

# NEWSLETTER

*Community of Aidan and Hilda Australia*





# Welcome

**BY BRUCE CHALLONER**  
EDITOR

Blessings! This is our first newsletter. Why start at Winter, especially when the northern hemisphere is in Summer. Shouldn't I start on a bright positive note, such as Summer?

Well, I am starting on a bright note. Many do not realise that Winter is the most positive place to start. How is that you ask? Most associate darkness with evil or badness. Remember as a child, switching the light out meant bad things lurked in the darkness or out of sight under the bed. We don't go out walking at night because of what may come out of the darkness. I'm sure you can come up with a few of your own examples.

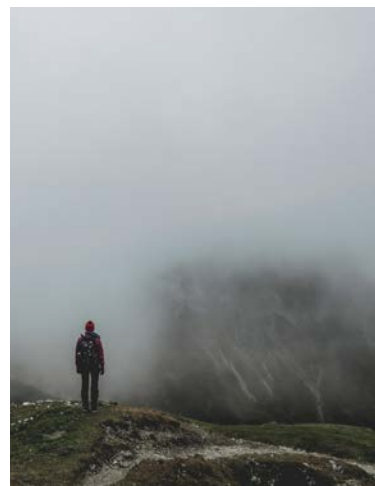
Genesis 1:2 - the second verse to the start of the Old Testament, speaks of 'The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep'. If we read Eugene Peterson's version of The Message, he says, 'Earth was a soup of nothingness, a bottomless emptiness, an inky blackness'. Now I believe that sums up the most desolate place around. Some might even say that is a great description of hell. How many of us fear falling into a bottomless pit? Not to mention an 'inky blackness'. A place you couldn't see your hand if it was just in front of your nose. Pretty black and scary!

And yet, God was there. The void and blackness was not something God stumbled upon. The void and darkness was also part of his creation. Just as light was in the next verse.

When we come to Winter, the long nights and short days; the days couped up inside because outside is too bleak and cold. Have you ever stopped and sat in blackness. The mind can conjure up all sort of terrible images at this time.

Maybe blackness needs to be a time of just sitting in it, waiting for God. A time of rest, not fear. A time of renewal, a new beginning. A change of thought. If God created darkness, he certainly can be found in it. Winter Solstice was a time of looking forward to the light of Spring coming.

How many of us actually thank God for the darkness? Can it not also be a time of blessing? Maybe, this winter can be the brightest time for you and the start of something wonderful.



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# Wisdom Circle

**BY MATT LAMONT**  
NEWCASTLE, NSW

This piece contains a prayer derived from the Community of Aidan and Hilda Ten Elements that I wrote some time ago. Following a recent community retreat, I was tempted to change the words to reflect an Australian context however something tells me to leave it as is with its universal themes.

Continuing the circle symbolism in my art recently the prayer is read in a circle moving inwards where we find the juxtaposition of the 10th Element (Mission) with the rich Interior Centre which is paradoxically often the source of the movement outwards with compassion towards others and the world.

The colours of the edges and the centre are the same, though reversed in sequence, reflecting that God often reveals that Inner and Outer can be experienced as a whole. While not intended as an Aboriginal piece of art the dot work in the centre and at the edges however acknowledges Koori Dreaming.

I believe we can connect with and appreciate the spirituality of First Peoples through our own instincts for prayerfulness.

For example, I recently discovered that the local Aboriginal word for

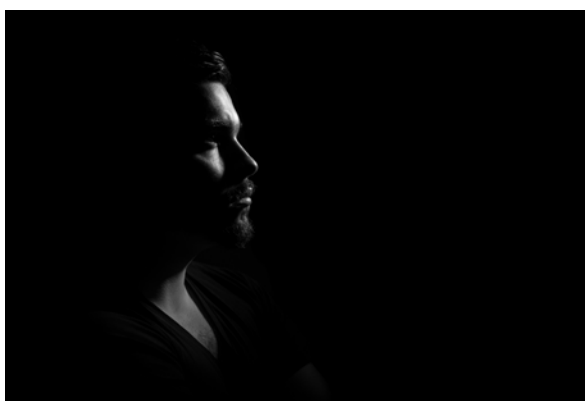
‘welcome’ is wantakalowa, literally ‘which way?’ It seems significant that wantakalowa seems to connect hospitality with spiritual journeying.

Perhaps each element of our Way of Life might also embrace us with the welcome at each point ‘which way?’

### Reflection

***Pick one of the numbers below (1-4), and use it as your own personal reflection.***

- 1. As you reflect on this Circle (previous page picture), what do you discover at the inner circle and then, the outer circle?**
- 2. After contemplating this Circle, and if you allowed the inner depths of your being to have a voice, what would it say?**
- 3. In your daily walk, take one of these prayers each day and dwell upon it. At the end of the day, and before you go to sleep, either journal what your dwelling upon this prayer has revealed to you; or, put into a sentence and speak aloud what it has meant to you.**
- 4. Using coloured pencils, if you were to draw out on paper your own ‘Circle’, what colours and shapes would you draw?**



## 10 Prayers

(Matt Lamont’s 10 prayers (previous page picture words) align with Aidan and Hilda Ten Elements of the Way).

