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Port Arthur

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## Government opts out of R.E.

Almost 100 years after Queensland voters passed a referendum guaranteeing time for religious instruction in Queensland schools, the Queensland Government has announced that religious education in all State Schools will be offered on an "opt in" rather than "opt out" basis.

By Bruce Mullan

THE 1910 REFERENDUM to enshrine Religious Education as part of Queensland State School programs was one of only two referendums ever to pass in Queensland. The other brought Queensland into the Federation.

Now, according to the Education Queensland Director General Ken Smith, parents enrolling their child at a State School will be shown the current RE programs offered in the school and will be asked to "tick a box".

Under the new system, if parents have not asked to have their child included, Queensland students will go without religious education at school.

The Education (General Provisions) Bill 2006 was introduced into Parliament on 21 April and will be debated during the coming months.

While the legislation had not passed the final reading at the time *Journey* went to print, it seems inevitable as the Beattie Government is determined to press ahead with the changes despite protests from Christian churches concerned at the potential loss of Christian RE for Queensland's 470,000 state school children.

If enacted, the Director General has specified that principals will receive training towards implementing the details by September 2006.

*Journey* spoke with Leader of the Opposition Mr Lawrence Springborg who said that the Coalition staunchly opposes the plan to make religious education an "optional-extra" in a child's public education.

"Religious education is a fundamental part of the Queensland educational system," Mr Springborg said.



Josh and Olivia's parents face a different RE future under the new legislation. Photo by Osker Lau

"Even parents who are not particularly religious welcome such education, as it teaches students sound values and good citizenship.

"It also ensures that students gain a proper understanding of the meaning of Christian events such as Easter and Christmas."

### Other Options

Education Minister Mr Rob Welford said that parents who choose not to have their child receive religious education at school would have other options.

"Those options could be anything from art classes through to additional reading and study time, through to sport.

"It could also include other values education classes which the school might organise, either from its own staff or from an outside source," Mr Welford said.

Mr Springborg believes that "if the onus is now shifted to parents to opt their children into religious education, a greater number of students will not receive the

religious education that is currently offered in State Schools."

### Non-religious access

As well as making RE "optional" the new legislation will change the rules to allow some non-religious groups equal access to State School students as religious groups during the 40 hours a year currently set aside for religious education.

Uniting Church representative on the government's Religious Education Advisory Committee (REAC) Rev David MacGregor said that currently groups are only admitted if they have adherents in that school, or are part of an RE cooperative arrangement.

"In this new system, groups can be admitted to a school after they have applied and been approved by Education Queensland, and there is at least one parent requesting that program in the school," said Mr MacGregor.

"There is a concern that this will open the way for a kind of state-sponsored proselytism, where at the behest of only one parent, a

program can be offered to all new enrolments in the school."

RE Officer for the Anglican Religious Education Team Mr Jonathan Sargeant said that parents may find a group coming into a school and offering their program to the entire school.

"They might have no adherents there and yet suddenly they may end up with a large group of people who think that this is a particular group that might seem to represent a number of different faith groups or seems very general in their

approach, and therefore they might scoop the pool, so to speak, with the students in that school," Mr Sargeant said.

One group positioning itself to take advantage of this change is the Baha'i religion which is marketing itself to lapsed churchgoers or parents disconnected from the mainstream Christian churches by their claims to represent all religions.

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# Living with diversity

AS THE 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly approaches, it is apparent that the issue of living with diversity in the church will again be the focus of considerable attention and reflection, not least because further debate on sexuality and leadership will be a major item on the agenda.

How much diversity is a good thing?

When we look at the world around us, the outcome of God's creative energy and wisdom, we can only conclude that the complexity and diversity of the created order is truly astounding.

In God's world, diversity is a given. We either learn to live with it, celebrate it and love it, or its all pervasive presence will be a constant source of tension for us.

One vital dimension of diversity was faced and dealt with by the Christian church very early in its history when, inspired and influenced by the leadership of Peter, it came to understand that everyone seeking a right relationship with God was to be included in its fellowship. (Read the story in Acts 10-11).

Of course, this was entirely consistent with what Jesus had taught about the nature and purpose of the Kingdom of God. Nonetheless the church still had to work out what that meant in the context of particular issues and circumstances.

We shouldn't be surprised that from time to time we have to do exactly the same thing!

However, from that first history-making debate and decision until now the church has wrestled with both the reality and the implications of diversity.

Even a basic knowledge and understanding of church history



## Message from the Moderator

Rev Dr David Pitman

will give an appreciation of the degree to which this process has impacted on the life of the church.

At its worst the church has dealt with diversity by suppressing anything considered unorthodox and cruelly punishing those it believes have moved outside the boundaries it has established at any given time.

We now consider many of those dealt with so harshly to be epitomes of faith, vision and courage!

At its best the church has encouraged and celebrated diversity so that it has been a source of enrichment and inspiration. Within the Uniting Church we have experienced this response in a variety of ways.

There is diversity in our styles of worship, in the membership of our church, and in the way our congregations and agencies engage in ministry and mission.

There is also diversity in our theological thinking and in our approaches to the interpretation of scripture. For some people it is this dimension of our diversity about which they feel most anxious.

In this matter particularly we have to understand that the principles involved have themselves been the subject of passionate debate in the life of the church from the early centuries until now.

For those who feel that we must have uniformity and conformity in regard to our approach to theology and the scriptures, these ongoing debates have been unsettling, even disturbing.

Others have experienced this process as a source of spiritual and intellectual stimulation, leading to a stronger faith and a capacity to engage more meaningfully and deeply with the profound and challenging questions that are inevitably raised in the context of our daily life and work.

How sad it would be if we were to relinquish our commitment as a church, to not only live with diversity, but to be blessed by it!

In the midst of such diversity in the life of the church, what is it that holds us together?

We are held together by our faith in the triune God; because Jesus Christ is at the centre of our faith and life; because in Christian community the love God has for us overflows into love for one another; and by our common commitment as disciples of Jesus to work together for the sake of the Kingdom!

We do not have to fear diversity, for the infinite variety of our world and the diversity within the church are ultimately gathered up into that indissoluble unity created in Jesus Christ, who is both Lord of creation and Head of the church!

## From the Editor

During the hundred years of legislated Religious Education in Queensland State Schools the changes in our community have been astounding.

The increasingly multi-cultural, multi-faith and secular aspects of our society have continued to put pressure on our churches' "right of entry" to schools and now Christian Religious Education is just one of many options available to parents when their children attend the local State School.

Christians in Queensland must shoulder some of the responsibility for the current state-of-affairs.

We have been neglectful in providing adequate support, resources and training for almost 6000 volunteers who visit Queensland State Schools each week as representatives of the Christian church.

Many Christian parents, often for sound reasons, have also been quick to abandon the government education system enrolling their progeny in the burgeoning private and Christian school sector.

Meanwhile some very effective lobbying by the humanists and some non-Christian religious groups has caught the ear of the Department of Education and the Arts resulting in the introduction of the Education (General Provisions) Bill 2006.

The State Government has chosen to ignore the lacklustre response of Queensland churches and push through with changes that will see a much more pluralistic program in schools.

What the government does not fully appreciate is that Christianity is not simply an ethical system which can be reduced to the sayings of Jesus.

Christianity is about the interaction between humankind and God and without that relationship ethics and moral education can become empty and meaningless.

Anglican Bishop Stephen Hale from Melbourne points out that "discussions on truth and value, morality and civic responsibilities, should include examination of the beliefs underlying decisions in these areas. Students need accurate information on the ways religious stories, practices and beliefs have influenced our culture and society."

Christians will need to be vigilant and vigorous if they are to maintain even the ground that will remain if and when the legislation is passed by the Queensland Parliament.

We will need to put much more energy into both the teaching of Christian Religious Education and monitoring the implementation of a very different set of rules.

Pray for your RE teachers and talk to your politicians.

Bruce Mullan

## JOURNEY

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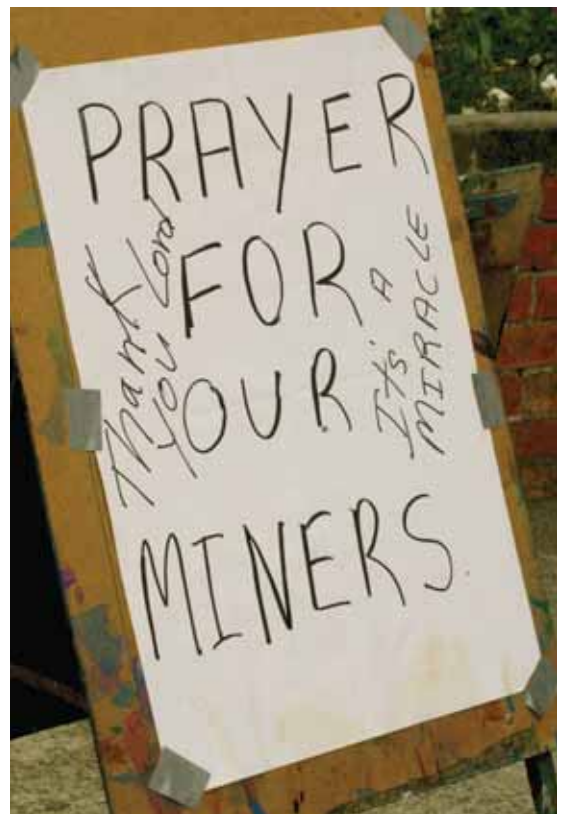
## Sign of the Times

This sign was placed on the footpath outside the Uniting Church in Beaconsfield after the mining accident.

The additional comments were added after Todd Russell and Brant Webb were found to be trapped, but still alive.

Thanks to Kim Cain of the Victorian and Tasmanian Synod Communications Unit for this photo.

Read more about the Uniting Church's role during the long wait for the rescue of miners Todd and Brant and in consoling the community after the deaths of miner Larry Knight and journalist Richard Carleton on page 5.







One of the truckloads of school supplies leaves the Synod Office. Photo by Osker Lau

## Packs are off to school in the Solomon Islands

THE FIRST and major shipment of school supplies has been loaded in a container and is on its way to the Solomon Islands.

The consignment consisted of 15 cubic metres of boxes packed with almost 700 complete back packs, hats, Bibles, children's school books, school uniforms, computers and an amazing amount of donated school supplies which didn't fit into the back packs.

Project coordinator Ms Heather den Houting said that there had been some delays due to the recent unrest but she is confident that the material will now be able to be transported safely to its destination.

The material will travel via Honiara to Munda in the Western Province where it will be distributed by partner church the United Church in Solomon Islands.

Ms den Houting said that people should not worry if they haven't yet returned their back packs.

"You have missed the first and major shipment, but we will be regularly shipping other material to the Solomon Islands for the rest of the year and your packs will go with these shipments."

Ms den Houting said part of the joy of the project has been the stories of incredible generosity.

"From the newsgroups who willingly became involved in the scheme in their local communities, to the donations of a huge number of stationary items from unexpected sources, to the volunteers who assisted in the mammoth task of checking and packing the back packs.

"We are thankful to all of you who participated and promoted the project across Australia.

"The response has overwhelmed us."

For more details email  
heatherdh@uccentre.ucaqld.com.au

# Assembly talks sexuality again

MEMBERS OF the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly will consider a number of proposals around the issue of sexuality and leadership when they meet in Brisbane next month.

Following a process which commenced in July last year the Assembly's Business Committee has finalised eight proposals which offer a range of policy options for the Church in respect of persons in committed same gender relationships and leadership.

Assembly General Secretary Rev Terence Corkin said a total of 21 proposals were submitted from across the life of the Church by the December deadline and negotiations with the proposers had reduced the number coming to the Assembly to eight.

