

NewView

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As we approach the day on which we celebrate the birth of Jesus it is fitting that we remind ourselves again of **the power of love**, which is the theme of this issue and this season.

I recently attended an address by Rev Dr Lorraine Parkinson who inverted the familiar saying, 'God is Love', and reflected on the differences it would make if we said, 'Love is God'. If we recognised Love as God, at work and present within and around us, perhaps we would see more clearly the necessity for us to allow Love to operate in our lives. Parkinson concluded, 'If Love were God, then all efforts to make life the best it can be for all humanity, would be recognized as holy. Love would be recognized as humanity's inspiration to create the best possible world. Ultimately, Love who is God would be the focus for all humanity.'

The story provided by Community Hub Missional group illustrates the concept of Love as God, and is present in the work behind the scenes of the Welfare Committee (p.4). This is the season when we specifically share with others our joy at the birth of Jesus through our gift-giving. We see Love's concern for others in the reminders from Colin King and Rohan Wickramaratne to share our joy at the birth of Jesus not just with those known to us, but with those whose lives are far less secure and whose needs are so much greater than we who are among the most materially privileged in this world.

This issue of *NewView* records many other instances of Love - of God - visible in our community. We see Love at work in the reports of the many activities of our missional groups for Inclusive Community and Outreach. We see it in the lives of people like Rev Bill Morgan and Evelyn and Herb Fleming, who have given so much of their lives because of their desire to share this Love, to help others come to experience it also. Love as God is shown in the response of our community at GWUC to those who are hurting as a result of the divestment process (p.8). It is present also in Bill Norquay's reminder that we should operate as a community where Love is the motivator, treating each other with respect (p14). Peter Stewart's review of Michael Morwood's book picks up the theme, in quoting Morwood's observation that when people 'acted lovingly...these activities were expressions of the Divine Presence within them' (p.17). *This* is how God's kingdom is established here on earth. Roger Vass found this idea was taken up by Marcus Borg in Canberra, when he said, 'It is not so much about believing, but "beloving"(sic)' because it is 'more about this life than the next' (p.15).

Finally, we have seen Love as God in the life of Nelson Mandela, who suffered so long for a just future for his people. It was inspirational to hear Emeritus Bishop Desmond Tutu recall that when Mandela had taken up the position of the presidency he had said, 'I can never forget, but I can forgive'. I was even more impressed when I heard Hillary Clinton tell the world that 'Mandela told many people *he had to learn to forgive*'. We remember how he led his country to a peaceful transition of government through the power of recognising and acknowledging human frailties and errors of the past. We are strengthened by this knowledge that Mandela too must have been beset by the temptation of violence and the desire for revenge, but he rejected that path. His greatness lies not only in his remarkable endurance, but in the wisdom inherent in his vision of a future in which the **power of Love** is needed to create the best possible world. Like Jesus, Mandela 'has tak[en] more into death/than was brought into life' (see Peter Baker's poem p10).

Robin Pope

Celebrating Christmas

During Advent we engage in many activities which have their origins in long forgotten practices, some of which even have connections to our pre-Christian past. For this reason some of the Christmas customs have been alternately celebrated and condemned by our church fathers.

Christmas is celebrated at about the time of the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere. Ancient peoples feared that with the onset of winter the sun would not reappear, and the solstice was a time of celebration to mark the beginning of the return of life-giving light and warmth. The ancient Egyptians are recorded as taking in the leaves of the date palm to decorate their homes in celebration of the winter solstice. Later, the Romans celebrated the time with the feast of Saturnalia, using evergreen branches as a reminder that green plants would soon start growing again. It was a brave symbol of life amidst the prevalence of death in the natural world. In a number of pagan cultures evergreens were believed to ward off the inhabitants of the spirit world such as witches, demons and ghosts. A legend of the Middle Ages claimed that when Jesus was born every tree shook off its burden of ice and snow and thrust out new green shoots.

The Romans were skilled in modifying to their own ends the customs of cultures they conquered. They celebrated *Dies Natalis Solis Invicti* on December 25 as the birth date of their sun god Mithra, and the practice of marking Sunday as a holy day ('Sun' day) is another which has been passed on to us in the naming and observance. It was not until the first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine, that December 25 was used to celebrate the birth of Jesus in 336 AD, and this was later declared as the official date of Christ's birth by Pope Julius I (337-352 AD).

In the early Christian church, the Epiphany (from the Greek, meaning 'appearance') of the Lord was more widely celebrated than Christmas Day. Epiphany was celebrated on the date when the three magi, or wise men, arrived with their gifts for the infant Jesus, although there are slight variations in the dates used by 'eastern' and 'western' Christian churches depending on whether they follow the Julian or Gregorian calendars! It is commonly set as January 6 in Australia, except in Orthodox communities. The gifts of the magi have given rise to our practice of gift giving, although in some countries this still takes place on January 6 (Epiphany). By the twelfth century this date was marked as a holiday.

The custom of bringing an evergreen tree into the home is now a common feature of our Christmas celebrations. Even in the secular world this is recognised as a symbol of hope for the future, although Christians are more specific in seeing it as a symbol of God's love to the world at *all* times, with the gift of Jesus. However, the custom has had a chequered career because of its pagan origins. Oliver Cromwell forbade the activity, as did the Massachusetts pilgrims in America. It is generally accepted that the Germans were the first to adopt the practice (there is an unsubstantiated legend that Martin Luther initiated it). Certainly German immigrants to America took the custom with them and gradually broke down American opposition. Similarly, the intermarriage of German and British royalty brought the tradition to England. Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg, wife of George III is recorded as setting up a tree for the enjoyment of the children of the families on the estate at Windsor Castle in 1800. John Watkins her biographer recorded the event:

In the middle of the room stood an immense tub with a yew tree placed in it, from the branches of which hung bunches of sweet-meats, almonds and rasins (sic) in papers, fruit and toys, most tastefully arranged, and the whole illuminated by small wax candles.

It was Queen Victoria and Prince Albert who popularised the idea in England when they were pictured in the *Illustrated News* with their family surrounding a Christmas tree. It soon became the fashion in nineteenth-century England.

The original branch or tree in a tub placed on a tabletop has long since been replaced by ever larger specimens, the candles have given way to electric (and solar?) lights, and the 'sweetmeats' of fruit, marzipan and gingerbread are represented by more modern and oft-times gaudy decorations. It is a custom which has threads leading back to a very distant past.