- 1. Life-Long Learning**  
Great Creator Spirit – we journey with Christ in all things seeking soul friends and pilgrimage along the way.
- 2. Spiritual Journey**  
May we enfold this given life in a soulful rhythm of prayer, work and rest.
- 3. Rhythm of Prayer, Work and Re-Creation**  
May we practice sacred reading of Scripture and spiritual writings, art and science.
- 4. Spiritual Initiatives through Intercession**  
May we hold the whole world in Light and prayer, as we are held.
- 5. To Live a Simple Life-style**  
May we simplify life such that beauty, generosity and hospitality shine forth.
- 6. Care for Creation**  
May we endow the earth with our love and gentle care.
- 7. Healing Fragmented People and Communion**  
May we with wisdom and discernment become a healing presence.
- 8. Openness to God’s Spirit**  
May we listen deeply in silence to the Spirit.
- 9. Unity**  
May we build a true communion of love with peoples of all faiths and spiritual traditions and of none.
- 10. Mission**  
May we spread peace, harmony and justice wherever the winds of the Spirit may blow us.



# Mirrabooka

## *Southern Cross*

The Southern Cross is known by many different Aboriginal names. Here is one story.

Kath Walker (Oodgeroo Noonuccal) (1920–1993) was an Australian poet, political activist, artist and educator. She was also a campaigner for Aboriginal Rights. Oodgeroo was best known for her poetry, and was the first Aboriginal Australian to publish a book of verse. She joined the Australian Women's Army Service in 1942. Serving as a signaller in Brisbane she met many black American soldiers, as well as European Australians.

When she was growing up on Stradbroke Island off the coast of Queensland she was told stories of how the Southern Cross came into being. According to her, Biami, the Good Spirit in the sky, was extremely busy keeping an eye on the Aboriginal people but found he could not watch them all the time. He decided that

he needed the assistance of someone to help him in the guardianship of his people.

He chose a man named Mirrabooka, who was not only loved by everyone but also looked after the welfare of his tribe. So, "Biami gave him a spirit form and placed him in the sky among the stars, and promised him eternal life.

Biami gave Mirabooka lights for his hands and feet and stretched him across the sky, so that he could watch for ever over the tribes he loved. And the tribes could look up to him from the Earth and see the stars which were Mirrabooka's eyes gazing down on them," Walker K., Stradbroke

Dreamtime Angus and Robertson 1972 Sydney

One of her poems, from her book, 'My People: A Kath Walker Collection', published in 1970 is called 'All One Race'. Her other books include 'Stradbroke Dreamtime'; 'Father Sky and Mother Earth'.

Black tribe, yellow tribe, red,  
white or brown,  
From where the sun jumps  
up to where it goes down,  
Herrs and pukka-sahibs,  
demoiselles and squaws,  
All one family, so why make  
wars?

They're not interested in  
brumby runs,  
We don't hanker after  
Midnight Suns;  
I'm for all humankind, not  
colour gibes;  
I'm international, and never  
mind tribes.

Black, white or brown race,  
yellow race or red,  
From the torrid equator to  
the ice-fields spread,  
Monsieurs and senors, lubras  
and fraus,  
All one family, so why family  
rows?

We're not interested in their  
igloos,  
They're not mad about  
kangaroos;  
I'm international, never mind  
place;  
I'm for humanity, all one race.

# Book Review

BY GARY LYONS

INDENTED HEADS VICTORIA

Life of the Beloved - Spiritual Living in a Secular Word by Henri Nouwen (1932-1996)

A prolific writer, Henri (1932-1996) was a Dutch Catholic priest, professor, writer and theologian. Much of what Nouwen writes about is seen in the following quote.

“ I wanted to know how we could integrate the life of Christ in our daily concerns. I was always trying to articulate what I was dealing with. I thought that if it was very deep, it might also be something other people were struggling with. It was based on the idea that what is most personal might be the more universal”.

— Henri Nouwen, Catholic New Times

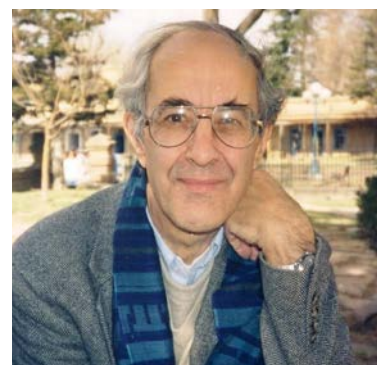
To me this book is both unique and special as it traces a relationship between a New York Times reporter (Fred) sent to interview Nouwen on his life and work.

