



Day camp
adventure



Pictures of
Assembly

Striving for
South Africa



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Pastors are in!

In a move which could dramatically change the face of leadership in the Uniting Church in Australia the 11th Assembly voted to establish a Ministry of Pastor.

STARTING IN January 2008 the new ministry will take in all those who currently would serve as Lay Pastors and Community Ministers and most youth workers.

Pastors will be lay church workers with pastoral oversight of congregations or groups in the Uniting Church and may serve full-time or part-time. Not all will be serving in stipended appointments.

Appointed by Presbyteries, Pastors may serve as lay chaplains, children and family workers, evangelists and community development workers. The ministry will not include people who are appointed by the local congregation such as Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, elders or church office workers.

Presenting the report from the Specified Ministries Task Group, Chairperson Ms Colleen Geyer said that the ministry aims to include the growing number of people now serving the church in a range of ministries such as Lay Parish Assistants and Children and Family Ministers.

"We have seen a proliferation of non-specified ministries in the Uniting Church and recognise that this points to the changing face of our emerging church," she said.

"The new ministry is a practical way in which the church can order its lay ministry and creates a flexible environment."

In presenting its report to the Assembly the Specified Ministries Task Group pointed to the *Basis of Union* which states that types and durations of ministries can vary.

The Assembly was divided on the name for the new ministry but agreed to "Pastor".

Task Group member Mr Bruce Mullan said the title had currency in the Uniting Church, one of the previous denominations, and in the wider community.

"The word 'Pastor' designates that the person is in a well-ordered relationship to the church which involves training, formation, supervision and support," he said.

Mr Mullan said he believes that within the next decade there may be more Pastors than ordained Ministers serving in the Uniting Church.

The new regulations will mean that no new candidates will be admitted to some existing specified lay ministries after the end of next year.



Even Beaconsfield Community Minister Frances Seen was part of the Assembly Celebration story "Da Invincible Code" – a journey through Australia to find the meaning of God's Word for God's World. Steve Molkenin as "Silo" (left), Chris Chapman as "Steel Girdling" and Sue Chapman as "Sylvia Bullet" followed the clues to find John 13:34-35. Photo by Kim Cain

"There is provision for those currently in placement in the specified ministries of Youth Worker and Lay Pastor to continue under the current arrangements until such time as they cease their continuous ministry with the Uniting Church," Ms Geyer said.

"It's about every ministry agent in the Uniting Church being in a specified relationship with the church."

Associate Director of Discipleship Education in Victoria Pam Kerr was sad that the current Lay Pastor Ministry would cease to accept new applicants.

"My main concern is that we lose what has become a very effective ministry in Victoria/Tasmania with people who feel a call to ministry but are usually of an age beyond applying for ordination who are willing to go anywhere, often to remote places that ordained ministers can't go because of family commitments.

"I would like to think that the new Ministry of Pastor will pick up that sense of commitment, availability to the wider church and solid training," said Ms Kerr.

Some Assembly members expressed doubt about the ability of presbyteries to support and resource the new ministry but Associate

Director of the NSW lay education ELM Centre Karyl Davison was more confident.

"I think it is a positive move for the church and I think that we might find that our presbyteries will have more capacity to do the work that they have to do under this resolution with more ministry agents in a specified relationship to the church."

Pastors will not be expected to have academic theological degrees but will undertake continuous education throughout their service to develop their skills and competencies for ministry.

These competencies will need to meet national standards to be set up over the next 18 months but prior learning will be recognised and a variety of alternative training options will be available.

Lay church workers will cease to be Pastors when they conclude their employment or appointment with the church.

Where a presbytery considers it appropriate, they may be given permission to preside at the sacraments of communion and baptism.

"We believe that this new ministry will address the future needs of non-ordained specified ministry in our church in a simple and flexible way that is responsive to the contexts and communities in which we serve," said Ms Geyer.

"It's about every ministry agent in the Uniting Church in Australia being in a specified relationship with the church."

More about 11th Assembly

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It was much more than a meeting

A GREAT DEAL of information regarding the recent Assembly has already been distributed and you will find more in this issue of *Journey*.

As you will see elsewhere, the whole week was notable for the quite superb planning and organisation provided by members of the local Planning Team, worship leaders, light and sound technicians, Synod staff, and a not-so-small army of volunteers from within the Queensland church.

Their individual and collective contributions were exceptional and I thank them on behalf of the whole church.

As I anticipated in my most recent article for *Journey*, the Assembly addressed a wide range of issues relating to its national and international responsibilities.

The significance of the decisions made will unfold in the coming months, not least for those engaged in one or another of our specified lay ministries.

As expected, however, attention to the richness and breadth of our life and witness as a national church was overshadowed by a further debate on the issue of sexuality and ministry.

In all, nearly nine hours was given over to this matter. Our meeting procedures were carefully followed at all times.

There was ample opportunity for conversation and debate. Deeply felt convictions were shared both passionately and respectfully.

The outcomes have been widely reported.

Conversations are continuing and the Assembly is committed to undertake further work with assistance from the Working Group on Doctrine.

There is no doubt in my mind that this Assembly, like the three that preceded it, is firmly resolved to maintain its position that the unity, which is both Christ's gift and command, is the foundation



Message from the Moderator

Rev Dr David Pitman

on which all our life together is established.

It is within the strength of that unity that we address particular issues about which there are significant differences of opinion and conviction.

Being the church of Jesus Christ is not, in the first instance, about difference and diversity, in whatever ways we may experience that.

What matters most is the identity we have in Christ and the obligations that identity lays upon us.

For that reason the statement made by the UAICC to the Assembly was a source of great encouragement and inspiration.

It reminds us that we can hold to what we believe with great sincerity and conviction and continue to live and work together in a respectful and fruitful relationship for the sake of the Kingdom of God and the life and witness of the church.

The conclusion reached by the Congress, and the manner in which it was shared, is an example to the whole church.

It is too easy to shift responsibility for conflict to those with whom we disagree. Difference does not assume or create disunity. It is what lies in our hearts, and the way we behave, that has the power to divide us.

Into the turmoil and conflict that characterised the church at Corinth, the apostle Paul wrote, "I decided to know nothing among

you except for Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1 Corinthians 2:2)

This was the recurring theme of a number of conversations in which I shared in the months preceding the Assembly and during the meeting itself.

The decisions of this Assembly continue to respect and protect the existing rights and responsibilities of congregations and presbyteries.

Given the realities of the situation in which we find ourselves, I believe we do have a choice to make.

We can remain enmeshed in the debate and the feelings it induces in us, or we can commit ourselves to the excitement and challenge of mission.

We can be caught up in criticising and blaming, or we can focus on living and sharing our faith.

Through the many reports and stories I heard at Assembly I know that all around this nation of ours there are individuals, congregations and agencies that are focussed and committed in regard to their discipleship.

They are living and sharing the love and grace of God in many different ways. They are making a difference in the name, and for the sake, of Christ.

That is what the Uniting Church stands for. That is the church I belong to and through which I live out my discipleship.

I invite you to do the same!

From the Editor

Throughout my adolescent and adult life I have observed the continuing tension between traditional and contemporary styles of music.

There is not always obvious hostility, but one doesn't have to dig too deep to realise that everyone has their own strong opinion about what makes the best formula for worship.

We are essentially creatures of habit. We like the hymns or songs we are familiar with and feel less comfortable with alternative styles.

Perhaps shy of potential "worship wars" or burned by past controversy about music styles, some worship leaders present a potpourri mix of music to try to please everybody, and often end up pleasing no-one.

Listening to the experts and reading the textbooks one could assume that the music is the worship. It has certainly become the predominant language of our Christian identity.

While it is difficult to imagine worship without music, I often ponder how our music-centred liturgies are experienced by those who are unable to fully participate in the musical content of our gatherings.

In fact, barring the occasional football match where the repertoire is severely limited, church worship may be the only place remaining where community singing is still regularly practised.

While music can carry us more deeply into the worship it is also the most changeable element in our liturgy. Trying to keep up with the shifting musical trends and an ever-expanding repertoire of songs can draw our attention to the music itself and away from God.

Could it even be that music is a distraction to our worship?

The boundaries between participation and performance can sometimes be crossed by musicians and worship leaders who are focussed on providing musical excellence to enhance the worship of others. Where the music is being performed for the approval of an audience rather than the glory of God it will potentially distract us from our worship.

Music that is theologically and culturally incompatible with the worshipping community can also distract our worship from full attention on God. Some worship music is trite, sentimental and unable to express the true majesty of God while many hymns have antiquated and sombre content which are an impediment to particular generations.

While it may seem inconceivable to some, there may be value in our church worship taking a fast from music for a season.

Could our devotion be deepened by some time out from the noise? Could our worship be enriched by some times of word-only worship with scripture, prayer and sacrament or, even more shockingly, embrace some significant and extended times of silence to allow space for worshippers to make a God-connection.

For the musically-challenged, and perhaps many others, the harmony of the bread and wine might ascend to become the tune of our connectedness with God and each other.

Bruce Mullan

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Sign of the Times



WHEN THE Assembly makes decisions it is aiming to discern the guidance of the Spirit in response to the Word of God.

Such meetings in the Uniting Church in Australia seek to make decisions using consensus procedures.

Reaching a decision by consensus takes account of the insights of each member. The process ensures

that issues are fully aired and that all members feel they have been adequately heard.

Decisions are taken not simply because one more than fifty per cent of members are in favour of a proposal, but because all agree to a way forward.

When it is working on its decision-making process Assembly members use coloured cards to

signal their response to what is being said.

Orange and blue are used as they are readily distinguishable even by people who are colour blind.

Orange can be used to indicate warmth towards a point of view or approval of a proposal, while blue can symbolise coolness about what has been heard or disapproval of a proposal.

Church asked to live with diversity

By Bruce Best

THE UNITING Church has decided against trying to reach consensus at present on a policy about homosexual people in positions of ministry and leadership.

Members of its 11th Assembly meeting in Brisbane agreed they were "not of one mind" on the issue of accepting into ministry people who were living in a committed same-gender sexual relationship.

They said that "notwithstanding the hopes of many in the church", the Assembly "is not prepared to exercise further its determining responsibility in this matter".

Instead, they decided that no congregation would be forced to accept a minister living in such a relationship if it could not do so in good conscience.

Equally, any congregation willing to accept such a minister would have its decision respected.

The Assembly resolution, passed

by 173-48 (78.3%) in a formal vote, affirmed the church's unity in Jesus Christ but acknowledged "a variety of theological perspectives and biblical understandings which we maintain in tension within our life as a church".

It noted that some of its members stay with traditional teaching about sexuality in the Reformed and Evangelical churches while others believe God may be leading this tradition to a different understanding and practice.

The Assembly expressed its regret that some ministers and members had felt they had to quit the Uniting Church after the last Assembly's 2003 decision on sexuality and leadership.

(Known as "Proposal 84", this decision left with presbyteries the authority to decide about a minister living in a committed same-gender relationship.).

The 11th Assembly also expressed regret that faithful Christian gay and lesbian people had experienced pain in the church because of the way their lives had been affected by its deliberations.

Among the next steps decided by the Assembly were:

- to encourage congregations to realise the diversity of belief on sexuality and, realising that some of their members might not feel free to express their views, to become "safe communities" where people could have diverse beliefs
- to encourage the whole church to grapple with the implications of God's grace for our humanity, and urge members with different views "to work at living together in peace"
- to ask its doctrine group to help the church "in our ongoing consideration of the theological diversity of the church on this issue".