"The proposals cover a range of options, include proposals from synods, presbyteries and individual members of the Assembly, and reflect the diversity of opinion in the church on this matter," Mr Corkin said.

"Some call for a continuation of the current policy of allowing decisions around this aspect of suitability for ministry to be made locally and others ask the church to adopt a single national policy on the issue of persons living in committed same gender relationships exercising leadership in the church.

"In order to be clear about how proposals have been handled, all of the proposals originally submitted are being made available on the



Assembly General Secretary Rev Terence Corkin. Photo by Osker Lau

Assembly website, along with the list of final proposals."

The Business Committee has also finalised the process that will be used when dealing with the proposal and is recommending that members of the Assembly need to decide which proposal(s) they want in front of the meeting in the first instance.

Mr Corkin said members of the Assembly will be invited to consider the question, "Do we need a policy for the whole church, and why?"

The final list of proposals, as well as a full report from the General Secretary and the list of original proposals received, can be viewed at the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly website in the "Proposals and Working Papers" section <http://nat.uca.org.au/11thassembly>

## Invited to celebrate

UNITING CHURCH National Assembly meetings are often accused of being remote from congregational life but this year Assembly and local Uniting Church people will meet together to celebrate being church.

Uniting Church congregations and people in South-East Queensland are invited to worship with the Assembly when it meets to celebrate on Sunday evening, 9 July in City Hall in Brisbane.

Assembly Management Team member and program coordinator Rev Bob Warrick sees the Celebration as an opportunity to bridge the perceived gap and let people see the human face of the Assembly.

"The Assembly Celebration will enable Uniting Church members from Brisbane and surrounds to participate in an exciting event, meet (or at least see) Assembly members, and to be stimulated in terms of music and drama that could be used in their congregation," he said.

"It also gives an opportunity to 'showcase' Queensland Uniting Church talent and gifts to the National church."

The Celebration will commence at 7.00pm and guest preacher is Rev

Mvume Dandala, head of Africa's leading ecumenical organisation.

Mr Dandala, a celebrated preacher known for his work in conflict resolution during the apartheid era in South Africa, is a past Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

With a unique ability to work in the church and in the secular world Mr Dandala has a proven record of courage and determination in leading the church in South Africa and all over Africa to address issues of injustice and human need.

Celebration Coordinator Mrs Megan Thomson who also coordinated the Uniting Church 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations in Queensland said there will be a particular emphasis making it a child and family friendly event.

"I envisage it to be a night where people of all ages leave feeling good to be sharing in and contributing to the journey of the Uniting Church, confident that God is in our midst and constantly challenging us to share the Good News," Megan said.

"The Assembly Celebration will be a mosaic of music, visuals, drama, dance, spoken word, symbols and so much more.



Assembly Celebration Coordinator  
Mrs Megan Thomson

"Participants will come from all corners of the nation with many languages, ethnic backgrounds, abilities and ages. Many styles of music and visual images will be used.

"You might laugh, cry, sing, pray, shout, be educated, enthused, challenged, encouraged but you will leave knowing that God is moving in the Uniting Church in Australia."

The Assembly Celebration will be held on Sunday evening, 9 July in City Hall from 7pm - 8.45pm. No bookings necessary but be early for a good seat.

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# The tears of God still fall for Port Arthur

By Bruce Mullan

TEN YEARS ON, the terrible events of Sunday, 28 April 1996 when a lone gunman killed 35 people at Port Arthur, Tasmania, still numb the feelings of many Australians.

At the time waves of disbelief and grief washed over the peaceful and tranquil holiday isle of Tasmania.

Dr Christine Gapes former faculty member of United Theological College, Australian Catholic University, Charles Sturt University and Trinity Theological College tells how all through that long Sunday she was riveted to the television as the drama unfolded.

With twenty years of research interest in adolescent bereavement and the theology of youth ministry, Dr Gapes flew into Launceston the next day to visit.

"As I went through the airport security I looked warily at men with blond hair who carried dark sport bags as it was reputed that the killer had carried his deadly weapons in such a bag," she said.

"I sat with friends in Tasmania and sipped the sour taste of anger and grief as people in that beautiful island came to terms with a tragedy that had ripped apart their sense of security and peace."

Just two months after the shootings Dr Gapes conducted research in two high schools in Tasmania, one in the north of the state and one in the south near Hobart, which is one hour's drive from Port Arthur.

Dr Gapes invited the students to express their reactions in drawing and through questionnaires.

"My primary question was 'What could I learn about adolescents' grief reactions to the violent deaths at Port Arthur?' but my mind continually wandered to



A grade 10 Tasmanian student responded to the massacre with this picture entitled "Tears of God"

the pictures and I began to notice hints of the students' understanding of what it means to be human and their sense of evil.

"I pondered their drawings and descriptions from a theological perspective and was amazed at the

richness of their illustrations of human nature, evil, and the absence or presence of God in traumatic times."

After carrying these pictures in her heart for ten years Dr Gapes has collected them into an e-book

called *The Day was Long: Reflections on the Tragedy of Port Arthur* where she has juxtaposed the students' drawings and comments with some interpretation and a passage from the Psalms.

"One Year 10 student from the

southern school carefully drew an exquisite depiction of rounded drops of blood and tears falling into a grey sea-cloud of grief.

"She captured the waves of grief that wash over bereaved people as they are flooded with tears of sorrow.

"She said, 'I have drawn a picture of tear drops and blood drops all dripping into the one heavenly cloud. I drew this because whenever I hear about the Port Arthur Massacre I think of the song *Tears in Heaven*. I don't know why though'."

Dr Gapes explained that the song which was sung at the Memorial Assembly held by this girl's school was emotionally moving for many students and the tears may represent a symbolic image of God.

"The drawing evokes Hildegard de Bingen's image of God as the passionate tear and biblical passages which reflect the deep compassion of God for those who are lost through terrible death and evil," said Dr Gapes.

The theological question for Dr Gapes is how we enable young people to respond to pain in the world and move beyond their immediate response.

"Children and adolescents need a circle of love and strength to help them navigate the uncertain, and the church needs to help them explore the dark moments of life and themes of evil and redemption."

Dr Gape's e-book *The Day was Long: Reflections on the Tragedy of Port Arthur* and a copy of her paper *Severed Connections* are available at [www.journeyonline.com.au](http://www.journeyonline.com.au).

## Jan's story – doing theology as part of a family

ON SUNDAY, Jan, her husband Theo, and the children went to church and during the prayers of intercession, Jan asked for prayers for her family as they worked through their response to a diagnosis of ADHD for their son.

After church Jan's elder offered to come around that afternoon for a chat.

When the elder arrived at the house, Jan made a cup of tea while the elder sat and watched the kids playing in the back yard.

"Is Theo around?" she asked. "He had a call from a client," said Jan.

"He'll be back as soon as he can. He works such long hours –he is really doing his best, he wants to create a great life for us and I really love him for it."

"It seems like you were pretty busy in the last week too," said the elder.



"Yes" sighed Jan, "We are always so busy, and with the extra time needed to deal with this ADHD stuff, I am finding it really difficult."

"So you do most of the stuff when it comes to the kids?" asked the elder.

"Yes" said Jan, "Theo's business is starting to take off and I want to support him as well as the kids."

The elder said, "I have been thinking lately about the way we order our lives, and as Christians I wonder if we do the family/work thing well at all. Our faith is

about mutual relationships and honouring and respecting each other, but we still tend to fall into traditional roles."

"Tell me about it," said Jan. "But I am seriously considering giving up the teacher aide position. Even though I love it, I cannot fit everything into my life at the moment. I could just do the book work at home for Theo and have more time for the kids. I was also thinking of giving up leading Girls' Brigade on Friday nights."

"Have you talked about this with Theo?" asked the elder. "The decisions Theo makes about his work also affect you all as a family."

At that moment Theo arrived home. "I'm sorry I wasn't here when you arrived, he said, "It is just that some things are really urgent."

To most people 'theology' sounds like an academic exercise with little relevance to everyday life.

However we all do theology in some way. Our assumptions about God, the world, and how we interact with each other are all interconnected.

The conversation between Jan and the elder is encouraging reflection on their assumptions.

The elder's questions are encouraging Jan and Theo to look at the systems under the surface in their relationships with each other, with their son, with their church and ultimately with God. We could call this 'systemic theology'.

For more on everyday theology visit the Theological Understandings and Reflection Network (TURN) web site at [www.turn.unitingchurch.org.au](http://www.turn.unitingchurch.org.au)



# Faithfulness rings true

AS TRAPPED miners Todd Russell and Brant Webb stepped out into daylight the people of Beaconsfield awoke not only to the news their miners were free, they woke to the sound of the Uniting Church ringing their bell across the town along with two other churches and the fire station.

Community minister Frances Seen rang the newly restored bell at Beaconsfield Uniting Church with such vigour and excitement that it broke.

The rusty 110 year old bell was last rung in 1945, by Mrs Seen's brother-in-law, to signal the end of WWII.

Having sat in the back of the church for the last thirty years after the tower was removed, a temporary stand was erected for

the bell by retired pastor Ted Wolfe so the church could herald the miners' rescue.

Mrs Seen said she was glad to get the bell back to work.

"I've kicked my toe on it many a time, it will be good to give it a bit of a rattle," she said in the days before the miners resurfaced.

Mrs Seen and the members of Beaconsfield UCA, which is near the Beaconsfield Gold Mine, played key supporting roles to the local community, rescue workers and the media. Mrs Seen counselled some of the media after the unexpected death of 60 Minutes reporter Richard Carleton.

Talking to reporter David Hardaker as she heartily rang the bell, Mrs Seen said the toll of the bell was not only one of joy.

"The tears are trickling down the face, but tears of joy and tears of sadness for Larry's family and for Richard's family, but yeah, we're here rejoicing, and it's just so wonderful. The poor old bell, it's doing it tough, as those that are ringing it are doing it tough."

A local miner, known as Teddy, has offered to build the church a new bell tower.

Throughout the rescue, Mrs Seen's unwavering faith and down-to-earth manner made her the darling of the media around the mine. But Mrs Seen knew things had a higher purpose.

"When the earth tremor came God had already performed a miracle. He just wanted us to hang in there and see it.

"It's a bloody miracle."



Beaconsfield UC elder Pat Veevers, Ted Wolfe and Frances Seen.  
Photo by Kim Cain.

## Queensland tormented by flood and drought

QUEENSLAND IS a huge state and the weather at one end can be very different from what is happening at the other.

Flying Padre for the McKay Patrol Rev Garry Hardingham's story starts on Maundy Thursday after North West Queensland had been inundated with so much water that even the station people were crying, "Enough is enough!"

"In fact many were waking up hoping to see blue skies. It was April and it was all just wrong; the wet was way too late and hanging around way too long.

"After all, too much water kills as much grass as drought," said Garry.

Cyclone Larry was followed by four days of torrential rain that cut the roads and isolated many stations.

Even the kids coming back from boarding schools were trapped. Some made it home via helicopter and the McKay Patrol plane after

spending three days just getting to Cloncurry.

"There were property owners trapped in town unable to get back to their properties, unsure of what was going on," said Garry.

"Sadly, many got back to find large stock and property losses. In fact, I flew one bloke back to his property near Normanton only to find that everywhere we looked there was only water and the homestead standing on an island.

"The fear was that the cattle may starve unable to reach the grass through the water."

Even a trip to the Northern Territory to perform some baptisms on Easter Sunday turned into a grocery and medical supply delivery service for a couple of stations on the way.

Garry reported that it had been a pretty busy and tiring time with 12 grocery drops and two evacuations all in pretty ordinary and trying flying conditions.