(Many sources which space does not allow me to list, but available on request)



Robin Pope

Celebrating Christmas with Gifts

Throughout the world there is an ever present problem of unsafe drinking water for people living in less developed countries. This is caused primarily by poor sanitation and hygiene. There are organizations working on this, but the magnitude of the issue makes it one of the most urgent that we face. In our wonderful country we simply turn on a tap and have, instantly, water that can be consumed with complete safety. This is not the case in much of the rest of the world. Below is some information on this, sourced mainly from UNICEF.

It is hard to come to terms with figures quoted for child deaths due to unsatisfactory water supply. While these figures might seem alarmist, similar quotes from several sources would lead us to accept this as reality. It is estimated that, globally, 2000 children below the age of five years die every day due to diarrhoeal diseases. These afflictions are directly linked to the lack of clean drinking water, which is in turn, in most cases, caused by poor sanitation and hygiene.

The analogy is made that if these children died as the result of 90 school buses crashing daily with no survivors, we would be appalled. These children are deprived of life every day from diseases that are easily prevented.

The social and economic repercussions of this are critical to the lives of the families and communities affected. Children, particularly girls, are denied the basic right of education in many cases because schools lack basic and private sanitation and hygiene facilities. Consequently women lack sophisticated work skills and many spend a large part of every day carrying water. In such circumstances workforces, both rural and urban, lose efficiency due to illness and health systems can be overwhelmed. Without "WASH" (water, sanitation and hygiene), sustainable development is impossible.

Changing economies in developing countries have led to migration from rural areas to cities where most people live in substandard conditions with poor sanitation and no direct access to clean, fresh water. This will most likely worsen with increasing numbers of refugees.

At Christmas we think of and celebrate an infant who brought a new compassion to the world. We buy gifts that are beyond necessity. What a gift it would be for a poor child to be given a glass of pure clean water every day. For slum-dwelling mothers the gift of a supply of fresh running water to their homes would transform their lives. This makes clear to us the divide between those who live in relative luxury, as we do, and those so close at hand who do not even have the provision of fresh water on tap. This Christmas we could give a gift of clean drinking water to a child, through one of several agencies that are doing this work throughout the world, or our own 'Tanks for Timor' project.

Colin King

As a follower of Jesus, I am called to preach the message of good news to the poor, announce pardon to prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, set the burdened and battered free, to announce, 'This is God's year to act!'

How can I do this, especially during the month of December?

Everybody likes to give and receive gifts, but for many the resources are not available to purchase gifts. So to enable everyone to share in the spirit of giving I suggest we limit the money that we each spend for each other; for example, say nothing beyond five dollars can be given or accepted as a Christmas gift. If we want to give more, we could pool this money and respond to the numerous charities seeking funds. Perhaps spend 25 dollars to restore eyesight in a child or buy 10 chickens to help a family, or help to send a child to school

Sometimes as adults we moan and groan about the insensitivity of the younger generation to the needy in this world. Whose fault is that? Ours. We need to be serious in seeking to do what God wants us to do, to preach the message of good news to the poor. In our giving of gifts to our families and our Christmas celebrations this year, may we teach our children these values so that they will be raised up to care for those in need. In doing so we are teaching ourselves and our families to shatter the shackles that bind us and our families. We need to fight the wrong value systems that the God of consumerism gives us.

May we and our families learn to have a vision beyond the fleeting world and its values to see God in His New Heaven and New Earth. May we and our families work towards empowering the poor and the marginalized, and may we learn to share the "Common-wealth" that God has given us. May we use this season of Christmas for a new awakening of our souls.

In that endeavor take a look at the Faith Development notice board. You will see some suggestions for giving, especially during this Christmas.

Emmanuel!

Rohan Wickramaratne

Missional Group: Community Hub

Under the GWUC Community Hub Mission Group, the **Welfare Committee** assists those within our congregation and the wider community with practical, spiritual and psycho-social support. The following short story from a collection of *Story Time Tales* helps to explain the underpinning of our purpose in providing assistance on behalf of the Glen Waverley Uniting Church.

More often than not it is our own hands which must be used as God's hands reaching out to our fellow man.

Love More, Judge Less

Ruth went to her mail box and there was only one letter. She picked it up and looked at it before opening, but then she looked at the envelope again. There was no stamp, no postmark, only her name and address. She read the letter:

Dear Ruth:

I'm going to be in your neighborhood Saturday afternoon and I'd like to stop by for a visit.

*Love Always,
Jesus*

Her hands were shaking as she placed the letter on the table. 'Why would the Lord want to visit me? I'm nobody special. I don't have anything to offer.'

With that thought, Ruth remembered her empty kitchen cabinets. 'Oh my goodness, I really don't have anything to offer. I'll have to run down to the store and buy something for dinner.' She reached for her purse and counted out its contents. Five dollars and forty cents. 'Well, I can get some bread and cold cuts, at least.'

She threw on her coat and hurried out the door. A loaf of French bread, a half-pound of sliced turkey, and a carton of milk left Ruth with a grand total of twelve cents to last her until Monday. Nonetheless, she felt good as she headed home, her meagre offerings tucked under her arm.

'Hey lady, can you help us, lady?'

Ruth had been so absorbed in her dinner plans, she hadn't even noticed two figures huddled in the alleyway. A man and a woman, both of them dressed in little more than rags.

'Look lady, I ain't got a job, ya know, and my wife and I have been living out here on the street, and, well, now it's getting cold and we're getting kinda hungry and, well, if you could help us, Lady, we'd really appreciate it.'

Ruth looked at them both. They were dirty, they smelled bad and frankly, she was certain that they could get some kind of work if they really wanted to.

'Sir, I'd like to help you, but I'm a poor woman myself. All I have is a few cold cuts and some bread, and I'm having an important guest for dinner tonight and I was planning on serving that to Him.'

'Yeah, well, okay lady, I understand. Thanks anyway.'

The man put his arm around the woman's shoulders, turned and headed back into the alley. As she watched them leave, Ruth felt a familiar twinge in her heart.

'Sir, wait!' The couple stopped and turned as she ran down the alley after them. 'Look, why don't you take this food. I'll figure out something else to serve my guest.'

She handed the man her grocery bag.

'Thank you lady.'

'Yes, thank you!' added the man's wife, and Ruth could see now that she was shivering.

'You know, I've got another coat at home. Here, why don't you take this one.' Ruth unbuttoned her jacket and slipped it over the woman's shoulders. Then smiling, she turned and walked back to the street ... without her coat and with nothing to serve her guest.

'Thank you lady!' the two called out again as she walked away. 'Thank you very much!'

