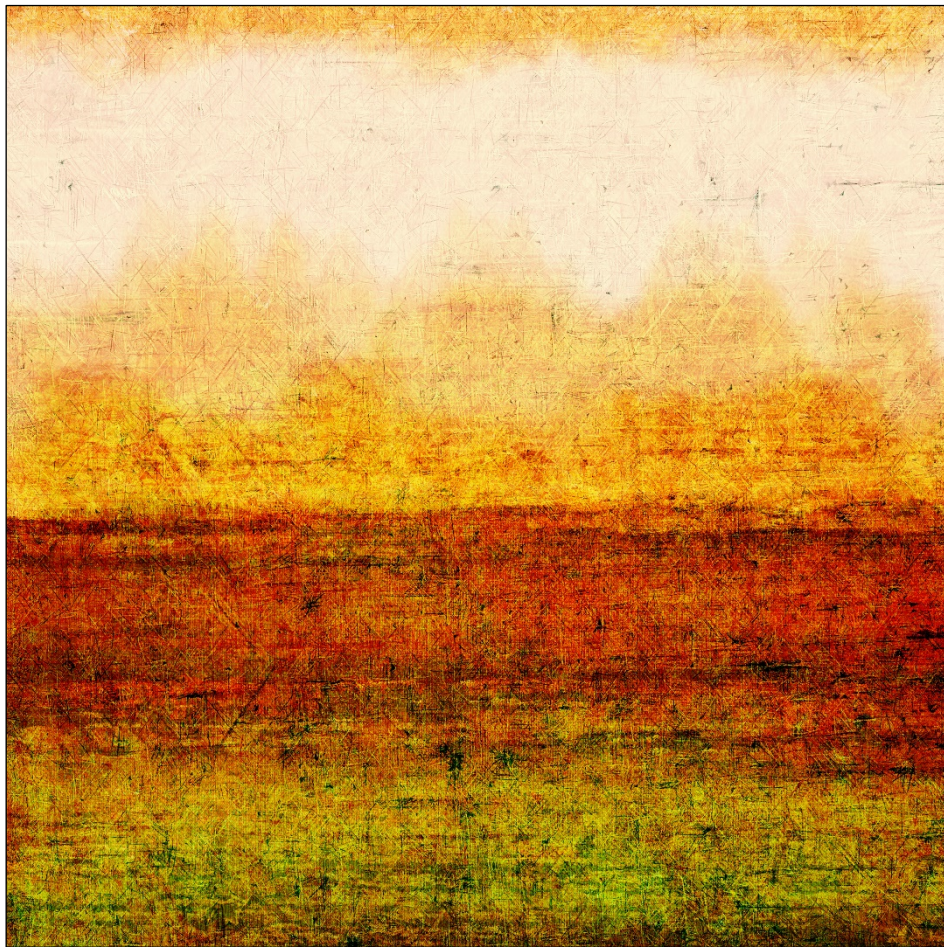


Ruminations



Saltbush - Uniting the Scattered Community



Country



Winter 2018.

Ruminations is brought to you as part of **Saltbush – Uniting the Scattered Community**. The Rural Ministry Unit, as part of Uniting Mission and Education within the Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT, oversees this work as an encouragement to all rural Christian communities and their leaders, irrespective of size or location. You are encouraged to share this issue of Ruminations with others.

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Contributors:

Nathan Tyson works as a Church Engagement Leader within the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress coordination team as part of the wider work of Uniting. Nathan has already made a significant contribution in assisting Congress ministry centres explore how they might engage with the wider community in supporting First Peoples.

Beth Wolfe is the pastor of the UAICC congregation in Condobolin NSW.

Anthony Rees is Lecturer in Old Testament/Hebrew Bible at United Theological College. Anthony has taught Old Testament in a number of colleges in Australia and at Pacific Theological College in Fiji. Anthony's interests include the way in which the bible continues to operate as a conversation partner in contemporary issues. This is reflected in his writings about immigration discourse, sovereignty, and ecological concerns

Tom Sloane is the pastor of the UAICC congregation in Wellington NSW and an artist painting about his life and country.

Editor's Introduction

Welcome to all who read this winter edition of Ruminations
with the theme of

COUNTRY!

As part of Saltbush – Uniting the Scattered Community, Ruminations is a reminder that wherever we are, we are part of the wider body of the church.

In addition to being available in the post, Ruminations is now published online and can be read at:

ISSUU SALTBUSH RUMINATIONS

Just type "Issuu Saltbush Ruminations" into your browser and you'll find your latest edition online!

Remember, you are invited to get in touch if you have any comments or questions regarding Ruminations or Saltbush – Uniting the Scattered Community. Contact details are inside the front cover.



In this edition the theme of Country has been chosen because as a church we are made of up diverse peoples from diverse places. As part of this diversity we acknowledge the particular place of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters and the work of the Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress. Saltbush – Uniting the

Scattered Community values this relationship and the opportunity both to listen and to walk side by side.