The Assembly's discussion of the issue had begun five days earlier with eight proposals on sexuality and leadership.

Three of them rejected homosexuality as a way of living and didn't want to see it 'normalised'. They argued that sexual relationships should be limited to a faithful marriage between a man and a woman.

Others said it was impossible to

reach consensus at present because of the widely divergent views that people held with integrity.

One asked Assembly to declare that "being in a committed same-gender sexual relationship is not itself a barrier to any ministry", while another sought a way for Uniting Church people to live out their diversity about sexuality.

Speakers described the proposals in terms that ranged from "a summons to us by God to confess and proclaim His truth" to a question: "What must we do for the church to be a safe place for gay, lesbian and transgendered people?"

It became clear early on, however, that most Assembly members thought it wasn't the time to decide one way or the other – or to change the 2003 Assembly's decision on sexuality and leadership.

It also became clear that the concern among indigenous people and the migrant-ethnic community in the Uniting Church about recognition of homosexual people was not a simple rejection of the moves in the church.

Just as the church had respected the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, the Congress respected the need of the church to have the discussion and made space for it to happen.

Speakers from migrant-ethnic churches showed diversity of views. Homosexual people in leadership went against the Bible and the tradition of the church, said one. But "not all of us" agreed with that rejection of homosexual people, said another.

Now, the Assembly statement calls all the church's members to bear witness to the gift of Christ's unity as well as living together in their diversity.



General Secretary Rev Terence Corkin and President Rev Gregor Henderson lead the Assembly through the conversations on sexuality and leadership. Photo by Kim Cain

Some want an alternative Assembly

By Bruce Mullan

POSITIVE REACTION to the 11th Assembly decisions on sexuality and leadership (see story above) has not been universal.

The Reforming Alliance (RA) and Evangelical Members of the Uniting Church (EMU) groups who have consistently asked the Assembly to make a doctrinal ruling on whether people living in same-gender sexual relationships should be ordained claimed it strengthened "the relentless march of the UCA towards the full acceptance of practising homosexuals in the ordained ministry".

Frustrated by what national EMU spokesperson Rev Stephen Estherby called the "refusal of the national Assembly to affirm the traditional teaching and practice of the Uniting Church", the meeting determined to set up a new grouping of dissenting members called the "Assembly of Confessing Congregations".

Uniting Church President Rev Gregor Henderson described this move as seeming to suggest the group wanted to establish a series of parallel structures within the Uniting Church.

Mr Henderson said it is not fair for members of the church to be asked to sign off on any proposal without sufficient detail.

"I encourage congregations to take their time before making any decisions and to wait until further

information about the exact nature of this proposal is available."

Mr Estherby said the group had not been satisfied with the proposal brought to the Assembly by Rev Dr David Pitman from Queensland.

"What was proposed there was a network whereby we were given some space within the church to do our own thing," Mr Estherby said.

"What we're saying is that's not enough.

"We actually want a fair share of power and self-determination for ourselves. We don't want all the power but at the moment we feel that we don't have any at all."



EMU Chair Rev Stephen Estherby

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Camper Rebekah, Day Camp director Paul Vandersee, camper Kirsten and mum / leader Jane Dwyer at the end of an enjoyable week at the Moggill / Karana Downs Day Camp. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

Day Camp: an ecumenical adventure

ONCE AGAIN hundreds of primary school children relished the chance to get dirty at Day Camps all over the state last school holidays.

The Moggill / Karana Downs Day Camp had record numbers with 177 campers and 90 leaders and helpers.

Camp director Paul Vandersee said it was the biggest the camp has ever been and was organised in conjunction with Moggill Uniting Church, Karana Downs Uniting Church, Kenmore Baptist, Kenmore Community Church, and Moggill Anglican.

"With all the support crew we have about 115 people," he said.

"The best part for me is being able to watch it happen. After many months of planning, to see the ideas that we had start to work and to see a whole community of different churches working for a common cause."

Here is what some of the kids thought about Day Camp:

Douglas (10) said his favourite thing about Day Camp was "cooking food over an open fire".

Leader Katie Dwyer said she enjoyed music time and said being a leader was challenging but fun.

Nicholas (11) couldn't choose one thing as his favourite. "The archery, the fire, eating afternoon tea, listening to the music, building gunyas, having fun and doing teamwork!" he said.

Rachie (12) said she liked the rock-climbing. "It was pretty high, but I wasn't scared."

Hannah (11) said, "My favourite thing is meeting new people, making gunyas [a bush cubby house] and learning about God."

Rebekah (8) said she liked "getting muddy" and Kirsten (8) enjoyed the gunya, the music and her day camp friends.

Church called to refocus on human rights

DURING ONE of the last business sessions of its triennial meeting, the Uniting Church's national Assembly agreed to adopt a historic statement on human rights: *Dignity in Humanity: Recognising Christ in Every Person*.

Speaking after the decision, Rev Gregor Henderson thanked the Assembly for passing the proposal from UnitingJustice Australia, saying the document was an "important piece of work" which would be a useful tool in the church's ongoing work for social justice.

Rev Elenie Poulos, who moved the proposal, said the document was necessary because of the current Government's increasing willingness to contravene our international human rights obligations. She said it was time for the church to make a clear statement "and send a strong call to the Government that we expect more from them".

"Jesus taught us that justice and peace will come as we claim the dignity granted by God to every person for every person."

Ms Kaye Tait, who seconded the motion, related the story of Pedram, a seven-year-old boy who has spent four years of his short life in Australian detention centres and continues to suffer from anxiety disorders because of the trauma he suffered there.

"His eagerness to please, at school, at home and at church belies a deep and lingering uncertainty about safety," she told the Assembly.

After a number of days spent debating slight wording changes to other proposals, the *Dignity in Humanity* document was passed by consensus in a matter of minutes.

Assembly then moved on to accept the statement *Integrity and Justice in Employment Relationships*, recognising that the Federal Government's new WorkChoices legislation required a whole of church approach to our own internal employment practices.

"The changes have already begun to threaten the livelihoods of Australia's most vulnerable workers," said Ms Poulos.

The Uniting Church has always been concerned for the most vulnerable in society, she said, adding, "UnitingJustice is asking that this Assembly does all it can to ensure our concern is matched by our practice."

By Alison Atkinson-Phillips
Editor *Western Impact*

'Beaut' award recognises Congress head

By Mardi Lumsden

VINCE ROSS said he is determined not to let his recent elevation to high-profile national positions obstruct his purpose.

Mr Ross has been elected Chair of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and was named National Aboriginal Elder (male) for the next 12 months at the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) awards on 8 July.

"For the first time in my life, I got to the microphone and I was lost for words!" said a beaming Mr

Ross in between sessions at the Uniting Church's 11th national Assembly, meeting in Brisbane in July. "Didn't take me long to get it back again though. It was a beautiful moment."

"It was hard to take it all in. I had no idea. I knew I was on the shortlist but I didn't realise how short the list was!"

Mr Ross said the position itself wouldn't alter what he already does, but it will probably require his attendance at events.

"I'm not one for the upfront sort of thing. I do it as part of who I am, but I am more concerned about the issues that are out there

with our people and for all people where they are struggling.

"I guess it will mean being a little more available to people in the community. But not to lose sight of the main things you've got to do."

As far as the Congress position goes, he sees it as an educational experience and his opportunity to make a contribution to the Uniting Church, to Congress and the Australian community.

"It is not about status or position. It is about the appropriate time, of where we are at in our life and the ministry of Congress.

"It is a good learning curve for

me. I feel that I can bring to the Congress, even in this leadership role, something to take us a lot further forward."


Mr Ross said the "beaut" part about receiving the NAIDOC award was when the presenter was reading out all the great things the Congress had done.

"In a sense God was present on that platform. In that main event that witness was there of Congress and I just thank God for that."

The NAIDOC award was announced to Assembly members at the celebration in Brisbane's City Hall on Sunday 9 July and was met with elated applause.



UAICC Chair Mr Vince Ross.
Photo by Kim Cain



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Contemporary music needs a broader view

CONTEMPORARY Christian music is a big industry. In the United States, it's grown by 80 per cent over the past decade, with 43.4 million units sold in 2004 representing 6 per cent of total music sales – ahead of jazz, classical, Latin and soundtracks.

No figures are available for Australia 10 years ago, but in 2004 Christian music sales here (through Christian retail and artists' direct channels) totalled \$30 million. That's 5.2 per cent of this country's music industry.

Contemporary Christian music (CCM) includes hymns, modern hymns, praise choruses, pop songs about God (ballads, country, rock, heavy metal). It's a genre rather than a style, offering music that can appeal to all ages.

It's also as diverse thematically as the Psalms. Its themes range from realising God's presence, thanksgiving and communing with God through to remembering God's part in history (including personal testimony), lament and relationships.

In Australia, what we call 'praise and worship music' mainly covers the first three of those (God's presence, thanksgiving and communing). Praise and worship music makes up about 70 per

cent of CCM sales in Australia (in the US, it is only 30 per cent). The reason for this high figure is the influence of Hillsong Church and Christian City Church. Both celebrate faith in music.

American CCM is largely evangelical. Its predominant themes are God's part in history (including personal testimony) and relationships.

But CCM's least developed area is music that focuses faith on political and cultural issues, social justice and interfaith concerns.

One reason may be that its performers tend to concentrate on the message rather than the music. Another may be that a more conservative Christian approach sees such music as unfaithful, or not gospel-centred.

Paul Colman's *Gloria (All God's Children)* is the best example of a Christian artist's popular interfaith song. However, some American Christian radio stations refused to play it.

On the other hand, *Gloria (All God's Children)* was the most played song on Christian radio in Australia during 2005!

Australia now has some 40 Christian stations and, along with commercial and community radio, they have helped create awareness

of local and overseas Christian music.

But that missing area in CCM poses a challenge to 'mainstream churches' (Uniting, Anglican, Catholic, etc) with a broader view of ministry and mission.

How can they encourage singers and songwriters to invest time and effort into writing songs that go beyond the praise and worship category?

The need is to offer some rewards (perhaps an awards function for this wider CCM) and for churches to invest money in artists and acts that could become models for such music of 'faith and community'.

Some Uniting Church congregations take CCM seriously, and support the (usually young) people who make up the band that provides music for their worship.

But the Uniting Church hasn't yet received, or given, much encouragement to add its own distinctive tradition and emphasis to the big and growing enterprise called contemporary Christian music.

By Bruce Best
Much of the material for this report was provided thanks to Wes Jay of Woodlands Media, a Melbourne-based business specialising in contemporary Christian music



Paul Colman's interfaith song *Gloria (All God's Children)* has been a popular hit on Christian radio stations across Australia. Photo by Jeremy Cowart and courtesy of Woodlands Media



It's quite an organ

THE PIPE organ in St Andrew's Brisbane City Uniting Church was completed around 1905 at a cost of £1440 and featured a great innovation – an electric blower.

St Andrew's is an impressive building of Romanesque style well suited to such a large pipe organ.

Viewed from the entrance foyer, the organ casework provides a dramatic visual effect for the observer.

The facade pipes are painted a clean grey colour, with gold mouths, and the mitred tops of the Orchestral Trumpet are visible between facade pipes and the Swell box shutters.

The organ currently has three manuals and pedals, 40 speaking stops and nine couplers, and a total of approximately 2250 pipes.

