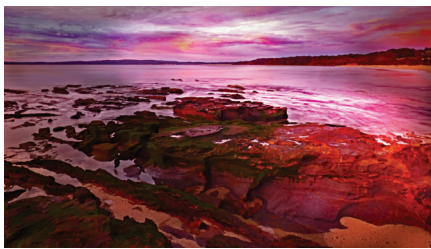


Introduction to this Issue . . .

Geoff Stevenson (Day 20)

A few weeks ago my wife and I, along with our dog, Nico, spent a couple of weeks in a dog-friendly rental by the beach. We could see the water and headlands from our house glittering through the wonderful bush and trees that lined the slope to the sands.

The weather was rainy for some of the days and overcast, with grey clouds sometimes threatening and sometimes a gentle pale-grey backdrop.



One morning we opened the curtains and discovered gentle pre-dawn light filtering through our bedroom. The grey clouds had parted, and the soft light filtered over the horizon, filling the dark sky. Susan pushed me out of bed, reminding me of the photos I'd promised to take of a beautiful sunrise. I quickly dressed and Nico and I ran across the road, down the track and onto the beach. We (well me) stood mesmerised by the beautiful light and scenic wonder. I clicked and clicked as we walked along the beach to the headland.

Colourful light, reds and pinks drifting through to oranges and gold flickered across the water, reflected through the clouds and across the sky. The whole world was filled with gentle, wondrous light. It was all around

as the sun poked its head above the horizon and smiled across the sea. It was an awe-filled experience.



As we stood on the headland taking in the immense beauty and wonder, I felt a deep and beautiful Presence all around me. I felt a deep and profound connection to everything – the sky and clouds, the sea and sand, the rocks and headland! We were connected, one, in this Divine Presence, held in its beauty, wonder and love. This grace-filled moment extended on as the sun gently rose and the world came to life. I felt the sense of being *inChrist*. This phrase is a common Pauline phrase, used over 160 times in the Pauline letters. *InChrist* is a 'code word' for being in God, in Trinity, in the deep Love at the heart of all things that holds everything in grace. Being *inChrist* connects everything to everything else. We, and everything, exists within the love of God, the relational community we call Trinity. I felt it at sunrise that morning. I experience this in the wonder of the world around, in its beauty and diversity. I experience this in people, recognising that in each is the image of God and that challenges and comforts me. I recognise it in the stories, music, art, poetry... that inspires and lifts me. I know it in

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the pain and suffering of life when I need to be held and picked up, and realise there is a love that will not let me go. I am known and loved and there is nothing I can do to become 'more loved' and nothing I can do to

be loved less. God is love and holds us all in deep grace!

In this issue of Pipeline we reflect on this love of God, recognised and experienced in action, contemplation, reflection, art, poetry, reading, the

beauty of the world, worship and in the midst of our lives. Join us on this journey in the Spirit, into the lives and wonder of our world and of Wellspring members.

Leader's Letter

How do you experience the reality of 'GOD is love' in your life?

Lisa (Day 8)



The Theme for this Pipeline reminded me of my high school days when I had 'God is LOVE' written on my school bag! In some ways it makes me cringe now - even though it is still my best way of describing what God means to me. Now I would rather 'let my life speak' than write a 'slogan' like that on my bag. I would rather be loving and have people ask me why I care if they want to know.

I have been listening to an audio book of the Dalai Lama in which he

reminds us that love and compassion is the thing that unites all the world's religions.

For me, living out of that love is an hour by hour and day by day adventure and it can make writing articles a challenge. I am typing this with one thumb while I hold my old friend Von's hand in palliative care so I will swap from Voice to Text:

I am at the bedside of my dear friend Yvonne Shire. Von is heavily medicated now and the nurses are looking after her to keep her comfortable. Only yesterday and the day before I'd been down to see her and we had some lovely chats. Von has been a volunteer with Kariong Eco Garden, particularly sewing Boomerang Bags. She is a great sewer and was a Driving Instructor (including teaching my son Sam) and in the past she has been a nurse.

Von loves birds - particularly magpies and the cockatoos - they all used to visit her garden in Kariong. I have been important to Von because she is

estranged from her family which makes me very sad, particularly at this time.

Earlier today I went with four other women from Common Grace to meet with Dr. Gordon Reid, our new Federal MP for the electorate of Robertson. We presented him with his own Climate Scarf and talked to him about refugees, domestic violence, First Nations Justice and Climate Justice. It was such a positive experience and it was lovely to meet my local Common Grace people.

Earlier this year I went with two Quaker friends to the Myall Creek commemorations for the Massacre in 1838. It is a place of very powerful love and reconciliation between the descendants of the survivors and the descendants of the perpetrators. It was very special to see Rev John Brown there this year and to thank him for everything he has done. I cannot encourage people enough to go there on the June long weekend and experience the truth telling and special place that it is.

I am looking forward to celebrating the Season of Creation with you all from 1st September to 4th October starting with Wednesdays with Wellspring on 7th September.

Update: Von passed away a few hours after we left her. Using the term 'passed away' reminds me of dear Jeannie Walkers' Funeral where her nephew or niece shared her wishes that we not say she 'passed away' - she said 'dead or died would do'! She also asked that no one say 'she worked tirelessly', as she got very tired doing the things she did! I will miss Jeannie and Von and am grateful for their love and friendship.



From Joy

Joy (Day 2)



The world I grew up in was divided into the saved and the unsaved. What mattered was what you believed and being kind and loving to others so you could be like Jesus and help them be saved too. Now being a follower of Christ is so much more. Now I sense the love of God in all things; in the lives of Wellspring members we have farewelled this last month, in the beauty of my cold climate garden in the Blue Mountains where I live, in beautiful music, glorious art, in someone being brave enough to make themselves vulnerable and rebuild a relationship, in groups of people being brought together through Sydney Alliance, despite their difference of culture or creed to work for the common good, in our MP and Mayor and councillors making time to stop and listen to each refugee's story at the Blue Mountains refugee art show last weekend. Every act of compassion, of growth, of sacrificial love and everything of beauty is a sign to me that we and all creation are God breathed. Stopping and silently letting that love soak in is a discipline I am slowly learning.

