

NEWSLETTER

Community of Aidan and Hilda Australia



Welcome

BY BRUCE CHALLONER
EDITOR

The pictures on front and rear pages of this newsletter were taken by Wes Lewis. The front picture according to Wes, "was taken at Lake Mackenzie (Boorangoora) on Fraser Island (K'Gari) in Queensland, Australia. This lone tree is a permanent resident of the white beach and crystal clear lake. Watching over the lake, this tree serves to ward off bad spirits and maintains peace and tranquility."

In a time of tensions between nations, ongoing wars, poverty and political groups seeking to push their own agendas, a place of peace and tranquility is certainly needed for many of us.

Summer time for Australians, has central, Christmas. A time when we stop and reflect on the birth of Jesus Christ, whose message to the worlds was simple; love each other!

And yet, with this simple message of love and peace, there were many wanting Him dead. Today, Christians are persecuted and killed because of this simple message. What makes certain people believe the message of love and peace needs to be eradicated from the face of the earth? It appears to be their long life ambition to see misery and hatred overcome love and peace.

What makes this intriguing dilemma even more profound is the fact that history is against them. All kings, queens, politicians and 'saviours' that have tried to establish a hate culture have come and gone. Even megalomaniacs have tried and failed. Statistics tells us that approximately a third of today's population is Christian. A baby born in a manger, crucified on a cross and rose from the dead is certainly a message of hope.

This Christmas, you may not be in Australia, with shorts and thongs on, standing at the barbie, cooking the 'snags'. You may not even be enjoying a piece of 'pav' under the shade of a gum tree, escaping the heat of the day. Wherever you are, regardless of the circumstances you find yourself in, try to show love and peace to your fellow man, even when they may not appear to deserve it, or appreciate it. May this Christmas be a new discovery of what it means to show love and peace. May your surrounds and space be one of tranquility and joy.



IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 The 'How To' of James
- 5 Prayer For Life's Storms
- 6 Prayers
- 7 Butchulla People
- 8 Reconciliation - The Together Spiral
- 9 Black and White Together Mandala Story
- 10 Psalm 51:16-17
- 11 Joining Exercise and Prayer
- 12 Book Review
- 13 The End



The 'How To' of James

BY BRUCE CHALLONER
LARA, VICTORIA

Last newsletter, we looked at the passage of James 1:1 and how the writer, James the brother of Jesus, explains his role as slave to Christ. As a Christian, James shows us the role of putting off our own ego to follow Christ, and if we don't, the journey becomes so much more difficult.

Let us continue to see what

else James reveals to us.

The 'How to Profit from Trials' - James 1: 2-4 appears to be out of character, and for some Christians, a strange passage.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its

perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.

Today, there are many Christians that believe, when they read Scriptures, that good things should happen to good people and bad things happen to bad people.

On judgement day, this saying is going to be true, but in our world today, this saying is not true because in our world, bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people.

If good things happening to good people was true, James would have no need for verse two.

Remember, this passage is written to Christians. Verse 2 does not say 'if' you fall into various trials, it says 'when you fall into various trials.

James is preempting that bad things are going to happen to good people.

Let's be honest here. The majority of you reading this today are struggling with a storm of life. And some, more than one storm.

James 1:2-4 passage can also be called, 'How to Survive in a Storm.'

For Christians, there is a process that God introduces us to. In the bad times, obey our master, then we will gain the action of patience. After more storms and more acts of patience, we will gain the action of understanding that God is in control and in

any trial and we will need nothing.

If at a storm or trial of life we get angry, upset, impatient, frustrated or give up; we haven't yet learnt patience. God cannot show us understanding, until we have learnt patience.

If I am a slave, I need to listen to my master's voice so that I can carry out his desires, because he wants me to need nothing in my life.

I have a favourite nautical saying, (having spent twenty years in the Royal Australian Navy).

'A skilled mariner never learns his trade in calm waters.'

It is only the storms of life that a mariner learns the art of sailing. It is only the storms of life that a Christian

learns the art of obeying God.

Many skilled mariners know that by heading into the wind in a storm you have a much better chance of survival. This cannot be learnt in a safe port. Turn and try to outrun a storm has die consequences for a mariner. Sailing in a storm means you have to watch the wind changes and adjust the sails. The skilled mariner is always scanning the water for rouge waves, ready to adjust.