"Country", "place", "home", each mean different things to us, but they are strongly part of our lives and through them we are connected to each other. No matter how we describe each of these, "Country", "place", "home", it is in those places we should find meaning and comfort, identity and purpose. When we think of our own "places" or "homes" or "country" we become very aware of how important they are to us.

In the Gospels, the word "Country" has many differences; a faraway place, a place where people would not go, a place sometimes of safety and at other times danger. "Country" was the place where different people separated themselves, the place of both welcome and rejection. "Country" was the place to which people belonged. "Country" was the place you went back to and at other times went away from.

This edition of Ruminations reflects on the place of "Country" from a number of different perspectives. I'm particularly thankful to each of our contributors who have made personal contributions to this edition, thinking about connection to Country as part of their personal histories and the history of their various people.

Together we are invited to think about our place from our own perspective, from the eyes of others, from the witness of the scriptures, and from the passion of our faith.

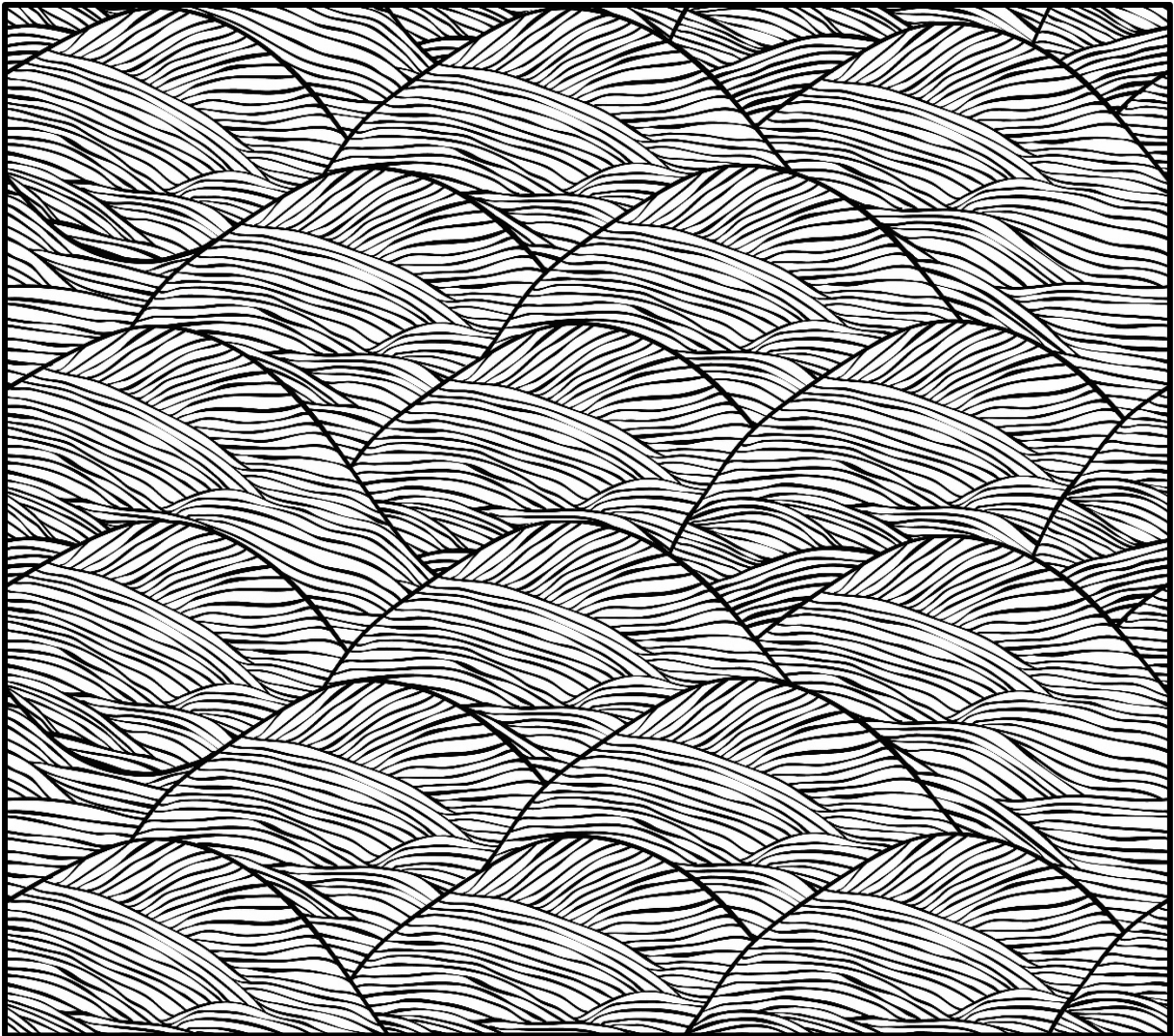
Peace to you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark" in a stylized, cursive font, followed by a period.

Rev. Mark Faulkner

Acknowledgement of Country

As we reflect on our understandings of Country, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we find ourselves, and recognise their continuing connection to country; land, water, air, life and community. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures and to elders both past and present.