"Through it all God and the McKay Patrol Cessna MJZ remained reliable and trustworthy...but then what else would you expect?"

At the same time in the Burke and Wills Patrol region, in Western Queensland, there was an eerie stillness. In contrast, not a hint of rain-clouds could be found. The horizon was tinged with the pink of a dust storm travelling towards the desert.

Coordinator of the Frontier Services Remote Area Families Service in Charleville Ms Davida Melksham said there is immeasurable personal and financial hardship and massive

environmental damage as farmers bear the brunt of drought.

"Although not formally calculated, total economic cost to the environment of the 1990-95 drought was \$5 billion," she said.

For Frontier Services Patrol Padre Rev John Case it is the unspoken that's hardest to witness.

"The look in their eyes when they say, 'Great news they're getting all that rain up north', that belies the desperation. Drought here just seems to go on forever," said Mr Case.

"Out of necessity their lives are mundane and routine. They've lost the purpose of what they are about. I guess I try not to let it get to me.

I see my role is to be able to make contact, and to be able to say, 'Hey, someone really cares for you'."

When asked about his support, he freely admits that he feels some of the greatest empathy and challenge in a decade of ministry.

"They [Frontier Services] stretch me to think in terms of my faith, to reflect theologically on what I have seen."

The insurance companies refer to these natural disasters as "Acts of God", but for those caring for outback Queenslanders the reality is very different.

By Bruce Mullan with  
Garry Hardingham  
and Davida Melksham



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Climatic hardships torment outback Queensland.  
Photo by Davida Melksham

# Huttons return from mission possible

IN AUGUST 2005, Frank and Ruth Hutton began a journey larger than they had ever expected.

The Huttons travelled to Sri Lanka with the plan to assist established Christian charities in their work for six months.

Despite the frustrations of bureaucratic red tape and language barriers, the Huttons found themselves in the tsunami and civil war devastated province of Jaffna.

"The reality of our journey has been the very personal struggle to find a place and role that is a real benefit to the community, (this is made so much more difficult by the language barrier) while at the same time missing the closeness we have enjoyed in the past with family and friends," said Frank and Ruth via their regular email newsletter.

"Spiritually it has been a time of growth as we have been so aware of our dependence on God when situations overwhelm us."

Having found accommodation at the Christian Theological Seminary, they set about getting involved with the local hospitals, children's homes, a day care centre, a sewing centre, and a home for the elderly as well teaching english in their local village of Thevakiramam.



Frank and Ruth Hutton were Vounteers in Mission with the Uniting Church serving in Sri Lanka. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

Through the email newsletter donations from the Huttons' family, church and friends amounted to over \$9000 and helped provide much-needed practical support to all of these facilities from things such as Christmas gifts for school children to supplying staff salaries.

"What strikes us here is the joy of the people, considering the suffering and hardships they still face.

"Many of the people of the Jaffna Peninsula have suffered terribly due to the war.

"The reality of this situation was powerfully brought home to us when a man who lost a leg and part of his other foot due to a landmine in 1997 came 10 kms on his pushbike to see us to seek some financial help to try to start a

small business to be better able to provide for his family.

"A local pastor had suggested this man come to us and we understand this was his third attempt to make contact.

"This was one of those situations we couldn't ignore if we are consistent with our belief that God wants us to be here.

"We expected, and certainly many people told us that undertaking this journey would have a significant impact on us and our world view.

"The experience actually has been more challenging in many ways, particularly living in a country close to a civil war and trying to work within a Church organisation, which is racked by conflict.

"We take peace for granted yet it is so valuable. Sometimes our perception is that having lived through such a long period of conflict it has just become a way of life for many here.

"For all the difficulties, we still thank God for this opportunity and for the support and prayers of many.

"We really appreciate our family and friends whose generosity has enabled us to make a small difference by increasing their opportunities through the tutorials and vocational training.

"We are yet to fully realise the impact on us of this journey."

By Mardi Lumsden

## Grants enable education travel


ALCORN FELLOWSHIP Trust travel assistance grants have been awarded to three Queensland Uniting Church recipients for 2006.

Rev Hedley Fihaki will go to the 19th World Methodist Conference in South Korea, Rev Dr Apichart Branjerdporn will attend the 5th Congress of Asian Theologians

and Pastors, and Deacon candidate Ms Tanya Richards will spend a year with the Christian Protestant Church in Bali (GKPB).

Tanya said she would be working in the area of domestic violence and women's rights.

"I will also be chaplain to the hospitality schools owned by the GKPB that provide pastoral care for young adults learning to work in the hospitality industry," said Ms Richards.



**SOMERVILLE HOUSE**

*Submissions of interest are invited from suitably qualified and experienced applicants for the following vacancy.*

**School Chaplain**

The Council of the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association is seeking an energetic and qualified educator to fill the role of Senior Chaplain at Somerville House. The successful applicant is expected to take up duties at the beginning of 2007.

The Senior Chaplain will provide Christian care and support for students, staff and other members of the School community. The duties include teaching Religious Education in the Senior School, leading the worship program and faith development in the School, with particular emphasis on the students in the Senior School and boarders.

It is not required that the successful applicant be ordained, but that would be well-regarded. Queensland Teacher Registration, or the eligibility to attain it, is required.

Somerville House has a current enrolment of 1200 students from Preparatory Year to Year 12. It is aligned with the Presbyterian and Uniting Churches, the doctrines of which inform the curriculum and faith positions adopted in the School.

Further detailed information concerning the position of School Chaplain may be found on the School's website.

Applications should be forwarded to the Chairman, Somerville House School Council. Applications close on Tuesday 13 June.

www.somerville.qld.edu.au  
PO Box 3357, South Brisbane, Qld 4101

Somerville House was established in 1899, a P-12 boarding & day school for girls and is a member of the Presbyterian & Methodist Schools' Association.



Trust recipient Tanya Richards

## Age no barrier



BETTY SMITH is not your average 90 year old.

A member and Elder of the Albert Street congregation, Ms Smith makes her way on public transport from her home in Teneriffe to Brisbane City three times a week where she has the large task of assisting to keep the Marriage Registers and the Baptismal Registers of Albert Street Uniting Church up to date.

She edits and prepares the 16 page weekly church newsletter (without the aid of a computer) and volunteers her time in numerous ways to the community.

Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman recently attended a morning tea to celebrate Ms Smith's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Ms Smith has an MBE for her extensive work in Christian Education and wrote Sunday School curriculum material for many years.

She is the author of a number of children's stories that were published in several languages, including Kiswahili.

By Mardi Lumsden



# Randy Stonehill: still loud and loving it

By Phil Smith

WHEN RANDY Stonehill was nominated to the International Gospel Music Hall of Fame he had two responses. At first he said, "Wow!"

After a moment he added, "Am I that old?"

Performing since 17 years of age, Randy is a pioneer of contemporary Christian music who has pointed hundreds of thousands to the risen Jesus for the past 37 years. Following AGMF in Toowoomba, Stonehill toured Australia again.

Yet the Church very nearly missed out on Randy Stonehill's ministry. Not long after his conversion in Larry Norman's Los Angeles kitchen, he leaned against his car after a concert and gave God a piece of his mind.

"I came away from a concert feeling pretty beaten up by some of the more conservative elements in the church who had gotten in my face," Stonehill recalls. "I was not their cup of tea. A lot of people would throw out the baby with the bath water, saying 'rock and roll is a destructive force in the culture – how can that ever be married to the Gospel? Your hair's too long, your music's too loud, your pants are too tight and you have too much fun! How dare you?'"

I remember staring at the night sky and having this conversation with God: "I think I'm through here. The very people I thought would support me for bringing the Gospel to my generation, to the streets, they're the ones taking pot shots at me. I don't need this. I think I'm just going to play rock and roll, make some money and see the world and I'll be sure to put in a good word for you from time to time, Lord, because I know you're real. But I think I'm done with this. I'm fed up."

Randy Stonehill recalls God's quiet reply at the moment when his heart was turning away.

"Well, young man, you have a free will and you can go your own way. I have given you good gifts and I imagine you'll have a modicum of success. But I promise you this: You will never be at peace. You will be

haunted every night you get up on stage and leave those people with nothing more than a good time, because you'll know you could have shared hope, you could have shared the Gospel and you chose to just play rock and roll."

That calling differentiated Stonehill from many of his LA musical associates, including The Eagles and others of that mid 70's ilk. Mentored by Larry Norman and Barry McGuire, Randy began visiting Australia in 1977. He went on to write 'Your Love Broke Through' with Keith Green. In Australia Marcia Hines made that song a Top Ten hit.

"That really busted the doors open for me. I was able to play at the Horden Pavilion and stay at Sydney's Boulevard Hotel. It was so funny, coming down in the elevator one morning and seeing 'The Boulevard welcomes our special guests – Charlie Pride, Mohammed Ali and Randy Stonehill!'"

The doors to mainstream media opened with opportunities to share his songs and articulate his faith without "being preachy".

As a track from his new *Edge of the World* CD says, Randy Stonehill is now playing for your daughters and your sons.

At AGMF it was obvious he was even playing for some of our grandchildren. Larry Norman, Barry McGuire, Annie Herring, Phil Keaggy and Chuck Girard feature on the third track *We were all so young*.

We were. Fans from thirty years ago may recall driving hundreds of kilometres to Brisbane or Townsville to see the mop haired funny guy whose songs made us laugh and think.

The wacky sense of humour is a Biblical tonic at a time when few Christians seem to be laughing.

"And that's just such a shame," says Stonehill. "If anyone has licence to celebrate hope and real joy, it's Christians. Laughter is good for the soul like a medicine. Yes, there's spiritual warfare in the works and pursuing a relationship with God is serious stuff, but at the same time



Randy Stonehill still rocking after all these years. Photo by Ben Pearson

laughter is a way of saying we take God and life seriously, but I'm a man set free! I've found out that God's love is not just the dream of desperate men."

Randy Stonehill toured four states to promote Compassion Australia, the child sponsorship program he has supported since 1981.

## Celebrating 160 years of faithful ministry

CELEBRATIONS were held on Saturday 13 May at Caloundra UCA for Rev Tom Scarlett and Rev Doug McKenzie celebrating 55 years of ordination and Rev Jim Hartshorn who celebrated 50 years of ordination.

The Moderator of the Queensland Synod Rev Dr David Pitman said the three men had quite outstanding ministries.

"We want to honour these men as they

celebrate this milestone in their life and ministry.

"Doug has been a prophetic voice for the church and a wonderful support for our partner church in Bali.

"Tom has been a great evangelical leader of our church."

Dr Pitman said the church truly values the commitment of people like Mr Hartshorn, whose service has touched countless lives.



(From left) Tom Scarlett, Ruth Scarlett, Jim Hartshorn, Maisie McKenzie and Doug McKenzie.

The Uniting Church in Australia  
**Queensland Synod**



**MISSION CONSULTANT**  
(DISCIPLESHIP FORMATION & SPIRITUALITY)

**Full time 5 year contract**

The Queensland Synod is seeking an individual (lay or ordained) with passion and drive for discipleship practices, spiritual formation and Christian education processes. You will be required to work with and support Church leaders in their local content and model behaviour which will develop and enhance discipleship, Christian spiritual formation and theologically reflective practices.

**To be successful, you must have:**

- The successful completion of theological degree and training qualifications.
- Knowledge of and experience in discipleship formation, spirituality and Christian education for ministry within congregational and presbytery settings.
- The ability to engage with others to facilitate the development, implementation and evaluation of resources and methods of discipleship formation, spirituality and Christian education for ministry within local contexts.
- Well developed communication skills including facilitation, mentoring, consultation, public speaking, networking, resource production and training.
- High-level analytical, problem solving, project management and research skills.
- The ability to work effectively within team settings and establish work priorities, meet timelines and work with minimum supervision.
- Commitment to and understanding of the mission and ethos of the Uniting Church.

