those in positions of privilege and power. In doing so, we uphold the true witness of Christ in our modern world.

About the Author – Rev. Brandan Robertson is a noted spiritual and contemplative activist. He is author of 'Nomad: A Spirituality for Travelling Light', and writes regularly for *Patheos*.

Loving God

Marcus J. Borg - from the chapter "To Love God is to Love Like God" in 'Speaking Christian'

A passage from Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, combines the language of loving God, with the language of beauty, longing, and sensuality (all five senses are mentioned). It is also a magnificent example of panentheism, the affirmation that God is not somewhere else, but right here. Addressing God as "you" Augustine wrote:

"How late I came to love you, oh, beauty, so ancient, and so fresh, how late I came to love you. You were within me, yet I had gone outside to seek you. Unlovely myself, I rushed toward all those lovely things you had made. And always you were with me, I was not with you. All those beauties kept me far from you — although they would not have existed at all, unless they had their being in you. You called, you cried, you

shattered my deafness. You sparkled, you blazed, you drove away my blindness. You shed your fragrance, and I drew in my breath, and I pant for you. I tasted, and now I hunger and thirst. You touched me, and now I burn with longing."



What would you do...?

"I asked a Roman Catholic padre one day what he would do if it was proved to him that there was no God. He replied that it would make no difference to his work at all. He would continue comforting the sick and bereaved, and giving the dying reassurance that there was one who loved them and that their living had not been in vain."



Donald William Alers Hankey

(27 October 1884 – 12 October 1916) was an English soldier, best known for two volumes of essays about the British volunteer army in World War One, both titled "A Student in Arms."



A symbol of friendship

While black Olympic icon, Jesse Owens was busy embarrassing Nazi Germany and making history at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, two Japanese pole vaulters Shuhei Nashida and his friend Sueo Oe were set for a tie-breaker to decide who took silver and who took bronze. The duo decided to decline the tie-break scenario and famously cut the two medals in half. They then fused the bronze with the silver to make two new 'friendship medals'.



Love through the eyes of a child

Anonymous

A group of 4- to 8-year-olds was asked "What does love mean?" The answers were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined. See what you think:

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and cut her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her, even when his hands have got arthritis too. That's love."

Rebecca - age 8

"When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouth."

Billy - age 4

"Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends even after they know each other so well."

Tommy - age 6

"Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen."

Bobby - age 7

"Love is what makes you smile when you're tired."

Terri - age 4

"Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving cologne and they go out and smell each other."

Karl - age 5

Is P for Protestant?

From Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay,
President United Methodist (USA)



Sometime back, when there were conflicts among Roman Catholics and Protestants in Ireland, a Protestant Chaplain went to a hospital to visit some of the injured parishioners. The nurse asked the Chaplain to wait while she attended to patients and then she would introduce him to the Protestant patients. Seeing that she was taking too long, the Chaplain went on his own.

As he was leaving, the nurse returned and offered to take him through but he responded that he had already done his visits. To which the nurse asked, "And how did you know who was Protestant and who was Roman Catholic?" The Chaplain said, "Well, that was easy, when I went to a bed, where it said P I stopped, spoke and prayed with the patient and where it said RC I nodded and passed by." The nurse smiled and replied, "But Reverend, P means porridge and RC stands for Rice Crispies."

"Influenza viruses are always surprising us and it reminds me to stay humble and keep an open mind when dealing with them."

Vivien Dugan, PhD, director of the influenza division at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)