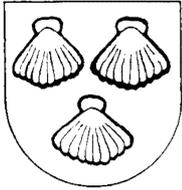




Red Wings

Issue 5 November 2012



**St James
Uniting Church**

Welcome to the fifth edition of **Red Wings** for 2012.

"A Pilgrimage—Walking the Camino"

On pages 2-3 I've included an article I found in the September 2012 issue of the Well-spring Community's "Pipeline" newsletter. Ingerid Meagher walked the Camino at Easter this year and her account is well worth reading. She peppers her writing with verses from the Beatitudes, and the Bible and offers very good advice for any brave souls thinking of taking on the pilgrimage in the future.

On the Lighter Side includes some light-hearted jokes and comments on ageing.

On page 4 there's a reflection called "A Pre-emptive Peace" by Chris Glaser.

Pages 6 and 7 feature a story on Archie Roach, the indigenous singer, song writer and his struggle to survive. It's entitled "Stolen, Lost and Found".

Burning Issues includes the paper by Bob Douglas entitled "Carbon Age must end or we will". There is also an account of the Nauru situation entitled "Australia's Tent Diplomacy"

With a Progressive Bent features a speech given by David Feeney in the recent debate in Parliament on the Marriage Amendment Bill, provided by Aaron Harper.

Kid's Stuff has a some craft ideas for gifts with a "Planet Earth" theme.

Editorial

A few weeks ago Marika Simpson and I attended a conference at the National Library called The Future of Homo Sapiens, in honour of Philip Adams, who was also the keynote speaker. It was organized by Manning Clark House.

The lineup of other speakers included Robert Manne, Clive Hamilton, and other leading scientists, economists, art historians, and philosophers. The general discussion was around climate change and climate warming, with various opinions and scenarios presented and at times a feeling of gloom and pessimism.

Bishop George Browning pointed out that the cult of the individual (as expounded by evangelical right and the Aust. Christian Lobby) claims the right of individuals to own anything and everything. In fact the fundamental doctrine of Christianity is that we are relational – we live in community. The cult of the individual threatens the common good. This can lead to consumerism and intolerance of the needy, something we can see happening already. He also mentioned the need for narratives, and positive ones at that, to give people hope for the future.

Judith Crispin spoke of the history of civilisations and how art has suffered in the last throes of the decline of past empires. She also spoke too of hope and a positive attitude in relation to our current situation.

While some of the graphs and data showed dire consequences even in the next 30 to 40 years for the human race, there were examples cited by Clive Hamilton and Bob Douglas, of the strategies and movements which are taking place now to address the problems and prevent some of the effects of global warming.

I have included the paper given by Bob Douglas at this conference and also at a later event organised by the Centre for An Ethical Society.

Bob's summary of the conference and it's speakers gives a very realistic view of the media and government attitude towards this issue.

Other papers given at the conference will be posted on the Manning Clark House website.

<http://manningclark.org.au/papers/by-event>

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A Pilgrimage—Walking the Camino

By Ingerid Meagher

'Blessed are you, pilgrim, if your backpack empties of things as your heart doesn't know how to fit so many emotions'. (5th of the 10 Beatitudes of the Pilgrim by the Hospitalera of Los Padres Reparadores, Puente La Reina).

Any one who has walked 'The Way of St James', The Camino de Santiago, would instantly recognize this Beatitude as a most keenly felt experience. And right now, again, I am struggling with deciding what I should filter through from the rich experiences and emotions into this short reflection on my Pilgrimage. My heart and memory is full and will remain so, unlike the weight of my 12 kg backpack that underwent three reviews and got whittled down to 8 kg. Simplicity is crucial! Few possessions, no spares and definitely no books – not even the smallest of bibles or guidebooks. Walk by faith and trust!! Many superfluous possessions are left behind in the Albergues along the way. Indeed there were two tables groaning with unwanted goods in the Abbey at Roncesvalles

So on Good Friday April 6th I set out from St Jean Pied de Port in France on the more than 1000 year-old 800 km Pilgrim walk across northern Spain to Santiago de Compostela, hardly prepared for the shock of the 1450 m climb up and over the Pyrenees and down to Roncesvalles. Ascent was literally my very own Calvary. And on that first day I experienced the first of many thoughtful kindnesses bestowed on me along the way. A young Swedish woman spontaneously offered to swap my pack for her much lighter one when she saw me struggling up the mountain!

My initial plan was to take a symbolic forty days to complete the journey. When it started to look like I would not be able to reach Santiago within that time frame, I decided that surely I would get there by Pentecost – a journey of 50 days and equally symbolic. That plan too was thwarted. By the time I had walked 500 km to Leon, I developed tendinitis in my right knee and was forced to complete the last 300 km by bus. A great disappointment! But I will be back in 2014 to experience this last part of the Camino and the euphoria of walking into Santiago and celebrating this adventure of the spirit that has the power to change lives forever with all the other pilgrims in the packed Cathedral at the mid-day Mass.