Last month Lisa and I attended John Telford's funeral. The palpable sense of his life as a man dedicated to Christ, made the love of God so real. John and Elaine spent their lives enabling and empowering marginalised groups of people all over the world and working for Reconciliation here in Australia.



John Telford

They quietly celebrated everything that was beautiful and helped to build systems that enabled justice to prevail. There were many First Nations People at his funeral and when it was time for the coffin to leave an Aboriginal Elder stepped forward and laying his hand on the coffin sang a farewell and letting go in language. I had such a sense of God's love.

I missed the zoom of Betty Matthew's funeral because of a medical appointment and a mix up with times but Julie Smout sent a small summary of Betty's life. " Betty and Alan had a real outreach to Aboriginal people and refugees. They would reach out to everyone they could and Betty rang Wellspring members on their birthdays. They were working with the Aboriginal people up in Darwin. When they were leaving they were concerned about how the Aboriginal people would go without them and

one of the people said don't worry we know that God is looking after us"

Wellspring has such a heritage. So many people who have lived and are living out God's love and reconciliation in the world with grace and delight. Our love and prayers are with Elaine and Alan and their families.

We have a new Government and the two areas that the majority of Australians have signalled they are concerned about through the ballot box, are reconciliation and care for the planet. As a community who aims to foster the growth of an Australian Christian Spirituality, Wellspring is planning to make a contribution to these areas of our national life through a dialogue on 'Care for Creation: Celtic Christian and Christian First Nations Perspectives'. The highlight will be in October 2023 when we and partners in different states will be hosting the leader of Iona and facilitating a dialogue between Ruth Harvey, Iona Leader and Aboriginal Christian Leaders.

As one lead-up to the 2023 dialogue, a short Zoom conference with young emerging First Nation Christian leaders is planned: Saturday, 29 October 2022, 10am to 12pm Topic: 'Identity and Country in a First Nations Christian Context'. More in the article later in this edition.

WEDNESDAYS WITH WELLSPRING

Wednesdays with Wellspring at 7.15pm EST

Worship in the Celtic Tradition



1st Wednesday of the Month on Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8862483446>

The Shining

Gladys Pagendam (Day 26)

One Saturday, when I pulled back my curtains, dawn was breaking. Imagine this:

God is flying across the sky like Superman, head-first, bringing in the light. Except you cannot see Him. His crown is so vast that crown is all you can see. The great immensity of the rest of him is beyond sight, following on.

This glorious crown, that announces his sovereignty is a brilliant array of flaming rubies and amethysts and sapphires, embedded in a sunrise of molten gold - thousands of tiny pebble sized gemstones, glittering and flashing and chasing away the darkness before them.

Such cloud formations are a rare gift even in MY enchanting world so, I dressed and rushed out to greet this marvel of nature. I was excited, and sensed God was revealing something of Himself! I had been struggling with taught concepts of the trinity. I wondered why I made a connection between the sky and my troubled thoughts.

Perhaps it was because to me it was as if a molten God was spreading himself across the sky, somehow seeming to symbolise His ability to spread out and cover the earth - to give light and warmth and hope and generally be everywhere at once.

I concentrated on the jewelled sky and thought of what I was seeing differently. I can wear the gloriousness of gold and gemstones on my finger, as solid and tangible as Jesus himself. Then there was that other more invisible ethereal factor, the ability of that amazing glory to pierce whatever was concrete in the world, to nurture and nourish and to make things grow and evolve - working on the deepest parts of all that is visible and material - including us.



Deep mystery. Understood! Sort of... The following Sunday I went to church and more clarity was offered. The minister did a very funny children's talk on the trinity. By pouring out a glass of H2O, then boiling a kettle to make steam and by producing a piece of frozen water - ice - he demonstrated how God could manifest in three different ways and still be fundamentally God. It was a gifted, hilarious demonstration of mystery, just as the sky had been for me.

I always find it curious, how God often reveals Mystery in very personal ways when learned explanations just don't cut it. Maybe my own visual, experiential way of understanding doesn't cut it with the more learned and academic. Maybe nobody will 'get' this writing - perhaps it will be too ethereal or airy fairy for them! Yet I have come to understand how true it is that God somehow meets us where we are and this is how He teaches me.

There was a time when I just accepted the concept of the Trinity.

Now I question it. Take it up with Brother Lawrence and the Cloud of Unknowing. According to him it is quite okay to come to other ways of knowing God. So, I feel it is quite okay to ask whether the Trinity is real, or whether it is a model to explain mystery? If so, should that not be explained loud and clear?

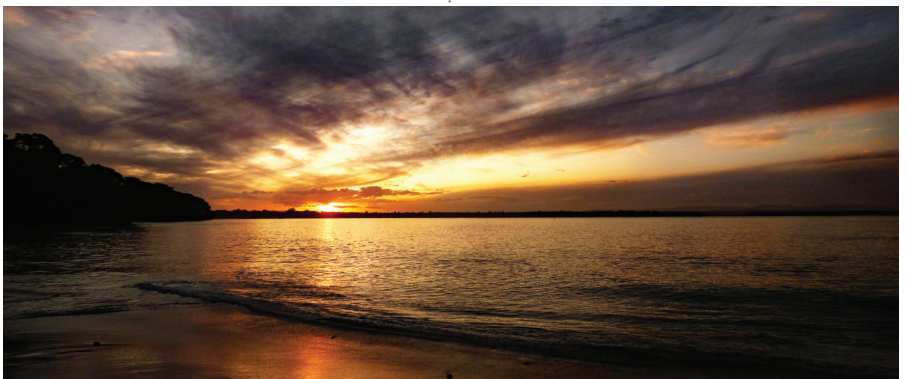
IT IS A MODEL!!!!

More Importantly, it is MYSTERY

Is it coincidence that God meets me in my need? Isn't He far too busy for my questioning?