Ruth was chilled by the time she reached her front door, and worried too. The Lord was coming to visit and she didn't have anything to offer Him.

She fumbled through her purse for the door key. But as she did, she noticed another envelope in her mailbox.

'That's odd,' she thought, 'The mailman doesn't usually come twice in one day.' She took the envelope out of the box and opened it.

Dear Ruth:

It was so good to see you again. Thank you for the lovely meal. And thank you, too, for the beautiful coat.

Love Always,

Jesus

The air was still cold, but even without her coat, Ruth no longer noticed.

Source: http://storytimetales.org/Stories/STT_shtml

Getting to Know You: Evelyn and Herb Fleming



Herb at 12

Both Evelyn and Herb grew up in the Murrumbidgee area and attended St Giles Presbyterian Church which is now part of Koornang Parish. They taught in the Sunday School and Herb was a member of PFA (youth group). Later, they were both members of the choir and tennis club and Herb served on the Board of Management (Church Council) there.

In 1959 Herb went on an adventure with four mates. It was a car trip through Adelaide to Central Australia, Darwin, across through Cloncurry and Mount Isa to Cairns and down the east coast. Their transport was in two Austin A40s. Conditions were different to

today, with dirt roads from Port Augusta to Alice Springs, and Tennant Creek to the Atherton Tableland, west of Cairns.

In 1963 Evelyn spread her wings with a girlfriend from night school, travelling to the Blue Mountains and Sydney in Evelyn's first car, a 1957 Morris Minor.

Herb served in National Service Training in the late 50s and the Citizens' Military Forces in the Royal Australian Engineers for two years following.

A lightning romance started in August 1964, followed by their engagement in December 1964 and their wedding in April 1966 (April Fools' Day!) at St Giles.

Evelyn had earlier embarked on an accounting course, part time, while she worked as a bookkeeper/accountant for a ladies' suit manufacturer in the city. Herb was working for a steel fabrication and construction company in South Melbourne as a draftsman and was studying at night for a Civil Engineering Diploma.

In December 1968 they moved to Glen Waverley. Evelyn completed her studies and gained CPA status in the 70s. Their children Scott and Kate arrived in 1972 and 1975 respectively. While the children were small Evelyn worked part time in tax, audit and business management accounting. As the children grew, she spent eight years as Bursar of Ruyton Girls' School. She later spent some years as Communications and Fund Raising Manager at Strathdon Aged Care Community. Herb continued in the construction industry in several management roles with different companies.

Evelyn has been involved in singing, mainly in an amateur capacity, at venues such as churches and aged care facilities. With John Colvin she had the distinction of singing the National Anthem in Rod Laver Arena to a packed audience at a national basketball final. Herb served as a Probation Officer in the court system for some years.

They have both been involved in many church roles, such as money counting, morning tea, cleaning and Bible reading. Evelyn bakes cakes for Leisure Time birthdays, was church treasurer at the time of the construction of the new buildings and served as presbytery representative in the early 2000s. Herb has had several stints on Church Council and Elders' Council, and is a member of the Faith Development Committee and Property Committee. They both sing with Uniting Voices and have recently started helping with singing at services at Glen Waverley Nursing Home. They are involved with pastoral work in the wider community and within the congregation.

They love spending time with their family, and they find looking after grand children a couple of days a week a great blessing. They have five grand children: Chloe 10, Emma 9, Spencer 7, Jamie 6 and Amelia 4. They have a close extended family and Evelyn's Mum lived with them for fifteen years.

One of their greatest joys is spending time working together as a couple and enjoying each other's company.

We thank the Flemings for sharing these details with us.



Evelyn, age 7



Getting to Know You: Rev Bill Morgan

FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS

When John and Jean Morgan welcomed their third child Bill into the world in 1915, he was endowed with a number of blessings. On his marriage, John Morgan had left his life as a maritime engineer in order to be a consistent stable presence for his family. After some years he established a flourishing engineering business which provided his family of six children with a comfortable home life, and a fine education at a private school. A second blessing was Bill's good health and fine physical attributes which enabled him to achieve success in a diverse range of sports, activity which broadened his effectiveness in his later work. Thirdly, Bill was reared with a robust set of values which emphasised an acceptance of the *responsibilities* that came with privileges.



The Morgans moved from Seddon to Camberwell before Bill was school age. They lived opposite the Chinese market gardens, and Bill remembers the 'sheer delight' of being allowed to help the gardeners pack their produce for the Saturday market. When he started school Bill was sent off to Scotch College. His long contact with the Presbyterian Church began at this time when once a week he would rush home from school to attend their Mission Band, which ran a highly organised workshop for young people to make small chairs for the South Melbourne Mission Kindergarten.

In about 1924 his father established the Nagrom Engineering Company, which necessitated a move to Footscray, as the factory was located on Geelong Road. Now the five boys had a longer journey to Scotch College. The family became involved in St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, where his father was on the Board of Management. Bill sang in the choir for some years and fondly remembers the Sunday School anniversaries when large platforms had to be built for the 300-odd children to present their items. They were memorable occasions and a highlight of the church year for the young folk.

Of increasing significance in Bill's life was Scotch College, whose masters were a steadying influence, remarkable in their willingness to be involved beyond the classroom. One of Bill's older brothers died at age 14, and Bill remembers the form master who supported him through this loss and later became a great friend and exemplar. Tragedy struck the Morgans in those school years when their baby sister also died, during these years before the availability of penicillin to fight infection.

Bill's sporting and leadership abilities were recognised and developed in his years at Scotch. He gave up playing cricket to take up rowing, and was soon in the school crew, becoming Captain of Boats in 1934-5. He also played in the first XVIII in football in 1934. In the Cadet Corps he was promoted to Cadet Lieutenant, and on becoming School Captain in 1935 was promoted to full Lieutenant.

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During his teenage years Bill was challenged to accept Jesus as his Saviour, and this decision determined his future direction. In 1934 he was accepted as a candidate for entry to Ormond College to do an Arts degree preparatory to entering Theological Hall; but he first had to pick up some new school subjects and do a further year at Scotch to meet the entry prerequisites. Bill's great desire was to eventually serve on the mission field with the South Sea Evangelical Mission in the Solomon Islands, although the Scotch College principal wrote to his father suggesting he should encourage Bill to be a teacher.

Once Bill was in residence, the Master of Ormond College advised him to complete his theological studies before making a final decision about his future work. His sporting interests continued at Ormond, where he played rugby union and rowed. He played interstate for the Victorian rugby team and won a full Australian University Blue for this sport.