'Blessed are you, pilgrim, if what concerns you most is not arriving, but arriving with others.' (2nd Beatitude)

What were my motives for the pilgrimage? On arrival and whilst registering at the Abbey at Roncesvalles for the night we were asked this question and given the choice of ticking any one or all of the options listed: religious, spiritual, historical, sporting, or other. In the first instance, for me, it was an intentional journey to review my life so far and to give thanks for all the people that have walked through it and to carry with me those with special needs and hold them up in prayer.

Looking back on my life, it grieves me that I have not been wholly present in my interactions with family, friends, colleagues, or anyone I chanced to meet. I can't make good these short falls that occurred in the past but I can resolve to do my best to increase and practice awareness and discernment.

I also looked forward to meditating on the religious and the historical aspects of this well trodden pilgrim's path. And again, like on my journeys through Israel, Turkey and Cyprus, I wanted to reflect on and honor the lives of those 'who have gone before us'.

My plan to use a simple 'daily office' with as centre meditation the canticle based on the Prayer of Azariah (Daniel 3:23) was abandoned very soon. I was too anxious to hit the road before the customary eight am deadline for vacating the Albergue. At the other end of the day I was too taken up with the arrival routine of showering, washing clothes, writing up my diary, eating and catching up with other pilgrims to engage in a spiritual exercise! Unable to take much in of the surroundings whilst ever pushing forward with the rain in my eyes, I frequently had to stop and turn around to see where I had come from and to appreciate the beauty of the landscape. The story of Lot's wife came to mind. Her regret for what she had to leave behind turned her into a pillar of salt. What a great metaphor for the paralyzing effect regret and dwelling on the past can have on one's life. 'Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it'. (Luke 17:33)

The Ten Beatitudes of the Pilgrim appeared too late into the journey for me to take to heart the 9th one:

'Blessed are you, pilgrim, if on the Camino you meet yourself and make yourself a gift of time without hurry, so that you may not neglect the image of your heart'. (9th Beatitude)

A Pilgrimage—Walking the Camino (cont.)

Azariah's Prayer and the blessings invoked (the Benedicite) no doubt is more powerfully experienced out there on the road than when reading them my little home-made breviary, especially the 'rain and dew', 'the scorching wind and bitter cold', 'the falling snow and frost', 'mountains and hills', 'all that grows in the ground', 'springs, rivers, birds of the air, beasts and cattle, all people of the earth'.

Walking the Camino in April-May means putting up with the rigors of nature - the intensity of the wind and the rain. They make the going tough along the often muddy, stony and steep pathways. At the same time I experienced as never before a powerful exhilaration, a oneness with these forces whilst moving through the immense landscape of snow topped distant mountains, sprouting or still empty furrowed fields and with an ever changing sky overhead, heavy with rushing, black rain clouds.

Unable to take much in of the surroundings whilst ever pushing forward with the rain in my eyes, I frequently had to stop and turn around to see where I had come from and to appreciate the beauty of the landscape. The story of Lot's wife came to mind. Her regret for what she had to leave behind turned her into a pillar of salt. What a great metaphor for the paralyzing effect regret and dwelling on the past can have on one's life. 'Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it'. (Luke 17:33)

Before I left Australia, I was warned to watch the ego. I did not understand the advise at the time. But it soon became apparent that focusing on rhythmically breathing, and repetitiously surrendering to each and every step had the effect of a walking and breathing meditation. There was no room for monkey chatter in my brain. All I could do in the end with my complicated intentions was breathe praise and thanksgiving for all blessing received.

And what a blessing it was to hear Terry Fitzpatrick's Pentecost homily on my return to Brisbane. The blinkers fell off!! I may have missed out on the Pentecost celebration in Santiago, but I experienced Pentecost all along the Camino. The charge at Pentecost was the spreading of the Good News. It implies love, and love implies concern – for the well being of others. There is an extraordinary amount of that along The Way. Sadly, lack of space on this occasion prevents me from elaborating! Camaraderie was the most profound experience on the Camino – camaraderie amongst many, many nationalities.

'Blessed are you, pilgrim, if you discover that a step backwards to help another is more valuable than a hundred forward without awareness of those at your side'. (6th Beatitude of a Pilgrim)

It is said of Santiago that it is the end of all roads and the beginning of new ones. Armed then with a frame of mind that is open to encounter, an attitude of service, simplicity, gratitude, tranquility, constancy, strength and an undaunted spirit (courtesy John Bunyan's famous hymn) let's continue life's pilgrimage down a new path.

'Blessed are you, pilgrim, because you have discovered that the true Camino begins at its end'.

(4th Beatitude of the Pilgrim)

Trinidad de Arre Monastery and the Villava Bridge across the Rio Ullzama



On the Lighter Side

Peanuts for the preacher

A preacher visits an elderly woman from his congregation. As he sits on the couch he notices a large bowl of peanuts on the coffee table. "Mind if I have a few?" he asks.

