

The need for new songs...



The first verse of Psalm 96 suggests that we should 'sing a new song' and that all the earth should 'sing to the Lord'. So, one of the COVID-19 restrictions I think many struggled with was the restriction to not sing together in public worship. That's not to say we haven't been singing at home, or in the car...and maybe over the last few months you've heard some new songs, and those songs have brought comfort and hope.

One song that struck me was 'One Day' by the American Jewish reggae musician Matthew Paul Miller, known better by his Hebrew stage name Matisyahu. The version I first heard was from an event in Haifa held in February last year. In this Matisyahu taught 'One Day' to a crowd of three thousand people which was made up of Muslims, Jews, and Christians.

They started in English by repeatedly singing 'One day! One Day! One day!' – which sounds a bit dry when said, but when sung the words well express longing and hope. In short, one day, one day, one day...we hope life can be better than it is.

The lyrics of the first verse are deeply personal and are sung initially in English, and subsequently in Arabic and Hebrew:

'Sometimes I lay under the moon and thank God I'm breathing;
then I pray, 'Don't take me soon, 'cause I'm here for a reason.
Sometimes in my tears I drown, but I never let it get me down,
so when negativity surrounds, I know it'll all turn around, because...'

Then the chorus roars:

'All my life I've been waiting for, I've been praying for,
for the people to say that we don't wanna fight no more,
there'll be no more wars, and our children will play:
One day! One Day! One day!'

It is deeply moving to watch three thousand people express their longing and hope that one day Israelis and Palestinians will be able to live in peace...and the video can be viewed on [YouTube](#).

The song is a gift for it gives voice to a longing and hope that a way forward can be found for all who live in the land that many call 'Holy'.

But as we think about the song and the Haifa context, which is very different to our own, I think it's helpful to think about what we long for. What are the challenges in Australia which we hope 'one day' will be successfully managed, or resolved, so that life can be better than it is?

Many of the songs we sing in church look forward 'one day' to resurrection and eternal life, but I wonder if there are enough songs which express longing and hope for this life. Longing and hope for...greater justice; genuine reconciliation; an end to COVID; and, better stewardship of this planet we call home.

Inspired by Matisyahu's song, and the affirmation of the Psalmist, I wonder if we could as a Church curate, create, and commission new songs for worship and community?

We CURATE when we glean from the thousands of songs already written – those that express our understanding of what God calls us to be and do. Then we use them, share them and...enable and encourage God's people to sing!

We CREATE when we encourage those are who gifted in song writing and composition to write new songs. I think the remarkable music departments of each Anglican school have huge unrealised potential in contributing to this need...but there are bush poets to encourage as well!

And, if we really think the Church and the world need new songs and anthems which express longing and give hope, then...could we choose to COMMISSION some new songs?

I'd love to hear what songs give you hope and why. And, what areas of life and society you'd love 'one day' to see more whole?

Sunday Devotions • Monday 7 September 2020 • By The Rev'd Canon Nicki Colledge

Sunday Devotion: 13 September 2020, Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

Knowing our need for God

Main Readings: [Exodus 14.19-31](#); [Psalm 114](#) or [Exodus 15.1-13, 17-18](#); [Romans 14.1-14](#); [Matthew 18.21-35](#); [[Genesis 50.15-21](#); [Psalm 103. \(1-7\) 8-13](#)]

Supplementary Readings: [Psalm 122](#); [Matthew 19.1-12](#); [Exodus 15.19-26](#); [Psalm 103.8-13](#); [Romans 14.13-15.6](#)

"I will sing to the Lord...this is my God, and I will praise him." ([Exodus 15.1-2](#))

When I was about 10, I was sure that it was possible to walk across the Toorbul mudflats to get to a mangrove island. So, I left my friends and canoe behind, and strode off. As my feet sank ever deeper in the yabby-pumped mud, it became apparent that there was no way I would succeed. Not only that, the tide was coming in and I would require much assistance to return safely to solid land!

After Moses and the Israelites had safely crossed the Red Sea, they sang a song of great joy and adoration to the God who had saved them from the Egyptians. There is no doubt about the strength, might and victorious power of this God who brought the people to a place of sanctuary ([Exodus 15.17](#)). Moses could not have led the people out of slavery without God's help. The Song of Moses drips with praise, relief, and celebration. God's handiwork had been momentous.

Perhaps it is easier to remember to give thanks and praise to God when God's work has been most visibly obvious? Sometimes, however, the hand of God in our daily lives is as soft as breathing, as gentle as a butterfly's wing.

Sometimes our best prayers simply recognise our need for God, and that we cannot do this alone. God deserves our songs of great praise and joy! There is much to be thankful for each day.