This position will be based in Brisbane, with travel throughout Queensland and interstate as required.

To obtain an information pack to apply for the position contact

**Kristine Bromiley (07) 3377 9825** or  
kristine.bromiley@ucqcentre.ucaql.com.au.

**APPLICATIONS are to be marked CONFIDENTIAL and addressed to:**  
Rev Jenny Tymms, General Secretary Qld Synod, GPO Box 674,  
Brisbane Q 4001 by CLOSE OF BUSINESS MONDAY 10 JULY 2006.

# What are we teaching our children?

By Bruce Mullan

CHRISTIAN religious education teachers in Queensland are predominantly using one of two Australian produced RE curriculum programs each with its own theological and educational emphasis.

*Religion In Life* is written and published by the ecumenical Council for Christian Education in Schools in Victoria and describes itself as a "Christian religious education" curriculum to indicate both the religious

and educational elements of its approach.

The content of *Religion In Life* is drawn from the Christian faith and presented from a Christian perspective but does not attempt systematic instruction in the Christian faith, nor does it presume a particular faith stance in the students.

In keeping with educational principles and the setting in which it is taught, the students'

experience, interests and capacities control the selection of content, and there is a preference for those procedures that allow students to explore and discern for themselves what is relevant to them.

The other commonly used program is produced by the Anglican Christian Education Publications (CEP) in Sydney and for primary students is called *Connect*.

CEP is more theologically and educationally conservative, describing itself as a "Bible-based program that accords with the historic creeds of the church".

CEP claims that a successful Christian Education lesson is one that assists students to make connections between the Bible message and their own lives whereas *Religion in Life* aims to give children a knowledge and understanding of the key beliefs, practices and literature of the Christian faith.

Recognising the reality that in State School RE the parental right of withdrawal exists, *Religion In Life's* aims are more general



and more limited than those of a church-based Christian education program

"*Religion In Life* does not call for a faith commitment on the part of students; rather, the faith is commended by the teachers and the development of a personal faith is thus encouraged, but never instilled."

For the CEP materials the underlying assumption is that the teacher will encourage students to live lives of obedience and trust to Jesus as Lord and Master.

"Consequently we first need to understand God as he reveals himself in the Bible, pre-eminently in the person of Jesus Christ, before we can understand ourselves."

CEP would claim that their material intentionally differs from

curricula that it says adopt a human frame of reference.

Journey asked Uniting Church minister at Emerald and former youth worker Rev Russell Reynoldson which curriculum was better.

Mr Reynoldson has used both and explained that the choice is up to the churches involved in the cooperative RE program.

"In the end the question is not 'What's best?', but are we using this tool to communicate God truths to the children and build strong and lasting relationships," he said.

"The material is a tool for the teacher to be and live the message of God's love.

"Children will remember their teacher long after the story of Jonah being swallowed by a fish."



# Government opts out

FROM PAGE 1

The ABC's *Religion Report* claimed that Baha'is themselves say they have 6,000 children around Australia coming to their classes, 90% of whom are not adherents to the Baha'i religion.

Even before the legislation has been passed, parents at Ithaca Creek State Primary School in Brisbane received an invitation to enrol their children in Baha'i classes.

"We study the spiritual laws common to all religions and learn about basic human virtues," said the invitation that went home via a weekly school newsletter.

"If you wish your child to attend Baha'i classes please fill out the form below."

Indooroopilly Uniting Church member Mrs Janelle Bennett whose children attend the Ithaca Creek State School told *Journey* she had read the letter and threw it out.

"I have no problem with the Baha'i offering to run education classes for those who are interested in Baha'i as long as my children and I don't feel under any pressure to attend," said Mrs Bennett.

Mr Sargeant said, "It's up to the parents in the end, but I'm concerned sometimes that parents may not necessarily have the chance to think through the issues involved as to what program they actually choose for their children."

In line with anti-discrimination laws, religious education classes

will no longer be taught solely by church representatives. Providing they are non-political, groups with a non-religious system of beliefs will also be allowed to teach religious education classes.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* (19/04/06) reported that one supporter of the changes, the Australian Humanist Society, has already designed a syllabus based on creative thinking and ethical responsibility.

Member for Maroochydore Ms Fiona Simpson, one of the legislation's most vocal critics, points out that the Queensland Teacher's



Union long-time representative on REAC is also the President of the Humanist Society.

"It's interesting that the explanatory notes to this new bill expressly mention the possibility of humanism being taught in

schools under the guise of religious education and beliefs," she said.

Criticised for having suggested that the new legislation opens the way for groups such as satanists and witches to have right of entry to schools, Ms Simpson claimed that under the Education (General Provisions) Bill there would be no legal mechanism to stop that.

Members of the Pagan Awareness Network (PAN Inc), which represents about 500 Queensland followers, have publicly stated they want the same rights and freedoms as any other religion.

PAN Inc. president David Garland told *The Courier Mail* (21/04/06), "There is absolutely no reason why religions like Wicca can't be taught in schools if there is sufficient interest from parents and students."

Mr Springborg sees the legislation as part of the Beattie Government's agenda of "radical social engineering".

"It was the Beattie Labor Government that introduced laws making it illegal for church schools to require teachers to share the faith of the school at which they teach," he told *Journey*.

"Labor's plans to remove religion from state schools is just its latest attack on values in the education syllabus."

Facing the inevitability of the new legislation Mr Sargeant said his current concern is the detail that churches still don't know.

## Unity is a shared education

UNITY COLLEGE, the newest school partnership between Catholic Education and the Uniting Church at Caloundra, has introduced an innovative shared Sunday celebration to its program.

Assistant Principal for Religious Education Ms Carmel O'Brien said friends and families of Unity College gather for "Open Church" to worship, build friendships and listen to guest speakers tell of their personal journeys in life.

"It is inspiring, family-friendly and often has students leading, through song, prayer or role-playing," said Ms O'Brien.

The worship seeks to embrace both Catholic and Uniting Church traditions and is part of the College's commitment to developing a school community that lives out the Gospel.

Unity College began its



A Unity College student checks out the Bible.

history-making journey when it opened its doors to the Caloundra community on 24 January 2006 and currently has 40 students enrolled in Pre-school to Year 4 (the Junior School) and Year 8 (the Middle School).

You can read more about Unity College at their web site <http://www.uc.qld.edu.au>.

"There are things like how local volunteers will be accredited, there are things like how will Education Queensland make decisions about which groups are worth admitting and which aren't," he said.

"Previously the government has taken no part in choosing groups on the basis of the content of their programs and yet we have some sense this time that groups do have to submit their RE programs and therefore the government might

make some decision on the basis of those."

Time may have already run out for the churches but Mr MacGregor said that even with the bill before parliament, contacting local members with your reactions may be helpful.

"Considering that the parliamentary debate may take place at any time now, such representations need to be made swiftly."



# Mentors give kids hope

By Mardi Lumsden

ENOGERA PRIMARY School and Emmanuel Uniting Church have commenced a new mentoring ministry built on a long-term partnership between local churches and primary schools.

A World Vision program, Kids Hope Australia (KHA) requires schools and churches to work together to match a caring adult with a child. Each mentor sees only one child and they meet one hour per week.

Emmanuel Uniting Church youth worker Tim Robinson heard about KHA and the church has jumped in feet first, including minister Rev John Cox who volunteered as a mentor.

Mr Cox said although mentors do not talk about religion with students a program like KHA gives children a living example of Christianity.

"It gives them the message that they are important, they are special and that they are worth while. It affirms them as kids and as individuals. Some come from settings where that affirmation may not be there," he said.

"There is no intention for KHA to be a pseudo religious program. We are intentional on recognising the right of entry rules in Queensland schools. The time we spend with a child is not to promulgate stories of scripture but to invest in that child's life."



Emmanuel Uniting Church Minister and Kids Hope Mentor Rev John Cox. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

Enoggera State School principal Jody Falvey said students are identified if teachers believe the mentoring program may be beneficial for them.

"The students selected are in Years 1-3 and have behavioural and/or emotional needs. The majority of identified students are boys.

"Teachers recognise that when students are experiencing behavioural and/or emotional

difficulties, they find it very difficult to focus on learning at school. Mentors and teachers negotiate an appropriate time for the weekly sessions to occur so as not to further disrupt learning."

Each mentoring session is divided into portions. There is a schoolwork component, an 'about me' section where students can talk about their family, friends and interests and time for the child and the mentor to do something

the child enjoys (such as playing a board game, kicking a football or drawing).

Judith Brumm, a former child protection officer, said the opportunity to help a child has been very rewarding and the child she mentors has been very responsive.

"She was initially reluctant, nervous, and hesitant but the last visit she said it was 'the most extraordinary happiest day of her life'. When I asked why, she

said, 'because you are here'.

"You are helping that child think 'I'm OK'. Helping them not get isolated from peer group through lack of social skills. Some children are from different countries. Some have little English or don't know local norms and customs."

As an education student, Rebecca Chan had done observations at Enoggera State School so she knew what she was getting herself into when she volunteered as a mentor.

"Knowing the kids and knowing how nice the kids are I thought it would be great to be able to make a difference in their lives. I thought it would be a good opportunity.

"Her response has been really positive. She is a really cheerful little girl. We do lots of drawing because she is really good at drawing and she helps me draw too. When she is happy it makes me happy... especially when we're doing work and she is understanding it."

Ms Chan said the child's teacher has been very positive about the experience.

Ms Falvey said both teachers and parents have welcomed KHA.

"The parents of students involved in the program are very appreciative of the level of support which is provided through Kids Hope.

"Teachers have expressed their observations of the positive nature in which students approach and participate in the sessions."

For the team of mentors from Emmanuel Uniting the experience is a rewarding one.

The sense of satisfaction is in making a difference in a life.

As Mr Cox said, "It is the knowledge that I am offering something hopefully rich to a child, and that this gift might be something beneficial to that child in the future."

For more information about Kids Hope Australia go to [www.worldvision.org.au/getinvolved/kha](http://www.worldvision.org.au/getinvolved/kha)

## School chaplains make a difference

A UNIVERSITY of Queensland study has found that chaplains in Queensland state schools provide a unique and much-needed support role ensuring school communities are equipped to deal with the "big" or "soul" issues facing young people today.

Author Dr Judy Salecich said more than 110 Queensland schools now had paid chaplains who were offering pastoral care to young people in the state education system.

"Unlike school-based nurses, chaplains are not appointed or paid by the State," she said.

Many State School chaplains are paid by Scripture Union Queensland.

"Chaplaincy is about community development — local people identifying the needs of young people and families in their community and mobilising community resources to meet these needs."

Data was gathered from four

Brisbane and five non-metropolitan schools with chaplains, by surveying all chaplains employed by SU Queensland and conducting student focus groups.

"Teenagers have a lot of questions, such as 'Who am I?' and 'Where am I going?' and they want someone to give them some answers."

Local churches can help students in a number of practical ways.

Earlier this year, Cleveland Uniting Church was asked by the chaplain at the local high school to help a family who had experienced a tragedy, by paying their school resource fees.

Cleveland Uniting Church youth worker and Cleveland State Primary School chaplain Beth Nichols said the congregation was more than willing to help.

"The response from the church members was immediate and very generous and provided the money plus extra for Chaplain Neile to use for similar cases.

"From the Church's point of



Kawana Waters Uniting Church Youth Worker Andrew Fox.

view, it was wonderful to be able to help, from the school's point of view they are thankful that there is a church willing to give support when needed.

"It's a great relationship: we have a school that wants to serve the community, we have a church that is called to serve the community and together we can do just that."