"No, not at all," the woman replies.

They chat for an hour and as the preacher stands to leave, he realizes that instead of eating just a few peanuts, he emptied most of the bowl. "I'm terribly sorry for eating all your peanuts. I really just meant to eat a few." the preacher says apologetically.

"Oh that's alright," the woman says. "Ever since I lost my teeth, all I can do is suck the chocolate off them."

Just exactly who is deaf?

A concerned husband went to a doctor to talk about his wife. He said to the doctor, "Doctor, I think my wife is deaf because she never hears me the first time and always asks me to repeat things."

"Well," the doctor replied, "go home and tonight stand about fifteen feet from her and say something to her. If she doesn't reply, move about five feet closer and say it again. Keep doing this so that we'll get an idea about the severity of her deafness."

Sure enough, the husband went home and did exactly as instructed. He started off about fifteen feet from his wife in the kitchen as she is chopping some vegetables and said, "Honey, what's for dinner?" He heard no response.

He moved about five feet closer and asked again. No reply. He moved five feet closer. Still no reply.

He got fed up and moved right behind her, about an inch away, and asked again, "Honey, what's for dinner?" She replied, "For the fourth time, vegetable stew!"

Ageing Humour

Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Long ago, when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today it's called golf .

I don't know how I got "over the hill" without getting to the top.

The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra.

You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.

Being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

(Attributed to Will Rogers)

Reflection

A Pre-emptive Peace

Walking our dog Hobbes in our neighborhood, we sometimes pass a car with a bumper sticker that reads, “I’m already against the *next* war.” It made me think of a church woman who complained about the student demonstrations against the Vietnam War, “Why can’t they be *for* something?” she asked. Another church woman responded, “They are—they’re *for* peace!”

I like the idea of a pre-emptive peace to counter the justification for pre-emptive wars. Politically, a pre-emptive peace means using diplomacy and peaceful influence and pressure in concert with other nations, and supporting like-minded public servants who can win elections and achieve these goals. (My pragmatism as well as my sense of urgency will not let me waste votes on unelectable idealists. And I must admit to having little patience with those who refuse to vote because the electable candidates are not up to their standards of perfection.)

Practicing a pre-emptive peace can also be disarming personally. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus advised, “Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on your way to court...” Many of the sayings in that sermon suggest practical strategies of a pre-emptive peace: Greet strangers. Love enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. Don’t exact revenge. Don’t be greedy. Don’t show off. Pray, remembering to forgive as you ask forgiveness. Tell the truth. Be faithful. Don’t be anxious. Trust God’s Providence. Avoid ultimate judgments of others. Practice discernment.

Some years ago, I was stunned to meet a totally disarming man: Mister Rogers. I did not watch his “neighborhood” growing up, and I knew him primarily through parodies of him on programs like *Saturday Night Live*. I had just given the sermon at Pittsburgh’s Sixth Presbyterian Church, which he attended, and he was waiting in line to greet me after the worship service. A relative of his gave me a passionate, unexplained hug, and then Mister Rogers stepped forward. “I know who you are,” I said good-humoredly as I reached out my hand, aware and admiring of this man who had been ordained by the Presbyterian Church to do his television ministry.

Now, I’ve met my share of celebrities, so I know the experience of a celebrity swoon that is sometimes felt in such encounters. But as he took my hand, smiling, this was not what I experienced. Rather, I felt complete inner peace. Gently, holding my hand, “the oracle” spoke: “You are very important to Henri Nouwen,” he said. “Mister Rogers knows Henri Nouwen?” I thought, amazed. As we talked, I knew that biblical “peace that passes understanding.” This is the peace that I imagine one may encounter with deeply spiritual people, such as the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa, or Desmond Tutu. I just was positively surprised to experience it with Mister Rogers!

There are prophets who disturb us, pastors who prod us, teachers who unsettle us, therapists who challenge us. But even they may convey a pre-emptive peace. Rev. Jim Hughes, an NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) therapist, was one of the rare people who could offer me helpful critiques that from anyone else could feel devastating and debilitating, but in his framing of them made me feel complimented and empowered!

I believe that many more of us may practice a pre-emptive peace, beginning each day by reviewing our agendas contemplatively, lifting all whom we will encounter and all the day’s activities in prayer, and then returning again and again to that place of peace throughout the day. After a spirituality workshop in which I led participants in singing the Taize version of “*Ubi Caritas*” from time to time, a seminary professor told me if she could just sing that occasionally during her day, she would be far more peaceful.

Let’s already be against the next war, politically and personally.

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Stolen, Lost and Found

Stolen, Lost and Found

Bernard Lagan

October 26, 2012

The face is a little fuller, movement comes slower. A small tremor ripples across his hands. A slight cough betrays a recent illness. But the old presence is here, the gentle dignity that comes to a man who knows more loss and pain than men should; who found not rage nor bitterness but forgiveness and gratitude.