On completing his studies at Ormond College, in 1943 he was sent to Clare, South Australia for his exit appointment. He declined their call to continue there, instead accepting a position in 1944 as assistant to the

Getting to Know You: Rev Bill Morgan

minister of the Malvern Presbyterian Church in Melbourne, with particular emphasis on Sunday School and youth work in their large community of about 800. Under Rev R. J. Howie's guidance, Bill learned about pastoral care and how to prepare for Sunday worship services, which regularly attracted a congregation of about 400 people.

In 1948 Bill married Joan Howie, ('my boss's daughter') and was called to Trafalgar, which included responsibility for Moe, Thorpdale and Yarragon. Three services had to be conducted every Sunday and as the Latrobe Valley expansion was just commencing at this time, with three new pre-constructed homes being delivered every day, outreach to the local communities was expanding. Bill's love of sport assisted in making contacts with the community here: he played cricket and VFL football in local teams, and for three years played for the Warragul and District Cricket Association at Country Week. He wryly remembers a football spectator bellowing, 'Carn Rev, rev her up!' in the heat of a match.

In 1953 Bill accepted a call to Shepparton Presbyterian Church. Responsibilities there included Orrvale, Kialla West and Tallygaroopna, so that Sundays were busier than ever. Bible Class at 9.30 was followed by services at 11 am, 2 pm, 3.30 pm (once a month at Tallygaroopna) and 7 pm. His work in Shepparton led to the erection of a new Kindergarten Hall, and new congregations were established in Shepparton North and Shepparton South. He again made contacts in the wider community by playing cricket for the Shepparton Cricket Club, taking Religious Instruction in the local school, and chairing the Good Neighbour Council, running citizenship classes for those applying for Australian citizenship. However these years are remembered especially for the death of his wife Joan in 1957, leaving Bill alone to care for his three young children: Heather and John at primary school and Libby still a pre-schooler. He acknowledges that it would have been even harder if he had not had wonderful support in those years.

1960 brought about a change of location to Launceston Tasmania, to become the first full-time chaplain at Scotch College there, teaching the examinable subject Religious Knowledge and Social Studies - thus briefly fulfilling his old headmaster's suggestion of following a teaching career! While there he coached the rowing, football and cricket teams, so that once again his experience on the playing field provided a different means of contact with his charges.

A call back to Ormond Presbyterian Church in Victoria was accepted in 1962, and in accordance with the regulations of the Presbyterian and later Uniting Churches, he was able to stay there until his retirement in 1983. In a bookroom one day he ran into Jessie, an old acquaintance from a PFA camp in South Australia in 1943, and this blossomed into marriage in 1964. Jessie took on Bill's children as her own and they enjoyed forty-seven years of 'marvellous marriage' together, until her death in 2011.

His long tenure in Ormond enabled some long-term projects to be undertaken. Units which housed 17 elderly people at an affordable rent were built adjacent to the church, with the debt successfully discharged (to the surprise of the nay-sayers). Other initiatives have parallels at our own GWUC, such as a coffee lounge and drop-in centre which provided fellowship for older members and attracted visitors from the local community. The 'paper boys' (a group of about 20 men who gathered, bundled and sold old papers to raise money for outreach purposes), also recorded their mid-week service for the elderly and took the tapes to 'shut-ins'. Special services during Holy Week culminated in communion. These years in Ormond were marked by another highlight, when he was elected as Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria and Tasmania for 1971-2.

The Ormond years saw a continuation of Bill's sporting activities. He played cricket, then tennis for the church team, then in the 1970s he began a long association with golf which he played until age 95. His current sport, at age 98, is lawn bowls (which after a recent bout of sciatica, he claims is 'a dangerous sport').

In the late 1960s Bill's long-held desire to do work on the mission field was fulfilled in unexpected ways. Jessie had suggested in 1965 that they bring a young New Hebridean pastor and his wife to Melbourne for further study and experience. Then a few years later, with the approval of his Ormond congregation, Bill relieved the minister at Port Vila for seven weeks. This had further consequences when he and Jessie were invited back as guests of the Government when the Republic of Vanuatu was established in July 1980; and again when, on retirement in 1984, he was invited to teach for six months at the Ministry Training Centre in Aulua.

Getting to Know You

Bill came to our congregation in 1996, when he and Jessie moved to Cumberland View Retirement Village. He is missing Jessie's support and companionship, but he has appreciated friendships established here - some were re-established, because he had known Malcolm Chamberlain in his Trafalgar/Moe days, and some couples he had married earlier were here. He continues to value worshipping in the company of others. He hopes that, rather than looking inward, we will learn to keep our focus directed outward, on our mission to our local community, in order to make more disciples. He feels strongly that the first responsibility of Ministers of the Word in the Uniting Church should be to the congregants, rather than being deflected by committee work.

Bill's long experience in parish and community work, and his sport, have provided him with diverse opportunities for service and witness to his God; and he is still working, still participating in leading worship, still ministering to others. We honour Bill for the long years dedicated to his calling, and rejoice in the many avenues through which he has been able to exemplify God's love for us all.

Thank you, Bill, for sharing your life with us.

Robin Pope

Love your Neighbour

In recent weeks we have all been aware of the difficulties and hurt experienced by congregations within the Uniting Church whose property is being divested. At Glen Waverley we have been mindful of these congregations, particularly those within Port Phillip East Presbytery and have reached out to them in several ways.

On 17 October an open Church Council meeting was held here when we prayed for affected churches and collected ideas about how we can helpfully respond. A recording of this meeting is available for those who were unable to attend.

On Wednesdays, 2.00 – 3.00pm, we set up a prayer time which included the lighting of candles, readings, a time of silent meditation and prayer over a period of five weeks. You are welcome to come into the church at that time or to spend a few minutes in prayer wherever you are.

Let us uphold one another in prayer.

Gael O'Brien has written letters of support and encouragement from Glen Waverley to affected congregations and to let them know that they are in our thoughts and prayers. We have received some appreciative letters of thanks.

On Wednesday 27 November Herb Fleming and I walked round the labyrinth at Brighleigh UC in Hawthorn Road. This was a worthwhile and moving experience as we slowly walked around the trail on the derelict tennis court and looked up to the church building on the rise above the court. We thought about and prayed for the people for whom this church had been a spiritual home over the years and those who now must find a new home.

You are invited to walk the labyrinth at any time as it is always open. You can park behind the church where you will find the labyrinth.

We have also offered practical help, such as packing and transporting goods to a new location. Free Spirit have offered their musical talents to support any congregation.