A Christian, in staying with God and not to their own understanding, learns the art of patience, and in patience, understanding that storms produce rogue waves and remains 'watchful', ever adjusting to what they see.

Our three life-giving principles at the Community



of Aidan and Hilda Australia are Simplicity, Purity and Obedience. The last one, 'Obedience' is the longing of our hearts to obey God. Even in the storms of life.

Next time you are faced with a storm, pray, "Lord reveal to me what I need to learn about myself". What I need to change about myself to obey God more.

In the storms of life, God wants me to obey Him more each time. More of Him, less of me. Understanding more about my relationship with God and less about me.

As I obey, my Faith is strengthened. At some point, having obeyed more and more I gain patience. Call it the fringe benefit plan for obeying.

More storms; more changes to belief and behaviour. More patience until I am a mariner able to handle any storm because I obey God's training implicitly. I understand through God's training, that there is nothing that a storm can produce that I am not aware of or cannot handle as long as He is in control.

If a Christian does not follow James, he/she is going to be left floundering in a sea of negative emotions and fear, because they will NOT have learnt patience.

Now I know some Christians would say to someone in a storm of life, just trust God more. That isn't very helpful is it? Especially if the

Christian does not know God intimately, and that is the majority of us.

Why? Because James is setting the scene to obey God (he is a slave and obeys his master). Trust comes later, not before obedience. Remember the passage "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" from Psalm 119:105. Have you ever wondered why a lamp? The simple answer is that David is standing in darkness with an oil lamp that will only illuminate one step at a time (there were no torches with led lights then). God says step out. It is only after I obey and take the first step that I trust enough to take the second step. Obedience first, trust second.

For those of us seeking the first step as Christians, it is in obeying our master's voice first. A storm can be a really scary place and offer many reasons not to take the first step.

In conclusion, of verses 2-4, James is not questioning the faith of his readers—he assumes that they are Christians. He is not convincing people to believe; he is encouraging believers to remain faithful in obeying their master to the end.

James knew their faith was real, but it lacked maturity. He is encouraging them about their spiritual training. That is why this letter is still applicable to us today.



Prayer for Life's Storms

Psalm 46:1-3 *God is a safe place to hide, ready to help when we need him. We stand fearless at the cliff-edge of doom, courageous in sea, storm and earthquake. Before the rush and roar of oceans, the tremors that shift mountains. Jacob-wrestling God fights for us, GOD of angel armies protects us.* The Message

Master, I need to draw closer to you to hear your voice so that I may obey. Hold my hand as I step out with you into this storm. I acknowledge my anxieties and fears and ask your blanket of love over them. May I remain under the folds of your garment, protected and safe. Allow your Son's tender touch remind me of your presence and your Spirit's light to reveal the way. May I learn from you how to face a storm by obeying your directions and guidance.

Amen.



A Prayer Reflecting Summer Rains

Father, calm us with the stillness of your presence. Refresh us with the flowing streams of your Son's love. Drench us to the bones with your Holy Spirit. Soak us in the waters of your everlasting peace.

Wilsons Promontory, Victoria



Summer Prayer for Australia 2018-19



A Prayer for our Government

In the turmoil of life, we pray that our government may develop the values of Aidan and Hilda. They may not be swayed in their decision making by ego or wrong influences but seek a moral solution that serves the people of this land.



A Prayer for Christmas

This Christmas may Christ not be removed, but central. In homes where families experience a time of anxiety and fear, may your Holy Spirit's presence establish a new found way of reconciliation, peace and love towards each other.

Creator of the Australian Summer, the dusty Willy Willies, the hot sweltering heat. The welcoming break in a shade of a gum tree. May at these moments, we take the time to thank you.

The joy of swimming in the local water hole, replenishing our energy on sandy beaches with family or friends. The time of holidays and relaxing or keeping the grass under control at home. In all, may be breath in your goodness you bless into our lives.

The unspeakable majesty of your setting sun. Out of darkness. the canvas of colour each dawning day. We stand in awe at your paint stokes to flowers and plants.

All of your creation is a masterpiece.

In your beauty may we stop and observe, the warbling flute of a magpie in song. The laughter of a kookaburra or the chatter of a Willie Wagtail. In the business of bees may we rejoice in your creation.

Teach us to slow down and praise your more. For the divisiveness of summer heat and flooding rains. Of dusty winds and cooling change at the end of the day. May Summer be a time of enjoying everything you have given us. Each day may we reflect on the gift of life.

