



Who are we and what are we up to?

I don't know whether you have been following the debate, initiated recently in an article in Nature Magazine by Julian Cribb of UTS, as to whether we should revise the name of our species. In 1758 Carl Linnaeus, the great Swedish taxonomist, named us Homo-Sapiens and in recent decades a sub-species classification of Homo-Sapiens-Sapiens, the wise and thinking man, was conferred.



It's time, Cribb argues, to recognise that 'our behaviour is not quite as intelligent as we would like to imagine.' The evidence points to the classification Homo-Sapiens as inaccurate and self-delusional. 'Humans are presently engaged in the greatest act of extermination of other species, by a single species, probably since life on earth began. We are destroying around 30,000 species a year - comparable with the greatest geological extinction events of the past.'

Moreover, we contaminate the atmosphere with 30 billion tonnes of carbon equivalents per year, risking accelerated warming which, if as predicted reaches 8C by end of the century, will disrupt life on earth with loss of between 50 and 90% of humanity, let alone the catastrophic effect on all other species. We have manufactured 83,000 synthetic chemicals, mostly toxic, which we inhale, ingest or walk around in every day of our life and we add hundreds of new ones of unknown risk every year.

Our actions are causing the collapse of marine systems, disrupting food chains and causing dead zones. Four hundred lifeless areas, in what were vibrant ecosystems fifty years ago, are humanity's gift to the planet so far. We waste one third of the world's food; we passed peak fish in 2004 and peak oil in 2006, yet our profligate demand continues to rise unchecked. We spend \$1.6 trillion annually on new weapons; that's thirty times the \$50 billion we spend finding better ways to produce food.

Cribb maintains, 'We are busy destroying many things that are real: soil, water, air, resources, our health, for the sake of a commodity that exists mostly in our imagination - money. Are we self-deluded about what constitutes real wealth as seems clear from the current financial crisis?'

I was pondering all this with some sympathy recently at a time when the Australian High Court decision gave priority to the dignity of peoples and the rights of humanity over the pragmatic protectionism determined to maintain the imaginary boundaries we have drawn on our world map in the concern to further our interests by excluding others. Forget about what we are doing to the planet; forget about our selfish actions and wanton disregard for other species; we can't even co-exist in harmony and peace within our own species. Wise and thinking humans? - I think not!

A creature unable to control its own demands can't be said to merit the descriptor *wise*. A creature which takes little account of the great risks it runs in its behaviour is not thoughtful. So whatever way you look at it, calling ourselves Homo-Sapiens seems a misnomer.

'What's in a name?' Shakespeare asked. In this case the answer might be an opportunity to reflect on who we are and what we are doing. Reclassifying ourselves Homo-Culpa might give us reason to pause and stop kidding ourselves. It might also give us reason for some critical reflection which never hurt anyone. Perhaps you have a suggestion as to how we might rename humanity. I encourage you to think about it, as I have been, if only as a way into a conversation with others - a conversation I think that needs to be had soon by *Homo - whatever we are*.

Dean McGlaughlin for the OLT

Edmund Rice Camps staff gathering - OCEANIA

Heads of ministry from six Edmund Rice Camps groups in Oceania gathered from 21 to 23 August at the Brothers' Surf St house on the Gold Coast. Although the Queensland weather was miserable, much to everyone's disappointment, we were still able to have a great time catching up with some and meeting others for the first time and even celebrating a birthday at the local Mexican restaurant. Peter Clinch came down for dinner with us on the second night which was a welcome sign of support and encouragement.

This is an annual meeting to provide peer support and share resources, policies and ideas and to promote best practice between Camps groups at various stages of development. In attendance this year was Mel from South Australia, Mark from Victoria, Scoops from NSW, Amelia from Dunedin, Jacob from Auckland and Alice from Queensland with apologies from WA (Ash has been our dedicated convenor the past few years) and Tasmania who don't currently have an Executive Officer.

This gathering had a particular focus on developing the Camps sector within the Province with a number of action-oriented decisions being made after several years' conversation and preparation to get to this stage. Particularly after our ERC Passion gathering in February this year, a number of Camps volunteers have also been getting involved in this skills sharing by travelling to different parts of Oceania to volunteer on camps as part of a holiday. We are all very pleased with the growth of the sense of connectedness between Edmund Rice Camps and look forward to where our sector development work will take us in the next twelve months.