Monday mornings at Kawana Waters State College are very busy for Kawana Waters Uniting Church members, youth worker Andrew Fox and the school's chaplain Anthony Pulford.

Members of the congregation cook students a free breakfast giving the chaplain and Mr Fox time to talk with students.

The church teams up with the local Baptist Church to provide a free breakfast and lots of games at the Primary Campus of Kawana State College.

Kawana Waters has also been involved with a mentoring program at the high school run in conjunction with Independent Family and Youth Services (a secular organisation) for at-risk students.

Both Kawana Waters and Cleveland run lunch time youth groups at local high schools.

Dr Salecich said chaplaincy in schools is important for young people to develop a rounded world view.

"Modern society suffers from a lack of God-consciousness and chaplaincy is one way in which communities are trying to redress that, to bring a reality of God closer to young people."

By Mardi Lumsden  
More information on Dr Salecich's thesis is available from [www.uq.edu.au/news/?article=3229](http://www.uq.edu.au/news/?article=3229)

# Assembly looks at a different kind of church

MEMBERS OF the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly will be asked to think outside the box to help foster faith development and approve ways to form new congregations and faith communities in Uniting Church schools and community service agencies.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly will be asked to endorse the document *Being Church Differently: Encouragement and guidance for the formation of new Congregations and Faith Communities of the UCA within institutional and other settings* for distribution and use across the life of the Uniting Church.

Responding to recent growth in the number of Uniting Church schools and community service agencies, *Being Church Differently* offers guidance to presbyteries, congregations and agencies in fostering faith development outside the structures of "normal" congregations.

The National Assembly's Consultant for Theology and Discipleship, Rev Dr Robert Bos

said faith formation cannot happen in isolation and requires the support of a Christian community as people journey.

"Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a Christian Community to evangelise and nurture a new Christian," he said.

"Christians have many kinds of contact with people, but need support in turning these contacts into disciple making opportunities.

Dr Bos is concerned with the increasing distance between the Uniting Church's extensive community service network and the life of congregations.

"If we do not provide opportunities for faith development outside the inherited 'normal' structures, people will go elsewhere, or miss the opportunity to come to faith. There is a huge evangelistic opportunity for the Uniting Church through its very extensive community services networks.

"If we do not recognise this and seize the opportunities, we may well be falling short of our calling

as a Christian community."

*"Being Church Differently"* suggests ways in which we might use our community service agencies and schools to offer more in the area of faith formation, as a fuller expression of the gospel of Christ.

"The document suggests that words (professing the faith) and deeds (providing community services) should not be separated, and that deeds by themselves do not always speak clearly."

As well as offering encouragement to congregations, *Being Church Differently* canvasses a number of important issues including the essentials of forming a new congregation or faith community, cautionary tales and considerations, examples of places new congregations might be formed and some questions and answers.

If endorsed by the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly, *Being Church Differently* will be distributed across the church for use over the next three years.

*Being Church Differently* can be viewed or downloaded from the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly website at the "Proposals and Working Papers" section <http://nat.uca.org.au/11thassembly>



National Assembly Consultant for Theology and Discipleship  
Rev Dr Robert Bos

## Vacancy Synod Selection Panel



Vacancies exist for **Uniting Church** members to be appointed to the Queensland Synod Selection Panel. The Synod is calling for expressions of interest and applications for membership. Positions are voluntary.

The Synod Selection Panel is responsible for determining who are accepted as candidates for the specified ministries in the **Uniting Church in Australia**. Interviews are conducted over two days twice each year. Not all members of the Selection Panel are required on every occasion.

The **Uniting Church** will make its appointments to ensure that the Synod Selection Panel has an appropriate balance of expertise across skill areas and to ensure a balance of gender and age and of clergy and lay people. All appointees to the Synod Selection Panel will be members of the **Uniting Church**.

The Selection Criteria for appointees to the Synod Selection Panel include gifting in discernment, the ability to frame appropriate questions and to listen carefully and sensitively, a prayerful approach to the task, knowledge of the Basis of Union and a good understanding of the ethos and polity of the UCA, relevant experience in the life of the local and/or wider church, and career experience which has helped to develop relevant useful skills for the task.

More information is available at <http://www.meb.ucaweb.com.au>.

Expressions of interest or applications addressing the above selection criteria and skills list should be forwarded to **Mrs Jenny Brecknell**, Chairperson Ministerial Education Board, UCA, Queensland Synod at [jenny@brecknell.name](mailto:jenny@brecknell.name) or GPO Box 674, Brisbane Qld 4001, by **23 June 2006**.



## Website of the month

SOME WEBSITES are visited regularly over a long period of time and others have a short life span for a particular event or period of time.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly website <http://assembly.uca.org.au/11thassembly> is up for just another month or two to provide Uniting Church members with a comprehensive collection of information about the Assembly meeting in Brisbane next month.

The site is well designed and easily navigated with full text pdf files of reports, timetables, agendas, proposals and ballot information so Uniting Church members and the general public can access the complete set of papers provided for each of the Assembly members.

The site also includes

downloadable resources for local reflection such as *God's Word, God's World, towards the 11th Assembly*, a series of four short studies designed for use as discussion starters for small groups, congregations and faith communities.

For those who want to be even more up-to-date, there is a button to access online subscriptions to the Assembly news services including a headline news alert which will be sent electronically each night during the Assembly and will provide all the news of the day including stories, reports and resolutions.

Uniting Church in Australia members who want to be informed about the detail of the 11<sup>th</sup> Assembly should bookmark this site now.

# What is the Assembly?

THE ASSEMBLY is the national council of the Uniting Church in Australia and, like other councils such as presbyteries, synods, and church councils, it has its own special role to play.

The Assembly has specific responsibilities in matters of doctrine, worship, government and discipline and also sets national policy and promotes the Church's mission in the world.

It also establishes standards of theological training and for the reception of ministers from other denominations.

The Assembly meets every three years with about 250 representatives elected by synods and presbyteries to form the decision making body of the Assembly.

The discussion revolves around social and policy issues relating to the church and the outcome is a series of decisions affecting the corporate life of the church over the following three years.

The next meeting of the Assembly will be hosted by the Queensland Synod at the University of Queensland 5-11 July 2006

Members from across Australia will gather to study the Bible, worship together and pray, review the life of the Church over the past three years, reflect on reports and recommendations, and determine the course of the Church in Australia and overseas.

The Assembly elects its President at its meeting.



Incoming President  
Rev Gregor Henderson

The current President Rev Dr Dean Drayton will step down and the new President Rev Gregor Henderson will be inducted.

The Assembly is guided by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, prophets and scholars, and the Church's *Basis of Union*, Constitution and Regulations.

The Assembly will also elect a Standing Committee to follow up decisions and deal with issues that arise in the three years until the 12<sup>th</sup> Assembly meets in 2009.

## The National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) 2009

is looking for a

### Convention Coordinator (Full time, Sept 06 - May 09)

The position's main purpose is to coordinate the planning and organisation of NCYC 2009.

Contact Kim Anderson at CECM: ph: (03) 9852 7433 or [kim.anderson@kew.vic.uca.org.au](mailto:kim.anderson@kew.vic.uca.org.au)

Applications close: Friday 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2006.



Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of Victoria and Tasmania  
Centre for Theology and Ministry





Geebung and Wavell Heights Uniting Church Minister Rev Wendi Sargeant.  
Photo by Bruce Mullan

## Religious Education makes connections

AS A UNITING Church Minister Rev Wendi Sargeant knows first hand how important it is for congregations to get involved with RE in their local schools.

As an RE teacher at Geebung State School and Wavell State High School and a former member of REAC Ms Sargeant sees RE as what she calls "pre-evangelism".

"It is a Christian educational practice that helps students in, often, their very first contact with knowledge about God," she said.

"It is dangerous to view RE as evangelism, per se, as the element of free will on the part of the student must be considered. We

cannot abuse the 'captive audience' aspect of right-of-entry into State Schools. Pre-evangelism builds the foundations upon which a faith response may be made.

"People usually need to understand a little about the God they are encountering, before they are willing to trust in that God.

"RE also helps students to talk first hand with someone who already follows Jesus, and children are encouraged to ask questions and discuss their thoughts openly. This is public theological discourse!

"There are plenty of people who can attest to the place of RE in their conversion and commitment

to Christ. A national mission consultant said to me recently, 'Whenever I question the value of involvement in RE, someone always tells a story about someone who came to faith through RE'.

"RE is about making connections with the people in your area.

"It is about being where people are. It is being part of your community.

"It is about sharing your love for God in Jesus Christ with others who might not hear the good news in such interactive ways. It is about using the opportunities that God has given us, being led by God's Spirit and growing in your faith."

## Moderator has heart for leadership

WITH THE goal of briefing 70 enthusiastic, competent and informed people committed to the implementation of the Vision for Mission, the Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman called a Leadership Forum in Brisbane in May.

Dr Pitman invited Uniting Church leaders to covenant together to offer proactive, gracious and courageous leadership to the church.

"In the current context characterised by the weariness and loss of purpose that invariably accompanies prolonged conflict, it is time for those who believe in the imperative of the gospel and the values and vision of the Kingdom of God, to stand up in the midst of the people and call them back to faithful discipleship in the name of Christ and in the power of the Spirit," Dr Pitman said.

"We need leaders who love Christ deeply, believe unequivocally in the unity into which Christ calls us, are committed to the Uniting Church, and are passionate about mission and the proclamation of the Gospel."

Dr Pitman said he was also looking for people who were willing to work within the diversity of worship, witness and service which characterises the Uniting Church and a willingness to think and dream "outside the square".

Quoting Eugene Peterson's proposal that the key task of church leaders is to keep the community attentive to God, Dr Pitman said he was convinced that Christian leadership is pre-eminently a matter of the heart and spirit.

Dr Pitman said he is best able to attend to what God says to him through the Gospel stories about how Jesus himself attended to God.

"In the wilderness, Jesus experienced the counter-attack as a series of temptations to embrace popularity, status, success and power as the hallmarks of his ministry.

"At that moment, he was engaged in an inner battle that was to endure throughout his life.



Queensland Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman is committed to Christian leadership. Photo by Osker Lau

"It was a battle he had to fight every time his personal popularity prompted the people to acclaim him as temporal king rather than eternal saviour.

"It was the agony of spirit he experienced as he contemplated his personal destiny and saw all too clearly the alternatives available to him."

Dr Pitman believes that being attentive to God is a life-long process and that we only ever manage to do it imperfectly.

He also believes that Christian leadership can only be offered out of our own broken humanity and that real leadership emerges out of honesty, self-awareness, vulnerability and humanity.

"The Apostle Paul understood that his strength in leadership was closely linked to the recognition and acknowledgement of his weaknesses, for only then was he ready to put his trust in God."

## Youth ministry: more than games

YOUTH MINISTRY Consultant Steve Kersnovske wants to encourage people who are struggling with small numbers of teenagers and can't provide whiz-bang nights to attract teenagers.

He believes that adults need to let go of the outreach element and equip and trust our young people for this task.

"One boy I know has just started attending a weekly prayer group at school and invited a friend to Youth Alpha during the lunch break," said Steve who cites this as a great example of how young people can outreach to their peers.

"Leaders can invest their energy in the quality of their time together rather than burning themselves out by trying to think of new ideas to attract and keep kids."

Steve struggles with the suggestion that the church's role is to provide a safe environment and keep young people off the street.

"I cannot find one piece of scripture that supports this position. Our mandate from Jesus himself is to go and make disciples.

"We can't possibly keep kids safe and off the streets for the other six days of the week?