They developed a close relationship with Fred, a traditional Jew, asking Nouwen to write about his faith in a language that Fred and his non Christian friends could understand and relate to.

From this challenge, Nouwen writes in the form of a personal letter focusing on Being the Beloved, Becoming the Beloved and Living as the Beloved.

You have a real sense when reading this book that it is written by a man that has

Henri Nouwen

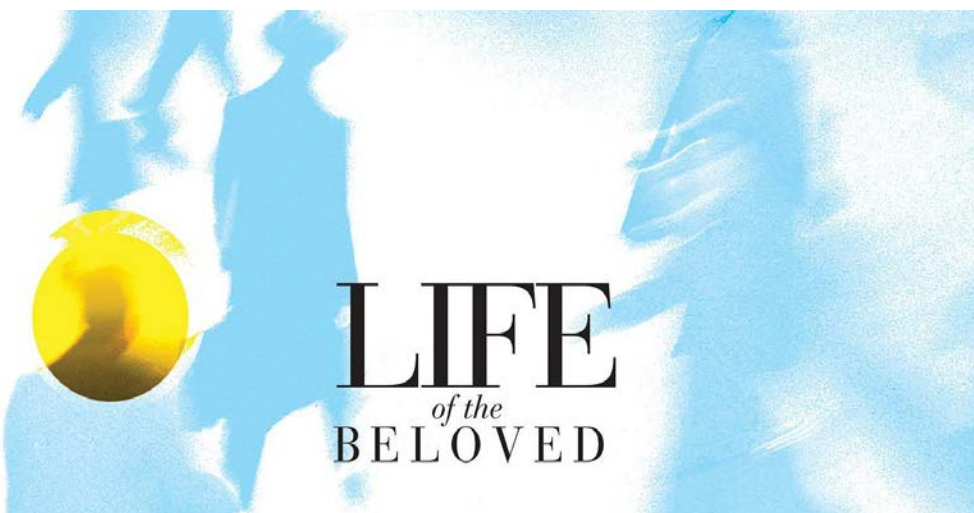


many real struggles in his personal life and is prepared to show them.

I won't give away the conclusion to this important piece of work, as it would rob the reader of something special.

So for me: Nouwen attempted to write about something that he was passionate about but had the restriction of making what he wrote understandable to those who had no foundations/framework to understand.

He learned an important lesson, as did I. When conveying our passion we are speaking with our own language. To water it down waters down the subject we are attempting to convey. Sure use the KISS (keep it simple) method but maintain your own integrity as there will always be those who understand.



It is Gods job to convince,  
ours to give only what we  
have been given.

### Points to Ponder:

After reading the book:

What would you write when  
describing a passion of your  
faith?.

How far would you 'water  
it down' to make it easy for  
others to understand?.

Would you still recognize  
what you have written and  
still feel ok?



## Reflections

**BY BRUCE CHALLONER**  
LARA, VICTORIA

### Postscript:

Before his death Nouwen  
published 39 books and  
authored hundreds of  
articles.

His books have sold over 7  
million copies worldwide and  
have been published in more  
than 30 languages.

In a magazine survey  
conducted by Christian  
Century in 2003 Nouwen's  
work was indicated as  
a first choice of authors  
for Catholic and mainline  
Protestant clergy.

His books include The  
Wounded Healer, In the  
Name of Jesus, Clowning in  
Rome, and The Way of the  
Heart, along with what is  
recognized as one of his most  
popular books, The Return of  
the Prodigal Son.

Our country, Australia is  
such a diverse continent.  
A poem, 'My Country' by  
Dorothea McKellar has one  
verse that says, 'A land of  
sweeping plains,  
Of ragged mountain ranges,  
Of droughts and flooding  
rains'. Lots of contrasts!

Such are the constant  
changes that happen. Our  
droughts are normally  
broken by floods.

### Diversity of People

Australia is one of the  
most ethnically diverse  
societies in the world today.  
Our Indigenous peoples  
- Aborigines and Torres  
Strait Islanders, make up  
of over 500 different clan  
groups or 'nations' around

the continent, many with  
distinctive cultures, beliefs  
and languages.

Within all this diversity are  
different personalities with  
some that like the direct  
approach of speech, others  
are offended by this. Some  
want things done quickly,  
others slowly.

The Community of Aidan and  
Hilda's vision is to: cradle a  
holistic Chrisitan spirituality;  
raise up a renewed people  
who journey with God;  
resource the existing church  
and heal fragmented people  
and communities.

In our diversity, please pray  
that we may not falter with  
the enormity of what lies  
ahead of us.