And yet.... in that glorious sky I FELT him burn a lesson into me as surely as molten gold would burn a seal upon my heart. I still understand God as Three in One whether I profess the word 'Trinity' or not. God just taught me through a more flexible route than Dogma. I don't have a problem with that. After all, He IS God and He can do what He likes.

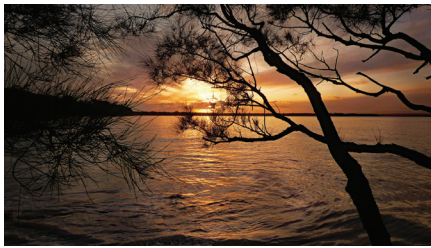
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you...



The God Whom We Worship – part 1

Michael Hillier (Day 14)

What draws you to Church? Why do you go? What do you make of our Sunday worship whether that be eucharistic or otherwise? What would a visitor who has never been to Church make of it all? Would they be entranced? Bored? Somewhere-in-between? Or perhaps simply unable to comprehend it at all?

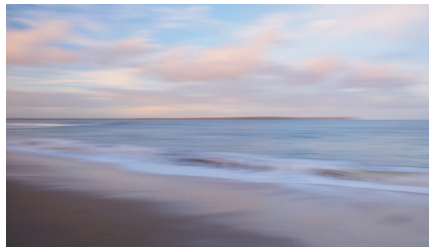


Like the Wise Men or Magi from the East, who came seeking the Christ-Child, we too come seeking – seeking God. That is a good place to begin. Like millions before us over the centuries, you and I faithfully come, hoping to meet God, hoping that in some way He will touch our lives and renew or even transform us. At the very least we want to find strength for the coming week. Perhaps also, in a fragmented, over-busy world, we seek a certain peace ‘that passes all understanding’ (Philippians 4.7). And so, we come seeking God, seeking an encounter with Him.

This article is about the underlying foundation to our communal worship; that is, the attitudes we bring. Our desire to be attentive to God is critical in this.

The difficulty for us is that in doing this, with the best of intentions we immediately create a problem for ourselves. We do not want to be vulnerable to God and we certainly want to be in control of this meeting. We want to set the agenda. After all, this is a meeting of equals! ... Isn't it?

Perhaps it is that we recognise deep down within our psyche, at some spiritual level, that this is not a relationship of equals, and so we practice almost unconsciously, what



could be called ‘God avoidance’. We are like Moses drawn up the mountain in fascination, to see the burning bush, but not wanting to get too involved and then wanting to know God’s name, to have control over Him. Or so Moses hoped. (Exodus 3.1-15).

One way we can practice this ‘God avoidance’ is to be casual in our relationship with God like Aaron. God told Moses to tell his brother, Aaron, not to come waltzing into the sanctuary, this holy place of God, in a casual, unprepared manner. (Leviticus 16.2).

Other ways we can do this is to avoid any silence and stillness. We can do all the talking and God cannot get a word in. We can also, in the words of James Turner, dumb down our liturgies and music through triteness. This is not saying we need to be ‘high brow’, but it is to say we need to take great care with our liturgical words and lyrics accompanying music; that they are worthy of our God.

And sadly, even this care with words and music can become a problem for we can become fixated on things like beauty in worship and in getting the details supposedly perfect. Or we can become fixated with needing to hear excellence with the sermon (not that it should not be thoughtful and even challenging). In an age of information, we can constantly seek new ideas and interesting thoughts to prevent our getting bored. Without care, this can become an escape into a form of entertainment even if that be with the serious intent of gaining new facts about our Faith. The means become an end.

Timothy Radcliffe tells of a visit he made to Mt Sinai and how he

noticed just outside the ‘Chapel of the Burning Bush’ an ancient fire extinguisher. There is a delicious irony in this which speaks exactly to what I am saying here: The extinguishing of any sign of God bursting into flame in our life before it might get out of control.

Maybe it is that we are always vulnerable to the temptation of avoiding God. Perhaps the most important thing we can do here is to simply recognise this ongoing dilemma and live in tension with it, since in the moment we think this does not apply to us, we are in danger of it being true for us. We will go far with a sense of humility, a desire for reverence and attentiveness to God.

Where then might we begin? In 1917 Rudolph Otto published an important book called *The Idea of the Holy*. In this, he named three words: *mysterium*, *tremendum* and *fascinans* and these translate as ‘mystery’, ‘terrifying’ and ‘fascinating’. Simply put, they refer to the sense of mystery, the overwhelming holiness and otherness of God and the feelings of awe, amazement, trembling and even fear that they invoke in us as mere mortals in the face of this overwhelming Being that we name God. And like Moses, in fascination we find ourselves drawn towards this Being. Otto says, this is the divine power; the numinous.

For an example of such religious experience read the story of Isaiah (6.1-8) who experienced this and felt overwhelmed and appalled by his sinfulness – until an angel cleansed him with a burning coal that touched his lips. This gives us a real sense of the power of this *mysterium*, *tremendum*, and *fascinans*. Above all, it is a time for us, in the words of that Communion hymn to ‘Let all mortal flesh keep silent and with fear and trembling stand.’

More than likely this is not our exact experience, though for some it will be. The word used to describe

this is *mystical* and normally, in experiencing this, in some way, we will be changed forever. Of course, we cannot artificially manufacture such an experience – it is a pure, unsought gift. But perhaps it is true that more people have these moments in life, although less dramatic, than we might imagine.

So, if this is not ‘my’ experience then why mention it? Because this is the reality even if I do not experience it this way. It is as if I am talking casually to someone and then realise it is the Queen or Prime Minister. And I am shocked! It is as if I am supposedly knowledgeable but waffling on to someone concerning a subject on which I know a little only to discover this is the world’s leading scholar and expert on this very subject! In worship, God is present whether or not we are aware of that truth!

Here is a true story to help make



the point. In Norway there lived a famous artist, Victor Sparre, who died in 2008. He did a great deal to help Russian dissidents during the Cold War years and one person he helped was Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the Nobel laureate, who for a time thought he might settle permanently in Norway after being exiled from Russia.