A word from the Moderator

Rev. Simon Hansford

Moderator of the Synod of NSW & ACT.

I was asked this morning about inviting people across our Synod to pray for rain, as the drought settles in and the predictions of even small pockets of rain prove false.

I drove from Tamworth through Mudgee to Bathurst recently, then spent a few days around Crookwell and Goulburn. We will live and work through a difficult season ahead, and we will need to attend to those around us. There are people on the land and those who build communities around them – people such as hairdressers, machinery businesses, supermarkets and fuel suppliers – who will need our prayers, and our actions.

Most people reading this know that we need to pray and to act, but this is also a time to remind ourselves of where, and in whom, our complete hope lies. We are the people of God not despite our circumstances, but in the midst of them. We place our hope in a God of resurrection, declaring that we endure the crisis in the knowledge that our future, and our present are held by our loving God.

We know that, at some time, the rain will come and the season will recover. Our hope is not in the rain, but in our God who has promised renewal in the midst of struggle, life in the midst of death.

Our wider church will find practical ways of supporting rural congregations and their wider communities, with things like chaplaincy and supply ministry, advocacy, financial encouragement and prayer. Each faith community will offer support and time to their neighbours and friends echoing the gospel in places that are dry, but are not barren, because God's Spirit is whispering in that place.

Our hope is in Jesus, crucified and risen. Our lives are held in God's hands, embraced by God's hope - in us. I promise to pray for the rural church and community, to act where I can and to place my hope in the God in whom all hope is found.

We pray for the land....

we hear the promise you have spoken in Isaiah
of the refreshment of the creation;
of water in the desert,
of renewal for the land,
of hope, of life.

We name our simple need - rain for our thirsty land.
Our tanks and dams are nearly empty,
like our hopes for this season.

Please, loving God, bring us rain
to renew the ground, to replenish our dams,
to bring some chance of feed,
to bring the possibility of some reward
to those who have toiled so hard.

We turn to you in faith and hope.

We pray for our community...

We pray for all those whose lives
are under the shadow of drought.

We think firstly of those who work with the land,
for farmers and their families,
for those who rely upon the land for their life and
relationships.

We pray for contractors, merchants and truck drivers,
for rural counsellors and support workers,
for all our rural community.

May the refreshment of your Spirit,
present in miraculous and truly human ways
be with all of us as we move forward into the days ahead.

We pray, too, for justice;
for fair prices for our stock and our wool and our crops.
We pray for governments, banks and corporations -
to be driven by the wisdom
of community, justice and compassion
not simply the folly of the dollar and the bottom line.

We pray for each other....

keep us aware of the needs of those around us:
for those who are struggling,
those who are grieving,
who are ill, who are dying.

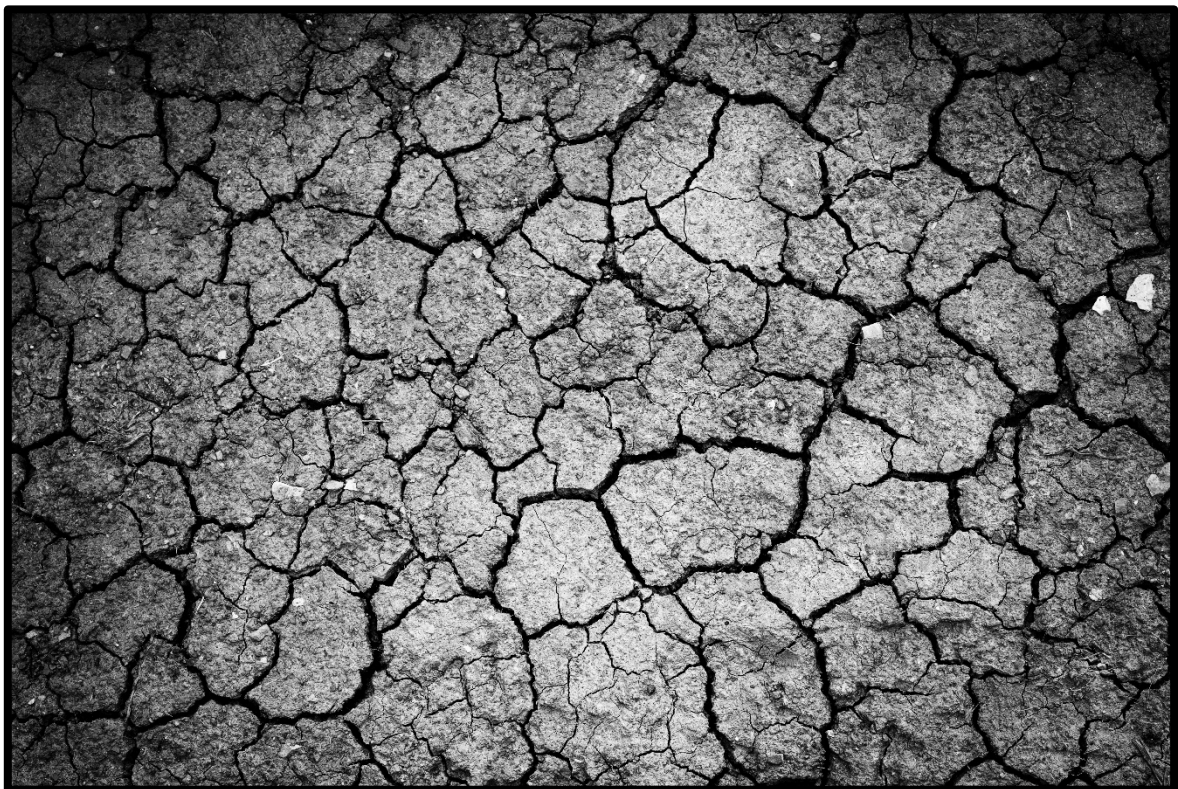
Restore those who are far from you
with the knowledge that they are loved and valued.

