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# The Mustard Seed

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Armada Uniting Church

*Edition 21 - August 2016*

## From the editors...

We lead this issue with some reports on Fiona's Induction at Armadale of 31 July. We've also included some photos.

Of course, we already know Fiona from her time at Armadale on a supply basis. She told us a little about herself in the Lent 2015 issue of *The Mustard Seed*, too. However, she's given us some more insights—and food for thought—in her *Statement of Beliefs* on page 2.

Rev Robin Yang has provided us with a summary of his sermon at the Induction Service (see page 3). Other items include an interview with Betty Terrell, some Springs of Japanese Wisdom from Mioko Wood, a review of a Bonhoeffer book by Ian Thomas, and some thoughts by Karel Reus on Jacques Ellul as well as a Credo by Daniel Berrigan.

— Bill Rush and Graeme Harris.

## Induction

The Service of Induction of Rev Fiona Winn Armadale on 31 July was a joyous and exciting occasion.

Rev Fiona Morrison, Deputy Chairperson of the Presbytery of Port Phillip East presided, and was assisted by members of the Congregation and Presbytery.

The preacher was Rev Robin Yang. He's provided us with a summary of his sermon, which is set out on page 3. He told us that we need to have courage to get "out of the boat" that is our comfort zone and walk with courage, not in our own strength, but in God's, to discover the God's call for us.

Going forward, we're looking forward to working with Fiona, especially in light of her Statement of Beliefs (see page 2) - thought-provoking and perhaps challenging.

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## Greetings!

It is a joy to write to you now as your minister in placement after an extensive and thorough discernment process which culminated in a wonderfully joyous and celebratory service of induction at the end of July. Thanks again to all involved – the members of the Joint Nominating Committee, the Presbytery of Port Phillip East, the Church Council and congregation here at Armadale.

In a previous edition of the Mustard Seed I offered a few biographical notes. Here, I offer a statement of beliefs I had to write in another context which might help in a different way to answer the question 'Who am I?'

### Statement of Beliefs

1. I believe in the specialness of Jesus Christ, His uniqueness in showing us God as Father.
2. I believe that Jesus Christ demonstrates that God loves bodies, that God loves this world and that God loves me. And I believe the world needs to know this or be reminded of this – as I constantly do too – in simple, clear language.
3. I believe the holy Spirit is alive and active.
4. I believe the Bible to be God's living, holy Spirit breathed Word, active, affecting, life-changing.
5. I believe in the importance of cultivating an inner life of stillness, quiet, listening to God, contemplating the Word, reflecting with other Christians.
6. I believe in heralding, announcing, building the Kingdom and I believe in speaking out when actions taken or decisions made violate or deny Kingdom values.
7. I believe the Church as Christ's body on earth has a unique and distinctive role to play in the world. I believe it is meant to be a dynamic and attractive organism, effective in the world, affecting the world, engaged with and changing the world through wonder-full worship, particular prayer, prophetic intervention, intentional action.
8. I believe that to God nothing is secular, that God is intimately concerned with and involved in every area of human being and that where there is injustice and the vulnerable are exploited, Christians, to be true to the Gospel and faithful to Christ, are compelled to show and speak a different way.
9. I believe the church needs to dialogue with contemporary culture in fresh ways, fearlessly and that this might mean thinking the unthinkable or saying the presently unsayable.
10. I believe that God is not shockable.
11. I believe that Christians should speak about the Faith, about their faith, in humility but without embarrassment.
12. I believe the world needs Christians to be people of refreshing hope - courageous, humorous, human – willing to speak out the truth on contentious, difficult issues but without judgement or condemnation.
13. I believe that wonder should be our hallmark - and gratitude, prayer, respect, love, laughter, celebration.
14. I believe in mystery and mercy and that all will be well in God's good time.
15. I believe we live surrounded and supported by faithful people who have gone before, whose example and witness we are called, helped by scripture and the Spirit, to emulate and explore, with joy and hope, in our own day and age.

I look forward to the days ahead.

*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,  
"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

*Jeremiah 29: 11*

Blessings.

Fiona Winn August 2016

# Robin's Sermon

**Rev Robin Yang preached at Fiona's Induction, and he's kindly provided us with a summary of his sermon.**



Good afternoon friends. It is a great privilege to have the opportunity to preach today. I am currently the minister at Endeavour Hills Uniting Church and have been the chair of the JNC that called Rev Fiona Winn to the Armadale Uniting Church. We rejoice and congratulate both the congregation and Fiona on a perfect match from heaven.