St Andrew's organist Dr Stephen Nisbet says that with its comprehensive specification the organ performs magnificently in worship, ceremonial occasions and concerts.

"The principal choruses are warm and bright, the flutes have their own individual charm, the chorus reeds are showy, and the solo reeds have tremendous character."

"The organ has the capacity to capture one's attention and provide inspiration for the soul."



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Somerville House
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Origins of music in worship

By **Mardi Lumsden**

MUSIC HAS always been prominent in worship in the Christian church and was originally used to convey doctrine and later to tell biblical stories to the uneducated masses. To some, music enables spiritual experience.

The western Christian worship music we know today grew from ancient Greek and Jewish traditions (the Psalms) and largely influenced and shaped what we now call classical music.

It was in church worship that the singing of monks moved from plainchant or Gregorian chant (all

singing the same thing) to two part singing; the beginning of harmony and music notation.

As everyone had one, the voice was the most prominent instrument in the early church.

The exact point of the introduction of instrumental music in western church worship is highly debated but common agreement is that instruments were not included in worship until several centuries after the New Testament was completed.

It is commonly agreed that the organ was the first instrument used in western church worship, mainly because of its versatility and ability

to imitate other instruments and the voice.

When it was introduced however is contested. Some historians say it was introduced around the time of Pope Vitalian I (657-672), others say it was not until the 10th century.

The trumpet is said to have been the next instrument adopted by the church.

As early as the Middle Ages the Mass was the most popular form of music used in worship and utilised Latin texts. Composers such as Palestrina, Monteverdi, Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Scarlatti and Handel explored the Mass. Bach (1685-1750) wrote a Mass in all twenty-four keys as well as writing many chorales still sung in worship today. The music was difficult, the musicians were professionals and congregational involvement was limited.

During the 18th century, composers began looking to popular and secular tunes and incorporated them with sacred lyrics.

Charles Wesley's spirited hymns were the central feature of Methodist worship and increased congregational involvement.

By the 19th century, the Church's influence on society was dwindling, alternative performance venues began to appear and churches had to rely largely on amateur musicians to provide music for worship.

The publication of the book *Hymns Ancient and Modern* in 1861 was said to reflect "the very best of the many traditions of hymnody".

It was an instant success and by 1912 (and in a time when many people couldn't read or write) had sold 60 million copies. It is still in print today.

With dramatic changes in technology, western church music was thrust into the 20th century. Global influences on music saw European folk music, African gospel music and many other forms of music incorporated into worship.

Churches also re-embraced hymns, particularly those of Martin Luther (1483-1546) who had been influenced by German folk music.

Other favourites were Fanny Crosby, Charles Wesley, George Matheson, and Isaac Watts.

Now music used in western church worship varies from chants to rock songs. Organs are giving way to guitars and drum kits.

Hymns continue to be sung in most Uniting Churches but the influence of popular music is also prevalent, just as it was in the early church. This helps the church relate to society and the worshipper.

Many church-goers love hymns because they are reminded of times past. No doubt future church-goers will also enjoy singing the songs they sang when they were young.

Written with the assistance of
The History of Music in Church Worship by Elaine Schneider
www.cartage.org.lb/en/themes/Arts/music/vocalmusic/liturgical/histfmusic.htm



Formed by the power of music

IT IS POSSIBLE that when it comes to shaping our theology the music in our worship is far more influential than the word: spoken, read or preached.

Protestant reformer John Calvin said music has a "sacred and almost incredible power to move hearts in one way or another" and Uniting Church Minister and hymn writer Rev David MacGregor would agree.

Mr MacGregor has spent half a lifetime studying how worship shapes the church and contends that music does this more powerfully than almost anything else.

"Music has in its very self a formative, nurturing, creative and evocative power ready to be unleashed in worship to the living God," he said.

Mr MacGregor points to the use of music from the African-American spiritual tradition in the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

"It was music that helped unite these enslaved and marginalised people in their cause. It helped them to articulate what words alone could not do.

"A similar scenario is seen in the freedom songs arising out of the decades of apartheid oppression endured by the blacks and coloureds of 20th century South Africa."

Mr MacGregor said the Christian church is more than competent when it comes to praising God but he is critical of what he terms "happy-faced" worship that leads the congregation down a one-way musical street of praise and more praise.

"It is untruthful; worship which fails to declare the whole truth of God; worship which fails to declare the whole truth of the human condition."

Music can best give voice to other places which allow room for "lament, for intercession, for connecting with a broken world, for connecting with people whose relationships are disintegrating, for sending people out in Christian service.

"Where is the music through which we confess our personal and communal sin before God? Where is the music that propels us into discipleship?

"In our public praise we have so sought to embrace the first part of the Great Commandment, 'love the Lord your God', that we

have forgotten about the second, 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself'."

While not wishing to criticise the Pentecostal churches Mr MacGregor maintains that much of contemporary music emanating from the mega-churches focuses on "praise, praise, praise" to the extent that God's worshipping people have become impoverished and their Christian formation faces a dangerous imbalance.

"Music is so influential that across the various demographics of the Uniting Church in Australia there are those congregations who, via their worship music, have a 'Hillsong faith' or a 'Vineyard faith', a 'Planet Shakers faith' or an 'Iona faith'.

"The question must be asked: is the music informing belief or is belief informing the music sung?"

Mr MacGregor argues that music has such a pivotal role that when we fail to name the human condition and explore the God-connections in our worship music, we are being less than truthful to God.

"It is encouraging to note that the contemporary British songwriter Graham Kendrick can both exhort the singer to 'Shine, Jesus, Shine' and yet sing, 'This is our God, the servant king; he calls us now to honour him. To give our lives as a daily offering of worship to the servant king'.

"I firmly believe if we were to take seriously and energetically the power of music to nurture and form Christian spirituality and discipleship we would be a more authentic and convincing Christian community – the loving and serving people God calls us to be.

"The Christian church, particularly those in spiritual and musical leadership, needs to catch afresh the formative power of music in developing worshipping, witnessing and serving disciples of Jesus."

First created in early 2000
Rev David MacGregor's website *Together to Celebrate* is a service to the wider church offering musical selections across the breadth of contemporary Christian music linked with the Revised Common Lectionary. www.togethertocelibrate.com.au



Image courtesy of www.home.wlu.edu/~bengt/Cor03SingingMonks.jpg

Messiah

Composed by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) in 1741-42

Libretto by Charles Jennens (1700-73)

First performance: April 13 1742 in Dublin as a charitable benefit.

A devout Christian, Handel composed the oratorio *Messiah* during one of the many low points in his career. He was facing waning health and bankruptcy but the Baroque era was near the peak of its popularity.

Composed in 24 days, it is said that Handel was often found weeping over the score at the beauty of the music he was creating.

Despite the title, much of the libretto comes from the Old Testament. Originally written to be performed during Lent, *Messiah* is now most commonly performed around Christmas.

The most famous movement, the *Hallelujah* chorus, concludes the second of the three parts of the oratorio. As tradition has it, on first hearing the movement King George II felt moved to stand, so the rest of the audience obliged and it is now commonplace for the audience to stand during this movement.

Handel's *Messiah* was instantly popular and Handel rewrote sections and conducted performances of the work up until eight days before his death.

There have been so many adjustments to *Messiah* by Handel and other composers (including Mozart) that it is now hard to determine the most authentic version.

"An oratorio is a religious opera with a narrator and without staging."



Music can shape our mission

By Bruce Mullan

WE SING songs and hymns as an act of worship but the lyrics of the music can actually shape a congregation's attitudes and missional practice.

Ann-Maree Whelan, who has studied ecumenism with the World Council of Churches in Geneva, believes it is possible that some hymns, from another place and time, can shape our understanding of mission in our contemporary community.

Ms Whelan believes that what we sing in our worship is important.

"How we pray together and what we say and do in our liturgies has an affect on who we are as church, our identity, our focus, but it also effects the lives of the people in the community," she said.

Former Director of Communication for the World Council of Churches Dr Albert van den Heuvel said it is the hymns, repeated over and over again which form the container of much of our faith.

"They are probably, in our age, the only confessional documents we learn by heart."

Ms Whelan believes that this statement is certainly true in Australia where the great majority of churchgoers would have difficulty reciting the creeds said collectively every Sunday.

"They might know a few more bible verses by heart, but the majority of what they remember is set to music," she said.

"The brothers of the Taizé Community in France know this, which is part of the reason why their whole worship service is built on short chants repeated over and over again.

"The songs resurface in the mind while going about the everyday tasks, and call the person into an inner unity with God again and again throughout the day.

"This is partly what makes often-repeated hymns so powerful, and why we should take them seriously when examining what affects our concept of mission in today's churches."

Ms Whelan said that despite 50% of the population having parents or grandparents that speak a language other than English as their mother tongue, the vast majority of the hymns sung in our churches are "old favourites" from

the United Kingdom, written in a very different time and context and passed on in a time of colonisation and migration.

"Many of these hymns may still have a great depth of meaning for congregations but it is important that their meanings are critically examined for them to be an authentic expression of our faith."

Ms Whelan takes the familiar *Onward Christian Soldiers* as an example of an explicitly missiological hymn.

"It is easy to see how this hymn has survived to the present day; it has striking imagery, stirring music, and it galvanizes support for the Christian enterprise.

"Its language elicits a strong sense of belonging to a vast and strong worldwide movement, and it expresses a great strength of hope and conviction in the missionary endeavour."

But such imagery is problematic when we live in a multi-faith society and it leaves little space for plurality and respect.

The church carrying out its mission in the world is described in terms of militarism and violence.

"The language of these lyrics is a language of domination. It is an image of the mission field, or the whole world for that matter, as a sort of battle ground, where the church of Jesus is at war with evil forces carrying with them the certainty of the promise that they will prevail.

"The language of violence and domination should have no place in our worship services, especially when it is used to describe mission."

Ms Whelan argues that this sort of theology is potentially dangerous and destructive for a multicultural



"The soldier" is stained glass windows from the Canadian Memorial United Church, a congregation of the United Church of Canada

Onward Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before.
Christ, the royal master, leads against the foe;
Forward into battle, see, his banners go!

Onward, Christian soldiers, marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus going on before

Like a might army moves the Church of God;
Let us boldly follow where the saints have trod.
We are not divided; all one body we:
One in hope and doctrine, one in charity.

country like Australia perched on the edge of Asia.

It is also a dangerous theology for any Christian to hold to in an increasingly pluralistic world.

Ms Whelan thinks it would be difficult to stand against an unjust war where Christian countries were poised to attack a Muslim country while singing *Onward Christian Soldiers*.

"The dissonance between our actions that were based on critical reflection and our theology of

mission, and the implicit theology of the hymn, would be too great."

Ann-Maree Whelan's paper *The Changing Missiology of Hymns a critical reflection on the hymns Australians use in worship and their implicit theology of mission* was first published by Jubilee Grapevine, the national magazine of the Australian Student Christian Movement and can be accessed from www.ascm.org.au/jgOnline/2005Winter/Missiology-Hymns.pdf

A vehicle for intergenerational conversation

By Duncan Macleod

THE SONG *Forever Young*, covered by Sydney band Youth Group, is an intergenerational text that provides opportunities to explore faith in everyday language of popular culture.

The music video, released this year, shows teenage skateboarders taking part in a contest at the Coca Cola factory at Frenches Forest, Sydney Australia, footage originally shown on Australian youth show *GTK (Get To Know)* in 1975.