"History and research shows time and time again that when young people only receive entertainment and a short devotion on a Friday night, they leave our groups between the age of 15 to 17. There are a few exceptions."

Steve is not averse to youth groups having fun and games but believes games must not consume more than 25% of the program.

"Games selected should encourage and build community and not cause embarrassment for participants.

"We just need to be intentional about why we are using the games. Games used for action and

reflection in opening up the Bible and applying it in activity based learning can be a lot of fun for all involved.

"We get so little time to invest in the life of a young person, let's not waste that time by focusing on entertainment."

Steve believes that discipleship is about getting into what really matters in a young person's life and helping them see what the Good News has to offer.

"Yes, we will lose some young people from our groups in the process but they will move on

anyway when they discover something more interesting.

"If the future of the world depended on the kind of impact we made on the lives of the young people in our church then I wonder whether that might be enough to motivate us to change.

"In reality Jesus invested all that he had into the lives of 12 impressionable disciples and the world was changed forever."

To contact Steve Kersnovske  
email [stevek@yacmu.com.au](mailto:stevek@yacmu.com.au)



Steve Kersnovske. Photo by Osker Lau

### Vacancies: Emmanuel College Council



Two vacancies exist for Synod appointments to the Council of Emmanuel College and expressions of interest are sought from energetic women and men within the Uniting Church who meet the selection criteria set out below.

Founded in 1911, Emmanuel College is a co-educational residential college of the University of Queensland which provides accommodation and care for university students together with opportunities for students to gain a wider and informal liberal education through college activities and collegiate living within a Christian context.

The selection criteria for appointees are:

- Membership of the Uniting Church
- Commitment to the values and ethos of the Uniting Church and Emmanuel College
- Experience/understanding of corporate governance preferably through service on a board or council
- Skills/experience in one of the following preferred areas: business/commerce, tertiary education
- Skills in any of the following areas will be an advantage: finance, legal, planning and development, marketing, public relations, fund raising.

Expressions of interest or applications addressing the above selection criteria may be forwarded to Rev. Jenny Tymms, General Secretary at [gensec@uccentre.ucaqld.com.au](mailto:gensec@uccentre.ucaqld.com.au) or GPO Box 674, Brisbane, Qld. 4001 by Friday 16 June.

### SANDERSON RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP Uniting Church Theological College, Melbourne



Applications are invited for the Sanderson Research Fellowship in the Uniting Church Theological College, Melbourne.

The Fellowship is tenable either half-time for one year or full-time for six months, commencing in **mid February 2007**.

Particulars about the Fellowship may be obtained from [www.theohall.vic.uca.org.au](http://www.theohall.vic.uca.org.au) (Research and Resources) or from the Faculty Secretary, Uniting Church Theological College, Ormond College, College Crescent, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia.

# WHAT'S ON

**Wednesdays (during Term time), 9.15-11.30am. GUCCE – Gap UC Craft Experience**, 1050 Waterworks Road, The Gap. Morning Tea and lots of fun and fellowship. \$3. Child minding \$3/child. Contact church office on 3300 2712 or email [thegapuc@inet.net.au](mailto:thegapuc@inet.net.au).

**April 20-August 2, Thursdays 6.30-9pm. Living the Questions DVD and Discussion series.** West End UC. \$30 for 12 sessions. For more information visit [www.progressivespirituality.net](http://www.progressivespirituality.net).

**May 30, 10am. Australian Church Women annual morning tea.** Musical program by group Celebration. St Andrew's Church Hall, Creek St, Brisbane City. \$7. Ph Mollie Jean Hunt on 3358 4349.

**May 30, 10am-noon. Meeting of the Brisbane and surrounding areas group for retired ministers, their spouses and widowed members.** The Gap Uniting Church, 1050 Waterworks Road. Morning tea available. Meeting from 10.30am, lunch at noon. \$13.50/person. Enquiries and replies to Jim & Jill Tame on 3891 6462 or email [jjtame@dovenetq.net.au](mailto:jjtame@dovenetq.net.au).

**May 30, 6.30pm for 7pm. South Moreton Presbytery Adult Fellowship Annual Dinner**, Labrador Youth and Community Centre, Billington Street, Labrador.

**June 1-3, Trinity North Queensland short courses for North Qld region- 'Worship'.** Cairns Emmanuel UC. More details contact Rev Hedley Fihaki 0401 698 934 or [hedley@cairns.unitingchurch.com](mailto:hedley@cairns.unitingchurch.com).

**June 3. FAQ launch Testify EP.** The Zoo, Fortitude Valley. More info at [www.faqmusic.net](http://www.faqmusic.net).

**June 4, 6pm. Joy in the Spirit Pentecost Ecumenical worship** using Taizé songs and prayers. St Albans Anglican Church, Auchenflower. Contact James Macdonald 3393 1567.

**June 6, 7-9pm. Biblical storytelling in a digital culture seminar.** UC Centre Bayliss St, Auchenflower. Speaker Rev Dr Tom Boomershine, co-founder of Network of Biblical Storytellers. For more information contact YACMU on 3377 9866 or email Paul. [Yarrow@yacmu.com.au](mailto:Yarrow@yacmu.com.au).

**June 11 and July 9, 12noon-2pm. Monthly Barnabas Community Fellowship** at the Oxley UC hall. Persons both disabled and able are invited to attend and make their needs and wishes known. Please join us and bring food to share.

**June 15, 9.30am-12.30. Micah Challenge Queensland Action Group Meeting incorporating Make Poverty History** at the UC Centre, 60 Baylis St Auchenflower. First floor meeting room.

**June 16-18. The Network of Biblical Storytellers gathering.** Youthworks Conference Centre, Deer Park Port Hacking, Sydney South. Keynote Speaker Rev Dr Tom Boomershine (USA). Contact Mark (02) 8267 4231 or Graham (02) 9401 6247.

**June 19-23. Trinity Theological College CEM week.** All ministry agents in the Queensland Synod invited. More info ph 3377 9950 or email [tte@uccentre.ucaqld.com.au](mailto:tte@uccentre.ucaqld.com.au).

**June 22, 10.30am. Frontier Services and International Mission Auxiliaries mission thanksgiving service.** St Andrews UC, Ann St Brisbane. Speaker Rev John Case, Burke and Wills Patrol padre.

**June 26-July 1. UAICC national conference**, Alexandra Park Conference Centre, Alexandra Headland.

**July-August. Spirit Journeys to the Desert.** Information on dates, costs, leaders and places available from [www.desertjourneys.com](http://www.desertjourneys.com). Contact [spiritjourneys@pnc.com.au](mailto:spiritjourneys@pnc.com.au) or 0425 314 863.

**July 5-11. National Assembly** meeting of the Uniting Church in Australia. University of Queensland, Brisbane.

**July 23. Ministry Sunday.**

**July 30, 5.30pm-late. JAM at Emmanuel UC.** 249 South Pine Rd Enoggera. More info at [www.emmanueluc.unitingchurch.org.au](http://www.emmanueluc.unitingchurch.org.au).

**September 2, 11am-4pm. Bremer Brisbane Fun Day.** At Allawah Scout Park, Allawah Rd, Chuwar (UBD 173 Q9). Contact June Rice on 3202 7045.

Want to promote an event?  
Email [mardi.lumsden@uccentre.ucaqld.com.au](mailto:mardi.lumsden@uccentre.ucaqld.com.au)  
with the subject 'What's on' or fax (07) 3377 9796.

## Band finds the right look at Kangaroo Point Uniting

Band FAQ has completed filming a video clip for their new single the gospel inspired *Piece of Dirt*. The clip was filmed in Wesley Kangaroo Point Uniting Church and features around twenty of the band's friends in full choir robes. The only thing missing was streamers on the tambourine.

FAQ launched their *Testify* EP at the Zoo on June 3. For more information go to [faqmusic.net](http://faqmusic.net).



FAQ members Dave, Peter, Paul and Hudson during the filming at Wesley Kangaroo Point Uniting Church. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

### Hamilton turns 100

In January 2007, St Luke's Uniting Church (formally Hamilton Methodist) will be celebrating its centenary.

For more information and details please contact Terry Stanyer at the Clayfield Uniting Church office on 3256 0175 (9am-12pm Monday-Friday), Joan Lynn on 3268 1477, or Annette Lynn on 3268 4131.

### Bible row in Qld hospitals

Deputy Premier Anna Bligh denied that Bibles have been banned from hospital bedsides because health officials fear they might offend non-Christians said *The Australian*.

"If a patient in one of our hospitals wants a Bible there will be one... Policy and practice in relation to Bibles in our hospitals is unchanged and remains as it has been for many years."

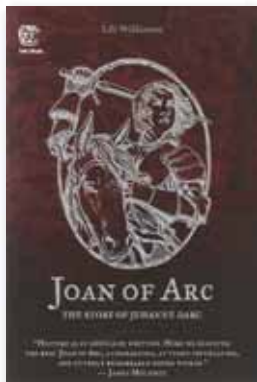
### What would Jesus drive?

*BBC News* said a poll to find out "what would Jesus drive" reported 29 per cent of 4,000 church leaders said Jesus would take a different route and stick with the sandals.

But Rev Clive Jones of Staplehurst thought Jesus would opt for a car "despised and rejected of men – a Skoda".







**Joan of Arc the Story of Jehanne Darc**  
By Lili Wilkinson  
Blackdog Books  
RRP \$16.95

Here is a must read history of a valiant young woman whose inspirational story has become legend.

Facing the intellectual and military giants of her day, an illiterate young peasant girl armed with a simple but passionate faith, stood her ground and fought valiantly. Joan stands as a symbol of courage and faith.

Wilkinson makes good use of the extensive volume of eyewitness accounts available, to reveal the amazing adventure of this courageous young woman.

Was she a witch, a messenger from God, a saint or perhaps a deranged girl? Rather than answer

the questions that continue to surround Joan of Arc, the book reveals the various complexities of her life and passions.

Joan ran away at 15 to answer God's call and by 19 met her death at the stake. We see events race at an incredible speed as she revived the hopes of a dejected nation, raised an army and led them to victory bringing the most powerful military power of her time to heel.

In an astonishingly short space of time this uneducated peasant girl achieved her goal of bringing about the coronation of her king and restoring the pride of France.

*Joan of Arc* is very accessible medieval history, is beautifully designed with C15th illustrations, and well placed vignettes explaining archaic terms and religious jargon in the flow of the story.

Readers are encouraged to consider the possibility of God's calling and its incredible power when obediently and faithfully followed. Teachers are given excellent material for Christian debate on biblical gender issues, divine inspiration and the tension between faith and mental illness.

Further themes that could be explored include loyalty and devotion in the face of betrayal, and obedience in contrast to pride and ambition.

James Moloney describes *Joan of Arc the Story of Jehanne Darc* as, "History as it should be written".

Liz Adams is a member of the Robina Uniting Church

## REVIEWS

### Elevation

#### Music CD

Produced by 96.5FM

RRP \$2.50 plus postage and handling

*Elevation* is the annual sampler release by Brisbane radio station 96.5 Family FM. As Brisbane's Christian radio station, 96.5 FM has access to some great local and overseas Christian music talent.

Immediately recognisable names like Superchick, John Reuben (of Hillsong fame), and Soulframe (recent guest artists at Aspley Uniting) will even be obvious to someone not overly familiar with "Christian" music.

The music is a mix of pop and rock mainly with a little RnB thrown to keep the balance. Lyrics are fairly tame for "Christian" artists



who would probably work as well in a secular context as a Christian one.

The CD (which is not commercially available) is also an enhanced CD with music videos of all the featured artists, information about the radio station and church youth activities. It also has a short introduction into the basis of what it means to be a Christian.