Along the way Archie Roach nearly gave up. In 2010, his partner Ruby Hunter died; she'd been his music soul mate and the mother of the couple's two boys. The next year a stroke felled Roach just as he was resuming his musical career at Turkey Creek, near Broome. Last year he was told he had lung cancer.

Who could not understand his desolation? The stroke was as cruel as the loss of Ruby. The pair, who had been together almost 40 years, met as teenagers on the streets of Melbourne; both were homeless then and heading for addictions. Children came. So did more alcohol. Ruby left with the kids and Archie had to make a decision: the bottle or the family? She'd told him: "Alcohol — I can't do that anymore and see my children suffer."

Archie remembers: "Ruby took the kids and left me. So it was a choice I had to make. Either keep drinking alcohol or have my children with me. So it wasn't really a hard choice."

Good decades together followed and so did the songs. Fame came with Roach's 1990 album, *Charcoal Lane*, and the haunting ballad, *Took the Children Away* — an ode to the generations of Aboriginal children, Roach and Ruby Hunter included, who were forcibly removed from their parents by Australian government agencies.

He was to take the loss of Ruby hard: "I just wanted to go away, to be left alone. I just wanted to lead a pretty quiet existence. It was a hard thing when Ruby passed away. It knocked me down pretty hard and I didn't want to get up."

He resumed touring a year or so later. Then the stroke. Roach could not walk, could not play his guitar and had to be wheeled into his bathroom.

"My right hand was just useless," Roach recalls. "I couldn't pick up things, I couldn't button up a shirt, I couldn't put my clothes on, for goodness' sake.

When that happened I felt pretty depressed. That was just pretty devastating."

Despair stalked him, and Roach wasn't sure he wanted to continue with anything much at all.

Offended by the loss of his dignity, he resolved to drag himself into his bathroom.

His strength slowly returned. Urged by medical staff to fight to regain the use of his hand, Roach again picked up his guitar and, slowly, the chords came back. So, too, did that smoky, weary voice that carries so many stories in from the missions and the desert.

But Roach had trouble finding his old songwriting skills. Says his friend, the Melbourne record producer and founding member of The Killjoys, Craig Pilkington (who accompanies Roach on guitar in our video and audio): "He had not been writing songs and he felt that his life had changed. He didn't have the usual infrastructure, I guess, of sitting around the kitchen table with Ruby, playing songs to each other, which was how they had worked. He found himself a little bit at sea and he was worried that he'd sort of lost his creative mojo. He did say he was really concerned that the shock and change in his life had made him creatively impotent."

Pilkington remembered that years before, Roach had recorded a couple of songs for a demo tape that had never been released, but which deserved to be. One song Roach had written, a couple of years before her death, was an ode to Ruby. *Mulyawongk*, a haunting, spare love song, is named after the spirit that guards the part of the lower Murray River where Ruby had spent her childhood. The song had been inspired in Roach when the pair travelled back to the river. Ruby tumbled back into those waters, shedding tears of joy. It was there that she had been taken away from her parents as a child.

"And Ruby left the river,

she cried so bitterly,

she was born by the water's edge, underneath this tree."

"Craig got that old tape and as soon as I heard it again, it hit me straight in the heart," recalls Roach. "I think it means more to me today than when I wrote it, when Ruby was still alive.

It's the Mulyawongk calling Ruby back to her river and her dreaming"

Stolen. Lost and Found (cont.)

As Pilkington had hoped, Roach's rediscovery of the song penned long ago for Ruby served to kickstart a new album that would revive his songwriting career. The album, *Into the Bloodstream*, is a triumph over everything that has been thrown at the man. And it is, arguably, Roach's best yet.

Roach has set down his life in the album's dozen tracks. The cover is a reproduction of an Aboriginal man's painting — done in the desert style — of the Framlingham Mission in Victoria's southwest. Roach had lived there with his six older brothers and sisters before he was forcibly taken from the family when he was three years old. Looking at the album cover, Roach picks out his old house. He never saw his mother or father again. Instead, he was to pass through orphanages and at least one bitter experience in a foster home until he ended up with a kindly farming family, the Coxes. They had a large record collection, and in amongst it Roach discovered Mahalia Jackson, Nat King Cole, The Ink Spots, and happy years in what he describes today as a beautiful family.

Eventually, a letter from one of his sisters arrived, telling of what had happened to him as a child. This would later trigger his spiral into teenage homelessness.

Roach writes more personally than he has ever done about being taken from his family in the track *Old Mission Road*; he imagines his hand in his mother's as he walks with her through Framlingham and hears her stories of his early childhood. It is a burning lament for the mother he lost.

"Won't you walk with me, darling, Just a couple of miles, Won't you tell me the stories of when I was a child."

Now age 56, Roach still has flashes that come like Polaroid stills of the day he was taken; "I remember running through bracken near the mission. I do remember stopping somewhere. They told me later it was the old Geelong prison. All the children stopped there for a break. I do remember some big man in jacket, a navy-blue jacket with a lot of silver buttons, picking me up on his shoulders and walking around."