This afternoon I want to preach from Matthew 14:22-33. This text is about Peter walking on water. I want to focus on the courage and faith of Peter and to emphasise how important it is for the people of God to walk out their call with courage.

## **1. WHAT IS YOUR DESTINATION?**

In verse 22, Jesus sends the disciples out on a boat to the other side. The destination is across a great expanse of water and the journey was very difficult as the boat was travelling through the night and was "buffeted by the waves as the wind was against it" (verse 24).

Our lives have a divine destination. Scripture's word for destination is "call". We both individually and corporately have a God-ordained call. Our ultimate destination is heaven in the presence of God and in the meantime, God calls and send us to our destination.

Your destination or your call is something you discover not something you choose.

It is important to remember that we do not always know our destination and there are times we need to trust that God knows. He is infinitely more qualified to choose the destination than we are. We must live life as a discovery of our call.

Fiona and the Armadale congregation have been called to journey and discover God's call together.

## **2. THE BOAT**

The disciples were crossing to their destination in a boat. It was their place of safety and security in the midst of a dark, cold, windy, rough sea of death. It's before dawn and boat is far out, being buffeted by waves and wind. This was in a time before proper life jackets, GPS technology or other marine safety equipment. To fall out of the boat could mean death.

For many people, and indeed for many churches today, the boat represents their sphere of safety, their place of protection from the storms of life. It symbolises their wealth and security. Therefore, people spend an inordinate amount of time, energy and finances, either trying to ensure that their boat stays afloat or making it luxurious, secure, beautiful and safe. In our consumerist society, that is the point of life. For these, the destination is not as important as their boat.

### 3. JESUS WALKS TO YOUR BOAT

Verses 25-26 tells us that Jesus approached the disciples in their boat shortly before dawn. Jesus' disciples were undoubtedly exhausted, cold and scared, so when their master walks out to them, they are naturally terrified! "It's a ghost!" they cry.

When God calls us, he never leaves nor abandons us. God is a rock, fortress, a strong tower, our king and Lord. God will continually approach our boats. What will be our response?

### 4. COURAGE FAITH

There were two responses - one from Peter, the other from the rest of the disciples. While the disciples chose to stay in the relative safety of the boat, Peter alone decided to walk on water. Peter saw his teacher and friend walking on the sea and he chose to expand his spiritual comfort zone. He wanted to be where Christ was. For all Peter's shortcomings, his passion and courage is inspirational. He courageously chose to get out of the boat and walk towards Jesus.

Imagine what Armadale Uniting Church - and indeed every church in our presbytery - would look like if they chose to walk courageously like Peter, leave their boats, and follow Christ? The key to walking courageously is not seeking to have more faith. Instead, we simply seek to know God more intimately. The more we know God, the more we know that God is trustworthy and consequently the more courageous we become.

The wind and waves sought to bring fear to Peter as he walked. But we read in our text that Jesus did not let Peter sink. Instead he grabbed him and lovingly said, "Why did you doubt?" We too will all face storms that will lash against us and threaten to bring fear. Indeed many people crumble in the face of storms. However, faithful and courageous followers of Christ become resilient people and find meaning and purpose in the storm. It is about seeing the opportunity rather than threat. At times God will use storms to teach us things that we can learn nowhere else.

Armadale, may today mark a new season where you all walk with courage and faith towards your divinely appointed destination. There will be many storms ahead, some which may seem too big or too scary to handle - but nothing is too big for our God! Don't focus on the situation you are in. Instead focus on the One who has power over every situation and always remember that God is with you.

May God bless you Fiona as you become the minister here.

And I pray you will all step out of the boat with courage, into the place where Christ stands.



# AN INTERVIEW WITH BETTY TERRELL

**We caught up with Betty for a discussion about her interesting life.**

**Where were you born?**

In Armadale in 1926. I have an older brother Tom, and a younger sister, Helen.

**How long have you been coming to church here?**

All my life, except for about seven years when, because of my father's work, we lived for short periods in Ashburton, Ballarat and Woodend. Of course, it was the Armadale Methodist Church then until union in 1978.