Overall I'm impressed with the sound quality and the variety of talent and musical styles featured and would rate it 3 1/2 out of 5.

*Elevation 2006* is available from most SU School chaplains or can be purchased in bulk from [www.96five.com](http://www.96five.com) in the 96.5 shop section to give away to young people in your area.

Matt Gees works in radio and is a student at Trinity Theological College

### Country Life and the Church

By Rol Mitchell

Glenlea Publishing

RRP \$39.00 post paid from

28 Western View Drive

Albury NSW 2640

This book is a record of Rol Mitchell's six years research which included an 18 month "live in" study of "Countrytown".

It explores as an academic social research project the significance of the Christian Church in an Australian rural community. The town ultimately selected for this project (identified only

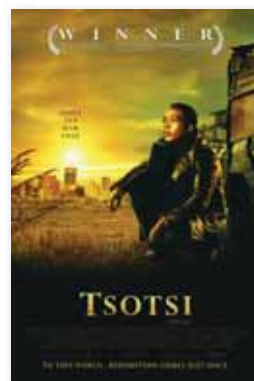
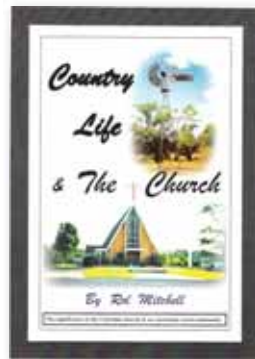
as "Countrytown") is a town of around 3000 people in central western New South Wales.

Being an academic research project there is a fair amount of detail to wade through but it is far from dull. In fact, to anyone who has spent, or will spend, any time at all in Australian country towns this will be a very interesting and important read.

In his summary Rol concludes, "when considered in its entirety this research project has shown that the rural church, in spite of the erosive influences of recent times, can still claim to be a significant component of contemporary rural life in Australia." There is no doubt that this summary is based on solid, validated research.

The book is more than the research process and findings. I found the book excellent in providing me with ideas, concepts and methodology to encourage my own exploration of the significance of the Christian Church in any given community, be it rural, regional or metropolitan. Having lived and ministered in a number of country towns in Queensland what Rol presented rang true with me and confirmed as well as challenged some of my own thinking.

Bruce Cornish is Presbytery Minister for the Presbytery of North Queensland



### Tsotsi

Directed by Gavin Hood  
Palace Films

(M)

A young thug living in a shanty town outside of Johannesburg gets more than he bargained for when he steals a car (and shoots the female owner) only to find a baby sleeping quietly in the back seat.

Orphaned at a young age and with little respect for the lives of others or himself, the presence of a baby unexpectedly forces Tsotsi to confront his own brutality.

This profoundly moving film captures the huge divide between rich and poor in South Africa and hints at the effects of the AIDS crisis on future generations. For the first time in his life, Tsotsi has to deal with the consequences of his actions.

Based on a novel by playwright Athol Fugard, *Tsotsi* won Best Foreign Language Film at the 2006 Academy Awards.

This film, with its dull, dirty colours and gritty ghetto soundtrack gives an insightful look at how life's simple truths can heal a sadly damaged soul.

Mardi Lumsden is associate editor of *Journey*

Read more  
online

[www.journeyonline.com.au](http://www.journeyonline.com.au)

## Ministry Team Leader

To work with an enthusiastic lay leadership team in a regional congregation serving a central area of the beautiful Mid North Coast of NSW.

- Growing regional service centre (population 71,000).
- Congregation embarked on journey of change.
- Growing small group ministry.
- Strong community service ministries.
- Seeking to grow in evangelism.
- Excellent church facilities.
- Walk to beach from manse.

An exciting placement for a Minister with vision for creative ministry in both church and community, energy, and delight in worship, with strong leadership and mentoring skills.

For further information, including a congregational profile, contact Rev Janet Dawson, phone (02) 6582 1767 or email [mncpresby@tsn.cc](mailto:mncpresby@tsn.cc).

Applications close 24 July 2006.

**PORT MACQUARIE, NSW**

Under the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 it is illegal for prohibited persons to apply and a "Working with Children Check" will be required.



Dave Thomas is Community Minister at the Tallebudgera congregation on the Gold Coast

# PRAYER DIARY

11 June:  
Middle Ridge

Middle Ridge Uniting Church is situated adjacent to the Blue Care Garden Settlement facility on the southern side of Toowoomba.

Current minister Rev Paul Jensen took over from Rev Les Comollatti this year.

Give thanks for the fluid process that the Church has progressed through in order to build the new Church.

Give thanks for particular members of the congregation who have led the building approval processes.

Pray for the leadership team and the Church Council as it leads the transition for the congregation into a new building and being a 'regional' style of Church.

Pray for the congregation as it negotiates its building project and the movement to being a 'regional' style of Church.

Pray that the Council and congregation will exercise patience with each other as living conditions change and become somewhat cramped over the next few months.

Pray for the Church Council and the congregation as they continue to discern how God is calling them to community engagement.

Pray for the resettled Sudanese and other ethnic African refugees as they settle into the Toowoomba community. Pray for the Toowoomba community as it seeks to provide a safe and hospitable environment in which refugees can rebuild their lives and hopes.

Pray for the Toowoomba City Council as it seeks to negotiate the significant water crisis that currently plagues Toowoomba and surrounding districts.

Pray for the Presbytery of the Downs which seeks to give leadership to the changing nature of the Church on the Downs.

18 June: St Luke's  
Congregation and  
Cape York Patrol

St Luke's Uniting and Anglican Co-operating parish is a small congregation located in Weipa, Cape York.

Congregation members are heavily involved in community activities as well as keen to increase the profile of the church in the community. The Cape York Patrol is part of Frontier Services' work in Queensland. It involves visiting people in isolated stations and townships around the Cape.

This has been a very late and very big wet season. Prayer would be appreciated for all stations and communities on the Cape.

Coen has been inaccessible by road for at least two months.

The increased reliance on tourism in the Cape has also meant that many people are facing a hugely curtailed income this year.

Some stations have been evacuated and many are cut off by road and will be for at least another six weeks.

On 4 June (Pentecost) St Luke's is holding a birthday party for the church including some individual baptisms, and a congregational reaffirmation of baptism.

Prayer for seafarers would be appreciated. Many ships come into the Weipa Port and some members of the Weipa Congregation supply Bibles for these ships.

The seafarers are often away from family for at least six months of the year, are very poorly paid and are often exploited when exchanging money. Please pray for this continuing ministry and for the conditions on ships.

Pray for reconciliation between the indigenous and non-indigenous people in the Cape.

Pray for the West Papuan asylum seekers who landed on the Cape in January.



Iris Carden, David Holder, Jenny Busch, Benny Lam Sam, and Sarah Sheehy

## Uniting Church members go skin deep for cure

THE WORLD'S Greatest Shave for a Cure saw many Uniting Church people take it off for a good cause.

Uniting Church Financial Services Division's David Holder and Benny Lam Sam, Moreton Bay College chaplain Jenny Busch, Uniting Church Property division's Sarah Sheehy, and Royal Brisbane Women's and Royal Children's Hospital chaplain Iris Carden were just a few who went under the knife.

The Leukaemia Foundation is the only national not-for-profit organisation dedicated to the care and cure of patients and families living with leukaemias, lymphomas, myeloma and related blood disorders.

Each year around 100,000 people across Australia pledge to shave or colour their hair to raise funds for the Leukaemia Foundation.

At the time of printing, the World's Greatest Shave had raised almost \$2.5 million for the Leukaemia Foundation.

The Leukaemia Foundation holds the Guinness World Record for the most heads shaved over a 24 hour period.



One of the Pine Rivers UCA 2005 team goes through his paces. Photo courtesy of The Leprosy Mission Queensland

## Breaking the cycle

LEPROSY MISSION Australia holds its 14th annual ReCyKle on 5 August.

The 2006 event will see up to 70 teams aim to raise money for projects in Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Each team needs twelve riders and any number of supporters. The teams compete against each other to see who can ride the most kilometres on an exercise bike in 60 minutes.

The current record is 50.40 km set by Grace Lutheran College in 2002. In 2005, 43 teams competed to raise \$30000.

This year's slogan is "Extreme Edge" and monies raised will assist in bringing people back from the extreme edge of poverty, disease, disfigurement, disability and despair that leprosy can cause.

For more information call event organiser Warren Brown on 3235 3924 or email [ql@leprosymission.org.au](mailto:ql@leprosymission.org.au)

## Two churches' milestones no small feat

GLADSTONE UNITING Church recently celebrated the 10th anniversary of their Worship Centre with a visit from the President of Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia Rev Dr Dean Drayton.

Dr Drayton, who was the special guest speaker at the celebrations in April, led a church family camp in 1989 that looked at the ministry of the church to the people who work in Gladstone.

This led to an increase in the number of people attending services and the need for a larger ministry centre.

Pine Rivers Uniting Church also marked a decade in their multi-purpose buildings on Narangba Road in April.

The congregation has forged a place in the community with family-friendly programs.

Divorce recovery programs are often oversubscribed, the

"Playaway" playgroup serves more than a hundred mums and children, and Boys' and Girls' Brigades engage hundreds of families with the life of the church.



Gladstone minister Rev Lorna Martin shows UCA President Rev Dr Dean Drayton the church's dedication stone. Photo by Margaret Cathcart

## Reduce Re-use Recycle

IN RESPONSE to his brother Craig's article in May *Journey* (Practical action is one way forward) Wayne Mischewski, an environmental scientist, gives these examples of how churches and individuals can practise more responsible environmental behaviour.

- Live with less: everything you buy uses precious energy and resources to manufacture, for which there is an environmental cost.

- Accept responsibility for everything you do buy: so mend your clothes, don't just replace them.

- Grow veggies, not flowers, or grow flowers among your veggies: the flowers bring good bugs that prey on the bad bugs eating your veggies.

- Cool down the outside of your house, not the inside: plant trees for shade or go for a swim.

- There are too many exotic species here already, so plant natives (and collar your cats).

- Minimise vehicular movement: use public transport, even if it's irksome; then demand a better service.

- Install a rainwater tank, not just for the garden, but for your toilet and your laundry too: it's bordering on sinful to flush potable (drinking) water down the 'loo'.

- Use water saving devices, and don't take so long in the shower, or have so many.

- Forget the 'quarter-acre dream': urban sprawl is the least efficient way to use scarce natural resources and it stretches municipal infrastructure to the max.

- Don't flush after every wee, and stop using so many chemicals in your home: you're killing all the good bugs too.

- Take your own shopping bags; and buy brands with less packaging than their competition: in the marketplace the consumer is king, or queen, and the market will respond to your choices.

- Think globally, act locally.

- Don't wash your car on the driveway, it's not just a waste of water, it's the chemicals running into the storm drains, which are polluting our waterways.

- And remember: "There is no away to throw to."



## No need to reshape Bible for evolution

*Journey* is to be commended for featuring Christian reflection upon one of the great challenges of our time, the environmental crisis.

Several contributions drew attention to Genesis 1:26-28 (May *Journey*) with its reference to humanity being created in the image of God, being given a responsibility for subduing the earth, and having dominion over the other creatures. One contribution noted that, for a Christian, such dominion should be in the form of sacrificial servanthood, and another rightly made the connection with Genesis 2:15 with its emphasis on tending (or serving) the earth and keeping (or preserving) it.

Yet another of the contributions, however, gave me cause for concern. The assertion that "life is the image of God" is clearly at odds with the witness of scripture and the theological tradition of the church.

Jason John rightly names evolutionary biology as a challenge to rethink our faith. However, it does not follow that we should thus proceed to reshape the biblical text to suit our evolutionary presuppositions.

The biblical text clearly states that "God created *man* in his image".