As the Apostle Paul said, 'Bear one another's burdens'.

'Peace be to the whole community, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Alison Clarkson, Coordinator of Ministry to Seniors

Missional News: Outreach

Highlights from the 2013 Fete COP Funding Presentations

A full church congregation was in attendance to witness the handing over of \$25,500 worth of funding payments to ten organisations at the 9.15 am service on Sunday 10 November.

The enormous success of the GWUC Fete 2013 had led to a record gross takings figure on the day. The Community Outreach Project representatives were welcomed by Helen Stewart on behalf of Church Council and each participant eagerly accepted their payment envelopes, presented by this year's Community Outreach Projects Committee, with some stopping to fully explain the details of the projects being funded.



Katie, Andrew, Helen & Alan

Cherish Exchange Foundation, Nakuru, Kenya was presented with a cheque to the value of \$1550. This grant is intended to provide one quarter of the annual cost of the food programme at Cherish for children who would otherwise not get one good meal per day. The payment was accepted by Mrs Pam Mc Donald.

The Glencoe Foundation (Australia) - Walk for Life, received a payment to the value of \$1000. The funds have been earmarked to finance the running of a single clinic for a year. Walk for Life operates in Bangladesh performing corrections of club feet. Representing The Glencoe Foundation on the day was Mr Eddie Post.



Alan & Eddie Post

Mission in Action Baby Orphanage, in Nakuru, Kenya was presented with a deposit to the value of \$1000. The funds supplied are to be used to purchase metal suitcases for each of the children to store their personal belongings under their beds. Mrs Rebecca Cornall accepted the cheque.

Friends of Baguia, East Timor were presented with a payment to the value of \$3450, funding which is to complete construction of a kitchen building at Ossofulari Primary School to qualify them for government food assistance, and for the continued support of Ossofulari Primary School and Baguia kindergarten teachers' salaries for the year. Friends of Baguia were grateful to receive this donation with Mrs Judy Lowe being present on the day to receive payment.



Judy accepting for Friends of Baguia

Friends of Ermera, East Timor received a payment to the value of \$3000. The funds earmarked will provide refurbishment and security of buildings, power supply, furniture, equipment, stationery and teaching resources for two new English Language Study Centres. Mrs Jan Tresize, a longstanding member of the group, received the cheque with a detailed explanation of their program.



Jan Tresize for Friends of Ermera

Pitjantjatjara Bible Translation Project (PBTP) were presented with a payment to the value of \$4750. The funds requested will provide the materials required for the renovation of the translation office and make it more secure. PBTP is undertaking the only full translation of the Bible into an indigenous language in Australia. Representing Pitjantjatjara Bible Translation Project on the day was Mr Paul Eckert who proceeded with a sample of this language before accepting his payment, in English. So enthralled were the congregation with this project that Mr Eckert has been sought by members of GWUC to attend a service, at a future date, to provide further information on this exciting project.

Uniting AgeWell Strathdon were next, presented with a payment to the value of \$4235. The funds requested are to go towards Stage Two of the construction of the McGarvie Hostel Activity Garden, which will include raised garden beds, seating, a barbecue area and covered outdoor gathering space. It will be used by

Missional News: Outreach

residents, families and friends and is due for completion in March 2014. Mrs Ann Chan from Strathdon thanked the church community for their fantastic support.

Christian Religious Education teachers at Glenallen Special School were presented a cheque for \$500. The funds will provide finance for the purchase of a Bible for each student graduating from the Junior school to the senior school and also for teaching resources. Glenallen is a special needs school located in Glen Waverley and representing the RE teachers at Glenallen Special School was Ms Jill Norquay.

Lentara Uniting Care Asylum Seeker Project was provided with a payment of \$3500. These funds are earmarked to provide rental assistance for a unit in Heathmont. This is used for asylum seekers who have no other housing available and are totally dependent on Lentara Asylum Seeker Project for accommodation. Mrs Robin Pope was present on the day to represent Lentara ASP.



Robin accepting for Lentara ASP

Kerry Children Bible Ministry was supplied with funding to the value of \$2500. The funds supplied are to assist with the Ponda Mali Food Program in Nakuru, Kenya, which feeds over 200 children twice daily and has been running with the support of GWUC for several years. The continuation of the food program will supply children with a Kenyan porridge (a basic stew) into the 2014 school year. Representing Ponda Mali School was Mrs Rebecca Cornall.



Rebecca for Kerry Children

We wholeheartedly congratulate all COP 2013 recipients and look forward to continuing our connections with them in years to come.

Andrew Hosking (Coordinator, Community Outreach Missional Group)

Asylum Seeker Support: Honey Money

Our sales of honey for the Lentara Asylum Seeker Project have been a little down this year, but we thank you for the grand total of \$650 so far!

Thank you for returning clean jars, to be reused - we especially thank Judy and Neil Mance for their wonderful source of jars. Heather Wilkins has with great enthusiasm taken over buying and bottling the honey. Support her and the project by buying a jar of the high grade honey by the kitchen servery in the church foyer.

Judith Boucher

Success in the Senate

Many thanks to those who took the trouble to contact the Labor senators of the Federal Parliament. On Monday December 2 the Senate voted on the Migration Amendment (Temporary Protection Visas) which was an attempt by the Coalition to re-introduce Temporary Protection Visas despite the well-known psychological, social and economic effects on both asylum seekers and the community at large; and despite an admission by the Immigration Department that last time they were used there was an increase in the number of women and children attempting to enter by boat (*The Age*, 5/12/12, p. 31). The vote rejected the bill, but it is only a temporary reprieve, as the new senate will undoubtedly address the question again in July 2014. More work needs to occur in the months to come.

Robin Pope

Meaning

The life of meaning
 consequence
 of the journey
 from birth to death
 taking more
 into death
 than was brought
 into life
 enhancing the inner
 from the experiences
 of the outer
 in the now.

P G Baker

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Traffik-Free Chocolate

A number of people gathered at South Wharf Docklands on Friday October 18 to join the Stop the Traffik Global Campaign advocating that Toblerone be a Traffik-Free chocolate bar.

As the 18th of October was Anti-Slavery Day across the globe, a small group of Uniting Church people, Salvos (including small brass band), Baptists, Anglicans and Jewish Council of Women gathered together at the Mondeleze Australian Offices. In the spirit of good fun, music and juggling, and assisted by the presence of 'human Toblerone', Mondeleze representative Simon Talbot was presented with thousands of signed postcards and 100 signed letters gathered by fifteen year old Ben Lohning, and accompanied by his heartfelt speech:

As a young Australian I don't agree with human trafficking. I don't believe that anyone should be bought or sold. Unfortunately the chocolate industry uses child labour especially down the Ivory Coast.