Alice McMonagle



Amelia (Dunedin), Mark (Melbourne), Scoops (Sydney), Jacob (Auckland), Mel (Adelaide), Alice (Brisbane)

Inter-faith Calendar - WORLD

Visit the Inter-Faith Calendar [here](#)

New magazine *Hadithi Zetu (Our Stories)* launched –VIC/TAS



The first edition of our brand new newsletter *Hadithi Zetu (Our Stories)* has been emailed to people who are somehow connected to Immersions and Volunteers in Victoria and Tasmania, or to those who might be interested in what's going on down here!! The stories and reflections in this newsletter will depict the journeys of some of our current and past volunteers, and also stories of the incredible people they are walking and connecting with along the way.

The idea of this newsletter (which we hope to get out monthly) is to share some of the remarkable stories we hear from our Edmund Rice Volunteers and Immersion Participants. All of these people are doing fantastic work in living out the vision of Eddie Rice both in Australia and overseas.

If you are interested in submitting a story, article or advertisement for future newsletters, please don't hesitate to send them through to either myself, or Brenton Carey at brenton@amberley.org.au

Katrina Powell
ER Youth Ministry team
katrina@amberley.org.au

Read the first issue of *Hadithi Zetu* on the website [here](#)

Report from Kabankalan – THE PHILIPPINES



The brothers have become involved with the *Anawim Foundation* which facilitates the operation of a house for deaf students. These students attend the regular public schools. Miladdie Chia is a teacher of the deaf students and the force behind *Anawim*. As a means of attempting to promote financial independence, Rod has facilitated the setting up of a goat farm. This has been many months coming to reality.

It is situated on an old fish farm in Su-ay, just north of Kabankalan. The farm is being run by three deaf youth at present, with advice from a lecturer from the Negros State College of Agriculture and overseen by Rod. They have eight young female goats at present. The plan is to establish a large enough herd to breed goats for sale as meat. Much is still to be done, with Bebot, the carpenter, building goat houses (pictured) and a hut for young men to live in.

Jim Quinn

Read the complete report on the website [here](#)

Balmain farewells Ian McDonald – NSW

Every now and then, we have to say goodbye to someone who has journeyed with us for some time, and has become part of the Mission of the Congregation.

Such a person is Ian McDonald, who, after many years of ministry in the financial office at Balmain, retired on 31 August 2011. Ian has been a valuable member of the Balmain office, and has worked tirelessly for the Province, especially in the field of finance. Ian is very much a member of the ERN, and has participated in at least one immersion experience in Africa.

I believe that Ian will be very much missed, not only in the Balmain Centre, but personally by many Brothers and others who have known and worked with and alongside him. Personally, I wish to thank Ian for his assistance at all times to me, with my questions, my money concerns, and for the sharings we have had over the years. This I am sure is felt by all the Cluster Leaders, past and present in the NSW Region, and by many local Bursars.

So farewell, Ian, and every blessing to you and your dear wife, as you take a well deserved rest from a lifetime of figures, bank balances and transactions. Our very best wishes go with you and your family.

Patrick, Brian, David on behalf of the NSW Region and beyond

What's planned for CREAT the remainder of 2011 – OCEANIA

SEPTEMBER

9 -11 September 2011 Rockhampton

16 -26 Perth September 2011 *Five Loaves is Enough* 5 workshops plus Broome

OCTOBER

2-7 October 2011 New Zealand - Auckland Theme Gathering

21-23 October Adelaide 2011 Cluster Gathering: *Five Loaves is Enough*

31st Oct-4th Nov: Kincumber 2011 Elders Gathering

NOVEMBER

11-13 Tuross gathering and Review



CREAT at Charingfield

Bill Greening, Ted Davis, Victor Bell, Terry Casey (CREAT), Peter McCracken, Bernie McGill, Ray O'Donoghue, Frank Pelin, Cyril Bosco (CREAT), Jim Grovenor.

Absent: John Hills, Stan McNamara, Max Langan & Stanis McGuire



Bernie McGill, Cyril Bosco, Paul Corkeron (Manager), Ray O'Donoghue, Ted Davis



Frank Pelin, Bernie Magill, Cyril Bosco, Paul Corkeron



CREAT at Tuross
Luke Quinn, Phil Grundy

Oceania Updates

Please send any information or news items for Oceania Updates to the Province Publications Coordinator, Brother Nev Thornton, Email: ntthornton@edmundrice.org

I am particularly interested in receiving any good quality images of people, places, sights and faces throughout Oceania.

CAST YOUR NET WIDER

www.edmundrice.net