While it is one thing to debate whether the Hebrew word "adam" in Genesis 1:26-27 is better translated gender-specifically ("man") or generically ("humankind", a translation which I favour), it is quite another to completely ignore the second half of Genesis 1:27 - "male and female he created them", and that is what one would have to do to arrive at Jason's conclusion that "Genesis states that men alone are the image of God, this is because the book was written by men."

John's attempt to "depatriarchalise" the text runs the risk of failing to understand the symbolic world of Genesis 1, of depersonalising God, and privileging a pantheistic view of the world. Amongst other things, it also completely ignores some very important texts that relate to Jesus Christ as the image of God (2 Corinthians 4:4, Colossians 1:15).

I would commend to readers of *Journey* two recent books which faithfully engage the biblical text and also the rich theological tradition of the church. The first is *The Liberating Image: The IMAGIO DEI in Genesis 1* by J. Richard Middleton. The second is *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei* by Stanley J. Grenz. Much is to be learned from both books.

In short, biocentrism as presented in John's *Journey* article is a significant misreading of the biblical text and the tradition of the church.

Douglas L. Jones  
Trinity Theological College

## A war between good and evil

Stan Klan (April *Journey*) criticizes the UCA for sympathizing with the 'looney left' when citing Kevin Rudd, Wadhurst and Gandhi in its story 'Should God get a vote'.

Stan says that the only UCA sweethearts missing from the list are the ABC and the Democrats. Sorry, Stan there is one more person missing from the list and that person is Jesus Christ.

A great battle is being fought in the world today between the dark forces of evil and the liberating forces of God. It's a battle of left vs. right; good vs. evil; racism, hatred, suspicion and fear vs. love, equality, acceptance and tolerance; perpetrators of war and terror vs. victims of war and terror; lies, deception, double standards and arrogance vs. humility, truth, honesty and humanity; military might, forceful occupation, inhuman detentions and world dominance vs. weak, helpless, voiceless and the marginalised; rich, powerful and the mighty vs. weak, poor and dispossessed; religious right, inward looking nationalism, self righteous conservatism vs. outward looking, all embracing love, compassion and understanding; torture, punishment, humiliation vs. justice, forgiveness and understanding; all conquering military might vs. all conquering Christian love;

comforts, luxury and indulgence vs. suffering, hunger, starvation and death.

I know on which side God is fighting this war and I am proud to be a member of the UCA who has firmly, decisively and rightly pitched its tent on the side where God is prosecuting this war.

Derrick Fernando  
Bracken Ridge

## CLASSIFIEDS

### ACCOMMODATION

**Norfolk Island holidays.** Any interested in a new economic, individual, small or large group deal with best accommodation may like to contact Lew Born before making other bookings. Ph 0409 347 224.

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**Bribie Island Holiday Unit.** Welsby Court No. 4, overlooking Bribie passage, 2 b'rm, LUG, reasonable rates. Frank & Elva Dixon Ph 07 3264 8080.

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[mardi.lumsden@uccentre.ucaqld.com.au](mailto:mardi.lumsden@uccentre.ucaqld.com.au)  
or fax 07 3377 9796

## LETTERS

### AGMF too loud: locals

There has been much positive feedback about the Gospel Music Festival held recently in Toowoomba.

The aspect that has raised considerable criticism from many residents who live close and not so close to the venue is the volume of the music.

This is a valid issue to which organisers and participants should make a positive response.

Why should young Christians expect their music to be loud especially when it causes annoyance and anger to residents?

Is it conforming to the values of the world, which the Apostle Paul warns against? (Romans 12). Is it Christian love and courtesy when our behaviour or practice causes fair minded people to object? Could loud music be harmful to the hearing?

The Toowoomba Showgrounds could be an option and also provide much needed parking and accommodation.

Brian Henman  
Toowoomba

### Asylum, not prison

Thank you for your incisive April edition on prison policy and practices and thanks to all the good folk working to improve matters.

It put into context for me, the inhumane practices towards asylum seekers in immigration detention these past six years, where our government has imprisoned in horrible conditions men, women and children who have committed no crime and retains legislative authority to do so indefinitely.

Frederika Steen  
Chapel Hill

### Prisons: more please

My sincere thanks and congratulations on the content of April *Journey*. The Prison ministry was given its deserved coverage from Bruce Mullan on the front page to Russell Clark and others on the back page, and lots in between.

Those intimate, first-hand and personal accounts of the effects of chaplaincy on prison inmates brought home the reality and necessity of presenting the gospel

of Christ in the prison setting. God bless our chaplains and those important people they serve.

Forgive my boldness for asking, but can we have a similar intimate full coverage of the work of overseas missionaries, past and present, and the reality of what Christ has done for those they served and are still serving? What a story they can bring us! What an inspiration to our young people, seeking a challenging vocation in the Christian life!

Finally, please advise readers how and where to start the journey to obtain the kind of training needed for prison and other chaplaincies: After all, the Christian journey is what our informative Church publication is all about, isn't it?

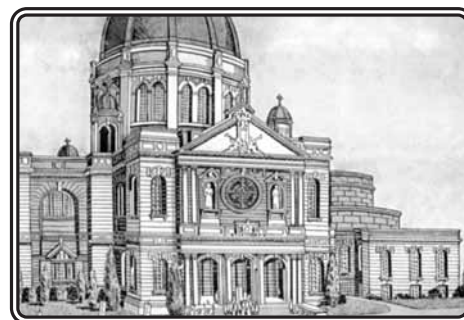
Ian Taylor  
Cooloom Beach

Read the story of overseas mission workers Ruth and Frank Hutton on page 6.

For information on being involved with prison ministry contact Beatriz Skippen on 0409 080 251, email [Beatriz.Skippen@llcq.org.au](mailto:Beatriz.Skippen@llcq.org.au) or visit [www.ucaprisnministry.com](http://www.ucaprisnministry.com)

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## Historically Speaking



### THE CATHEDRAL WHICH NEVER WAS

It was to have seated 4,000, its Romanesque basilica dominating Brisbane's skyline. Inspired by a cathedral of the same name in Chicago, the Cathedral of the Holy Name had been the vision of Catholic Archbishop James Duhig.

The long-serving archbishop, known as James the Builder, laid the foundation stone of the cathedral in 1928. Such was his passion for the project, he was prepared to demolish his own residence, the imposing Dara, to ensure the realisation of his vision.

For many years, the city held its breath, awaiting word of the commencement of construction from within the sandstone walls. But in the late nineties, the site was sold for a multi-unit development.

All that remains of the vision are the architectural drawings for the cathedral that never was.

### Alex Gow Funerals

A Brisbane-owned family business, established in 1840.

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# JOURNEY asks...

## *What do you like best about RE?*

**Beryl Drinkwater**

I enter the classroom with two inflated balloons, place one on a table and ask for a volunteer to move the balloon without touching it. There's no shortage of boys wanting to "huff and puff" like the fabled wolf. The next task, to move the balloon using a second balloon without letting them touch, has them stumped until I show them that, by rubbing the second balloon on my clothes to charge it with static electricity, I can make it move the first balloon without touching it.

I didn't think up the balloon idea. It was a suggestion in the Teachers Manual as a "way in" for a lesson on the Holy Spirit. Wind and electricity are things we cannot see, but we know they are there.

RE teaching has never been more interesting and yet so few people are willing to "give it a go". The *Connect* material from Christian Education Publications is excellent, with many helpful suggestions for making lessons memorable and fun. A "monopoly" house perched on a rock (hidden blu-tack) remains intact, while the one on sand gets washed away. A hollow Easter egg with the end broken off provides a picture of the empty tomb as well as a taste of chocolate for everyone afterwards.

Towards the end of each lesson children use activity books to do mazes, puzzles, missing words, etc. Their books also contain the words of songs on a CD. When I first played these, my grandma-vintage ears wondered what they'd struck, but the children loved the loud jivey music, and sang with gusto. It's a far cry from All Things Bright and Beautiful but I'm learning to move with the times.

This year I am blessed with all Grade 2 classes and the seven year olds are delightful; still so innocent



and bubbling with excitement.

No two lessons work out the same way and it requires quick thinking and flexibility to cope with unexpected interruptions like a child suddenly vomiting, deafening excavation work for a new building outside, or oral reading tests in a corner of the room when teachers are trying to complete their records at the end of term.

This is my third year of RE teaching and I still get nervous beforehand. Prayerfully I enter each classroom, knowing that children more than ever need to experience the love of Jesus and hear the wondrous stories that tell of God's love and forgiveness. I rely on the Holy Spirit to make that message real to them and, when they race up and hug me in the supermarket, I praise God.

Perhaps the greatest thrill came at the end of last year when a little girl who was not permitted to do RE but instead had to work on a computer behind a screen, slipped me a note which said "I know I'm not in your class, but I'll miss you".

How wonderful to still be used by God in my later years!

**Beryl Drinkwater is a member of Middle Ridge Uniting Church, Toowoomba.**

**Pam Armstrong**

As I open the question box from the class that I have attended, I am often touched by the sort of questions that the students ask in private. "When you are in heaven do you have to work?" or "How can we really see God?"

An anonymous question that affected me was "When I need god most he dosent help."

What does this mean? I didn't know how deep this young person's need was so the Intercessor Prayer Group from our congregations prayed for them especially.

I often try to allow the students to ask questions in the lesson or by having a question and answer card for them to read during class. This is a helpful way to help them find answers to their questions.

Wondering if the students are enjoying the RE lessons, I recently asked some Grade five and six students.

Mitchell wrote "I like the books", while Sean was keen about the crosswords and Shani and Lauren enjoy using the question box.

Cynthia liked RE "where we learn more about God as in what he could do more than just forgive our sins."

Then there was Chris who liked nothing about RE. I feel sad for him.

Lauren wrote, "When we get to learn about God and Jesus it makes

me believe more about God."

Elisha said the best thing about RE was "that we learn about God and Jesus in a fun way. Mrs Armstrong explains what she is talking about and never yells at people and gives her anger to God."

Young people's lives are changing and growing in faith.

I feel encouraged. Young people sometimes need to reach out. It is great to bring Jesus into the classroom.

God has called me to the classroom to share and be part of helping young people.

**Pam Armstrong is a member of Redcliffe Uniting Church.**



**Heather James**

I have taught RE in a State Primary School to every year level for the past five and a half years. Classes usually number about 25 but I once taught 40 which was fun, but never again.

Support from principals, teachers and assistants from the congregation are encouraging and help with discipline, but there is always one child who wants to give you a hard time.

I believe RE is an important ministry as some children who never come near a church have a chance to hear the Good News.

As often happens, the teacher learns more than the student. My knowledge of the Bible and faith has grown from experiences of trying to explain "justification by grace through faith" or "who made God?" to a six year old or a 12 year old. Quite a challenge but well worth the effort.

The most frustrating thing is never knowing if my efforts are bearing fruit but the parable of the sower comes to mind, "But some fell on good soil and yielded a crop."

I do receive more than I give and the blessing comes from the privilege of being the bearer of grace to children in word and action.

You can't beat the feeling when a child excitedly greets you in the street or the supermarket and explains to the adult with them "That's my religion teacher".

**Heather James is a member of Clermont Uniting Church, Central Queensland.**



## Kids quotes for Journey

- I like RE because it is fun, the people are great. (Joshua Year 11)
- I like the interesting facts about life, finding out what life holds and the special things involved. (Brent Year 11)
- We have fun doing it and we can talk to anyone at RE about anything we got in mind or have trouble understanding. (Scott Year 11)
- I like that in school we can have RE so we can learn about Jesus and God. (Tess Year 6)
- I like that we get to learn about God and we're being taught by real pastors. (Kacie Year 5)