You can see the music video on *RAGE*, the Australian equivalent of *MTV* on Saturday and Sunday mornings. More people see the video on *You Tube* and *Google Video*, free online video web sites.

What's made the track so popular? Youth Group recorded *Forever Young* for the third series of *The O.C.*, a music-saturated teen US television drama series, and suddenly found themselves with an international hit.

The original song, performed by German synth band Alphaville

in 1982, picked up the uncertainty experienced by Gen X teenagers as they faced a world in danger of nuclear holocaust.

Let's dance in style, let's dance for a while.

Heaven can wait, we're only watching the sky,
Hoping for the best but expecting the worst.

Are you gonna drop the bomb or not?

Let us die young or let us live forever.

Forever young, I want to be forever young.

Do you really want to live forever, forever, forever?

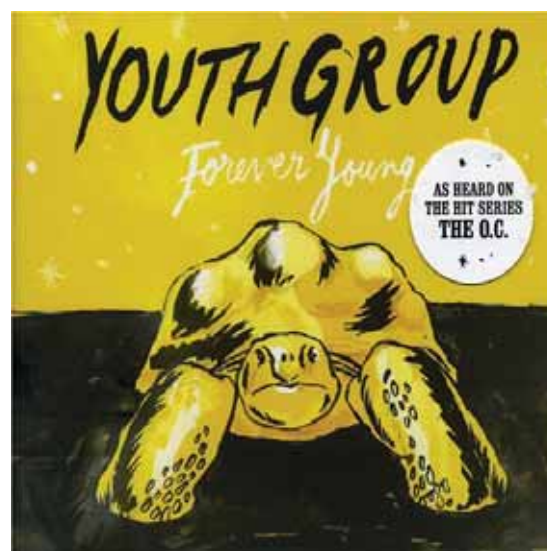
As I watch this video and listen to the song with my family and friends, I'll be exploring questions relating to youth, aging and hopes for the future. I'll be inviting Gen Xers to talk about their experiences of youth in the 1970s and 1980s, along with the realities of their lives

now. In turn, teenagers will have their unique perspectives on the world of the twenty-first century and what it might mean to become adults with a future.

The conversation could be rounded out with a reference to Bob Dylan's 1973 song, *Forever Young*. It would be good to hear from people who despite their physical limitations can look back at their lives saying they've grown up to be true, courageous, upright and strong, living with joyful hearts, forever young.

Having explored the songs and video, it's time to introduce a new intergenerational text for conversation, Ecclesiastes 12:1-2 paraphrased here in *The Message*.

"Honour and enjoy your Creator while you're still young, Before the years take their toll and your vigour wanes, Before your vision dims and the world blurs and the winter years keep you close to the fire."



You can read Duncan Macleod's music video reviews at www.music-videos.duncans.tv and clues to generational conversation at www.generations.postkiwi.com



11th ASSEMBLY 2006

Assembly offers a new way forward

THE UNITING Church has adopted a new approach to sharing faith. It wants to encourage the growth of faith communities and spiritual formation in non-traditional settings such as schools, community service agencies and work places.

Being Church Differently is the title of the new guidelines adopted by the 11th National Assembly in Brisbane to help the church connect with the growing number of people who have no regular contact with organised religion.

The church will ask presbyteries, congregations, schools, community service agencies and other interested groups to use the document to help set up new congregations or faith communities.

National Director for Theology and Discipleship Rev Dr Robert Bos introduced it to Assembly by asking what he called the “key question” of our faith: “How do we confess Christ in our context?”

“This is not some desperate attempt at institutional survival,” he said. “We are not called to confess the Church – we are called to confess Christ.”

(top) Rev Gregor Henderson becomes the 11th President of the Uniting Church in Australia

(centre from left) Dancing and music welcomed the new President at the induction service on the first night
Mawuyi Yathalawuy AM, Assembly member from the Northern Synod
Joy Balazo, Margaretha Hendriks, Norkaya S. Mohamad and James Komengi were ambassadors for peace

(below from left)

Maddy Gordon (4) has attended two Assemblies with her parents;
Rev John Mavor has attended all eleven Assemblies
Rev Ronang Gurrawurra, Rev Dean Drayton, Rev Liva Tukutama and Mata Havea join hands across cultures

Youthful delegates help Annette Bryant (NCYC 2007 management team member) lie down on the job

Photos by Kim Cain, Rohan Salmond and Bruce Mullan

this context is how to assist people on that journey in ways that are helpful?”

“Being Church Differently acknowledges this and suggests ways our schools and community service organisations can be places where people might start to take that journey if they want to.”

If the church failed to provide opportunities for faith development outside its own formal structures, he said, people would go elsewhere, or miss the opportunity to come to faith altogether.



Exceptional elves made Assembly great

By Bruce Mullan

“EXCEPTIONAL”, “fantastic” and “brilliant” were some of the words used by members and visitors to describe the hospitality offered by the Queensland Synod when they attended the Assembly meeting in Brisbane 5-11 July.

A team of 64 volunteers in distinctive half yellow, half floral vests showed people to their rooms, set out the morning tea, handled registration and drove the shuttle bus.

Hard working Assembly Coordinator Tony Litfin said it was an honour to be working with such a capable group of people.

“Nothing was too much trouble, and there was no shortage of people doing all they could to make things easier and more comfortable for others.

“The management team and the volunteers became the type of community one longs to belong to.”

With 15,000 cups of tea and coffee served, 6000 meals provided, and guests travelling from around the nation and across the world, management of the 11th Assembly was an enormous task for the local arrangements team.

Queensland Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman described the volunteer team as “magnificent”.

“There were volunteers at regular intervals between the accommodation and the meeting venue on the first night so no one



Bob and Nola Warrick were just two of the many volunteers who made the 11th Assembly happen

would get lost right through to hot towels towards the end of session on Monday night,” he said

“The attention to detail was remarkable. The team had obviously very intentionally thought through the whole program and ways in which they could ensure that people would be welcomed and supported and made comfortable. It was amazing.”

Retired minister and volunteer Bob Warrick said one visitor compared them to the elves that secretly do things at the shoemaker’s.

“It was lovely. Fancy being called an elf like that, it was beautiful.”

General Secretary of the Queensland Synod Jenny Tymms was appreciative of all that was done.

“Thank you to everyone who contributed to making the hosting of the 11th Assembly in Queensland such a resounding success.”

Highlight of the week was the Sunday evening Assembly Celebration in City Hall where local Uniting Church members joined the Assembly in a 2000 strong crowd to enjoy a potpourri of music, drama and prayer.

Preacher Rev Dr Mvume Dandala from South Africa urged the church to “name the name” of God if it was to restore its apostolic confidence.

“A church that is in mission, names the name, touches those who are in need and, as it touches them, they feel the power oozing back into their life. Whether it is individuals or communities, they feel the strength of Christ,” he said.



Cutting humour by Queensland comedians the Chapman family kept the evening moving along with gentle barbs directed at Assembly processes and church foibles.

Perhaps the least church-like aspect of the program was the energetic presentation by RnB group JC Souljahs.

Victorian minister Rev Harriet Ziegler responded enthusiastically to the Celebration. “It lives in my memory as the best part of the Assembly. I loved it,” she said.

Other Queenslanders like Ruth Beasley from Mareeba attended as members and sat through many days of meetings and agendas.

“Having experienced a sharp learning curve I come home amazed at the breadth and depth of the work of our Uniting Church in Australia and am proud to be a member.

“To God be the glory,” she said.



Rev Dr Dean Drayton, President 2003-2006

IN HIS RETIRING address as President of the Uniting Church, Rev Dr Dean Drayton called on Assembly members to act on six prophetic affirmations made at the first Assembly 29 years ago.

Highlighting affirmations from the 1977 Assembly document *Statement to the Nation*, Dr Drayton asked whether Christians living in the wealthy world could hear Jesus' call to care for the poor.

"The Christians among the poor," he said, "are saying it louder and louder to Christians in the West: How can you say yes to Jesus for your own individual Christian lives, live among the wealthy 20 per cent of the world, and not hear the call of Jesus to care for the poor of the world?"

Calling on the church to pledge allegiance to God first, Dr Drayton said for too many of our politicians the market is god.

"Budget after budget of this government has had a preferential option for the rich.

"At least ten per cent of our population is trapped in poverty, and millions if not billions elsewhere in the world are sacrificed on the altar of this market economy."

Criticised as a "meddlesome priest" in an editorial in *The Australian* on 8 July Dr Drayton said with a concerted effort we could make poverty history.

"Instead the refrain is consume, consume, consume, with little concern for the tomorrows of our children and grandchildren."

Dr Drayton was relentless in his criticism of government policy.

"Some human rights are negotiable in Australia: Aborigines, asylum seekers, the poor and now Papuans. Anti-terrorist laws have traded away basic rights before the law."

Dr Drayton said the last few years had taught him that not only was Christ found in "the service, witness and worship of the everyday to which we are called", but that "the Lord Jesus also invites

us into difficult situations where the prisons in which we live our lives become more obvious, even as his power gives us new visions of the way the unbridgeable can be bridged."

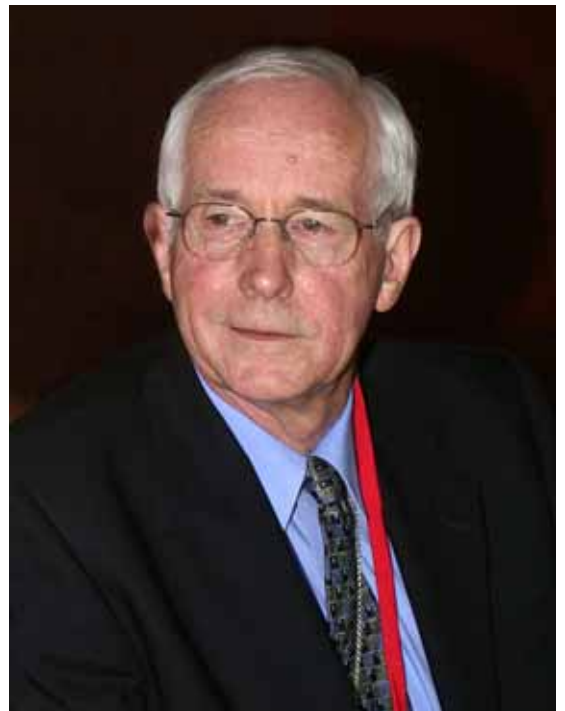
He said, "We do not need to be afraid of the other, afraid of the divisions, for in Christ we have the reconciling one who gives us a place to be and participate in any situation. The Holy Spirit leads us on in this demanding and joyful discipleship of the mission of God."

Still, he said, his first love was for those who were just discovering God's message for them.

"I am always humbled when I see the bright eyes of a person who has just discovered they are loved by Jesus, the tears of joy when forgiveness is received, and the delight of a person seeing that there is a new beginning in Christ for them."

"I thank you Lord, for these last three years."

By Stephen Webb



Rev Gregor Henderson, President 2006-2009

IN HIS FIRST sermon as President of the Uniting Church Rev Gregor Henderson challenged congregations across the country to get on with mission and connect with the 80 per cent of Australians who no longer have regular contact with the church.

Speaking on the Assembly theme, "God's Word, God's World", Mr Henderson said the church needed to focus on being at worship and at mission if it was to reach out and connect with those outside it.

Congregations also needed to let God's living Word excite and inspire them, he said. This would help them shake off their "moribund" behaviour and find new confidence that God was leading the church into his future.