Give them not just a sense of renewal,
but a sense of hope and purpose for lives
that are finding the journey hard.

Let us see the miracle of healing
in relationships,
in lives,
in communities,
where there is illness
and hope is far away.

Keep us always conscious of the task we have
in ministry and mission in your world.

We offer all these prayers in the name of Jesus.



My connection to Country

Nathan Tyson

Brooklet NSW.

There are many perspectives about the importance of Country, and I hope my story and thoughts below may offer one such perspective.

Country is an important cultural grounding point and intrinsic to the lives of Aboriginal people and communities. For many Aboriginal people, particularly those who were forced off their ancestral lands, Country can also be a point of sadness. Often when we are removed from our ancestral lands, where our language, culture, law and ceremony is linked, we are deeply impacted.

My Grandmother's mother (Victoria Brown) was raised on a station (Bassendean Station, Tingha, NSW), having been placed there by a Catholic priest and two nuns as a very young child. As she grew up she was told that her mother had died giving birth to her. She worked as a domestic servant for the station owners, and eventually married a stockman of Irish background (Mallick Kelly), and they moved around NSW looking for work, eventually ending up in Sydney. My Nan was born in Sydney, as was my Dad, as was I. Having been born on Gadigal Country, and having spent most of my life in Sydney, I have a strong affinity with this Country, but it isn't my ancestral Country.

In 2017 I learned that while I have relatives that were from the Bundara/Tingha area (for example Victoria Brown, Tina Brown

and Susan Munro), and hence I have for much of my life considered my heritage to be linked to Gamilaroi Country, Susan Munro's mother was "Queen" Mary Ann Sullivan, documented as an Aboriginal "tribal" woman from an area near Glenn Innes... which is Anaiwon Country.

With the discovery of more of my family history, I now, at 46 years of age, need to find time to go to Anaiwon Country, find/meet relatives I now know I have, and hopefully begin what will no doubt be a lifetime of learning about this part of my heritage. It's all about Country, and needing to be grounded spiritually and culturally. I know it will be a significant journey for me - I have finally found my ancestral Country, and the link to my extended family.

My Nan, Mary "Molly" Moss, sadly passed away without knowing that her Grandmother hadn't died giving birth to her mother. In fact, Tina Brown went on to have 2 sons after Victoria was placed on the Station - Victor and Gordon (We suspect Victor was named out of a sense of loss after the removal of Victoria). Sadly, my Nan also passed without knowing exactly where her family was from, she never knew her true Country.

I remember about 15 years ago talking to my Nan and trying to glean information to help me learn more about my heritage and family... I would ask lots of questions when I got to spend time with Nan, like I was Sherlock Holmes, trying to solve a mystery. On this particular day, my Nan all of a sudden burst into tears and said "I'm sorry Nath, I just don't know. I just feel like I'm a leaf blowing around in the wind and I don't belong to anyone!" After that I stopped asking questions, as I realised my Nan had told me all she could.



Fortunately, my Nan's brother, Uncle Norman Croshaw, had spent his life doggedly researching the same mystery. It was his lifetime of persistence that led him to the Aboriginal Land Council at Tingha, where he learned from an old bloke there that Tina had two sons as well as Victoria... this then enabled Uncle Norm to do more research which enabled him to find two more generations: Susan Munro and Queen Mary Ann Sullivan, and to realise our mob was from Anaiwon Country (with strong family links to Gamilaroi Country).

For me, when I finally got the information from Uncle Norm, it was one of the happiest days of my life – I finally knew my Country, and finally knew who my wider family were – at least in terms of ancestors and their names. This knowledge filled a huge hole in my heart and provided answers to a mystery that I had come to accept may never be solved. Sadly, many Aboriginal people who were impacted by policies and practices that created the Stolen Generation (actually it should be "Generations" as more than one generation was impacted) have yet to find their link back to Country and their families. For them, the hole in their heart still exists and for many it causes much grief and pain.

I look forward to continuing my journey, to finding and getting to know relatives that I thought I would never know of or get to meet. I look forward to learning about Anaiwon culture, law and stories, and hopefully learning the Anaiwon language, which has fortunately been documented and is taught through a University course, as well as no doubt being spoken by a number of Anaiwon people who have maintained their culture despite the impacts of colonisation.