Butchulla People

Fraser Island (K'gari)

(From stories told by direct descendent and Elder of the Butchulla people – Olga Miller)

Beiral, the great God in the sky, made all the people. But after he made the people, Beiral realised that the people had no lands! So Beiral sent a messenger, Yendingie, to solve the problem and create lands for the people. Yendingie came down from the sky, and set to work to make the sea, and then the land. When Yendingie arrived at what is now known as Hervey Bay, he had a helper – the beautiful white spirit called Princess K'Gari.

K'Gari was a great helper, and helped Yendingie make the sea shores, the mountain ranges, the lakes and the rivers. Princess K'Gari enjoyed her work very much, and worked tirelessly to create all this natural beauty. One day Yendingie was concerned, and said to her, "K'Gari, you better rest, otherwise you will be too

tired to continue our work. There are some rocks over there in the sea. Why don't you go and lie down and have a sleep?"

So Princess K'gari lay down on the rocks and had a long and deep sleep. When she awoke she said to Yendingie, "I think this is the most beautiful place we have ever created. Please, Yendingie, may I stay here forever?" "Oh no, K'Gari, I cannot allow that. You are a spirit, and you belong here with me!" But K'Gari pleaded with him, "Please, please Yendingie ... I could still look up into the sky and see what you are doing. I would love to stay here."

Finally Yendingie agreed. "You may stay here, but you cannot stay in spirit form. I will need to change you." So he changed her into a beautiful island. So she wouldn't be lonely, he then made some beautiful trees and flowers, and some lakes that were specially mirrored so that she could see into

the sky. He made creeks and laughing waters that would become her voice, and birds and animals and people to keep her company. He gave these people knowledge and laws, and told them what to do, and how to procreate, so that their children and ancestors would always be there to keep K'Gari company.

And she is still there today, looking up at the sky in one of the truly most beautiful places on earth! She is very happy in, and as, "paradise".

(Archaeological evidence suggests Aboriginal settlements existed on Fraser Island at least 5000 years ago.)

The Butchulla (Badtjala) people also controlled the mainland territory to Bauple Mountain, including the current locations of Maryborough and Hervey Bay. Whilst there was a permanent population on the island of around 500, this swelled to in excess of 3000 during the winter months when seafood was abundant.)

Reconciliation

The Together Spiral

Black & White Spiral Together Mandala

BY MATT LAMONT
NEWCASTLE, NSW

This painting is an exploration of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples from a non-Aboriginal person's perspective. The red ochre coloured background points to the reality that reconciliation is grounded in the solidity of the earth. The dot work celebrates Aboriginal connections with their Dreaming. The long lines of black and white dots flowing into the spiral represent the long lineages of countless generations of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

The term reconciliation has always seemed a little strange to me as it implies that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples were in 'right relationship' at a previous time in history and then lost their way. In the short time since European invasion and possession of the 'Great South Land' this has rarely been the case. However, if we went back in pre-history, before settlement of this continent, we would likely find ancient connections which the process of reconciliation might rediscover anew. As Yothu Yindi sing in their track Treaty: 'Now two rivers run their course, separated for so long. I'm dreaming of a brighter day, when the waters will be one.'

The colours of the rainbow at the centre of the spiral show what is possible if Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples are transformed by their contact with each other in many fruitful ways. Rainbow colours remind us that rainbows form a bridge between one part of the sky and another. However the interconnection of the two paths in the spiral is imperfect which highlights that this is not an easy process and requires great attentiveness. Both lines have much to learn about what is possible as things are more actively woven together.

The symbol of the spiral carries dynamic energy and movement. With this energy it is possible to say that reconciliation is soul work. In other words, at some level, it is about transformation of consciousness. This is a different process to that of assimilation or oppression of Aboriginal peoples which is a one-sided destruction of individuality and cultural giftedness and does harm to communities and the earth. Transformation leads to communion and deep respect for all things.

In the spiral non-Aboriginal people are challenged to discover their own deep soul connections as they journey together with Aboriginal people. In Celtic tradition monastic and ordinary folk learnt to uncover their capacity for imaginal vision which refers to 'inner seeing' or 'seeing with the heart'. Inner seeing enables the reality of all things to be apprehended intuitively with wisdom and love. It is our imaginal vision which will nurture our own healing and support the dreaming of the Aboriginal peoples as it continues to unfold. Unfortunately this quality has been largely repressed or forgotten in the Western world. The time is ripe for it to be strengthened again.