Together they searched for a suitable country home where Solzhenitsyn could continue to write in peace and

quiet. One place for sale that they visited was an old, stately home. The aristocratic woman who owned it was delighted to meet Solzhenitsyn and could not do enough for him as she showed him around the estate. She did not know Sparre and ignored him.

Finally, they came to a large painting and she proceeded to tell Solzhenitsyn that this was her favourite painting. Solzhenitsyn then, to her shocked embarrassment, introduced her to its painter, Victor Sparre, standing quietly in the background.

Each of us, so frequently does the same to God when we treat Him casually and with little sense of awe and wonder, trembling or holy fear, as we stand, sit, or kneel before the Holy of Holies.

Christians for Peace Newcastle

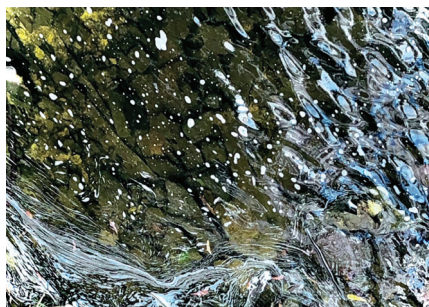
An Other reality beyond skin materializes when the exigencies of life choices bother me. I want to find a place of stillness where I can just Be. How do I feel God’s love in the midst of turbulence in the world when darkness, despair, desolation, powerlessness take hold and descend upon me. I whisper a prayer to God in solitude and feel her presence. Then darkness turns into light.

‘To people who walk in my life, I say:

Peace

I honour our encounter, your journey with me. I seek forgiveness for the consequences of my imperfect striving. I keep the embers of hope alight so that one day, we shall both comprehend the invisible lines of our destiny, heal the fissure in our relating, help us fly undeterred, unhindered, uncharted to meet the Self, the Author of Pathways combined with our predicated partial nods, ultimately to find the contours that guide life’s mystery, the ever-flowing force of waves and ripples within the great stillness that we seek.

She stands in the dark waiting. Her name is Peace



Sometimes we retreat from our restlessness, and insert ourselves together in Nature. We discover the emergence of paradise within us, our devotion to God. We honour her unconditional love for us, despite our blemishes.

Devotion

A pause for stillness to banish the maelstrom that dwells in our minds, discern through the haze the mystery that lies in every space we occupy, wherein lies the purpose of the patterns we see from the barks of trees, from the veined beauty of a single leaf,

from the complexity in simplicity, and from the lovely waratah materialising out of season only to be seized by the eye of our soul to bring us joy together, we sing in our hearts the tweets of the birds flying by, punctuated by the motor roars in the background, and through it all, we find Peace in our retreat from the whirling movement in the street, we meditate within our walk in the dark to learn to work in concert the tools of mothering the earth and all the creatures it embraces, using our diverse gifts — architects, planners, and dreamers sailing on the same boat knowing that Wisdom has already built her House, that there is no other rock but God, and we, God’s field in the realm of Creation, are devoted to pay homage always to the breath of life eternal, in discipleship.

The Spirituality of Dag Hammarskjöld, UN Secretary General 1953 - 1961:

Why his life inspires me 60 years after his tragic death on 18 September 1961

Doug Hewitt (Day 7)

“Once I answered Yes to Someone – or Something. And from that hour I was certain that existence is meaningful and that, therefore my life in self surrender, has a goal.”

Dag Hammarskjöld, published in *Markings* p. 14, written on the Day of Pentecost 1961, three months before his untimely death.

Accepting the invitation to focus on Spirituality and Worship in this issue of Pipeline I wish to share the impact that the Spirituality of Dag Hammarskjöld has had on my life.

Dag Hammarskjöld was born in Jönköping in south-central Sweden in 1905, the fourth son of Sweden's first world war prime minister Hjalmar Hammarskjöld. In 1953, he reflected on his family's influence on his career. *“From generations of soldiers and government officials on my father's side I inherited a belief that no life was more satisfactory than one of selfless service to your country — or humanity.”* After doing degrees covering literature, linguistics, history, economics and law, he entered the Swedish civil service in 1930, ending up in Ministry for Foreign Affairs. In the late 1940s he represented Sweden at the newly formed United Nations. In 1953 it seemed that this whole life of service to his country had been destined to prepare him for the role of the second UN Secretary General, when he was elected to that significant position.

Recording my memories of the significant impact of the spirituality of Dag Hammarskjöld on my life prompts a reflection on why it happened. Why did he become such an inspiration that I was eager to share his impact with many generations of students I subsequently taught in school, college and university, over a



period of 50 years? It all dates from 1961 when I heard of the death of the UN Secretary General in a highly suspicious plane crash, as he attempted to resolve a conflict in the Belgian Congo. At the time my father, Alan Hewitt, was studying at Union Theological Seminary in New York, and I recall his account of the impact that the death of Hammarskjöld had at the UN headquarters, not far from Union Seminary in New York. In letters home he reported on the great sense of loss at the sudden death of the second UN Secretary General. US President John Kennedy called him “the greatest statesman of the 20th Century.”

To return to the unexplained explosion in the DC6 aircraft, which caused the death of the group of nine UN staff, plus pilots, on their peace mission. At the plane crash site in the Belgian Congo, where Hammarskjöld and his UN colleagues died, his brief case was found with its usual but surprising contents - a copy of the New Testament, Martin Buber's theology text *I and Thou*, a book of Rilke's poems and a French novel. Not the normal diplomat's reading! But this choice of reading typified this deeply spiritual man!



My own life in the 1960's was enriched with the publication of Dag Hammarskjöld's hand-written diary in the book *Markings*, and from his personal reflections with their great depth of spirituality and meaning, I drew inspiration. The rough copy of his diary was found in his New York apartment sometime after his death, with a note to a Swedish friend “I wrote these reflections without the thought of others reading them, but if you find them worth publishing you have my permission.” He called them “negotiations between myself and God.” It was published in English with an introduction by the poet W. H. Auden, who explains that its Swedish title, *Vagmarken* has no easy English translation and could have been “guide posts” or “trail marks.” But the translators settled on the title *Markings*.