The dark years of living homeless and in the grip of alcohol are sung, relived, in *Big Black Train* — a story of his experience and a plea to young people to avoid that journey; "It was pretty hard. Me and Ruby, we ended up going to a half-way house. It was Ruby who led the way. She just grabbed the children one day and said, 'I can't live this life anymore.'"

There is a striking gospel influence in Roach's latest work, enhanced by Craig Pilkington's arrangements. Pilkington says: "The new songs that Archie was writing were such message songs that they'd naturally fallen into a bit of form that to me was traditional Gospel."

The arrangements were also inspired by a special moment in Pilkington's recording studio in the Melbourne suburb of Coburg, when Roach was talking about his hard-living, hard-fighting Uncle Banjo, who still got himself to church every Sunday because he loved to sing hymns. Then Roach led the musicians in an impromptu version of *Just a Closer Walk with Me*, and talked of his own love of that hymn as a child.

Says Pilkington: "In some ways, this is Archie returning to a musical form he was really comfortable with."

One day during the making of Roach's new album, the singer/songwriter and Roach's old friend and collaborator, Paul Kelly, turned up at the studio. Kelly had brought along a half-finished version of the song *I'm On Your Side*, to work on with Roach. Roach also had the beginnings of his own song, *We Won't Cry*.

Says Pilkington: "It was a really magical studio afternoon... because we realised they'd both brought songs of mateship and support and of sticking together for each other."

Both songs made the album. Kelly features on one. It was in the midst of making the album that Roach's manager, Jill Shelton, noticed he was sometimes short of breath. She spoke to Roach's doctor and arranged a chest x-ray.

"We had started doing the album and, bang, I was diagnosed with lung cancer," says Roach, who had been a smoker.

Late last year half of Roach's left lung was removed. Again, he raised himself from a terrible setback to complete his new album.

"You have to really. When your body starts to fail and you get sick, you've really got to dig deep in yourself to come out of that, to also find the strength to be grateful. To be grateful just to be here. Grateful every day. It could have been different. It could have been much different." <http://www.theglobalmail.org/feature/stolen-lost-and-found/446/>

Burning Issues

Carbon age must end or we will

Date October 19, 2012

During a Canberra symposium last week on "The Future of Homo Sapiens" in a 12-hour day of presentations and panel discussions, 15 leading Australian experts from climate science, public health, theology, philosophy, politics and economics expressed their dismay at the seriousness of the human predicament.

They bemoaned the continuing effectiveness of entrenched interests to maintain a culture of denial and inaction about the seriousness of the developing climate emergency. The meeting was in honour of Phillip Adams, who, in his keynote address quoted Pablo Casals. "The situation is hopeless. We must take the next step."

Neither the media nor most of our elected federal representatives appear to share the view which prevailed at the conference, that the situation is well-nigh hopeless unless somehow the world can urgently break its addiction to fossil fuels.

No one seriously argued against the technical feasibility of doing this but both Clive Hamilton and Robert Manne expressed the view that governments are unlikely to rise to the challenge in time.

Instead, Hamilton opined, on present evidence, humans are more likely to wait until catastrophe is upon us and try managing and manipulating Earth's systems to protect us through such techniques as gigantic injections of sulphur dioxide into the stratosphere. And as if to confirm Hamilton's view that humans will continue to treat the Earth as our servant rather than our host, Thomas Faunce described increasingly promising efforts to replace natural with artificial photosynthesis and said that commercial interests are falling over each other to patent the process.

The symposium reinforced my own conviction that our species is doomed unless we can act quickly and decisively to terminate our dependency on fossil fuels. That is a really challenging ask but it is by no means unachievable. The longer we leave it the more impossible the task will become to avoid unsurvivable global heating.

Australia is the highest carbon emitter per capita in the world. We are hugely dependent on fossil fuels for our energy and on top of that we are continuing to export coal and gas to other countries for them to convert into carbon emissions. We must take the next step.

It is hard to imagine a more lemming-like response to this crisis than what most of our Australian governments are doing. There is frenetic commitment to export as much of our coal as can be dug out of the ground as fast as possible; destructive fracking of our range-lands, subsidies to big polluters and coal mines as well as retreat from wind and solar energy initiatives and failure to invest adequately in other renewables.

For now, the climate-change denial industry remains in the ascendancy. National consensus that climate change is the greatest moral challenge of our time rose and fell with Kevin Rudd. Neither side of federal politics now sees it as the cataclysmically important issue that it is. We are much more concerned with Peter Slipper's texts and Alan Jones's outbursts.

It would seem that until there is visible electoral expression of concern about these issues, government policy commitments will remain timid and largely ignored by media that are preoccupied with trivia.

The good news is that many Australians are now acting and that the 50,000 strong Australian Youth Climate Coalition is working strategically with politicians on a number of fronts to awaken the dreamers to the reality that the threat is here and now.