The blue band which runs from top to bottom (the original picture has been turned 90 degrees to fit within the frame) represents the Deep River which sources each soul and goes by many names. In Christian tradition the waters symbolise the real value and authenticity of the Beloved. Our bodies flow with the waters each day. The Deep River is supportive of any soul work especially that which is about healing and its flow brings good things.

Finally, the glitter highlights the cosmic nature of the process of reconciliation. Like our own Milky Way galaxy which has spiralled solar systems together over eons and created great beauty, form and life we are invited to bring our energies together to do the same.

Reflections

One of the central themes of Scripture is relationships. Our relationship with God and His with us.

Reflect on your own prejudices. When seeing a down-and-out sleeping on the street what thoughts come to your mind? Are they he deserves what he gets; probably a junkie or alcoholic; can't or won't get a job and a myriad of other possible thoughts. Are the thoughts negative towards this person, then they are our prejudices (an adverse judgement or opinion formed before hand without good justification).

What other prejudices when meeting another person do you make in your thoughts? Make up a list. If your not sure, meet another person and listen to your self talk. If you have a spouse, what thoughts are generated when they are angry at you, don't listen, or you are a parent - what do you say about each child.

Look over the list and ask yourself what prejudices are on the list and what positives are there. Which has the most?

You may not be aware, but psychology would have us believe we make judgements of others, both positive and negative within the first 10th of a second (July 2006 issue of Psychological Science - by Princeton psychologists Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov). Not 30 seconds or a minute. Within the first second of meeting someone.

This leads to us looking at our prejudices in a new light. Helps us to reflect on our lists, especially in trying to follow the greatest commandment by Jesus to love God and each other, and not let our prejudices get in the road.



Gum tree flowers

Psalm 51:16-17

You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it; You are not pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit. God, You will not despise a broken and humbled heart.

A desert hermit said, "as our bodies are always accompanied by a shadow let us take penitence and lamentation with us everywhere."

What the hermit was explaining is that the 'shadow' is our ego or self. That side of us that wants us to do it our way, not God's way. The hermit looked at the central theme of the Psalm and saw a broken spirit and a broken and humbled heart was pleasing to God.

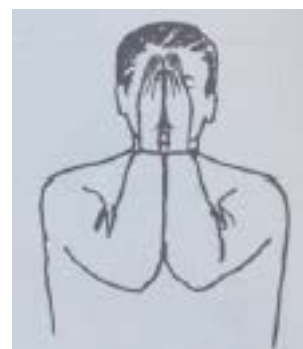
He saw that to subdue the ego, we must never forget it is there to trip us up, and it was in continued penitence and lamentation (the prayer - 'Jesus Christ, forgive me a sinner') that was always on his lips. He desired to please God!

Today, in the business of life, we may find this difficult to do, at least we could start the day with the prayer, "Christ be within me, be behind me, be before me, be above and below me, be at my right and left hand. Today, may everything I do be for you. Amen.

Stick this prayer in on your bedroom or bathroom mirror to remind you daily.



CONFESSION



Joining Exercise And Prayer

BY JUDY KENNEDY

TAIGUM, QLD

Lord God,

Standing straight, move chin back to straighten head.

I have sinned against you

Raise arms from elbows placing fingers on shoulders.

In thought (breath)
Word (breath)
and Deed (breath)

Pinch shoulder blades together.
Repeat
Repeat.

Lord, have mercy on me

Bring elbows together in front of body.
Hands together in front of face.

Lord God

Lower Hands to side

Forgive me

Raise elbows to shoulder height, palms facing front.

for my neglect (breath)
of other's needs (breath)

Pinch shoulder blades together.
Repeat.

Lord, have mercy on me

Bring elbows together in front of body.
Hands together in front of face.

Lord God,
Forgive me,
for my apathy and greed. (breath)

Repeat exercise again.

Lord, have mercy on me

Repeat as before

Loving Lord, Keep my eyes,
on you (breath)
today (breath).