Country is an intrinsic element of who I am as an Aboriginal person – it grounds me and keeps me linked to my culture and heritage. Having lived so long without being 100% sure of my ancestral Country and knowing the joy and relief I have experienced in finding my Country, I can say for certain that Country is deeply connected to our spirit. Without knowing our place, like my Nan expressed, we are just like a leaf blowing around in the wind.



Beth Wolfe

Condobolin NSW



Condobolin Freedom in Christ Fellowship is an indigenous Christian fellowship that desires to reach Australian Aboriginal people for Jesus Christ. We base all our teaching upon the word of God with a Pentecostal approach and outlook.

Down through the years we have faithfully struggled working amongst our own people right throughout NSW country, but mainly focusing on the people of central NSW.

We are committed to our Lord to provide a witness amongst the poor and down trodden in our various communities surrounding Condobolin.

As the majority of members within our church are women a large percentage of our ministry involves single mothers, widows and young people.

Even though distance separates us we enjoy our partnership with the wider Uniting Church, particularly in Dareton, Bathurst and other Aboriginal fellowships in Victoria and NSW. We also enjoy sweet fellowship with a couple of Korean and Fijian fellowships in Sydney.

We thank God for our place of worship

As a Wiradjuri woman my faith is the focus and strength of my life.

Tom Sloane
Wellington NSW



Tom Sloane. Aboriginal Artist, Wiradjuri tribe, Murie-boy. Born: 1962

When I was a young gallarri boy (meaning river people) growing up I listen to many dream time stories that was told to me by my elders. These stories originated off a reserve back home in Condobolin. This reserve has a history, good and not so good, but the best part of growing up in those days was the stories that

was told to all the young Buurias (meaning young children). Some were scary, some were very entertaining and exciting and very memorable stories that I don't forget, so since then to now, I have gone on to paint those stories my people have told me. It helps me to remember them and never forget where I come from. Now I share and tell my own stories passing on my knowledge and character and the attributes of these animals - what they mean in everyday life. I hope you enjoy my paintings. Just to let you know I am a Christian my paintings are based on God's creation.



Apart from my painting skills I am a father of 6 children their ages range from 30-18. I have 7 grandchildren whom my beautiful

wife and I love very dearly. Over the years I have passed much knowledge on to my children, hoping they will remember to be wise in the future with their lives and hope they make right choices.

Throughout the years my children have learned of my birth place Condobolin. Part of my life I was raised on the murie. It's a reserve with a creek that runs for about 4 kilometres. Our people lived along this creek. They lived in tin shacks. Some had wooden cladded boards for their walls, but these houses had dirt floors. Our fathers worked on stations around certain areas and they didn't bring home much, but we had enough to get by. A lot of our people learned from their elders how to track and know the location of certain animals, we learned to survive on our bush tucker and bush medicine plantation that heals. We had a variety of food in those days growing up and we still eat it today when our mob get together.

Just to name some we used to eat:

- Goanna, we call it googar or narrang.
- fresh Water muscles, in creek beds or bottom of rivers.
- doobies, we call tree grubs they live in gum trees.
- guuyas, means fish, yellow belly, cod, and catfish.
- yabbies or crayfish,

On occasion during summer we eat shrimps.

I play digeridoos carve them and make our artefacts it's one of my passions about my culture. I also make boomerangs that fly, I tell stories of my own now through my paintings.

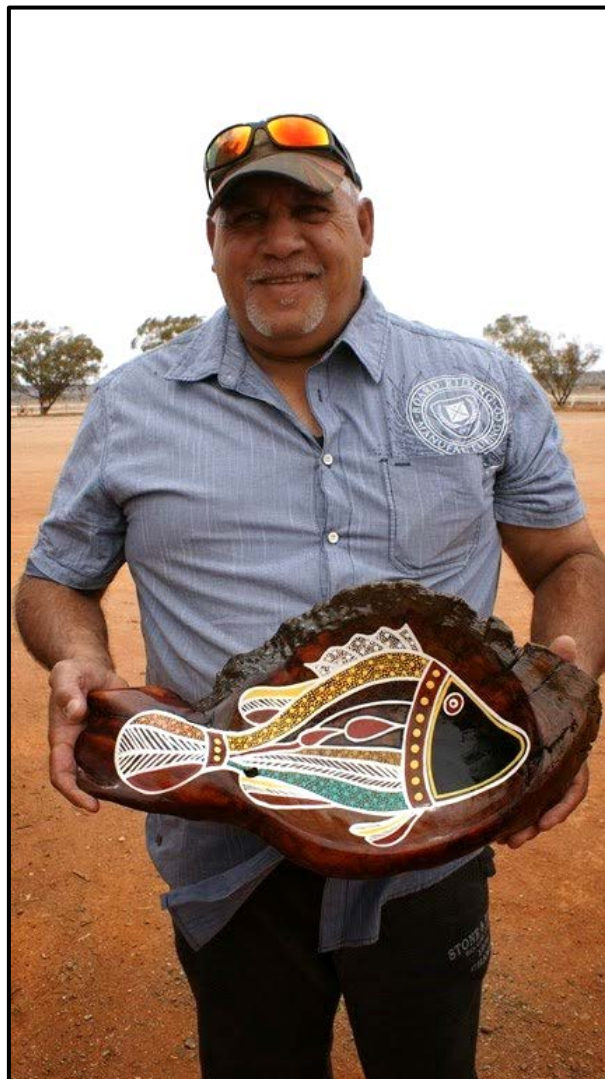
My eldest daughter now paints. She has a collection of her own. she has gone on in the footsteps of her father.