Mr Henderson said it was imperative that in the next few years the Uniting Church lived out two big convictions about the Christian life with passion and determination:

"That God's living Word is there for us and for everyone, every day;

alive, active, succeeding and seeking for us to receive God's love and to know God's power and peace in our lives.

"And that God's living Word is at work in God's world, every day; seeking for people to join with God in working for and with compassion and justice and peace."

Mr Henderson said while debates about what was essential or not essential to the faith were healthy, disagreements over theology and pastoral issues like sexuality and leadership (that sometimes descended into personal denigration and abuse) hurt the church's mission to engage with God's world and people.

"These are shameful behaviours, not worthy of Christians," he said.

Instead, the church should remember the 17th century German Reformation principle: "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things love."

The church needed to remember that it existed "not for its own sake but for the sake of the world and of a new humanity in Christ".

Witnessing to God's Word in God's world would inevitably mean serious disagreements with those in political power, Mr Henderson said.

"At a time of extraordinarily increasing wealth in this country, how can we justify the fact that the gap between rich and poor is wider than ever before in our history, and how can we accept that there are people in this country who every day are victims of poverty, racism, physical or sexual abuse, and homelessness?"

"What's happened to the concept of the 'common good'?"

Mr Henderson said it was time to engage strongly in the national and international life of God's world.

"It's not a time for shirking God's mission.

"It is a time to set the Uniting Church free to proclaim and live the good news of Christ, to cease our divisiveness and to get on with being the church at mission."

By Marjorie Lewis-Jones



Rev Alistair Macrae, 2009...

REV ALISTAIR MACRAE, Principal of the Centre for Theology and Ministry in the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania will succeed the Rev Gregor Henderson as President when the Assembly next meets in 2009.

Thanking members of Assembly for their confidence and asking for their prayers, Mr Macrae outlined his hopes for the Uniting Church.

He said the Assembly had been immersed in the process of discernment about unity and diversity but that "if we are to be truly church, neither can be pursued at the expense of the other. To isolate them is to create idolatry."

Mr Macrae said the Uniting Church was fundamentally

ecumenical and multicultural. "I believe we have a great gift to offer the wider community if we can model an alternative.

"Our culture patently has few clues about how to progress the reconciliation process. At times it feels like we don't do much better in the church. But I sense a strong will in the Uniting Church to invest the resources, the prayer, the patience and pragmatism to explore ways to redress historical wrongs and restore justice. Let us not ask others in the public space to do what we do not do ourselves."

Mr Macrae is married to Clare, a writer, and has four teenage children. In his leisure time he is a sport "tragic" and enjoys music.

By Stephen Webb

Uniting Network

Support and safety for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, families and friends in the Uniting Church

If you need to talk to someone about your personal or family situation contact:

Rev Bev Cameron
(02) 9957 5367

Bev can refer people to QLD contacts.

write to unnswhotmail.com
PO Box 98 Enmore NSW 2042

more info www.uca.org.au/boe

In the NSW Synod, Uniting Network links to the Synod through the Board of Education

Striving for a new South Africa

By Bruce Mullan

WITH COMMITMENT

forged in South Africa's era of civil disobedience, boycotts and torture Bible study leader at the recent Assembly in Brisbane Rev Dr Mvume Dandala is now helping his church face its biggest challenge: shaping the new Africa.

While still a young teenager Mvume Dandala began preaching and was mentored and given leadership opportunities by the principal of his school.

He sensed from that very early time the call of God into ministry in the church.

Youngest son of a South African Methodist minister and educated at a Methodist mission school, Dr Dandala was to become Presiding Bishop of the Methodist Church in Southern Africa and the General Secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches, a fellowship with a congregational membership of 120 million.

Straight from high school as a 17 year old, Dr Dandala had served a two-year apprenticeship as a youth worker in a local congregation and candidate for the Methodist ministry in 1970, entering John Wesley College of the Federal Theological Seminary.

Describing the seminary as a "special place" in the difficult years of the 1970s, Dr Dandala said this was where his political awareness was developed.

"There was a lot of emphasis on contextual theology at the time and we had some very outstanding theological and social commentators."

While at the seminary Dr Dandala was elected chairperson of the local branch of the all-black South African Students organisation, whose president at that time was Steve Biko.

The British Methodist Overseas Division recognised Dr Dandala's leadership potential and provided him with a scholarship to study in Cambridge at Wesley House. He completed his BA and MA before returning to home in 1977 to be ordained and posted to the first non-racial circuit of the Methodist Church in South Africa.

"Of course the government was not happy (with racially integrated circuits) because it was going directly against the policy of apartheid."

Paying the price

Dr Dandala moved on to be Superintendent Minister in the Methodist Circuit in Port Elizabeth, one of the key spots for black resistance.

"The additional pressure of Port Elizabeth was that most of the underground operatives of the time in the African National

Congress (ANC) actually came from that region."

It was the era of civil disobedience with boycotts, extreme pressure and torture, and the role of pastors in community leadership was crucial.

"Of course we paid a price for that in more ways than one. At one stage three or four of us pastors there, Presbyterian, Methodist and Anglican churches, were rounded up by the security police and thrown into detention for a while.

"We were living every day with being tear-gassed in our properties and so on ... It was not easy.

"Those three years assumed such visibility and significance for the struggle and truly it was a privilege to be there at that time."

In his next appointment, as Head of the Missions Department of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa from 1986 to 1991, Dr Dandala developed a radical new strategy where black ministers were twinned with white ministers for four weeks to travel and undertake evangelism work together.

"It was a new experience for all our people and really had a powerful impact, focusing our church on the struggle and the situation of our people. It was a wonderful experience."

Succeeding Peter Story as head of the Central Methodist Mission in Johannesburg, Dr Dandala took over when violence was at its highest between the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party.

"The nice city of Johannesburg was in a mess at the time and we played a very pivotal role in the facilitation of peace."

Dr Dandala said that, while church leaders had a certainty that things would change, they were somewhat astonished when it actually happened.

"I always get amazed when I revisit my sermons that I used to preach up until the '90s. Most of them were faith-building, hope-building, that would say to people, 'This will not last' and yet, when it happened, we were taken by surprise."

Visionary leaders

Dr Dandala said that he was still young when Nelson Mandela and the Rivonia trialists were sentenced to life imprisonment.

"The excitement of meeting them in the '90s was absolutely overwhelming.

"Of course, when they came out they came out affirming the role and place of the church and what the church had been standing for.

"It was for us, who had been in leadership, a very encouraging thing to hear."

Dr Dandala said at that point the ministry of the South African church had to change from a liberation role to the three tasks



General secretary of the All Africa Conference of Churches and Assembly Bible study leader Rev Mvume Dandala

of peace, reconciliation and nation building. "We hope history will judge us fairly."

Dr Dandala said that his nation had been blessed with incredibly visionary leadership.

"South Africa should forever be grateful for Nelson Mandela and his colleagues at the time.

"These guys had spent so many years in prison and had taken so much hammering. Their families had been broken up and tortured, but they still came out saying the life of the nation is more important than anything else at this stage.

"Imagine for Mandela to come out and tell people who had been fighting in his name, 'Let us throw our weapons in the sea' before there was any election. He took very unpopular decisions.

"People often ask how is it that black people in South Africa were so ready to forgive and I say it was indeed because of people like Mandela and Desmond Tutu who had been at the heart of the

struggle but at every turn were striving to purify the struggle.

"When people were killing one another and burning each other with motor car tyres, Desmond constantly said to our people, 'That's not what the struggle is about. This struggle is about values.'"

Now, in 2006, Dr Dandala believes the theology of the church needs to focus more than ever on values such as forgiveness, sharing, hard work and compassion that should form the bedrock of South African society.

"The social deficits that result from apartheid are vast and will take more than ten or fifteen years to reverse but my sense is that we have done and are still doing reasonably well.

"But our biggest fear is that the younger generation will forget the struggle and, in forgetting, will become susceptible to the consumerism that tends to come with economic growth; and forget that the struggle was not merely

for individual acquisition but rather was for the transformation of our whole society."

Dr Dandala said that Africa had been an object of charity for too long and that economic growth was essential to turn the continent around by the creation of wealth.

But he also believes the church is very conscious of the need to highlight for its people the kind of value implications that underlie any drive for wealth creation.

"As a Methodist, I always think of Mr Wesley talking about, 'Make all the money you can make (honestly), keep only that which you need and give away the rest for the welfare of humanity.'"

"So the church has got to walk the delicate line of balancing the need for people to be innovators with the need for them to prioritise common wealth.

"That is the biggest challenge that faces the church at this point in time if the church is going to be a contributor to the new Africa."

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For further information please contact Br Nathan-James.

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programs@brookfieldcentre.org.au

*These programs have prerequisites; recognition of prior learning may be applied for.

WHAT'S ON

Wednesdays (during Term time), 9.15-11.30am. Gap UC Craft Experience, 1050 Waterworks Road. Scrapbooking, Christmas card making & more. Ph Lyn 3351 7662 or email thegapuc@inet.net.au.

August 5, 1-5pm. Communication Training Day. St Francis' College, 233 Milton Rd, Milton. Contact Focus on 3835 2229.

August 6. Kawana Waters Congregation celebrates 20 years of worship and fellowship in their current building. Contact Trevor Huth on 54916632 or 0408723638 or email trevann@dovenetq.net.au.

August 7, 7-8.30pm. Wills and Power of Attorney Seminar presented by solicitor Geoff Melvin. Broadwater Road Uniting Church. Free. RSVP to church office on 3849 8548 (9am-2pm, Monday-Friday).

August 10-19. Brisbane Exhibition, RNA Showgrounds. The Gap and Ashgrove Uniting Church congregations provide the best food at the Ekka. Go to the stall at Machinery Hill and support your church.

August 13, 2pm. Fifteenth Annual Hymnfest, Redcliffe Uniting Church. Contact Keith Lawson on 3203 1788 for more details.

August 13, 6.30pm, Diane McGrath-Fingleton speaks on Resilience at the Progressive Spirituality Network at the West End Uniting Church, 11 Sussex Street, West End.

August 14, 7-8.30pm. Residential Tenancy Act Seminar presented by Andrew and Tanya Johnson. Broadwater Road Uniting Church. Free. RSVP to church office 3849 8548 (9am-2pm, Monday-Friday).

August 16, 9.30am. Bringing into Focus: Indonesia and Japan - OMF International (Qld) information & prayer day. Chinese Christian Church, 83 Ryans Road, St Lucia. Ph office on 3343 3893.

August 17-November 30, 6.30-9pm. Living the Questions DVD and Discussion series. West End UC. \$30 for 12 sessions. For more information visit www.progressivespirituality.net.

August 17-19. Wheller Gardens Auxiliary Rummage Sale. Uhl Hall 930 Gympie Rd, Chermerside. 17-18 open 8.30am-3pm, 19 open 8am-12noon. More information contact Merril Herbert on 3857 4668.

August 21, 7-8.30pm. Mortgages Seminar presented by David Bailey of Mortgage Choice. Broadwater Road Uniting Church. Free. RSVP to church office on 3849 8548 (9am-2pm, Monday-Friday).

August 21-26. Fifth Congress of Asian Theologians. Hong Kong.

August 25 - September 16. 40-hour Calling & Caring Lab 1 course. Trainers Rev Peter Arnett and Pauline Thomas. Registration form and details available from Emmanuel office at euca@dovenetq.net.au or ph Rosemary on 3355 2162.