**Where did you go to school?**

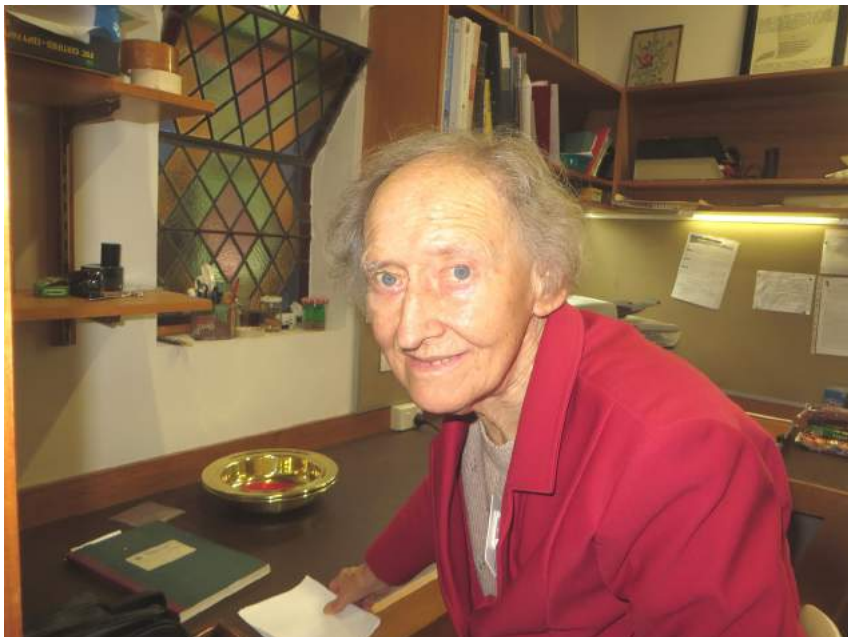
I started at Ashburton Primary School, then Spring Road Primary School, then on to two country state schools, then Ballarat High and back to Spring Rd Central in 1938. I won a part scholarship to MLC Hawthorn, arriving there in 1939, the same year that the famous Dr Harold Wood began his long term position as headmaster. In 1943 I was Dux of the school.

**What did you do when you left school?**

I went to Melbourne University on scholarship to study Science.

**Then what happened?**

After completing my degree I went to work as an analytical chemist at CSIRO - for 40 years.



**Do you find think science and faith are in conflict?**

No.

**What other interests have you had?**

I have travelled overseas - South America and Antarctica were especially memorable. I have been on many walking trips in Australia when my hobby of photography resulted in many slides. I used these to give illustrated talks to church and community groups. As you know, I still walk to church when the weather permits. This is my exercise!

**What positions have you occupied here in the Armadale church?**

I was a Sunday School teacher for many years, and in charge of the kindergarten. I was a member of the church Badminton Club from the 1940's to the 1970's. I was a member of the Church Council and Church Treasurer for 22 years and a member of the UCAF. Every Thursday I go to 130 Little Collins St to help the Sammy Stamp team. I am still on the flower roster. In earlier years, I acted as a Cub-Scout leader (Akela) for a group of blind boys at their residential school in Burwood. They really enjoyed those Monday evenings.

**Do you have any favourite hymns?**

No one hymn in particular though I enjoy singing the old Methodist ones.

**Do you have a favourite book or section of the Bible?**

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm - which I learnt when I was very young.

**What people do you especially remember from the past?**

Stan Elliott was organist and choirmaster for 40 years. Stan had been gassed in the Great War. His nephew Stan Graham was a member of the choir and donated a mixture stop to the organ which enhanced its range and capacity considerably. Betty Just was lead soprano for many years. She was a seamstress with a business in Armadale and specialised in making wedding dresses. The Moran family were members of the church and contributed significantly to the building of a new hall after the original one burnt down in the thirties (see the foundation stone in Clarendon St). Moran and Cato were a firm of grocers who had a chain of stores in the suburbs. The Cato family were also Methodists who donated generously to Wesley College.

**Do you want to say anything about how the Christian faith affects you personally?  
e.g. prayer, bible reading, fellowship with other believers etc.**

All these practices mean a lot to me.

**What next?**

My 90<sup>th</sup> birthday on August 28<sup>th</sup> this year!