The Manning Clark conference heard from former Liberal leader John Hewson, who is leading an international ratings agency that is monitoring the extent to which trillions of dollars of investment and superannuation funds are being used to prop up fossil fuels rather than promote renewable technologies. This is a brilliant strategy to force investors to a reality check on how their funds are being used.

A decisive rejection of fossil fuels and an enthusiastic embrace of renewable energy is our best hope for a future for our grandchildren. This is a moral and not an economic issue.

Bob Douglas is a retired epidemiologist, a director of Australia21 (australia21.org.au) and chair of SEE-Change ACT (see-change.org.au).

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/opinion/carbon-age-must-end-or-we-will-20121018-27tqz.html#ixzz2A5rn54gn>

Babbling brooks, the mist of waterfalls, the tears of those who have suffered in this land.

Why in this land of beauty that lifts the heart and renews the spirit do people's hearts turn to violence driven by fear and suspicion.

To live life well is to trust.

Roger Munson



Plitvice Lakes National Park, Croatia

Burning Issues (cont.)

Australia's Tent Diplomacy

By Bernard Lagan October 19, 2012

It's not just the asylum seekers who are frustrated on Nauru. The foreign minister has a few things to get off his chest, too.

The tiny Pacific nation of Nauru has — for the first time — voiced its frustrations over the Australian government's decision to re-open the controversial asylum seeker processing camp on the island.

More than 300 people are being held under canvas, with plans to send at least a thousand more to the camp.

In an interview with *The Global Mail* Nauru's foreign minister, Dr Kieren Keke, said Nauru had hoped that by now the asylum seekers would have been housed in permanent buildings on Nauru rather than still in tents.

Keke issued a rebuff to the Coalition, whose leader, Tony Abbott and immigration spokesman, Scott Morrison, said that under an Abbott Government asylum seekers could expect to be held on Nauru for five years.

It was also a rebuff for the Gillard government policy that asylum seekers who arrive in Australia by boat should not enjoy any advantage — in the time taken to process their refugee claims — over those who apply for Australian residence through official channels overseas.

The length of time asylum seekers would stay on Nauru, Keke said, was for the Nauruan government to decide — under whose laws they were being processed — not for Australia.

Asylum seekers' accommodation in Nauru, slammed by detainees and advocacy groups as unbearable and woefully inadequate, (September 2012.)

"As I have said, the (assessment) process itself will determine how long it takes, not some pre-determined, arbitrary figure," said Dr Keke. Speaking from Nauru on October 19, Keke, a New Zealand-trained medical doctor, said: "I think we are all frustrated as to the time it's taking to get



Department of Immigration and Citizenship

permanent buildings up and permanent accommodation put in.

"The fact that we've still got tents — that's a little less than desirable," he said. "We'd all hoped by now we'd have progressed to permanent buildings and long-term accommodation."

Keke made clear that he was not blaming the Australian government nor its contractors for the delay in erecting permanent facilities for asylum seekers on Nauru. Rather, he said, the delays had arisen because of Nauru's insistence that the refugee processing centre be designed and re-built with proper facilities that would provide protection and dignity to the estimated 1,500 asylum seekers who will eventually be transferred from Australia to Nauru to await the processing of their claims for refugee status.

Keke spoke out after refugee advocates in Sydney made public details about the failings of accommodation on Nauru and disclosed that one man had already begun a hunger strike, and that there had been several suicide attempts among asylum seekers on Nauru.

One asylum seeker had informed authorities he would refuse food, although at present he was still eating, Keke said. He also confirmed what he described as several actions of self-harm, but he said none had resulted in serious or permanent injuries.

The Refugee Action Coalition, which is in contact with some asylum seekers on Nauru, said a mass protest meeting of asylum seekers on Nauru on Wednesday had demanded an immediate start to the processing of their claims.

Burning Issues (cont.)

The Gillard government has suspended the processing of all asylum seekers who arrived in Australia by boat since mid-August — a policy designed to ensure that people arriving by boat lose any advantage over others who use official channels to seek residence in Australia.

A message sent from Nauru and signed by a group of asylum seekers said: “Nauru has become a place for asylum seekers to be detained, in small tents that are set up on dirt and are non-standard, with only a few bathrooms and showers that aren’t usable and an area that is surrounded by wire. It’s called Nauru and we asylum seekers, numbering 290 people are detained within this.”

(According to the Refugee Action Coalition another 38 asylum seekers were flown into Nauru on Friday, October 19.)



The asylum seekers’ statement, delivered to the Refugee Action Coalition, continued: “Here, in addition to mental and psychological problems such as several instances of suicide attempts, most of the asylum seekers are suffering from horrible skin diseases that the officials’ only solution to is to recommend Paradol and an intake of cold water.

“When the sun rises the asylum seekers try to seek refuge outside the tents in search of some shade in dread of the blazing sun rays and the hot weather inside the tents and only when the sun sets are they able to return to their tents.”