And I want to be able to buy chocolate traffic free.

You have the power to change that.

Please make Toblerone traffic free and make Mondeleze a company that ethically young people can be proud of.

It was a great start to the global campaign, with Mondeleze gracious in acceptance and open in discussing their own hopes for the future of ethical chocolate in Australia.

It has been said that the people of Australia don't seem to care about where their chocolate comes from, but we do and we encourage you all to keep campaigning and working together against child trafficking.

Some resources;

<http://www.stophetraffik.org/campaign/chocolate>

<http://www.unitingjustice.org.au>

http://campaign.worldvision.com.au/campaigns/dont-trade-lives/?lpos=top_drop_1_Helpendexploitation

Together we can stop the Traffik!

A group of Glen Waverley Uniting Church people (plus Toblerone), joined the Global Campaign on Anti Slavery Day 18 Oct to advocate for Traffik-Free Toblerone

Ben Lohning who gave a speech to Simon Talbot of Mondeleze Australia is pictured far right.

From the left: James Clark, Ashleigh Boucher, Amy Smart, Toblerone - Age Greenwood, Georgie Boucher, Helen Boucher, Rhian Owen, Alanee Hearnshaw & Ben Lohning



Alanee Hearnshaw

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MIA KENYA – DEFINITELY A MISSION IN ACTION!!

Following a 3 week period in September/October this year in which we volunteered to work in the MIA orphanage and school in Nakuru, Kenya, we are extremely confident and appreciative of the leadership of Ivan and his team in improving the outcomes for the children in the orphanage as well as the wider community. We would encourage everyone to continue to support MIA as they are making a valuable contribution in making a significant difference to the most vulnerable children.

Our three weeks were packed full of amazing experiences, with mixed emotions when confronted with the level of poverty, devastation and need. During the day while the children were at school we spent much of our time out in the community while the afternoons, evenings and weekends were mainly devoted to the children.

One unforgettable experience was purchasing fifty pairs of 'Sabbath Shoes' and fifty pairs of thongs. The children were desperate for new shoes and MIA did not have any available funds to purchase them. This task involved shopping at shoe shops, market places and then more market stalls and then more shoe shops. This took 9 hours!!! And then another 4 hours to fit the shoes to the children. Fun!!



Another great need was an individual space for each child to keep their personal belongings secure. Together with Ivan we ordered 80 lockers to be built. These have recently arrived and the children are most excited to have their own personal space. Combination locks will arrive with Jason and Kat when they visit after Christmas. Every second night we helped out with worship introducing Eddie the Emu at his first international appearance. The children loved Eddie and many thought he was 'real'.

We were also involved in supporting the school, spending time in each classroom and providing feedback to the Principal, Administrator and teachers. An ongoing commitment has been made to continue to support the school plans for improving teaching and learning. We also visited a number of other community schools where we provide educational supplies e.g. exercise books, rulers, erasers, readers, pencils, pencil sharpeners, soccer balls and netballs. And of course Chupa Chups!!! They love Chupa Chups! The children in the community schools were very excited to see us and all wanted to visit Australia. The teachers were very pleased with the resources we were able to provide too. A typical classroom consisted of 40+ children with 4 or 5 children sharing a small desk.

We were also able to spend a wonderful time visiting Moses, Joseph and Marion (their Auntie). Moses is an orphan whom we have supported since June 2012 when Anne met him at a Juvenile Remand Centre. He is now successfully attending school and enjoying having a family who care for him. We also spent time with Joseph (the brother of Moses) who is now re-engaged in schooling and achieving excellent results. He values the second chance he has been given. Thanks to our friends for helping us support Joseph.

We loved spending time with Faith and Tim Tam, the children whom we sponsor at MIA, Ellie-Jo and Laura sponsored by Jason and Kat, Esther sponsored by Alanee and Joel, Michelle sponsored by Sarah Lorimer and all the other children at the orphanage. Tim Tam and Faith were able to come on a 3 day safari with us to Masai Mara and it was wonderful to experience this through their eyes.

The children have very little but every day they greet you with a smile and a hug and are very thankful for the life they have at MIA. Hearing them sing songs of praise in Swahili stirs the heart. We will return to MIA and we encourage everyone to be supportive of MIA and to consider volunteering at some time.



Anne & Dean Mann

Missional News: Inclusive Community

Firstly I want to say a huge thank you to the committee members: Faye Wagon, Barbara Thompson, Alison Clarkson, Marj Collins and Laurel Muir. They are always ready to make phone calls and help in any way and I couldn't do this job without them. We were sorry to say good-bye to Joy Jackson earlier in the year but understood why it was difficult for her to continue travelling from Berwick.

Pastoral Care has continued to be one of our major agenda items at all meetings. We have reports from the sub-committees that formed part of the Pastoral Committee including supportive care link, bereavement support and cradle roll. We are grateful to the groups that have appointed a pastoral support person and these group contacts have been used when there is illness or a special need within a group so that we can provide help quickly. We were pleased to welcome Sharonne Price as a visitor to our congregation in August. She spoke to us about the Pastoral Partners program which she began in South Australia and it was great that so many people could attend the sessions. Following her visit we have had three training sessions for people who are considering becoming pastoral partners. These have been valuable times of fellowship and learning. We will have two more training sessions in February/March and then launch into the task of approaching more people to consider being pastoral partners and allocating clusters. People have asked me, 'Will we still need our pastoral support people within our groups and visitors?' The simple answer is, 'Yes'. When we form clusters in the new year we will concentrate, firstly, on providing pastoral care for those people who have wanted a visitor (and we have been able to give them one) and haven't any group contact. Rev. Neil Peters has been kept in the loop regarding pastoral partners and he will join us in our final training sessions. We are **all** working together to improve pastoral care here at GWUC.

Munch with a Bunch continues to be very worthwhile. Last week forty-five people had lunch at the Waverley RSL and enjoyed the food and the company. Folk who dine alone have also enjoyed special morning teas at the Community Hub, Club 2013 and Seniors' services. We have been surprised at the number of people who attend morning tea after 11am worship and we will continue to have this every month next year as well as lunches after combined worship. We will have morning tea after combined worship on Sunday 22 December so if you aren't racing off to another function, please join us for a cuppa and shortbread.