Repeat again

Book Review

BY GARY LYONS

INDENTED HEADS, VICTORIA

As this will be the last book review for 2018, I thought I might do something a little different. What is that little different you may ask? Well, it is a review on a collection of books, with exactly the same theme and aim, but by a series of different authors

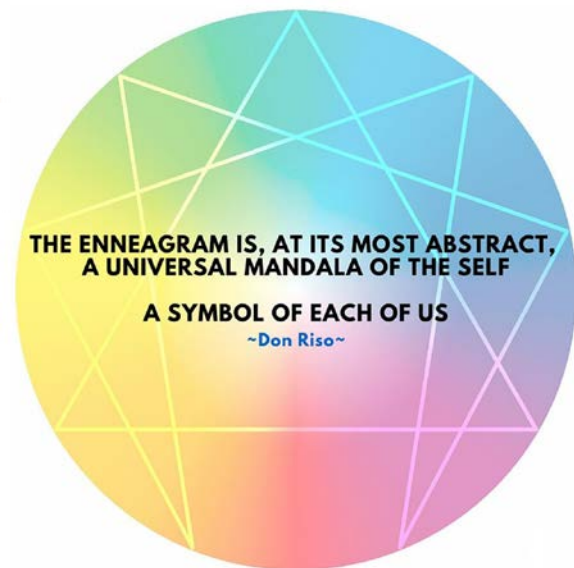
The books are on the Enneagram, which, according to authors, Don Riso and Russ Hudson are about understanding others and ourselves. They say that:

“The Enneagram (often spoke of as the nine faces of the soul) is being used daily by millions of people around the world because it works. It is the clearest, most accurate method available for understanding ourselves, including those who are important to us. It helps us understand why we do not easily get along with certain people while with others we instantly feel that we are old friends. Understanding the Enneagram is like having a pair of special glasses that allows us to see beneath the surface of people with special clarity: we may in fact see them more clearly than they see themselves”.

Taken from Don Richard Riso and Russ Hudson, ‘Discovering Your Personality Type: The Essential Introduction to the Enneagram, Revised and Expanded’. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

A Brief History of the Enneagram

The origins and historical development of the Enneagram of Personality are matters of dispute. Wiltse and Palmer have suggested that similar ideas to the Enneagram of Personality are found in the work of Evagrius Ponticus, a Christian mystic from the 4th century. Evagrius identified eight logismoi (‘deadly thoughts’) and an overarching thought he called “love of self”. Evagrius



wrote, “The first thought of all is that of love of self (philautia); after this, [come] the eight.” In addition to identifying eight deadly thoughts, Evagrius also identified eight ‘remedies’ to these thoughts. (Wikipedia)

I believe that we are continually being called on by the Eternal One to transform ourselves into our authentic self, our original essence or who we were created to be, not the illusion that can, at times, pose as our true self. The Enneagram can be a tool for spiritual journeying, discovery and transformation.

Henri Nouwen (book review in Winter Newsletter 2018) has identified three lies that we believe to be true in when identifying ourselves. They are:

I am what I have,
I am what I do,
I am what other people say or think about me.

What I am suggesting to you is not a Myers Briggs personality test or any psychological assessment, but rather an ancient tool that has stood the test of time. It is as relevant today as it was back with the ancients.

Books To Read

Three of the books I am suggesting (only because I have studied with them) are:

Richard Rohr and Andreas Ebert, ‘The Enneagram. A Christian Perspective’,

published by The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2001.

Don Richard Riso and Russ Hudson. 'Discovering Your Personality Type: The Essential Introduction to the Enneagram, Revised and Expanded', published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2003.

Christopher L. Heuertz, 'The Sacred Enneagram: Finding Your Unique Path to Spiritual Growth', published by Zondervan, 2017.

I sincerely hope that this book(s) review will encourage you to explore more of your

essential self. I also believe that what the Enneagram teachings offer are in line with the Community of Aidan and Hilda and the call for continual spiritual growth.

This can be achieved in a number of ways, such as working through an Enneagram book with a Spiritual Director, attending an Enneagram seminar, with a trusted companion or perhaps by yourself. Either way, consider making this undertaking a New Year's resolution. Who knows what might happen!

Peace and blessings for this special time of the year.

Evagrius Ponticus wrote, "If your seriously desire true prayer and yet succumb to anger and resentment, you are out of your mind. If you want to see clearly, you do not scratch your eyes."

Double-eyed Fig Parrot, Kuranda, Queensland



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 on the Autumn Equinox which is Thursday, 23rd March 2019 (Southern Hemisphere)

Disclaimer

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