The statement said the number of sick refugees on Nauru was increasing and their conditions were worsened by dirty water — a product of Nauru’s well-documented water shortages.

But Keke said the processing facility was being supplied several times a day with clean, desalinated water and that a well-equipped clinic to treat ill asylum seekers was in place on the island.

He said teams of nurses, doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists were being flown in on rotation from Australia; a fully equipped ambulance had been delivered; and an X-ray machine had been flown in on Thursday.

He said the only outbreak of disease he was aware of was a viral gastro infection that had brought down some of the centre’s Australian staff.

“When the sun rises the asylum seekers try to seek refuge outside the tents in search of some shade in dread of the blazing sun rays and the hot weather inside the tents and only when the sun sets are they able to return to their tents.”

“It’s understandable why the likes of the Refugee Coalition are trying to exaggerate the realities in trying to make the loudest statement they can and I appreciate they are trying to assist the asylum seekers,” Keke said.

“But it’s really a very calm centre and some of their efforts, although well intentioned, are probably not assisting the asylum seekers. They are fueling thoughts and leading to more despair in my view.”

The issue causing the most concern to the asylum seekers, their advocates and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees is the delay in beginning the processing of refugee claims.

At least 4,000 people — most of them still being held in Australia — are among those caught by the suspension of the processing of their refugee claims.

Keke said he could not say when processing would begin on Nauru — though it will be conducted under Nauruan law and overseen by Nauru’s secretary for justice and border control.

“Nauru’s position is that we are working as quickly as we can all aspects of this — the necessary legislation, the human resource capacity and the physical resources,” Keke said. “Once they are in place, then assessments will commence.”

<http://www.theglobalmail.org/feature/australias-tent-diplomacy/437/>

“I discovered later, and I’m still discovering right up to this moment, that is it only by living completely in this world that one learns to have faith. By this-worldliness I mean living unreservedly in life’s duties, problems, successes and failures. In so doing we throw ourselves completely into the arms of God, taking seriously, not our own sufferings, but those of God in the world. That, I think, is faith.”

Dietrich Boenhoffer

With a Progressive Bent

SENATOR DAVID FEENEY

Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Senator for Victoria Transcript Marriage Amendment Bill (No.2) 2012

I am a Catholic having been brought up and schooled in its traditions. I married my wife in the Catholic Church and I continue to profess the faith of my forebears. In the Hon. Michael Kirby's submission to the inquiry of the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee into the Marriage Equality Amendment Bill 2010 he stated that only one-third of marriages in Australia today are solemnised in a religious ceremony. The argument that marriage belongs to the church can no longer be justified. It is my firm belief that in Australia, a secular society, religious doctrines should not be enshrined in our laws. It is clear in section 116 of the Australian Constitution that Australia has an essentially secular legal character, notwithstanding our cultural indebtedness to our Judeo-Christian values and morals. I must say, having heard the contribution of Senator Thistlethwaite, that I thought he summed up my own views on this subject very eloquently.

The Second Vatican Council declared that 'man is bound to follow his conscience faithfully in all his activity'. I am aware that many see the use of conscience as a cherry-picking tool of Catholic teachings but, to me, Matthew 7:12 provides the crux of all of Christ's teachings: 'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.' Dr Daniel Maguire, a United States theologian and professor at Marquette University, a Jesuit institution in Milwaukee, has written on Catholic Church teachings and sexuality. In fact his pamphlet entitled *A Catholic Defense of Same Sex Marriage* I would commend to all of my coreligionists. He has said that church leaders are misrepresenting catholic teaching and are trying to present their idiosyncratic minority view as the Catholic position and it is not. He went on to say:

"... Most in the church have moved on [to] a more humane view on the rights of those whom God has made gay."

Most Catholic theologians approve of same-sex marriage and Catholics generally do not differ much from the overall population on this issue.

That is certainly true for me. I also note that the Democrats in the United States have in recent times taken on this debate with eloquence and with dignity. Nancy Pelosi, the House minority leader in Washington, has said that her Catholic faith compels her to be against discrimination of any kind and thus same-sex marriage. Ms Pelosi said:

"My religion ... compels me to be against discrimination of any kind in our country, and I consider this—'this' obviously being the marriage arrangements prevailing in the United States—a form of discrimination. I think it's unconstitutional on top of that."

President Obama has said on the issue:

"... [Michelle and I] are both practising Christians and obviously this position may be considered to put us at odds with the views of others but ... when we think about our faith, the thing at root that we think about is not only Christ sacrificing himself on our behalf, but it's also the Golden Rule, you know, treat others the way you would want to be treated."

Over the course of several years, as I talk to friends and family and neighbours, when I think about members of my own staff who are in incredibly committed monogamous same-sex relationships, who are raising kids together. When I think about those soldiers or airmen or Marines or sailors who are out there fighting on my behalf, and yet feel constrained even now that Don't Ask Don't Tell is gone because they're not able to commit themselves in a marriage, at a certain point I've just concluded that for me personally, it is important for me to go ahead and affirm that I think same-sex couples should be able to get married."

