

NAMBUCCAVALLEY ANGLICANS

SUNDAY PAPERS 24.10.2021

2
God made night and day,
but they weren't the same.
Then he made sea and sky
and he gave each its name;
and when God saw the ocean
which was sparkling and bright,
he was glad he'd made water
when the time was right.

3
God said to himself,
'Now I'd like to see land.
I'd like meadows and mountains
and shores full of sand.'
So he brought earth from water
and was pleased with the sight
of the plants which all grew
when the time was right.

4
Then God looked at the sky
and he found it too plain.
It was all coloured blue
and was filled up with rain.
So he made sun and moon
to change day into night
and the stars blinked their eyes
when the time was right.

5
God looked at the land
and decided, one day,
to put fish in the sea
and make sure that they'd stay.
He put birds in the air
and they all shook with fright
till God taught them to fly
when the time was right.

6
Then God made the animals,
some small and some large,
and soon he was asking
'Who on earth will take charge?'
So he waited and wondered,
till with careful insight
he made man and made woman
when the time was right.

7
Then God watched from a distance
to see what they'd do
with the world and its creatures
and with each other too.
Sometimes they forgot
what God wanted or said.
Then they'd go their own way
and do their will instead.

And it hurt God that people,
who he'd made out of love,
should forget how to live,
what to say, where to move.
Should he punish and hate them?
Should he leave them to fight?
No. He sent to them Jesus
when the time was right.

8
Today we enjoy
all that God's love has done
and thank him for our world,
for our lives, for his Son;
and we sing songs of praise
to express our delight
at all God meant to be
when the time was right.

One body, not yet fully vaccinated



Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

I Corinthians 12:12-13

There's a lot of talk these days about independence, self-sufficiency, and 'my body, my choice.' Whether people are referring to financial arrangements, homesteading, or vaccination, there is an underlying assumption that each person, or at most each family, is an individual unit,

independent of anyone else and free to choose how to live. This is not, however, consistent with Christianity.

The Apostle Paul is clear on this. Like it or not, those who have been baptized into Christ are now members of one body. As he writes, 'If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body ... And if all were a single member, then where would the body be?' (12:15-16, 20). Those of us who have been baptized into Christ belong to a larger body of diverse members, and what affects one member of the body affects the whole. Just as a bad back can affect temper, tongue, mobility and bowel movements, so too do the experiences and choices of each member affect the whole.

So membership of the body comes with responsibility: and Christ's body

has its own priorities. We might think that the tongue or the hand are the most important members. They are publicly visible; they have clear and important functions; through speech and touch they communicate and interact with the world. Surely, then, they should be granted special privilege and be able to do as they choose. But not so in the body of Christ: 'On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour ... God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member.' (12:22-24).

Paul lived at a time of strict social hierarchies, when men had absolute power. Women, children and slaves had no rights whatsoever; and people with disabilities or skin diseases were thrown out of town and banned from interacting with others. So Paul is turning these hierarchies upside down: for he is telling us that the 'inferior' or 'weaker' members, which in Paul's worldview includes children and people with disabilities, are indispensable and must be greatly honoured and carefully protected. Like Christ, who emptied himself of power and took on the form of a slave, those of us with social freedoms and power to choose are called to set aside our rights,

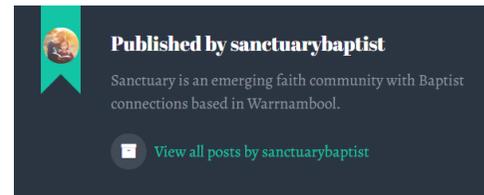
privileges and preferences in order to honour and protect the weaker members of the body.

And why has God ordered the body in this way? 'That there be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, they all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.' (12:25-26). We experience this mutuality every time we gather as a body and share our trials and joys. One has had surgery and is struggling with pain, loss and other people's demands: together we pray and grieve. Another has had a hard-earned triumph, a long term project well received: together we pray and rejoice. But it's not 'just spiritual.' How we use money, how we participate in the wider society and whether or not we are vaccinated all affect the body as a whole.

As we prepare for our state to open up, some of us are rejoicing, and we rejoice with you. But others of us, acutely aware of the consequences for children too young to be vaccinated and for people with disabilities, that is, for the most vulnerable members of the body, are anxious and afraid. We know how precious these people are, and the suffering of one member of the body affects us all.

This is why we here at Sanctuary (read Nambucca Valley) are committed to meeting online for now, to keep our weakest and most vulnerable members safe during what is predicted to be the peak of infections. And this is why I am delighted that Sanctuary is well on the way to having all those who can be vaccinated fully vaccinated, for it is a witness that we love and care for our most vulnerable members, and are honouring and protecting them in the best way that we can.

Shalom,
Alison

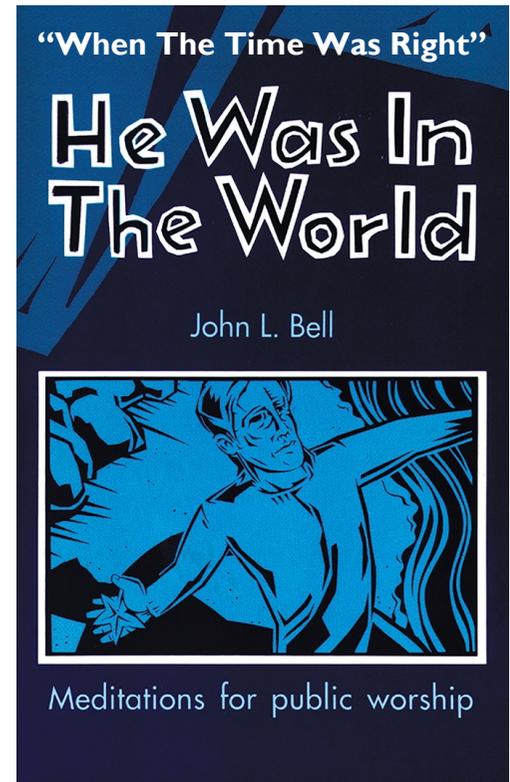


Thank you again to SANCTUARY Church for this. I am looking forward to talking with the author Alison on Monday.

At our discussion group using the book "I AM" on Wednesday, we talked quite a bit about vaccinations (or not) and the effect they have on our life together, inside and outside of the Church.

While we considered what Jesus might have meant when he said. "I am the door" within the context of John's whole Gospel, and more specifically Chapters 9 & 10, we did not consider the lens of 1 Corinthians 12, which maybe we should have in the light of the current Public Health Order.

Pete



© 1995 Wild Goose Resource Group, Iona Community

Here is a meditation from John Bell of the Iona Community which fits well with our recent 'Season of Creation'. See also the Iona song in Leslie's Reflection in today's SUPPLEMENT.

**I
God looked into space
but nothing was around:
just darkness and wind,
not a smell, sight or sound.
Then God said to himself,
'I think we'll have light.'
So the darkness stopped
when the time was right.**