The murie is a healing place for many of my people. We visit from time to time to reflect on our people from the past. It helps us to refocus and remember our past to the present. This helps us to heal physically and mentally also spiritually. This helps me to understand our people and communicate in ways they understand.

I hope to share more and it is a pleasure to share hoping others may understand our people God Bless.

Yours sincerely

Tom Sloane.



Experiencing the Word...

Dr. Anthony Rees

Lecturer in Old Testament/Hebrew Bible
United Theological College.

I was born in a little country town. Deniliquin. I didn't live there very long. My parents were ministers and so I had a reasonably itinerant life growing up. Towns and cities became a part of my story: Deniliquin, Rockhampton, Canberra, Armidale, Wollongong, Newcastle, Brisbane, Sydney. Not to mention the places overseas I have been fortunate enough to call home: Colombo and Suva. Things happened to me in those places. I knew people in those places, and they knew me, and so each of those places mean something to me - something different. Some strangely inexpressible thing buried within my being that both matters and doesn't really matter. That is the nature of an itinerant life, I guess. One is attached, but not too attached.

I know people who have a different experience of life. They have lived all their lives in the one place, or a significant enough time in one place to feel attached. Their connection to place is more than sentiment, more than memory, more than the utilitarian reality of having been somewhere, more than the existential reality of knowing. Their attachment to place seems to be only explainable in one word: spiritual.

We talk a lot about country in Australia. Our indigenous sisters and brothers seem to inherently know about the sort of attachment I am talking about. Similarly, our Pacific Islander family talk of vanua, a word that links their home to ideas about their mother's womb. It is an intensely personal image, and one

that links person to vanua in a seemingly intractable way. One's person, being, essence, well-being is linked to that home, that place, that country. But it is a different idea world to the one I know. Yes, things happened to me, and I knew and was known, but that was all about people, about human relationship. The sense of connection to place is absent from my experience.

What might the Old Testament lend to this discussion? The concept of land is a common one in the Old Testament materials; the land promised to Abraham in Gen 12, the land which he passes through on his way to Egypt. The promise of that land punctuates the narrative. Through the wilderness journey of Exodus and Numbers, it is presented as a goal, as the true home for the people of Israel. At times, it is romanticised as the land of milk and honey. At others, the people remember that the land they imagine as theirs is already in the possession of others, others who appear stronger and more powerful than they. In time, the people settle in the land and it becomes their place. Mind you, it is always under contest, and it is often an uncomfortable place, but it is their place.



The ideology around the divine promise of the land was further developed by the idea of the king and the establishment of the temple. The figure of King David looms large in the Israelite memory. He is the one who took control of Jerusalem and established it as the capital. His son, Solomon, builds the temple, the symbol of God's presence. Despite their own failures, and those of their successors, the temple represents the eternal presence of God in Jerusalem, and so, the eternal promise of safety, protection and so on. The limits of that are tested, most seriously by the encroachment of the Assyrian empire, but even their might – sufficient as it was to destroy many others around them – proved to be thwarted by God at the crucial moment. This land was Israel's land, the place of God's dwelling, and no human power could ever interrupt that arrangement.

All of this was torn down by the Babylonian invasion and deportation of the people in the early part of the 6th Century BCE. Not only was the temple torn down and destroyed, but so too a nation's understanding of herself; its theology of being. We hear an echo of the despair in the famous verse from Psalm 137: How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? The identity of the people is tied to that place, that place where they were, where God was, in their home.

No longer home, no longer a nation, and encouraged by the prophet Jeremiah to get on with their lives, the people begin to reimagine their place in the world. Jerusalem is in the past, the king is toppled, the promised land has been vanquished...what choice is there but to try and move on? In the midst of that tragedy a new ideology is born, or rather, an old one is reborn. Perhaps the best way to describe it is with one word: Zion.

In one sense, Zion is Jerusalem. But at the same time, Zion is far more than Jerusalem. Zion is all of the ideas that are held about Jerusalem. Zion is the place where God dwells. Zion is home. Zion is the place of belonging. Zion is the place where ultimately, all things will be made right. Despite present circumstances, something from the past inspires hope into the future, and that thing is the idea of home. There is an irony here, of course. Those people who left Jerusalem for Babylon or Egypt, or wherever the empire sent them, for the most part did not return to Zion. The time of exile was too long to imagine a returning group of former residents. It was their children and grandchildren who made their way back to Jerusalem, only to find that the glories of Zion, so beautifully imagined and proclaimed by Deutero-Isaiah, were at best, buried beneath the rubble of devastated buildings, and inhabited by people who had remained, or arrived and made the city their home. Perhaps for them, the promise of Zion had been over-sold, and so quickly, in the light of present circumstances, a new Zion is imagined: the ultimate Zion, to which all nations will stream to offer worship to the God of Israel, the centre of God's enduring reign.