In his Foreword to *Markings* W.H. Auden wrote “His knowledge and understanding of poetry, the only field in which I am competent to judge the quality of his mind, were extraordinary, and presumptuous as it sounds, I felt certain of a mutual sympathy between us, of an unexpressed dialogue beneath our casual conversation. The loneliness and the religious concern which his diary records, I sensed, ... and while translating it, a real surprise at his

familiarity with the Anglican Psalter and his fascination with the haiku as a poetic form.”

Writing early in his public service career Hammarskjöld had expressed his conviction:

“I am being driven forward, into an unknown land.

The pass grows steeper, the air colder and sharper.

A wind from my unknown goal stirs the strings of expectation.”

Hammarskjöld was surprisingly relaxed about the future—at least sometimes. At a journalists’ luncheon in the spring of 1958, celebrating his election to a second five-year term as Secretary-General, he made some extended remarks, including: “I cannot belong to or join those who believe in our movement toward catastrophe. I believe in growth, a growth to which we have a responsibility to add our few fractions of an inch. [This] is not the facile faith of generations before us, who thought that everything was arranged for the best in the best of worlds.... It is in a sense a much harder belief—the belief and faith that the future will be all right because there will always be enough people to fight for a decent future.” Clearly, a hope in humanity based on a deeply spiritual foundation.

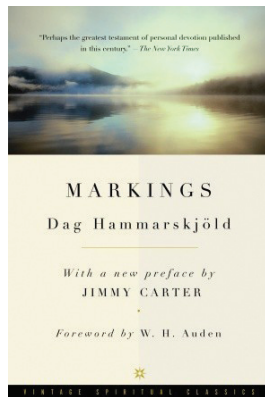
Speaking in this way, he was the Hammarskjöld the public knew: clear-minded, realistic yet forward-looking, inspiring without showiness. In his journal, where we can discover something of his inner life, he recognized the price that he himself paid, and that others might need to pay who desire effective roles in achieving that decent future. He wrote:

“Each day the first day: each day a life. Each morning we must hold out the chalice of our being to receive, to carry, and give back.

It must be held out empty—for the past must only be reflected in its polish, its shape, its capacity.”

Roger Lipsey wrote: “Dag Hammarskjöld lived two lives. The first was what he called ‘this enormously exposed and published life’ as Secretary-General of the

United Nations. The second was intensely private, known by a very few close friends who understood that they could speak with him about very personal matters—for example, an Indian couple, close students of Vedanta, could count on him to join their conversation as one who belonged in it.”



Only after his death, with the publication of *Markings*, did it become clear to the English-speaking world that Hammarskjöld had been a religious seeker for whom certain source texts—the Gospels, Psalms, Meister Eckhart, Thomas à Kempis, the early Chinese classics—provided steady inspiration and guidance. It is true that on rare occasions during the UN years he would say or do things that were self-evidently rooted in an otherwise undisclosed point of view. For example, in a public talk in 1953, enlarging on a thought from the TAO TE CHING, he said, “We cannot mould the world as masters of a material thing..... But we can influence the development of the world from within as a spiritual thing.”

At a time when our political leaders constantly urge the necessity of nationalism and patriotism, suggesting that our country can do no wrong, and that those who question its policies are traitors, we need to hear the inspiring international voice of genuine leaders such as Hammarskjöld. In a similar vein Mahatma Gandhi wrote “I want the cultures of the world to blow through my windows, but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any of them.” On 6 July 1961, just two months before his untimely death, seeking renewal, Hammarskjöld penned these words:

“Tired and lonely, so tired the heart aches.
Melt-water trickles down the rocks,
The fingers are numb, the knees tremble,
It is now, now, that you must not give in.
On the path of others are resting places,
Places in the sun where they cannot meet.
But this is your path.
And it is now, now, that you must not fail.
Weep if you can,
Weep, but do not complain.
The way chose you – and you must be thankful.”

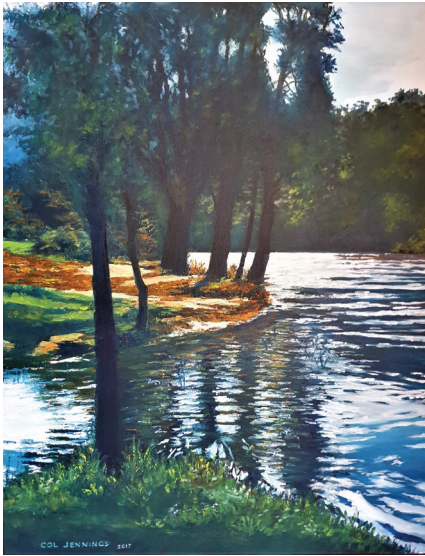
The impact of such reflective writings, and the example of the total commitment to the service of others provides an example that is hard to ignore. By the conclusion of my period of study leave in 1978, spent mainly at the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Sussex, I had written a new unit of university study entitled *Educating for International Understanding*. Visits to various centres in Europe and the UK, including the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in Uppsala, all contributed to an exposure to a global perspective which transcended the nationalistic approach often used in our schools. It was offered to teachers pursuing a post graduate course in education studies.

So, the commemoration each year on 18 September, of the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld, gives us an opportunity to pause and pray for peace in our world. In a contribution to *The Conversation* on 5 July 2021, Binoy Kampmark from RMIT University, called Hammarskjöld “a defiant pioneer of global diplomacy” and concluded his article with the words:

“To this day, Hammarskjöld’s legacy endures through the continued deployment of UN peace keeping operations, with the aim of promoting “stability, security and peace processes.” His shaping of the general-secretary position is also marked: an international, neutral figure, who was tasked, however successful, with using preventative diplomacy, promoting peace and securing an environment where states can develop on their own terms.”

Spirituality and Worship

Col Jennings (Day 3)



Worship to some is to value or to treasure God above all things. The inner essence of worship is the response of the heart to the knowledge of the mind, that is, when the mind is rightly beginning to understand God and the heart is rightly valuing God.

Religious worship is not a futile monologue of self-deception. Worship is a personal communion with the Divine Creator. Through worship a person aspires to be better, and thereby, works through prayer and service to God to eventually attain the best outcome they can. Prayer consists of doing God's will as we understand it, or out of love for God as we keep his commandments.