August 27, 2pm. The Wesley Hospital Auxiliary: A Pleasant Sunday Afternoon. Featuring the Birralee Blokes and Birralee Singers. \$12. Evan and Mary Thomson Auditorium, Wesley Hospital, Auchenflower. Contact Heather on 3395 1796 or Joan on 3397 6896.

August 28, 7-8.30pm. Consumerism and its Effects on Third World Countries Seminar. Presenter Anna McGregor (Oxfam). Broadwater Road Uniting Church. RSVP to 3849 8548 (9am-2pm, Mon-Fri).

August 30-31, 9am-4pm. Prepare/Enrich Administrator training. Chermerside Kedron Community Church, Rode Rd & Gympie Rd. Contact Bob Warrick at nolabob@optusnet.com.au or 3857 7101.

August 31-September 2. Sandgate Uniting Church Craft Fair. 116 Board St, Deagon. Phone Bobbie 3269 6565 or Jean 3265 2412.

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

September 4, 10.30am. Uniting Church Adult Fellowship Annual Service. Boonah UC. Morning tea 9.30am. BYO Lunch.

October 21-22, Asia Focus Weekend. OMF International (Qld) Uniting Church at Alexandra Park with Mark Robinson, Director of Intercultural Studies, Bible College of Qld. Ph OMF Qld 3359 2758 (Tues-Thurs).

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



Outreach Team Leader and SOS co-coordinator Ashley Edwards and Chaplain Warren Myers load blankets in the SOS street van

Warm hearts for the homeless

As the nights become longer and colder, Drug Arm is grateful for the knitted blankets provided by Kangaroo Point Uniting Church.

Drug Arm's Outreach Team Leader Ashley Edwards was enthusiastic. "It won't only keep the homeless people warm, but the vivid colours and beautiful texture will cheer them up as well."

Drug Arm's Street Outreach Service (SOS) vans have come in contact with over 5,900 people in the last six months alone.

Please call Dana on 3620 8800 to have your donations picked up.

PowerChange unplugged

After over ten years of ministry in Queensland the PowerChange youth and young adults movement is ending.

The PowerChange executive thanks the many committed PowerChange members and volunteers for their selfless commitment.

Many of the PowerChange activities (including Experiments of Life, camps and Global Walking) have been delegated to other congregations and ministry areas in the Uniting Church.

For more information contact Jason Bray on 0407 574 883 or jasonandjuliebray@bigpond.com.

Church women share vision

Saturday 26 August Queensland Churches Together (QCT) and the Gender Commission of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) host 'Dreaming the church: Christian women share their hopes and visions'.

9.30am-3.30pm at Old Bishopsbourne, MEC/St Francis College, Baroona Road, Milton, Brisbane.

Registrations to QCT by Wednesday 23 August. Queensland Churches Together, P.O. Box 2046, Milton, Qld 4064. For more information contact ph 3369 6792 or qctadmin@tpg.com.au.

Conversations on climate change

Queensland Churches Together and Friends of the Earth host a professional development workshop on climate change.

Experts will help answer the question: "Who is my neighbour when climate change threatens neighbouring countries?"

Thursday 10 August, 4-8pm at Trinity Place, the meeting hall at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 68 Hawthorne St, Woolloongabba, Brisbane. Cost \$22 including refreshments, a light meal, and a CD compendium of resources.

Contact Queensland Churches Together to register or for more information on 3369 6792 or qctadmin@tpg.com.au.

Change of address

Country Life and The Church by Rol Mitchell. See classified advertisements for more information and updated address to purchase this book.

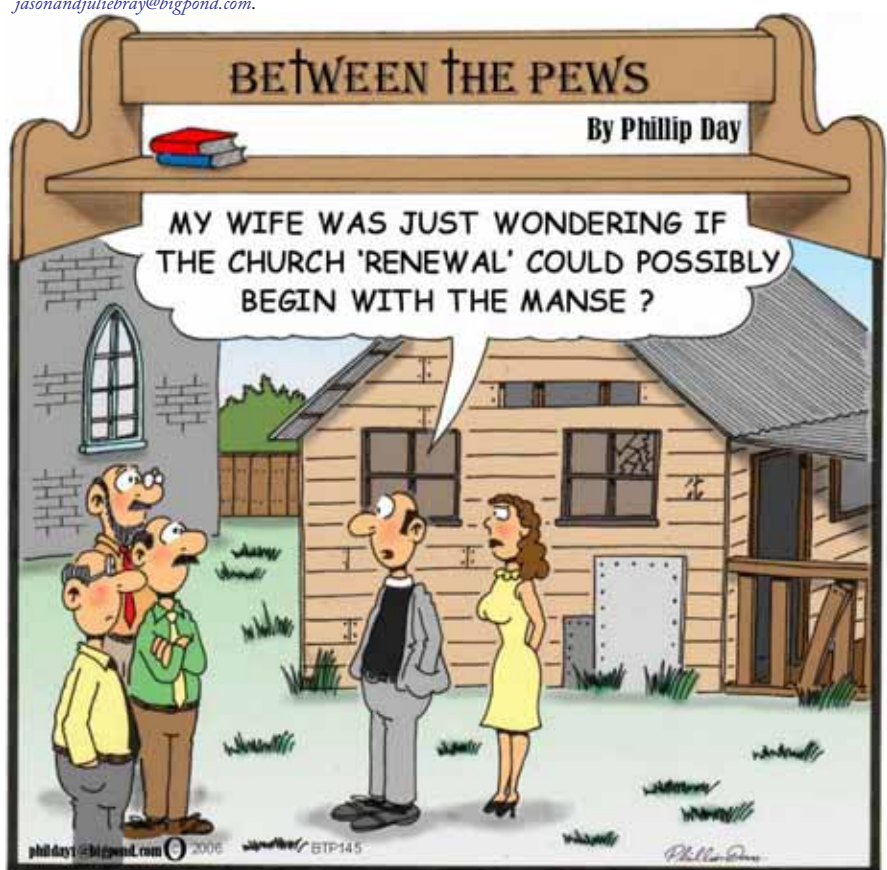
Trinity CQ

Trinity Central Queensland is offering a Worship Leadership course 13-16 October at Emerald Uniting Church.

The course is designed to deepen understanding of worship and equip participants with the skills needed to lead worship.

The course is aimed at lay people or groups who are exercising worship leadership functions in congregations.

For more information or to register, please contact Mrs Sharon Kirkon phone 4978 7390 or email sharon_r_kirk@bigpond.com.



Voting for Jesus- Christianity and Politics in Australia

Quarterly Essay Issue 22 2006

Amanda Lohrey

Black Inc.

RRP \$14.95 or by subscription

In *Voting for Jesus* Tasmanian essayist Amanda Lohrey takes an in-depth look at the Christian revival in Australia, its impact on politics and public life, and explores the world of evangelical Christianity.

Starting and finishing in conversations with young evangelical Christians, Lohrey looks particularly at the Hillsong phenomenon and the success of Family First.

She claims that the influence of Australia's Christian Right which has modelled its political interventions on the United States experience is vastly overrated and that the government uses them when it suits and disregards them otherwise.

Lohrey claims that despite declining church attendances and the growth of Pentecostal congregations it is the mainstream churches that are still the main players.

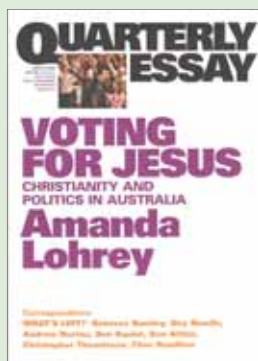
Because the "Christian vote" has remained static at around 5%, Lohrey says conservatives have focused on family values to broaden their appeal and win community support.

In 2004 when federal Treasurer Peter Costello told the Hillsong congregation, "we need a return to faith and values, which have made our country strong", it was taken up by fundamentalist Christians as a catch cry.

Lohrey writes, "The Christian Right have demonstrated that they are masters of marketing in all spheres."

Voting for Jesus- Christianity and Politics in Australia is an essay of astute political analysis coloured with personal stories. It is guaranteed to attract attention and provoke debate.

Bruce Mullan
is the Editor of *Journey*



Finding Naasicaa - letters of hope in an age of anxiety

Charles Rigma

Regent College Publishing

RRP \$32.95

Finding Naasicaa is written as a series of letters by Charles Rigma to his 19 year old granddaughter Naasicaa.

Rigma is an Australian scholar, activist and deeply spiritual thinker who is Professor Emeritus of Missions and Evangelism at Regent College in Vancouver, Canada.

Each letter (chapter) deals with an issue of life, faith, spirituality and social transformation - all issues that are of interest to young adults.

This book is written from a philosophical / theological perspective but is thought provoking, easy to read, and full of wonderful insights.

The issues covered in the text are very relevant to the current young adult generation and include topics such as disillusionment, conformity, the reign of God, the power of hope and commitment.

"Success may be the fruit of our commitment, but can never be the basis for our commitment. Instead, commitments are made because we believe that we are called to give ourselves to certain persons, causes, and situations."

Finding Naasicaa - letters of hope in an age of anxiety is written in a style that will assist post-modern young adults clarify what they believe and how faith can and should impact on how they live their lives.

The book forces a serious rethink of the central claims of the Christian faith and is one that young adults will enjoy reading.

Sarah Bialy is a student and Rev Sue Fairley is Principal of Grace College, University of Queensland.

Finding Naasicaa is available from
Ridley College Bookshop,
Melbourne. Email
bookshop@ridley.unimelb.edu.au



REVIEWS



Animism: Respecting the Living World

Graham Harvey

Wakefield Press

RRP \$29.95

Although I had previously understood animism to mean those religions that worship animals, that was never what the word meant.

The word animism is used to describe that which all religions have in common, the belief in souls or spirits but became associated with Indigenous religions thought to represent the "primitive" origins of religious belief.

The author of *Animism: Respecting the Living World* moves us from this point to explore "new" animism which recognises the personhood of all living things including some things that most of us would consider non-living.

Harvey introduces us to the existence of other-than-human persons, including rock persons, fish persons, and living country.

He does so from the perspective of Indigenous people, modern pagans, and environmental activists.

He goes on to explore the implications of new animism for the way we approach the natural world.

Written in a dense academic style that covers a lot of material and with many brief illustrations,

it is a heavy read but very effective at helping one to rethink their perspective and relationship to the natural world.

It should not be read as accurately describing Indigenous culture but it will help us understand the different perspective from which many indigenous people come, and the place from which modern animists derive their respect for the environment.

The book completely lacks any discussion on the relevance of God the Creator in animism making it a little spiritually draining.

Read *Animism: Respecting the Living World* if you are seeking to understand new-age, pagan or environmental activism movements of today, or if you wish to gain a new way of looking at environmental and ethical issues.

Tim Trudgen works with Indigenous Australians as a cross-cultural consultant and is currently studying anthropology and theology part time



Mighty To Save

Hillsong

RRP CD \$29.95

DVD \$39.95

Leading over 10,000 worshippers at the Sydney Entertainment Centre with what must be the world's best behaved mosh-pit Darlene Zschech and the Hillsong

team present 14 songs that will be the benchmark for much of Australian worship music for the next 12 months.

Mighty To Save, the latest live worship album to come out of Hillsong Church, was recorded on 5 March 2006.

Available as a double disk CD, double disk DVD, a music book on CD ROM and print version plus a split track CD, the whole package would come close to \$160 to set up the Hillsong repertoire complete.