We started English classes for new arrivals in August. We have a wonderful group of volunteer tutors and I would like to thank them for giving up their time. Now we have nine or ten students each week and the sessions are very enjoyable. Our students are so eager to learn. Modern technology (ipads and laptops) is a great help when our students are unsure about meanings of words. We can show them a picture so quickly.

We have spoken to Alanee and Belinda about the possibility of having cross-generational meals. They loved the idea so we will be working on this concept next year. These would include young families, youth and older people.

We are looking for extra people to go on the Welcoming Table roster so if that is something that you could do on a Sunday morning, please let me know. This involves being at church from about 8.50 am until 11.05 am. It is helpful if we have people from different services as we all know different people.

If you have any ideas about next year's program please let us know.

Jan Clear

Member Comment

Renewal after Upheaval

Having been members of this congregation for up to 40 years we are no strangers to discord within the church. While some expect church members to all work happily together and ministers to be saints, we are people just like the rest of humanity, having likes and dislikes and being prone to all human frailties. As such, members don't always have a harmonious relationship with each other or every person in the congregation. The difference in the current upheaval is that one of the ministers decided to leave the group, causing the upheaval and soul searching in the whole church that we have recently witnessed.

There are two points that I would like to make.

1. Social Media

One of the greatest poxes on today's world is 'social media'. It has spawned an attitude where some people believe it is acceptable to use text messages, emails, facebook and the like to express themselves in a very blunt, abrasive and downright abusive manner with a type of anonymity, often through thoughtlessness. No one should be subjected to this type of treatment, particularly within the Christian church.

2. Democracy

Whether we like it or not the church works on the principle of democracy. As such the majority rules. However democracy relies on two principles:

- (a) The leaders of the democracy must lead for all members and not dictate their ideals on that society.
- (b) All members of society must accept the decisions that have been made.

Some may not agree with certain decisions or directions of the church but until such time as they can bring about further change they must respect the majority decision. The recent upheaval in Egypt is a classic example; the president assumed absolute power and when he was removed his followers rebelled causing civil war.

With a new church council structure and new ministerial team let us all work together and avoid making the mistakes of the past, respecting each other's views so we build a stronger Glen Waverley Uniting Church.

Bill Norquay

Wilderness

Into the wilderness

outside or within

leave the noise

find the silence

then seek

the noise of silence

and return

to experience

silent noise

everywhere

for an instant

and finally

for ever

in the now

of each

present moment

P G Baker

Report: 3rd Common Dreams Conference

September was a good time to visit Canberra. Our capital city was celebrating its centenary and the famous Floriade was held. Importantly for me, the month was a chance to attend the **3rd Common Dreams Conference**.

Entitled *Midwives of Change: Progressives Shaping Religious Communities* the conference drew over 400 delegates from around Australia and NZ and elsewhere. A show of hands revealed about 75% of delegates were from Uniting Church backgrounds. The conference sought to explore ways that progressive religion, including progressive expression of other religious traditions besides Christianity, enhances human life rather than diminishes it.

The varied program comprised public lectures (attended by over 500), keynote lectures and seminar sessions. Professor Marcus Borg, Canon Theologian at Trinity Episcopal Church, Portland, USA and author of many books on progressive Christianity was the principal keynote speaker.

Other keynote speakers included: Aussie theologians Dr Val Webb and Dr Lorraine Parkinson (retired UC minister); Dr Nigel Leaves, Canon at St Johns Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane; Dr Steven Ogden, Principal of St Francis Theological College, Brisbane; Rabbi Aviva Kipen (Australia's only women rabbi); Dr Bruce Sanguin, Minister of the United Church of Canada; and Rev Glynn Cardy, Minister, The Community of St Luke (Presbyterian) Auckland.

I have not the space to outline all sessions I attended. However, a summary of Borg's first lecture serves to highlight some Progressive Christian thought, namely:

- it is about this life more than the next life;
- it is intentional rather than conventional. The post Christian era sees the decline of the centrality of the institutional church in society (eg falling numbers) and a growth in intentional seeking after the sacred;
- it offers a progressive theology; for example,
 - it takes an historical and metaphorical approach to Biblical and Christian language;
 - it sees no fundamental conflict between Christianity and science;
 - it affirms religious pluralism. Each enduring religion of the world is a specific cultural response to the sacred;
- it is progressive socially and politically;
- it's not so much about 'believing' but about 'beloving' .i.e. loving God as known especially in Jesus.

The full conference proceedings will be available on DVD in due course¹.

Why did I attend? I find that doubt about one's faith is a powerful motivator². Rather than a blind acceptance of belief that someone else tells me I must accept, a healthy questioning not only opens up new meanings to the Bible message but also enhances one's sense of purpose and meaning in life through a strengthening of a living faith that grows beyond literal and fundamentalist interpretation of the wisdom book. Our world today is nothing like the world of the Bible or of any periods since and a living faith is one growing and exercising in a modern context. There are many theological scholars today progressively reinterpreting the Scriptures for a modern world and it is exciting to hear and consider these views.

(1) Refer <http://pcnvictoria.blogspot.com.au/>

(2) See Dr Val Webb, In *Defence of Doubt: an invitation to adventure*, 2nd ed, Chalice Press, St. Louis, Missouri, 2012. Available from Mosaic Resources (<https://mosaicresources.com.au/>)

Book Review

Michael Morwood, *It's Time: Challenges to the Doctrine of Faith*,
Kelmor Publications, Sunbury Victoria, 2013.

Towards the end of October I was given a copy of Michael Morwood's book *It's Time*. It articulates clearly and simply a new, more spiritual way to look at our faith which resonates with the scientific knowledge of the twenty-first century. For the sake of brevity this review omits chapters dealing with Paul's Christology, The Break with Judaism, Baptism of Jesus, Jesus and Powerlessness, The Resurrection and Transfiguration, Mary: the Mother of Jesus, and The Cosmic Christ. In order to reveal the author's writing style, I have in many cases quoted his text verbatim.

About the Author: (Summary of information on Morwood's website) Morwood resigned from priestly ministry following the banning of his book, *Tomorrow's Catholic* and his silencing by Archbishop George Pell in Melbourne in 1998. Morwood's particular interest is in helping Christians examine what they believe and why they believe it.

The Author's Message: Morwood maintains that much of the church's doctrine does not stand up to reasonable, open, scholarly examination. He proposes we replace doctrine based on the concept of a deity in heaven who denied access to himself, with a twenty-first century understanding of the Divine Presence permeating the universe, and focus on Jesus as the human expression of that Presence.