"I can, therefore I am."

"Every perfect life is a parable invented by God."

The difference between worship and prayer is that in worship we do so not for any egotistical delight or gain; whereas in prayer it may embody an element of self-healing or love of self. More often though it is a request of God's love for another, many other people, or for part of our sadly broken world.

Pope Francis has said that worship is an act of love that transforms one's

life. "In worship, we allow Jesus to heal and change us to kindle light amid our darkness, to grant us strength in weakness and courage amid trials."

Contrary to the materialistic thinking of some people in this age religious worship is not a futile monologue of self-deception. Worship is a personal communion with that which is divinely real to them, to the one who is the very source of reality. As said, humans aspire by worship to be better and thereby eventually attain the best

Simone Weil, a remarkable French philosopher who knew the value of silence, spoke of our relationship with God in this way: "We have to remain quite still and unite ourselves with that which we desire, yet do not approach."



We unite ourselves to God in this way, through silent meditation. We learn to listen, to become more aware through heart and mind what may transform our lives, with the yearning of the soul for betterment and happiness.

Mostly we simply worship God for what we comprehend our Creator to be. Worship asks nothing and expects nothing for the worshipper. We do not worship God because of anything we may derive from such veneration; we simply offer our devotion and engage in our worship as a natural and spontaneous reaction to the recognition of our Creator's matchless personality and because

The main attributes of God – Love, Wisdom, Will, Order, Perseverance, Patience and Wisdom

of the Creator's lovable nature and adorable attributes.

The main attributes of God – Love, Wisdom, Will, Order, Perseverance, Patience and Wisdom are some of the attributes we can aspire to or evaluate in our life from time to time during this brief existence on Earth.

We can never wisely decide temporal issues or transcend the selfishness of personal interests unless we constantly meditate in the presence of our God and try to better understand the realities of divine meanings and spiritual values.

Daily meditation makes the contact of mind with spirit. This interchange of strength for weakness, courage for fear, the will of God for the mind of self, constitutes worship.

Worship from the heart and mind can bring you the highest joy of all.

Unfortunately, one of the great troubles with modern life is that men and women think they are too busy to find time for spiritual meditation or prayer.

I've recently been reading "The Cloud of the Unknowing" by an unknown author of the Thirteenth Century. I liked the first line of the Introduction which says: "the book you hold is a rainmaker for anyone whose soul has ever felt as dry as a bone." The author – possibly a monk – who wrote each chapter to his friend somewhere else in Britain, said 'contemplative prayer can help end that spiritual drought, shortage of love, low levels of humility or the absence of peace.' All of us have a soul with a spirit-spark waiting to be awakened or renewed.

The God Whom We Worship – part 2

Michael Hillier (Day 14)

Annie Dillard writes this of Sunday worship: 'On the whole, I do not find Christians, outside of the catacombs, sufficiently sensible of conditions. Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke? Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offence, or the waking god may draw us out to where we can never return.'

We cannot, nor should we try, to manufacture an overwhelming experience of God for this can only be a gift. But there is much that we can do to help deepen our sense of awareness of God when we come to worship Him. In the words of Joseph Martos, writing on the Eucharist, but equally applicable to all our worship, it is a 'doorway to the Sacred'. He goes on to say that faith is the key that opens this door. In the end, this is what it is all about!

And so, the next step is to offer you some suggestions that may help as you come deliberately and consciously into God's presence to worship, remembering, of course, that we are always in His presence wherever we are, and not only then.

Things to Consider...

- Preparation is one key. Use some form of preparation the night before. Read the Scripture readings; think about your sins, what you wish to give thanks for, and is there something special you wish to pray for at this Service? Our worship is communal



and not a time to focus on private prayer, though there is nothing wrong with having some private thoughts and intentions.

- Arrive in time to have some quiet time. It is very easy to get caught up in extended conversations with others. But here at the beginning, we want to move from our time to God's time from what is called chronos time to kairos time. We do want, in truth we need, stillness, silence and time to make ourselves present to God.

- In some Christian Churches, particularly in Asia, the people will remove their shoes in symbolic recognition that they stand on holy ground for God had told Moses to remove his shoes for this reason (Exodus 3.5). You and I do not actually need to do this, but spiritually and mentally we somehow do need to make this important transition. Just

as Aaron needed! And yet, perhaps it would be a good thing!

- Many, if not all, Orthodox Christians will touch the floor of the Church as they enter. Again, this is a symbolic recognition given a practical shape that we are of the earth, humus. This is intended to remind us of the need for humility. It is also one reason for kneeling.

- Spend a few moments looking around, noticing, just being thoughtful. Many others have gone before us and now stand in the nearer presence of God, who also worshipped in this building and lovingly served God through it. Give thanks for them and their ministry. Are there stained-glass windows? Often, these will be of the saints who have gone before us. Give thanks to God for them and the examples they set for us. As we reflect on and offer prayers for all these, we are reminded that worship not only happens on earth but also in heaven. In some way, in this Eucharist, we join with the whole company of heaven; with angels, archangels and all who have gone before us, in worshipping God. We are never alone! In communal worship, we transcend time and space.

Love At A Distance

John Martin (Day 28)

'The commitment to the spiritual journey is not a commitment to pure joy, but to taking responsibility for the whole human family, its needs and destiny'. - Thomas Keating

Many years ago, at a meeting of the Pre-Union Presbyterian Assembly in NSW, the Rev Bob MacArthur made a comment in a speech that I have never forgotten.

*'Money enables
Love to work at a distance.'*

He was speaking of financial support for relief, refugee, and aid organisations in overseas countries.

When I talk with Fair Trade business owners, especially those outside the Church, I discover that they often became involved in Fair Trade because they visited a country in Africa or Asia and saw the need to support artisans and craft workers. This need was met by their setting up a Fair Trade business in Australia.



But it is not necessary to witness first-hand the pain of people overseas to become passionate about addressing their plight.