But that also includes a DVD teaching segment from Darlene Zschech on worship, a documentary on worship from the Hillsong perspective, guitar and drum workshops to teach musicians how to play the songs, multiple sub-title language choices and much promotional material about Hillsong conferences and resources.

There is a consistent and clear message that music is the key to worship, and the DVD shows the musicians and congregation in accord in serious, energetic and all-absorbing praise.

Brief, repetitive lyrics are matched with power chords, strong vocal presentation and enough choir participation to give a strong "live performance" feel that engages the emotions and stirs the soul.

At times the almost two hours of DVD worship is a caricature of itself with ceaseless shots of the ecstatic and youthful crowd, hands raised, eyes closed and totally engrossed by the experience.

Such is the influence of the Hillsong stable that many of our congregations will be singing these songs over the next decade and the music will be heard and sung world-wide.

Mighty To Save will no doubt join previous Hillsong offerings at Number 1 on the Australian album chart and go quickly to gold, but there are no surprises here, either lyrically or musically.

While the music is competent and tight, if somewhat stylised, I couldn't help wondering if this collection would have gone straight to the bargain bin had the lyrics not been about Jesus.

Bruce Mullan
is the Editor of *Journey*

Preliminary Notice

Alexandra Park is 60 this year!

Monday 27 November 2006 10am-3pm

Come one, come all to celebrate and share lunch and memories, with special guest Dorothy Gibson.

Lunch will be catered on site by Alexandra Park staff at a cost of \$12.50, or \$20 per couple. Numbers are limited to 100 so book early.

If sufficient interest is shown for the hiring of a bus from Brisbane on the day this could be organised but will depend on early advice - contact **Rob Caitens** on **3285 6146**.



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PRAYER DIARY

6 August:
Maroochydore

MAROOCHYDORE Uniting Church is located within the central business area and is walking distance from the proposed Transport Interchange and extended shopping centre.

The Vision for our Congregation is "to see our community come to know: The Hope, The Values and the Love of Christ".

We have begun steps toward the fulfilment of this vision in terms wider than just worship services, although they are an integral part of our mission and witness.

Please pray for the recently established and opened Drop In and Book Centre. This centre is a quiet, friendly and safe place for people to come and have a conversation, a cup of tea or coffee, read a book and enjoy fellowship.

The centre is open on Mondays and Fridays as well as Sundays and is staffed by volunteers.

Discussions are being held with Lifeline Sunshine Coast with the view to locating their office and activities centre on land adjacent to the church.

This will open further opportunities for programs to be shared between the congregation and Lifeline to meet the increasing needs of an aging and transient community. Please pray that these discussions will bear fruit and glorify God.

When there is a fifth Sunday in the month, a bring and share finger food fellowship tea and service is held at 5.30pm. A feature of these services is to have guest speakers who are working in the community and beyond to serve the mission of Christ in ways that are not always known by us. Please pray that our vision of Christ at work in the community will be widened and acknowledged.

13 August:
Brookfield

BROOKFIELD Uniting Church is situated on the western edge of the city of Brisbane and is just west of Kenmore.

Brookfield was once a rural community. Today little commercial farming takes place. The area is growing with large acreage housing and Estate Housing, a major feature of the area.

The congregation has nearly 140 years of witness in the area but has only been a congregation working its own ministry for 4 years. The congregation is growing in numbers and is made up of people from several countries of origin.

The ministry reaches the geographical areas of Upper Brookfield, Kenmore Hills and Pullenvale.

Please pray for joint activities with the Anglican Church; for the Annual Country market (October); for leadership for the Youth work; for the potential of the Sunday School recommencing weekly (currently monthly) within the next three years; for Christian nurture of those who attend worship in their busy lives and responsibilities.

George Barnes is the minister in a .25 time placement. Pray for George as he combines his Pastoral ministry in the area with his Hospital Chaplaincy placement.

Give thanks for the display at the Brookfield Show

Give thanks for the opportunities provided of giving pastoral care through funerals, weddings and baptisms;

Give thanks for the support for our mission outreach including chaplaincy at Kenmore High School, the Wesley Research Foundation and the schoolbags for the Solomon Islands project.

20 August: Albert
Street Congregation,
Wesley Mission
Brisbane.

ALBERT STREET Uniting Church, in inner-city Brisbane, is known as a spiritual centre in the city, a community that welcomes all, and having a compassionate heart. Wesley Mission Brisbane is a very vital part of our ministry.

Our missional context includes building relationships with the homeless and marginalised people nearby, the city office workers, and those living in the inner city apartments.

Wesley Mission Brisbane offers extensive aged care services and community services, including family day care, youth services, employment services, disability services, community care and support.

Over 8000 visitors come to the church each year, either to view its heritage architecture, for prayer and meditation, or to seek assistance.

Others come as guests of the many couples married here or to have their children baptised. Others come to worship God at one of the five weekly services.

We would value your prayers for our ministry with:

- couples as they prepare for marriage and families as they prepare for baptism of their children;
- those who live and work in the inner city and those attending our Christian spirituality studies;
- homeless and marginalised people and our ecumenical programs – servants on the margins, crash bed program, community meals;
- the Lions Den punk rock scene which attracts over 300 youth each weekend.

Give thanks for the thousands of lives touched through the activities of Wesley Mission Brisbane, where we can 'make a difference' and our building projects for more aged care facilities, the redevelopment of Wesley House, and our preparations for the centenary of Wesley Mission Brisbane in 2007.



On Saturday 1 July Minister of the Word Rev Sue Page and Deacon Rev Tim Hodgson were married in the Albert Street Uniting Church. Officiating at the very reverend wedding was the Queensland Synod Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman.

Retired doctors head for Africa

SUNSHINE COAST doctors Jim and Chris Dick from the Mooloolaba Uniting Church will head for Sierra Leone in West Africa soon to serve for a month as volunteers with Mercy Ships.



Dr Jim and Dr Chris are heading for Sierra Leone which according to the World Health Organisation still has the highest rate of maternal mortality in the world with 2% of women dying in childbirth.

"We could have been selfish in retirement and become grey nomads," said Dr Chris, "but we believe God has given us skills and we can serve him in our retirement."

Both doctors will serve at Mercy Ships' land-based Aberdeen Clinic and Fistula Centre.

Left: A woman, given a new dress to symbolise a new start in her life, celebrates at the fistula hospital in Sierra Leone following surgery.

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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.

Coolumb Beach Qld Holiday Renovated 3 bedroom brick house, walk to patrolled beach & shops. Church members discount. Book on-line: <http://users.tpg.com.au/coolumb> or call 0418 889657.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Passover & Easter next year in Jerusalem. Join Rev Dr Geoff & Mrs Lorraine Pankhurst on pilgrimage to Israel, Greece & Turkey, including Gallipoli & Churches of Revelation. Details ph 4698 7824.

Country Life and The Church by Rol Mitchell. An in-depth study of the rural church. \$39.90 postage paid from Glenlea Publishing, 1 Ibis Cres, Orange, 2800 or Dr Rol Mitchell at mitchel@postoffice.csu.edu.au.

Email your classified advertisements to
mardi.lumsden@uccentre.ucaqld.com.au
or fax 07 3377 9796

Organists Needed

The Community of Wheller Gardens, Chermide, would like to hear from anyone who could donate their time and talents in playing the organ for our Church Service on Sunday morning (9.30am-10.15am) in The Sanctuary. If you would like to volunteer to be part of the roster contact Colin Gurteen or Ruth O'Sullivan Wheller Gardens on RuthO@umb.org.au or phone 07 3621 4512.

Knitting Workshop

Celebrate Seniors' Week on Wednesday 23 August, 10am at 'Unity House', Linton Street, Kangaroo Point with a knitting workshop and morning tea.

Contact Gwenda Branjerdorp or Rosemary Trevaskas on phone 07 3397 7829. Admission is free.

June Harwood 1934-2006

GROWING UP in Kalbar at age three, June Harwood (nee Kubler) took her first turn of convulsions and stopped breathing. Her father begged the Lord for her life, dedicating it to his service. She breathed again and this event became a driving force in her life.

In 1972, Mrs Harwood was awarded her accreditation as a Lay Preacher and became secretary and president of the national and state levels of the Lay Preacher's Association. She was awarded Life Membership of the Association at the National Conference at Margate last year.

Mrs Harwood was a woman ahead of her times, the first female Circuit Steward in the Methodist Sandgate Circuit and the first

female parish secretary in the Uniting Church.

We thank God for a woman who gave so much of her life to the church.



Water Sense

I find it difficult to understand why along the coastal regions there is a surplus of water, and those lucky enough to live in this area are being encouraged to waste it. There has been no thought or consideration to the vast area of the state that is drought stricken and some of which depend on it for food and their livelihood.

Rather than flush this precious water needlessly down the drain without a care, I recommend the whole State be on the same water restrictions. I suggest that a pipeline be installed to pump the surplus supply to the various dams and catchment areas that are at dangerously low levels. This would relieve the suffering and hardship and those who are faced with abandoning their properties.

Max Schulze
Gatton

It is with regret that I take issue with the Moderator's views concerning the proposed Mary River Dam.

My understanding of the teaching throughout the Bible is that we are continually encouraged to take the long view rather than an immediate easy path.

Our government is charged with the responsibility of providing water for future generations and this government has grasped the nettle. It's always regrettable when people get hurt like this but someone always pays for the welfare of the population.

The church has an important role to play to encourage victims to seek new opportunities. It's not the end of the world to have to move. I've moved nine times and the last was the best I ever did 36 years ago.

Doug Robertson
Bribie Island

Reshaping creation

Douglas L Jones is quite correct in saying that we should not reshape the biblical texts to suit our presuppositions, however, if we allow our presuppositions to re-interpret what we read, are we not doing the same thing?

Apart from being unsupported by repeatable, observable science or that it is the basis for such evil as communism, eugenics and racial superiority (claiming that other races are 'less evolved than others'), the theory of evolution stands in opposition to the entire theme and message of the bible, as well as being the basis of unbelief for many.

Greg Cooney
Murgon

RE in schools

It is very sad to read that some elements within the Christian Churches have persuaded the Queensland Government to abandon its attempt to bring religious education in schools into the 21st Century.

When will politicians learn that there are many other Christians who are strongly in favour of progressive policies that are more honest and open about the role of religion in education?

The arrangements for the traditional very limited access that members of Christian churches have had to the school population for religious education are well past their "use-by-date".

Australia is now a society in which many persons practise a variety of religious faiths and many others have no such practices.

Far from blocking this Queensland government move for a more contemporary sense of religious education in schooling,

LETTERS

the Christian churches should get together, and with other interested faith and non-faith groups, be pressing for a larger reform that would really bring the religious dimension into the mainstream curriculum, be it history, science, art, social studies, etc.

Dr Peter J Fensham
Annerley

Messy middle

Besides the obvious typo with respect to the date of the inauguration of UCA, a number of issues in your front-page article "20 Years and Still Talking" need to be addressed.

Firstly, the 1970 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church did make a statement in favour of homosexual law reform.

However, this law reform was not within the Presbyterian Church, but a recommendation to the Government of the Day with respect to the decriminalisation of homosexual behaviour between consenting adults.

This recommendation was part of a report by the Church and Nation Committee, which did not comment on the rights, or wrongs of homosexual behaviour.