*Note— we'll be celebrating Betty's 90th after Church on Sunday 28 August, so come along and join in the celebrations!*



# Springs of Japanese Wisdom



Image is by Sadao Watanabe - 1913-1996, a Japanese artist whose art is completely devoted to Christian themes.

This little book includes some well-known Japanese proverbs. Here are a few to contemplate:

No road is long with a friend at your side.

The day of decision is the day to act on it.

Even the thousand-mile road has a first step.

Joy and sorrow are life's companions.

Love lives in a cottage or a castle.

After three years even disaster can prove a blessing.

For these few days, the hills are bright with cherry-blossom.  
- longer, and we would not prize them so.

Submitted by Mioko Wood

The Spirit can make life. Sheer muscle and willpower don't make anything happen. Every word I have spoken to you is Spirit-filled and so it is life-making.

A translation of John 6:63 from The Message.

Book Review

# Bonhoeffer – Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy

Eric Metaxas

Reviewed by Ian Thomas

Published by Thomas Nelson, Nashville Tennessee 2010 608p

ISBN: 978-1-5955-5138-2



This is not a book that is a cannot-put-down page turner, but it is a pick-up-and-keep-reading type of book that is entertaining, informative and tells the story of a truly remarkable person who led a truly remarkable and influential life. It follows the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer from early childhood, through his formative years and brilliant academic career, through his development as a pastor and outstanding theologian.

It is a well-researched and detailed account of his life and his writing, his ill-fated and long running struggle against a national church that lost its direction in seeking recognition from a corrupt and evil regime, and ultimately his involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler.

The story tells of a remarkably well connected, super-intelligent, tolerant, close and loving family that spawned and help develop the acute intellectual skills possessed by Bonhoeffer and in a strange way helped to shape his absolute conviction that redemption can only come through Jesus Christ, his unrelenting discipline in seeking wisdom and guidance from the word of God in both Old and New Testament, an unshakeable faith that things work together for good through the grace of God, that life is meant to be lived in the abundance of God's grace in the world, not separated from it, that God is not to be partitioned off to parts of life that are not really important but must be a central part of the whole of life, that there can be no higher allegiance than to the will of God. There is so much to this story and to the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer that a short paragraph review cannot really do it justice. It was not an easy read – but a compelling and humbling account of the full but tragically short life of a modern day prophet.

(see also our Advent Reflection in the Advent 2015 issue of *The Mustard Seed*)

It may be that one of our greatest faults in prayer is that we talk too much, and listen too little.

When prayer is at its highest, we wait in silence.

William Barclay



# Jacques Ellul

By Karel Reus

*Born 1912, died 1994. Sociologist, philosopher, theologian, academic, activist, Christian.*

I first dipped into the work of Jacques Ellul in 1975 in the reading room of Cambridge University library during a period of sabbatical leave. I had been advised that, for a person who was both a sociologist and theologian (of sorts), Ellul provided a model of a life of scholarship and action that brought these two fields together to the benefit of both. Over this last year I have accepted the task of studying and working with the *Creative Ministries Network* that has its base in the buildings of the Armadale Uniting Church. That exercise led me to Ellul again because I wanted to refresh my understanding of how rigorous analysis and faith can come together.

Not long before that heady time in Cambridge I had worked supporting the Rev. Brian Howe in the establishment of the *Centre for Urban Research and Action (CURA)* in Fitzroy, Melbourne. Brian had recently returned from a period of study at the University of Chicago, an institution famous for its pioneering work in urban studies. Brian's intellectual leadership led me to Ellul's *The Meaning of the City*. I was struck immediately by Ellul's approach to the biblical text itself, for while rejecting the fundamentalist assertion that every word in the Bible is a word of God, Ellul insisted that the biblical text must be treated with absolute seriousness. Ellul argued that the Biblical text is a religious depositary honed and filtered over time, and is therefore unique. The Biblical text, Ellul insisted, is the Word of God, but not in any naive or literalist sense. Ellul started his analysis of the meaning of the City in faith history with a meticulous analysis of the text of that part of the Book of Genesis dealing with The Fall. If one was to ask Ellul if the events of The Fall actually happened, he would probably answer no, but then he would add that yes, they did happen in the context of a *faith history* (my words) that exposes what happened to human kind in the eyes of God. What happened was that human kind was cast out of the presence of God and was driven to seek its future in the building of cities. Cities, in Ellul's analysis, are not the place of humanity's salvation, nor are they the place where humanity can demonstrate higher values. No, Ellul "shows" that the City in human history is associated with sin, with false starts, with idolatry, with hubris.