August 23rd is the UNESCO day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition. The key person in all this was William Wilberforce whose birth in 1759 we commemorate the next day, 24th August. The only travel out of Britain that William Wilberforce made was to the European continent often with family or associates. Wilberforce relied on the accounts of others regarding the slave trade and the

condition of the slaves on plantations in the Caribbean. During the decades long struggle for the abolition of the slave trade and eventually slavery in the British Empire, Wilberforce reported experiencing many sleepless nights, tossing, and turning with the thoughts of the hardships and misery being endured by slaves squashed into crowded ships crossing the Atlantic.

Love at a distance.

Not only separated by distance, but time as well. Speaking recently in Kigali in Rwanda, Prince Charles said “I cannot describe the depths of my personal sorrow at the suffering of so many as I continue to deepen my own

understanding of slavery’s enduring impact.”

‘Fair Trade enables Love to work at a distance.’

We may never witness first-hand the conditions of workers responsible for the products we purchase, whether in agriculture, manufacturing, or mining. We can, however, by seeking Fair Trade products, ensure the supply chain is kept honest with fair wages and good working conditions.

Love is basic to the Christian Faith. ‘God is love’ (1 John 4:8 & 16).

The whole of our loving life, including the way we shop, reflects our Spirituality and Worship.



Book Review

The Universal Christ – Richard Rohr

Geoff Stevenson (Day 20)

After reading several other books by Richard Rohr and listening to several podcasts, videos and interviews, I was eager to read ‘The Universal Christ’ when it was released. It didn’t disappoint!

For, me, it flowed on from The Divine Dance (see a review in previous Pipeline) and develops the idea that ‘Christ’ is in everything and everything is in Christ (Col 3:11). At the beginning he names some themes and asks some questions and the book is largely an exploration of these. These themes and questions are:

“The revelation of the Risen Christ as ubiquitous and eternal was clearly affirmed in Scriptures (Col 1, Eph

1, John 1, Heb 1) and in the early church...

... we gradually limited the Divine Presence to the single body of Jesus, when perhaps it is as ubiquitous as light itself – and uncircumscribable by human boundaries.”

[We] can open the ancient door of faith with a key, and that key is the proper understanding of a word that many of us use often, buy often too glibly. That word is ‘Christ’.

- What if Christ is a name for the ‘transcendent within’ of every thing in the universe?

- What if Christ refers to an infinite horizon that pulls us from within and pulls us forward too?

- What if Christ is another name for everything – in all its fullness?

Rohr speaks out of the broad and, in my mind, delightfully open and integrating, Franciscan Spirituality. I have long loved St Francis and been inspired by his life, his call and his ministry, so Rohr, for me, is a breath of fresh, opening my Spirit to the beauty and wonder of Christ, revealed in everything.

I am learning to experience the Divine Presence in all things, to see and hear and encounter Christ or Trinity, in the early morning bird-song and coloured sky; in the streams and creeks, rivers and oceans; in the bush and trees with abundant creatures, animals, insects, reptiles, fish, birds... I am learning to recognise the face of Christ in all people and that as I simplify my life and thinking and engage in more

experiential living, I experience and see Christ.

Rohr's book has been terribly affirming and also very challenging. I understand the interconnectedness of all things, as we live, breathe and have our being in Christ. I recognise that in Christ there are no barriers, human barriers that judge, distort, exclude, divide and do harm – all are one.

Rohr affirms the deep, abiding and embracing love of God for all things

and our connection to all creatures and Earth itself. A series of spiritual practices accompanies this book and invites us into the space of contemplation, that grows awareness and leads us into deeper love and loving. Each morning Nico (our dog) and I wander paths and tracks along Toongabbie Creek. It is a walk of prayer and contemplation – sometimes I listen better than other times. It has become a vital way to start the day.

A group of us now gather around once a month to talk through some of the themes raised in his book and to grow in spirit. This book has been exceptionally helpful in opening my rather narrow 'Protestant' mind to the deeper Tradition and spirituality that the world needs more than anything right now. There is also an accompanying podcasts series that can be freely accessed on the 'Centre for Action and Contemplation' website.

Conference Update

Diane Speed (Day 11)

Timeless Land Painting by Lloyd Rees, with permission of the copyright owners.

Arrangements for Wellspring's dialogue on 'Care for Creation: Celtic Christian and Christian First Nations Perspectives' in 2023 are progressing in a promising way. It is intended that a short update will appear in each Pipeline henceforth.

The dialogue is to consist of a number of events next year, mainly to take place for some four weeks across October 2023, when the Iona Community Leader, Rev. Ruth Harvey, has accepted our invitation to visit Australia, specifically to engage in this dialogue with a range of First Nations people. The exploration of care for creation as a key shared concern of the two traditions with which Wellspring has a particularly strong engagement is expected to attract considerable interest, not only amongst Wellspring members, but also amongst other organizations with similar interests, and we are exploring potential partnerships with some such groups for mounting some of the events. We very much hope this initiative will both refresh and enrich our existing members and also attract the interest of others in joining Wellspring.



Events will be variously formal and informal symposia and conversations, variously in person and online. Wellspring Council's Visitor Committee is beginning to consider the possibilities for Ruth to visit several different Australian centres, and we hope to have more news about her itinerary later this year.

As one lead-up to the 2023 dialogue, a short Zoom conference is planned:

Saturday, 29 October 2022, 10am to 12pm — by Zoom.

Topic: 'Identity and Country in a First Nations Christian Context'.

No registration fee.

Please save the date!

This conference is intended to give Wellspring members and other

interested people a clearer idea of what might be encompassed by First Nations Christian perspectives on the care of creation.

While non-indigenous people appreciate the broad cultural importance of country for identity amongst First Nations people and understand that First Nations people have a range of different backgrounds and views, this is an opportunity for us all to hear from different emerging First Nations leaders how, as Christians, they understand the relationship between cultural concern for country and concern for actual care of the created world. There will be some discussion time.

A call for registration will be sent early in October and Zoom details provided upon registration.