In coming to this view President Obama said that he was sensitive to the fact that, for a lot of people, the word 'marriage' has very powerful traditions and religious beliefs.

In researching this topic I came across a document entitled '10 Reasons why Christians should support same-sex marriage'. I have to confess it came from a Canadian website, but I will attempt to put an Australian spin on it. It says:

Why Christians should support same-sex marriage.

1. Christians support equal rights for all [Australians].
2. Christians have long benefited from the freedom of religion in [Australia], indeed that is why many came here.
3. Modern Christians realise that marriage is not based only on procreation.
4. Christians should support marriage.
5. Christians realise that the Church has been discriminatory in the past and would want to seek amends for that.
6. Christians realise that marriage has never been a static institution, and therefore there is no reason that it should be now.
7. Christians support the separation of Church and State.
8. Christians have long known that the Church should not determine the laws of our society.
9. Christians are committed to justice.
10. Christians believe in the supremacy of God, not the supremacy of government.

Passing the Marriage Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2012 to remove discrimination and to allow two individuals, regardless of sex, sexuality and gender identity, the opportunity to marry will create what the constitution intends, that of a separation of church and state. This bill is fair and it strikes a balance ensuring legal acceptance for everyone's beliefs and values. I commend the bill to the Senate.

Kid's Stuff

KUCAnews

Planet Earth Themed Crafts

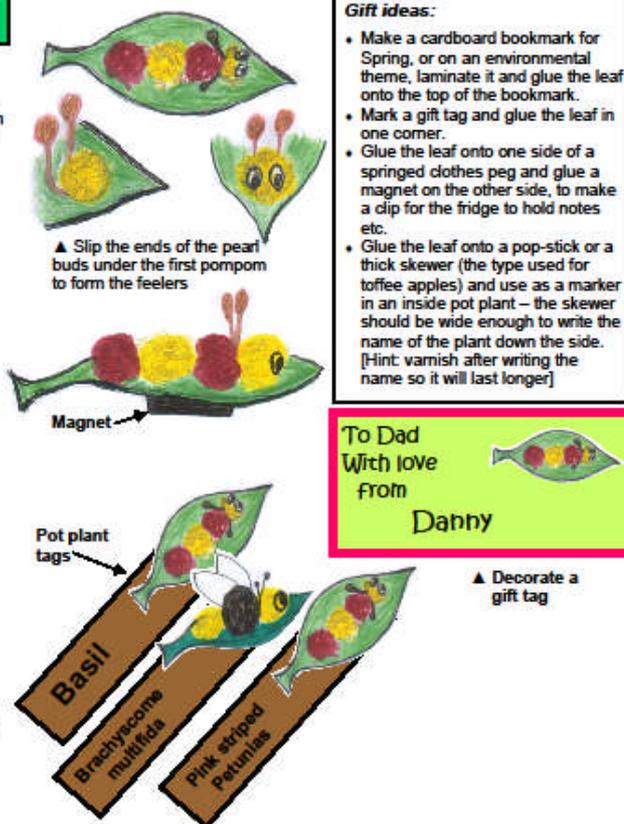
Caterpillar on a leaf

You will need: (per child)

- 1 artificial cloth leaf approx 5cm long X 3.5cm wide (you can save in the cost of these by cutting leaves from recycled artificial flowers, or cut your own from stiff green material)
- 4 X small sparkly coloured pompoms (approx 8-10mm in diameter), 2 each of 2 different colours
- 2 X 5mm wiggly eyes
- 2 X pearl buds
- craft glue
- Optional: magnet, springed clothes peg, thick skewer

What to do:

- Spread a thin strip of glue down the centre of the leaf.
- Place the pompoms in alternate colours in a line down the line of glue to form the body of the caterpillar.
- Bend the ends of the pearl buds and slip them under the first pompom, with the stems ending in the buds poking up between the first and second pompom to form the feelers (see diagram).
- Glue wiggly eyes onto the front pompom.
- Optional: When the glue on the caterpillar is dry, glue a magnet onto the back of the leaf to make a fridge magnet.



Gift ideas:

- Make a cardboard bookmark for Spring, or on an environmental theme, laminate it and glue the leaf onto the top of the bookmark.
- Mark a gift tag and glue the leaf in one corner.
- Glue the leaf onto one side of a springed clothes peg and glue a magnet on the other side, to make a clip for the fridge to hold notes etc.
- Glue the leaf onto a pop-stick or a thick skewer (the type used for toffee apples) and use as a marker in an inside pot plant – the skewer should be wide enough to write the name of the plant down the side. [Hint: varnish after writing the name so it will last longer]

To Dad
With love
from
Danny

▲ Decorate a gift tag

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We want to hear from You!

Email your articles and ideas for the next issue of Red Wings to stjames.uca@gmail.com

St James Uniting Church 40 Gillies St, Curtin ACT stjamesprogressive.org.au