The *Meaning of the City* may have been my own introduction to Ellul, but the introduction to Ellul's thought for many people will have been through his book *The Technological Society*. Ellul had been a Marxist in his younger days, and so had at one stage accepted Marx's analysis that the economic system determines the shape of society and the shape of social relations. Later in life Ellul decided that it is not so much economics that determines the shape of social relations, but the development of technology. At the heart of Ellul's analysis of technology is his pointing to "technique" as the oppressing force. When Ellul talks about "technique" he points to our total acceptance that at all costs we should seek out "the one best way". We accept without argument that we must continue to seek out better ways to achieve goals and that organisational change, change in relationships, change in beliefs can always, and only, be judged on the basis on whether "the one best way" is achieved. It is hard to read Ellul without being caught up in the horrendous vision of a society that is dominated not by the question "Why", but rather the question "How". If you think this is far-fetched, have a look at what is happening to the reorganisation of social services in the Uniting Church here in Victoria and Tasmania. Look at the justifications for it. You will see frequent references to how these changes will achieve

goals in a better way, as if pointing to the changes as a case of better technique requires no further argument in their favour.

Ellul has written widely. He has written on media and propaganda. He has written on relationships between nations. He has written on Christianity and Judaism and Islam. Perhaps most interesting is his constant attention to the study of the Bible. He ran frequent Bible studies both from his home and from his workplace, the University of Bordeaux. I have accessed some of these studies on Kindle, and many of his books are available there too. If you read into Ellul's work you will be impressed. You will not always agree, but there is a good chance that you will see the world in a different light, and that can't be a bad thing.

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### Travelling to Malaysia and Singapore

Rob Ahin recently travelled with his sister Faris to Singapore and Malaysia. Here are a couple of photos. On the left, Faris and Rob at the Batu Caves in Kuala Lumpur, and on the right, the beach at the resort they stayed at in Langkawi



Graeme and Bill are always pleased to receive contributions from all members of the congregation. These might be relevant photos, letters to the editors on an aspect of Christian or church life, your favourite hymns, concerns, travels, reflections, memories, book and movie suggestions and reviews, your life story, etc. Whatever you think might be of interest to others in the congregation. We would welcome anything from 50 to 500 words.

Just as our love for God begins with listening to God's Word, the beginning of love for other Christians, is learning to listen to them.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

# Photos from the Induction



Rev Fiona Morrison asking the Questions (above); Bill Rush leading the Prayers of the People (right); Keith Ferguson doing the readings (below right); and Rev Fiona Morrison presiding (below).



## Contemplative Worship at Armadale

This group meets in the church lobby on the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 7 p.m. It is based on Ignation meditative practice. For further information contact John Bottomley on 9531 3288 .

# Credo

## Daniel Berrigan

*Born 1921, died 2016, Berrigan, a Jesuit priest, was well-known in the 1960s as an activist. More details can be found at [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel\\_Berrigan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Berrigan). Berrigan's Credo (I Believe) provides food for thought. It was used in a devotional starting the Armadale Church Council meeting on July 20, 2016. Lines 9 and 12 (in italics) were added to ground it in our own place and time.*

### **Credo**

I can only tell you what I believe; I believe:  
I cannot be saved by foreign policies.  
I cannot be saved by the sexual revolution.  
I cannot be saved by the gross national product.  
I cannot be saved by nuclear deterrents.  
I cannot be saved by aldermen, priests, artists,  
plumbers, city planners, social engineers,  
nor by the Vatican,  
*nor by the Uniting Church Synod,*  
nor by the World Buddhist Association,  
nor by Hitler, nor by Joan of Arc,  
*nor by Turnbull, nor by Shorten, nor by Hansen,*  
nor by angels and archangels,  
nor by powers and dominions,  
I can be saved only by Jesus Christ.

Contributed by Karel Reus

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0403 662 786

Organist: Rowan Kidd

[www.armadale.unitingchurch.org.au](http://www.armadale.unitingchurch.org.au)

**Regular service times (except January):** 9.30 am each Sunday.

**Children's program:** 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month, during term time.

*During January, and occasionally at other times, we hold combined services with the other Stonnington region Churches, instead of meeting at Armadale.*