# GOOD RHYTHM 7 Tips for

Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly. *Matthew 11:28-30 From The Message, the Bible in Contemporary Language by Eugene Peterson*

1 STOP	2 SLOW	3 PLAN	4 BE AWARE	5 PRAY	6 RELAX	7 ELIMINATE
<p>And attend to your breathing.</p> <p>Breathe deeply in - out - in - out - relax.</p> <p>Enjoy simply being yourself in God's presence.</p> <p>Do this ten times.</p>	<p>Down and attend to your walking.</p> <p>Put your weight on the right foot, then the left foot.</p> <p>Let your body sway side to side.</p>	<p>Pauses for rest. Exercise. Have fun today.</p> <p>Say 'NO' to, or reschedule whatever crowds this out.</p> <p>Hold on to your pauses.</p>	<p>Of the Sun's rhythm of rising and setting.</p> <p>In the morning pray 'I arise today in the radiance of the True Sun...(use a prayer of the heart or from a book morning, noon or night).</p>	<p>At noon, 'As the sun rides high at noon may the Sun of Righteousness shine upon me/us/them'.</p>	<p>Before bedtime with the prayer 'As the sun sets in the west may I settle down with you'.</p> <p>Recall failings to off-load and blessings for which to give thanks.</p>	<p>What destroys rhythm. Rhythm is being natural. The false ego is unnatural, such as Pride, Possessiveness Stubbornness Or ...?</p> <p>Now dance and sing in the rhythms of your soul!</p>

## FLAME AND STRUGGLE

### AIDAN AND HILDA'S SIGNIFICANCE FOR AUSTRALIA

Aidan was invited to a land where settlers had dispossessed the indigenous Celtic people. He brought the ways of Christ to both peoples, not by imposing them or by making a show, but by gentle listening, authentic living, and shared community.

He taught his disciples to earth their faith in the land and to retreat with God in order to advance. He

respected and walked among the indigenous people. He let Jesus and the Creator Spirit confirm to them what was good and purify what was bad.

If rich landowners gave him money he gave it all to the poor, or went to the slave market and bought a slave his freedom.

He believed that everyone could learn something more

about God every day. So, he taught people to memorise the Gospels and Psalms so they could meditate on them.

He did not think that an individual faith was enough – he created villages of God, called monasteries, where people shared a rhythm of prayers, meals, work, study and hospitality to guests. This inspired people to make their existing villages more like that.



Perhaps he realised that only spiritual mothers, like those in his native Ireland, could reach the most hardened parts of the English. He inspired the Saxon Princess Hilda to start communities for men and women. She became a 'merciful mother' to people from conflicting traditions. She released the songs in the heart of an illiterate cowherd.

Aidan's name means Flame and Hilda's means Struggle. Together they are a universal symbol of people from different races and genders who become soul friends for the common good.

A modern movement in many lands which invites Jesus' disciples to again become 'Followers of the Way' is named The Community of Aidan and Hilda. It invites people of all races to spread Christ's ways in the gentle spirit of Aidan, to heal the land, to unlock the song in every human heart and to follow the trail of the full human being through Flame and Struggle.

### COMMUNITY AIDAN & HILDA

*A world-wide people  
who journey with God,  
reconnecting with the Spirit  
and the Scriptures, the saints  
and the streets, the seasons  
and the soil, through a way  
of life, a rhythm of prayer and  
a network of soul friends.*



### For Those Who are Suffering

Father of Compassion, allow Your enfolding arms to be around those on our hearts that we know are suffering now. May the healing touch of Your Spirit be underneath them to uphold them, next to them so they will not be alone, above them to watch and guide, and within so they experience healing and renewal. Amen.



### Sorrow and Loss

We remember those in the journey of grief. The pain and tears of the sad experience. Jesus, may the presence of Your love flow like tears over them, washing them with Your compassion. Allow them to feel Your caressing touch across their face. Wipe away the tears and in Your gentleness, hold them in Your loving embrace until the pain subsides. Amen



### A Winter Prayer

We thank you Creator God,  
For giving us the lesson of Winter  
To illustrate the path of  
"Life, Death, Life".  
We thank you.

We thank you Obedient Christ,  
For embracing Winter,  
As you walked the path of  
"Life, Death, Life"  
That we might follow in  
your steps.  
We thank you.

We thank you Guiding Spirit,  
For revealing the joy of Winter,  
As you lead us along the  
path of "Life, Death, Life"  
That we too may know the  
wonder of Resurrection.  
We thank you.

Judy Kennedy

# TheEnd!

Our logo, the Southern Cross is considered Australia's oldest symbol.

Australia's Indigenous cosmology has understood its spiritual significance for millennia.

As Christians, the Southern Cross reminds us of Jesus Christ and his love for all of us. The Southern Cross shines its brightness only in darkness.

## NEXT!

Our next newsletter will be in the Vernal (Spring) Equinox which is on Sunday, 23 September 2018 (Southern Hemisphere).

## Disclaimer

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