Doctrine: 'Doctrine' is a generic term covering the teaching of the church. Morwood asks the question: 'What if the doctrine ... is flawed or is simply not believed any more ...?' ^{p3} The thesis of the book is that much of this doctrine has 'outlived its use-by date' ^{p3} and it is time to break from the worldview of two thousand years ago and explore the notion of "God" that fits what we know today about the universe. ^{p21}

The Divine Presence: Morwood says, 'It is time to take seriously what Christianity has always proclaimed: that this awesome mysterious Presence we call "God" is everywhere, embedded in all that is alive and is beyond all our human concepts. It is time to make a significant shift in our understanding of "God", from notions of a deity dwelling in heaven above the earth, to an understanding and appreciation of the Divine Presence always here, always and everywhere active in an expanding universe and the evolution of life on this planet.' ^{p23} He speaks of science 'in terms of mystery and wonder as it tries to explain the how and why of reality'. ^{p26} In his view today's scientific knowledge 'could be the best means we have for a deeper understanding' of the Divine Presence ^{p26} He says also, 'Thousands of years ago, humans had a sense of this Presence' until 'formal religion told people they were basically sinful'. ^{p29}

The Divine Presence and Judaism: Morwood reviews the Hebrew Bible (our Old Testament) from the viewpoint that the Divine Presence 'does not operate from the heavens down, but from within and among the human community'. ^{p34} This Presence was given voice 'all around the world ... in indigenous spiritualities ... religious movements ...' ^{p34} When the Hebrew prophets heard 'the voice of the Lord' it was the 'voice of the Divine Presence within ... which was not concerned with "the next life" ...' ^{p35} but 'was, is and always will be primarily concerned with life on earth'. ^{p39} Morwood says 'it is time to hear the message not as one coming from heaven down to us but as one rising from the Divine Presence actively expressing itself in and through the human community' ^{p37}. 'Humanity needs to hear the voice within all of us saying "act justly and do what is righteous" ...' ^{p38}

Jesus – Human Expression of the Divine Presence: As Morwood says, Jesus did not renounce his Jewish religion or ask any of his followers to renounce Judaism. 'He did not start a new religion.' ^{p41} As a rabbi, Jesus knew 'what "the kingdom of God" was about and what it would take to make God's kingdom visible on earth ... His preaching about the kingdom of God and the need to establish it resonates with what we believe today about the Divine Presence permeating everything that exists.' ^{p42} Morwood talks of Jesus' 'insight that the Divine was within him and all around him' ^{p44} and how 'Jesus gave his heart and soul to this task: to helping people see how they could make visible God's reign on earth. His first step was to clear away

Book Review cont.

attitudes, beliefs and religious practices that prevented people from seeing and experiencing what he believed, that God's Spirit, the Breath of God, the Divine Presence was with them.' p45 Morwood says that a key impediment Jesus had to address was people's fear of God 'which was part and parcel of the religious worldview ... He invited them to consider a relationship with God as akin to the relationship a child would have with a most loving parent.' p47 A brilliant teacher, Jesus 'was not trying to describe God; he was describing a relationship of trust that will stand the test of time'. p47 As Morwood puts it: 'He urged people to look and see more deeply that when they ... acted lovingly, that these activities were expressions of the Divine Presence within them ... When we grasp this we are better able to appreciate the challenge confronting us in Jesus' teaching: to give expression to the Divine Presence: Love Itself, in all our social interactions ... We are to love graciously and generously; we are to be compassionate; we are to be merciful and forgiving and a neighbour to everyone. We are to establish "God's way" of acting. For Jesus, nothing was more important than establishing the "kingdom of God" here on earth. Nothing.' pp49-50

The Last Supper: Morwood chooses to put aside the theological construct of 'the Christ' setting up a new religion. He interprets the last supper as follows: Jesus was having a Passover meal with his Jewish friends. He took the bread and broke it. He wanted his friends to see in this gesture his willingness to give his all for what he believed. He wanted them to remember him this way. When he asked them to eat the bread he was symbolically asking for their commitment to carry on his dream and his ministry. Morwood says Eucharist 'was, is and always should be about serious commitment to the dream of Jesus'. p110

The Cross: Morwood queries whether 'Jesus' death must be believed and taught as a sacrificial offering to the Father for forgiveness of sins'. p113 Morwood goes on to say that this doctrine came from Paul who transformed Jesus into a semi-god (the Christ) p114 and that the real Jesus was a deeply inspiring and courageous Jewish man who gave the best possible human expression he could to the Divine Presence within him. He did what many others have done and continue to do: he stood up for what he believed and accepted the consequences. p116 Morwood claims that when we contemplate the human Jesus on the cross, his integrity and courage, his faithfulness to his vision despite all the pain and struggle, we realise the depth of the Spirit of God in this man. 'Then the Aha! moment comes! This Spirit of God in Jesus is exactly the same Spirit active in our lives when we struggle to be good, to be courageous and take a stand, to bear suffering and disappointment, to be faithful to what we know to be true and loving.' p119

Conclusion: It's Time: The Way Ahead:

Morwood believes that Christianity would *not* collapse if people were allowed to openly question Paul's Christology. Rather, it would return, as it should, to focus on Jesus and his concern to make the Divine Presence visible in our human interactions. It would have a wonderful and challenging story to bring to our world. p84 Morwood sees this new story as presenting the biggest agenda ever to confront the Christian religion; bigger than the Council of Nicaea, the Reformation or Vatican II .p87 Morwood says that Paul's story '...has no basis in reality...' and '...this is a choice... You *either* make sense of Jesus in the light of what we know today *or* you choose to stay locked into a religious imagination and worldview that are irrelevant in the modern world world. It is as simple as that.' p88

Morwood suggests that many Christians 'are yet to understand why their children and grandchildren have moved on from the notion of God ... A lengthy educational process is needed if adult Christians are to appreciate the shift in religious thinking.' p151 Morwood speaks about 'tensions within congregations' and 'institutional resistance' by the Church and concludes his book by offering some topics for reflection and discussion by members of small faith-sharing communities, "ecclesia" (pp154-162).

Footnote: This review was written after a discussion of the book at the GWUC Friday morning group.

Peter Stewart

for everything there is a season
and a time for every matter under heaven ...

We record with sadness the deaths in the past months of members of our church family and we extend our love, support and sympathy to their families

Elaine Audrey Sadler

Frank George Watson

John 'Janos' Ernest Kenez

We celebrate the marriage of
Christopher James Nolan & Linda Keov

We record with joy the baptism of

Chelsea Grace Dawkins

Paige Madison Dawkins