By Zion, I do not mean the Zion which is laced with politics and ambition, and the urgency around it which agitates, even tears down people's lives to fulfil particular ideological convictions. Rather, I mean the Zion which is imagined in the final chapters of Isaiah, the Zion which is the centre of God's eternal reign and is brought about not with human effort, but solely by divine agency. That is, the 'true' Zion exists beyond our experience in a mythical, other-worldly kind of plane.

This ideology of Zion has clear parallels with notions of country with which I began. While we can romanticise these things,

imagining home in a way which is unrealistic (which the people of Israel certainly did!), the human pull to home, to belonging, to the comfort of familiar surroundings is a powerful reality. The story of the Old Testament though, is one that affirms the reality that where we are can be home: that God is with us, despite our dislocation from familiarity. That's good for folks like me, who have no strong sense of connection to any particular place. But it is also good for those who do. Yes, the desire for home is strong and real. But dislocation need not be terminal. One can do well, even away from the familiar trappings of home. And even then the desire for home can be a source of hope and optimism. Zion is a powerful idea!



News & Views...



From 14th. – 21st. April. a group of people gathered with members of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and local Indigenous leaders for **Walking on Country**. The group was made up of people from UAICC, Uniting, Frontier Services, Uniting Mission and Education, presbyteries, congregations and local communities. It was both inspiring and confronting.

An important part of Walking on Country is to listen on country and may times the listening has no words.

This Walking on Country took us to Cootamundra Domestic Training Home for Aboriginal Girls where we listened to the memories of an elder and his grandson telling of the tearing apart of families and the longing for reunion with parents. In the silence of the buildings and the wind in the old gums were the memories of the many children.



Together we shared in worship at the UAICC Church in Condobolin and visited Murrumbidgee Bridge just outside of Lake Cargelligo. Murrumbidgee Bridge was originally a government "mission" where Ngiyampaa, Paakantyi and Wiradjuri people were all removed from their lands and placed together in this one location.

Murrumbidgee Bridge is on the Lachlan River and there, amongst the trees, with the goodness of fish and water is the grief of a people removed from country; a pain that transcends the generations.

We visited Narrandera Uniting Church where the names of Aboriginal people who served in WWI and WWII, previously left off, have been added. We walked out across Lake Mungo and listened to an elder talk about history, place and the importance of the return of Mungo Man to country. Lake Mungo; country of the Willandra people for 45,000 years!



Lastly we visited the flood plains between Shepparton and Mooroopna where Yorta Yorta people lived not isolated, but “removed” from the township. Here the people lived in shacks at one time shielded by an erected hessian fence to avoid offending the Queen when she visited in 1954!

- Walking on Country was a good space for reflection and listening. There was amongst the vast untouched landscape the reality of cattle farming, crops and many little towns. There were the first people and then the people from other cultures, countries and traditions. There were ancient river gums and rusty wind pumps. There was peacefulness and grieving, past and present. There was the finite and the eternal.

God is not bound by race or religion. Before time when other peoples lived and loved the land and country, there was God. When we ponder, or talk, or sing of God as eternal we are

meaning the God of enduring presence; of people, of country, of existence. We are not meaning a God of our own snippet of history, our own traditions and our own locations.

For Christians, in responding to the life of Jesus Christ we become the people of the Eternal who see humanity in its breadth as being of God. It is impossible to read the Gospels where Jesus went to the other side, told a story about the Good Samaritan, sat at meals with all types and demonstrated sacrificial love not to see an invitation to participate in the eternal way of God.

There is of course a deep challenge for Christians in our relationships with others who we find ourselves beside and in our understanding that together we are from the land and not just on the land. Reconciliation is not something that can be organised or decreed, but has to involve lament, humility and both the giving and receiving.

Perhaps reconciliation can be shaped by our responses and attitudes. By being humbled under gum trees 100's of years old. By walking lightly on the land and remembering its history. By reading about Aboriginal traditions, agriculture, language and history. By listening more and talking less. By attending rallies and gatherings because it counts. By respecting the land; place and country. Through confession and lament. By being a people who try to shape our relationships with our brothers and sisters based on the shape of our faith as found in Jesus Christ.

You might like to consider attending.... Walking on Country!

Where are we up to with Saltbush?

Rev. Mark Faulkner

Director of Rural and Remote Ministry Initiatives



I've been encouraged by the affirmation from a broad church (Uniting Mission & Education, Uniting, the Synod Secretariat, Uniting Resources, Frontier Services, presbyteries, congregations and individuals) around the work of Saltbush and the steps towards both encouraging and connecting smaller Uniting Christian communities in a sustained way.