Refugee News

Julie Brackenreg (Day 2)

We are reminded as followers of Jesus and readers of The Book that we have a duty to provide care and compassion towards the sojourner in our land and widows and orphans amongst us. No one fits these two descriptors better than those who come to this land appealing for help, justice and safety. They come from countries where justice is often a rare commodity, help is only available for a select few and safety depends on parlous political stances – they have seen Australia as a safe haven, offering life. So many sadly have been denied help, justice or safety by the government of this country.

Recent political changes in Australia have left many hopeful that this situation which has brought international embarrassment and shame to Australia have given hope to many that actions towards Refugees and those seeking asylum may be moderated by new policies and practices based on a more humane understanding. There have been a few hopeful signs but as yet no major policy shifts enacted. Several Independents and members of minor parties have spoken in Parliament in both Houses about Refugees and Andrew Wilkie has introduced a Bill calling for an End to Refugee Detention. Here is a link to a short (6 min) and excellent speech by MP Monique Ryan on refugee issues. <https://youtu.be/CV8rr-xg0Hc>

Meanwhile the problems just grow. Whilst we have those whose lives were originally impacted by the regimes of Saddam Hussein and the Ayatollah Khomeini, who have both been long consigned to history, still awaiting certainty regarding their applications, we now are also dealing with Refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine who have now entered the pipeline of those awaiting processing and granting



of visas. The situation becomes intolerable as Australian bureaucracy continues to sit on its hands and seemingly “wish these people away”.

The Legacy Caseload of Refugees is currently between 30 and 31 thousand people seeking asylum. Of that about 19,000 have received their refugee status and have been granted either TPV [Temporary Protection Visas] or SHEV [Safe Haven Enterprise Visas]. The remaining 9 to 10,000 are on bridging visas in different stages of the application. The new Government has committed to convert TPV and SHEV to permanent visas. As yet there has been no announcement on bridging visas.

We are encouraged to hear that there is increasing consultation and an awareness of the need to change procedures and implement and speed up action within government departments who have jurisdiction over Refugee affairs. Any changes in this direction can only benefit Refugees and their tireless advocates who have been waiting for as many as ten years for conclusive judgement and action in their cases.

On 19 July, the Federal Court began hearing a case brought by Mostafa Azimitabar against the Australian government, in which he alleges that he was unlawfully detained for 15 months in Melbourne’s Park and

Mantra hotels. Azimitabar claims that he endured ongoing trauma because of unlawful detention and says that the nightmare of his prolonged unlawful detention left him ‘dreaming of sunlight’. There has been no further reporting of the progress of this case.

There are growing calls for the Australian government to endorse Community Sponsorship allowing individual groups of Australians to directly sponsor Refugees to live in their community. These measures would meet with good reception, especially in rural areas. CRISP Community Refugee Integration and Settlement Pilot <https://refugeesponsorship.org.au/what-we-do/crisp/> is working with established networks and new community groups – many sponsored by church groups – to bring about an acceptable model through which additional numbers of refugees can be brought to Australia, over and above the set “quotas” the government is working with.

September will see the holding of a National Conference in Katoomba hosted by Rural Australians for Refugees and BMRSG <https://ruralaustraliansforrefugees.org.au/conference2022>. This Conference will have a large number of workshops and breakout groups as well as engaging speakers and opportunity to meet

like-minded groups. Billeting is being arranged for those from out of town.

All of these matters help us to see that there is still much to do before we can say we live in a country where

the Sojourner and Widows and Orphans are cared for adequately and fairly. As members of Wellspring we need to continue to speak out, join groups who are active in their support

of Refugees and above all take the simple but effective step of writing/ emailing/speaking with our elected representatives and those who do speak up in Parliament on behalf of Refugees.

“If Still from the Desert Prophets Come”*

EREMOS ONLINE EVENT Sunday 23 October, 2022

Workshop led by Celia Kemp - approximately 2:45 AEDT after the AGM.

The introduction of buffel grass to Central Australia fuels fires that burn too hot, destroying what they once renewed. These burned-out hills have a sadness about them, but also a strange beauty. When all is not well, listening to place, and the people of place, is painful. But we need to be grounded in the difficult real for life to spring up into the future. And so, when all is not well, we need to listen out for prophetic voices saying the unwelcome true thing.

Celia will draw from Scripture, First Nations and other desert voices and country itself to speak about prophets, wilderness and the state of the Australian soul.

There will be time for personal reflection and small group sharing.

This event is open to all and free for Eremos members or \$15/\$10 (conc) for non members. Bookings essential. Register by email to events@eremos.org.au no later than 20th October.

If you email, please include your name, location, and phone number.

WELLSPRING COMMUNITY INC.

Wellspring Community Inc. ABN 81 293 869 355

Leader	Alex Scutt	0419 501 545	scuttaj@bigpond.com
Deputy Leader	Diane Speed	0499 777 580	dianes@scd.edu.au
Secretary	Neil Holm	0420 936 190	neil.holm.wellspring@gmail.com
Treasurer	David Eckersley	0401 212 913	hdecks17@gmail.com
Ecumenism and Interfaith Faith	Doug Hewitt		doug.isabel35@gmail.com
Healing and Hospitality	vacant		
Peace and Social Justice	Mark Hurst		m5hurst51@gmail.com
Reconciliation	Joy Connor		j.j.connor@bigpond.com
Spirituality and Worship	Alex Nelson		alexnelson@optusnet.com.au
Sustainability	Lisa Wriley		lisaw0508@gmail.com

Visit our webpage at: www.wellspringcommunity.org.au • Follow us on Facebook

NEXT ISSUE: August 2022.

Pipeline Committee: Geoff Stevenson.

Deadline for material The Pipeline, August Edition, focusses on the theme of Spirituality and Worship (one of our Wellspring focus areas). In the Prayer Diary for Sunday, we read in John 4:16 that God (Trinity) is love. You are invited to reflect upon how you experience this reality of ‘GOD is Love’ in your life. Share your experience, write a poem, share an image or review a book, song, movie... that conveys your sense of ‘God is Love.’

Contributions are to be submitted by Friday August 5. You are welcome to begin now and submit early!

Please email material for that edition to Geoff Stevenson geoffs81@gmail.com