What the *Journey* article failed to say was that prior to Union, the Methodist Conference in 1974 resolved "Conference deplores those attitudes in the community which encourage homosexual behaviour and calls upon our people to view the homosexual acts as contrary to God's creative purpose".

The most glaring discrepancy in the *Journey* article is the omission of a word in the quoting of a recommendation from the 1985 report *Homosexuality and the Church*, which reads.

"The Committee is of the opinion that the homosexual condition should not in and of itself be grounds for a making a person ineligible for membership ..." (Page 24).

Journey left out the word "condition" which in the context of this report means "orientation".

There is a world of difference between "homosexual orientation" and "homosexual behaviour".

Journey has (I want to believe unintentionally), misled its readers by mis-quoting the findings of this Assembly Committee.

Finally, my reading of the July issue of *Journey* as well as recent issues is that we are being given the message that those who feel strongly about Resolution 84 should calm down and prepare to keep living in the "Messy Middle".

For many of us, unfortunately, our consciences make that an impossibility.

Donald McKay
Samford Valley

Sexuality and leadership

Journey received long letters on this issue. An extract of each is included here.

As a simple country parson, I too have "prayerfully sought to discern God's will and after much deliberation" on the issue of homosexuality and leadership I read what St Paul's the Apostle wrote about God's will in 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.

It seems that the clever city parsons and lay people of the Assembly know more about God's will in this matter than St Paul the Apostle.

Rev Ray Lindenmayer
Manly

I was informed by a person of high position in the church that "the church is not a democracy", and that a decision made by the small percentage of the total church membership who attend Assembly, is binding on all. If the question was asked of, and voted on, by the total church membership, no one could then complain about the result.

I am one member who, after 70 years of association with the Methodist/Uniting Church, will now be voting with his feet.

John H Grimmett
Upper MtGravatt

Maybe the members of the Assembly keep putting off making a decision, knowing that by the time a decision is made, those who object to people living in same sex relationships having leadership in the church will either be dead or too old to be bothered.

Rev Jim MacLean
Toowoomba

The church is only correct if built and carried on in the teaching of God almighty and Jesus Christ, otherwise members will leave it and younger ones won't join it.

S Weiner

The Assembly has a problem with "unity" because it put the homosexual debate in the "too-hard" basket. The Assembly has its hand on the "self-destruct" button.


Graham Hall
Victoria Point

What used to be called unity is now called diversity! As a Christian believer I say to that still wonderful, but becoming fragmented UCA; "Accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative and stop becoming Mister in-between", by scrapping the debate.

Ron Dowker
Southport

Your article "Sex and splits" (July *Journey*) said that this has gone on for twenty years. That most of us (elders and congregations) did not know until 1997 or 2000 is not good. All is forgiven by genuine Christians however, it does prove that light is better than darkness, even if the media get excited.

Eric Sullivan
Innisfail



Have your say

Letters to the Editor may be edited due to space limitations.
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Pray for rain

I am currently Chairman of the South East Queensland Water Corporation but I write to you in a personal capacity and as a fellow Christian who believes that prayer changes things.

I write to ask if, in the midst of your prayers for folk in North Queensland in the wake of Cyclone Larry, you and your congregation will join me and my Chief Executive Officer, Peter Borrows, in praying for rain in those areas of Queensland still in the grip of drought and specifically for rain over South East Queensland's major drinking water catchments.

Although the Gold and Sunshine Coasts have received good rainfall in recent months, the catchments for Wivenhoe, Somerset and North Pine Dams have received meagre Summer rains for the sixth year in succession, and their combined storages going into traditionally dryer times are currently less than one-third of capacity. If we are to avoid the current water restrictions becoming more severe, we need soaking rain over the catchments in the next eight weeks.

Although contingency plans will ensure that the region does not run out of water, severe restrictions bring hardship on the community, and implementation of contingency plans will inevitably involve significant expenditure which will impact on future water prices.

We are working hard to manage the current situation but we cannot make it rain.

I know there are many demands on you, but I would sincerely value your making this need for rainfall in our catchments a matter for prayer in your church, home groups and personal devotions of your people.

Thank you for praying.

Bob Grice

Dr Bob Grice is a member of Malaney Uniting Church and has completed his term as Chairperson of the South East Queensland Water Corporation, Mr Peter Borrows is a member of Samford Uniting Church. - Ed.

Historically Speaking



The oldest funeral business in Queensland

When Alexander Gow bought his Brisbane funeral business in 1910, he became the proud owner of the first and oldest funeral business in Queensland.

Care and compassion were old-fashioned - even in the convict days of 1840, two years before free settlement in the colony of Moreton Bay. But in 1840, they were watchwords for Andrew Petrie, often referred to as Queensland's first free settler, when he began the state's first undertaking establishment. His son, George Barney Petrie ran the business until it was sold to Walter Barrett in 1877.

The business changed hands four times before Alexander Gow bought it.

Today, Alex Gow Funerals is one of only two funeral businesses established in Brisbane before 1883, which remain trading today, but both under different names.

And today, guided through the years by four generations of the Gow family, the same highly-valued principles of old-fashioned care and compassion drive the company and its people.

Times change, but some things which meant a lot in 1840 are still the same.

Alex Gow Funerals

A Brisbane-owned family business, established in 1840.

Phone 3852 1501

JOURNEY asks...

How does music enrich your spiritual journey?

Emma Castle-Morton

As a little two week old adopted baby from Sri Lanka cried and cried in her crib, her tremendously loving and amazing parents would play music through the night so she could dance herself to sleep.

When shopping for shoes, it didn't matter what colour they were or how many bows were on them...all that mattered was the sound they made when walking on the floor.

For her fourth birthday, she was given a toy keyboard to play with and started imitating familiar tunes.

As a seven year old, attending a lunch club at her Sydney Christian School, she would stand at the piano so her toes could reach the pedals and try to play Sunday School songs for her friends to sing along to.

I have loved music my whole life. Whether it be pop music, film scores or songs written about our Saviour, something powerful happens in my heart when I hear great music being played or sung.

For as long as I can remember, music has been the familiar pathway that has helped me gain confidence, make friends, do the housework, study, worship the Lord and lead others.

No matter where I go whether it is in the car, having a bath, reading a book, falling asleep, music has been by my side.

I can't express how deeply passionate I am about making music and being a part of a team who makes music.

Being adopted makes it very difficult for me to understand what innate desires have perhaps come from my natural parents, but one thing is for certain: I do know



that this deeply imbedded love for making music scream from life has come from my Father in heaven.

Does it mean that it's always easy to sing and make music to the Lord? Simply...no.

Certainly there are times when my heart does not rejoice or when there is no song in my heart...even times when I don't want to be around others who are worshipping God through song.

According to www.hymns.me.uk here are the top ten most popular hymns:

1. Amazing Grace
2. Ave Maria
3. Jerusalem
4. Holy Holy Holy
5. Battle Hymn Of The Republic
6. How Great Thou Art
7. Be Thou My Vision
8. Rock Of Ages
9. Joyful Joyful
10. It Is Well With My Soul

That message was reinforced at church and Sunday School where the Parable of the Talents seemed to crop up quite regularly.

It did not take too long for me to be roped in to play for the hymns and choruses at Sunday School.

Wesley had a pipe organ, which fascinated me greatly, and the resident organist encouraged me to play some of the hymns at services. I started learning organ at age 15, and within two years the organist had resigned and I was appointed. I have been a church organist ever since.

Do I let that stop me from worshipping my Lord though? Definitely not!

Speaking the promises of God from his Word and making statements of faith from the lines of songs, helps me to keep my relationship alive with Jesus.

Even just sitting in a quiet place listening to soft worship music allows me to make more room in my heart for my Jesus.

Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Tell of his salvation from day to day. (1 Chronicles 16:23)

Emma Castle-Morton is Worship Coordinator at Logan Uniting Church

Musical experiences in church events large and small have consolidated my belief in the central role of music in expressing the love, truth and mystery of God.

Music for me is an expression of faith in worship as well as a means of serving the church.

Music is a special language which conveys the messages of faith as clearly as words.

The great hymns of our faith (old and new) communicate the Gospel not only explicitly in words but also implicitly in the substance of the music. Music can often say what words cannot.

No wonder church music sends tingles down the spine of many people, including me.

Dr Stephen Nisbet is the organist for St Andrews Uniting Church in Brisbane city

Craig Burnett

At different times music draws out of me different things: fun, movement, emotional expression, clever and crazy vocalism, acts of worship, reflection. Often these point me to God, help me become aware of the Spirit and enhance or celebrate life.

Putting on some great jazz as I cruise into town to see a live artist or play a gig creates a vibe of excitement that can lead me to remember seasons of darkness and depression that Jesus has rescued me from. To me a musical "vibe" is like a symbol of abundant life.

Listening to classical music whilst driving through nature on a sunny day augments the colours, smell and sounds already present in creation. Moments like these lift my spirit and draw out both internal and verbal worship.

I appreciate a wide range of worship music styles, but preferably something gutsy - be it rock groove or something more atmospheric.

I really love it when a band or worship team produces music and an experience where powerful lyrics meet exciting, quality music.

However, regardless of quality, I know for sure that the approach of my heart and mind is paramount to deeply connecting to the heart of God. I can sit in an auditorium

of thousands with the whole thing going off and be totally negative and critical and another day be in a church singing old school praise and worship and be totally into it.

Top 40 music is a whole other jungle. I find that I often experience truth and beauty or a perceptive portrayal of human experience in pop music. God bless Coldplay!

But I also witness a damaged and dark culture that is both reflected in and reinforced by pop music.

Both these experiences inspire me. What could I and other musicians who follow Jesus do to be a powerful vessel for communicating God's love and values to our world?

Craig Burnett is lead singer of gospel jazz band SCAT



John Wesley's singing rules for Methodists:

1. Learn the tune.
2. Sing them as they are printed.
3. Sing all. "If it is a cross to you, take it up and you will find a blessing."
4. Sing lustily and with a good courage.
5. Sing modestly. Do not bawl.
6. Sing in time. Do not run before or stay behind.
7. Above all, sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word you sing. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself, or any other creature. In order to do this, attend strictly to the sense of what you sing, and see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually.

Fanny Crosby

The most prolific hymnist of all time may have been Frances Jane (Fanny) Crosby (1820-1915). She wrote over 8,000 hymns. It is said editors didn't want to publish so many hymns by the same lyricist in one book, so they asked her to use pseudonyms (she used over 200).

Fanny Crosby said about her blindness, "It seemed intended by the blessed providence of God that I should be blind all my life, and I thank him for the dispensation. If perfect earthly sight were offered me tomorrow I would not accept it. I might not have sung hymns to the praise of God if I had been distracted by the beautiful and interesting things about me."

Fanny Crosby was possibly also one of the oldest hymnists. The day before her death at age 95, she wrote her last hymn to console a neighbour who had lost a child. Her tombstone carried the words of one of her best-loved hymns, "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine. Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine."

Steven Nisbet

I cannot imagine Christian faith without music; both have been part of my being all of my life. So I just don't think that music enriches my spirituality - it is an integral part of it.

No one should be surprised by this; I grew up in a Christian and musical home where belief in God, participating in church life, and learning music were taken as axiomatic.

Wesley Methodist Church was close to where we lived, as I grew up in Kangaroo Point. The family worshipped there regularly and my sisters and I went to Sunday School.

We three learned piano, so there was always music in the house.

From those early days, my parents had instilled in me that my musical ability was a God-given talent and should not be wasted.