In particular, at this time, along with many others, I am shaping the practical steps towards a team of Scattered Community Ministers who, as part of Uniting Mission and Education, will work specifically with smaller Uniting rural and coastal gatherings. This team will work with both existing congregations and groups/individuals who want to shape new gatherings and who are willing to pare back and ask formational questions about how we gather and live out Christian community in the 21st.

Century. This team will work with the people in rural and remote locations who make up our church and who are, despite vast distances, still passionate about being connected, about gathering and about the way of mission. In short, about being both the church of the present and the future.

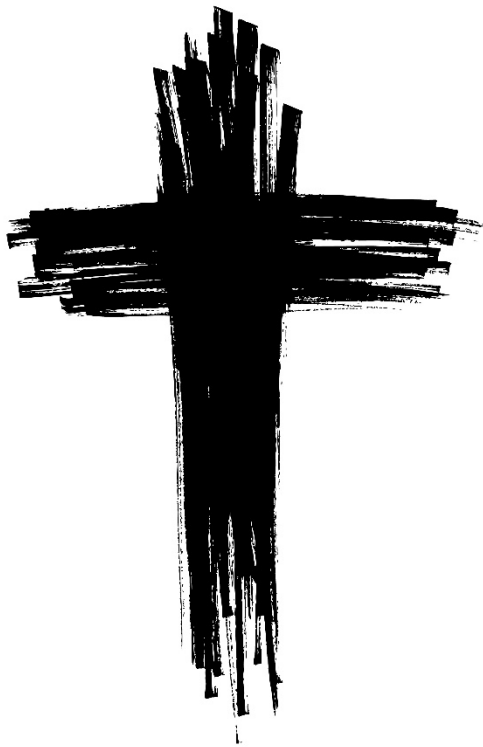
As part of this practical shaping of Saltbush I recently met with a group of people including Moderator, Rev. Simon Hansford, Associate General Secretary, Rev. Bronwyn Murphy, Corrina Alchin (Uniting), Andrew Cunningham (Orange Uniting), Daniel Mossfield (Crookwell Uniting), Matt Tyler (Uniting Resources), Claire Wright (Bathurst Uniting) and Geoff Wellington (Canberra Region Presbytery). Together we met in Crookwell for a day to discuss the shaping of Saltbush and ministry positions (Scattered Community Ministers) who will work as a team to help shape Christian community for the 21st. Century.



The next step will be to gather rural and coastal presbytery Chairpersons and Ministers, along with representatives from our other presbyteries, secretariat, Uniting, Frontier Services & Uniting Mission and Education. This Scattered Community Gathering is being held in Tamworth on 14th. & 15th. September.

This gathering has the following aims:

- ▶ hear where the shaping of Saltbush is up to and proposals for the year ahead; 2019.
- ▶ group discussion around the opportunities that a Saltbush Ministry team will offer.
- ▶ discussion around rural/coastal Uniting Congregations where the opportunity for creative change exists.
- ▶ discussion around where we see the shape of our church in the coming years... which leads me to the place of the cross.



The place of the cross...

Jürgen Moltmann (born 1926) is a German Reformed theologian. Some of his writing that draws me the most is around Spirit and church community. Moltmann wrote: "The Church only follows the promise of Christ and the trend of the Spirit when it accepts its own cross". (*The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. P. 26) He is that there will only be life where we are able to give it up.

This is the “trend of the Spirit” we undoubtedly find ourselves in as a church in these very days.

We may have thought the words of Jesus were about us as individuals, but they are also about us as disciples... and about us a church. “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it”.

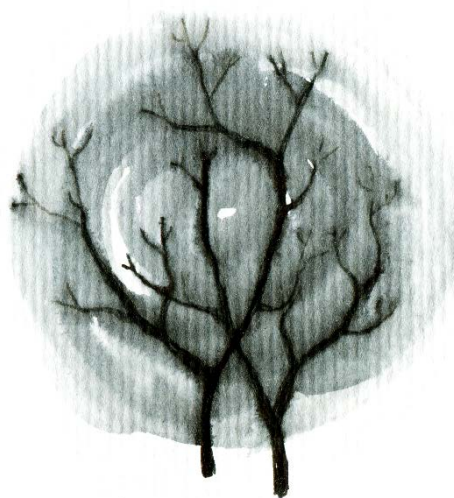
[Matthew 16: 25]

It’s interesting to reflect on this idea... these words, for ourselves, our church, our world.

Part of the ethos of Saltbush – Uniting the Scattered Community has to be centred around those people, those places, those congregations, those church bodies who are willing to give up, to loose, to let go, even to die, in order that there might be life.

Please be both mindful and prayerful for me and all of us as a broad church as we seriously ponder the urging and leading of the Spirit towards Christian community in the world in which we find ourselves.

Mark .





Please consider financially supporting Saltbush; either as individuals or as a congregation.

Your donation will be used directly to support the work of Saltbush and the ways that we are working to encourage smaller, rural congregations.

You can donate generally towards Saltbush which will include supporting the cost of printing Ruminations.

To donate please make a direct transfer:

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