



Hope and
problems at
Lakeview

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Is it an inconvenient theology?

The Uniting Church regards climate change as a serious threat to the future and integrity of life on earth.

The scientific evidence on global warming and its potentially disastrous impact is now indisputable. Also beyond dispute is that the burning of fossil fuels and subsequent creation of greenhouse gas emissions and our worldwide failure to plan for a sustainable future are seriously exacerbating the problems we face.

The threat posed by climate change therefore challenges the way we live in a fundamental way. If we are to meet and overcome the challenge we must think creatively about the organisation of our social and economic institutions, our relationship with each other across national and cultural boundaries and our relationship with the environment.

It is increasingly the case that some humans consume the earth's resources whilst other humans pay the price.

As one of the world's major producers of greenhouse gas emissions on a per capita basis, Australia must acknowledge that it has a responsibility to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels.

As long as we remain prepared to abuse the atmosphere and entire ecosystems for the sake of short-term economic gain for a few, we undermine our own future.

It is important that Australia's social, economic and environmental policies begin to reflect that social justice and ecological justice are not competing interests, but have shared solutions.

It makes good economic and political sense to spend money ensuring the long-term well-being of our natural world – there can be no security for humanity without a healthy ecosystem.

For the sake of the planet and all its people: A Uniting Church in Australia statement on climate change. Adopted by the Assembly Standing Committee, Uniting Church in Australia, November 2006



More about climate change

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How's the weather where you are?

OVER THE past week or so I've been reading the autobiography of renowned environmentalist, David Suzuki. It's an enthralling book for a number of reasons, and it reveals a man with a deep love for the natural world and a passionate commitment to preserve it for future generations.

His book confirms what we already know. In many parts of the world, the destruction of the environment has passed the point of no return! Vast areas of pristine wilderness have been torn apart by mining and drilling.

Millions of hectares of virgin forest have been cleared to meet the insatiable demand for timber. Much of it has not been replanted, or has been converted into unproductive farms.

Rivers and lakes have been so badly polluted by the runoff from industry and mining that all life forms in and around them have disappeared.

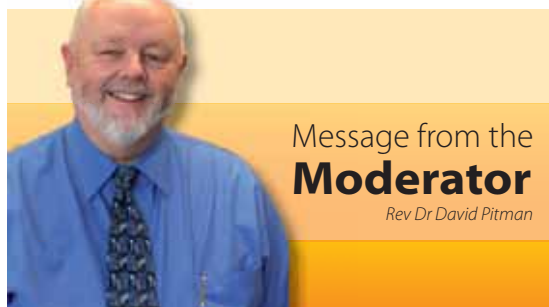
The air in many of our major cities is now so toxic that it represents a constant threat to the health and wellbeing of those who live in them.

Global warming and climate change are the inevitable result of environmental degradation and the pollution of the atmosphere.

Responsible environmentalists have done their best over many years to alert us to this rapidly developing threat to our collective future.

Their warnings, as so often happens, have often been scoffed at or ignored, especially by those intent on making a great deal of money very quickly, and by governments more concerned with the next election than the future of the planet.

Although our own Prime Minister has recently acknowledged that the problems are real and must be addressed, his continued



Message from the Moderator

Rev Dr David Pitman

insistence that what is "good" for Australia sets the environmental agenda is somewhat mystifying.

If "good" means economically beneficial then the attitude is short-sighted and very misleading.

If it means that the rest of the world doesn't matter as long as Australia gets something out of it, the attitude is totally selfish and irresponsible.

We are one world! What happens in South America, or

"We should be in no doubt. The problem is real, it is urgent, and it demands a unified approach from the nations of the world."

Africa, or Antarctica ultimately impacts on everyone.

When our Government (along with the USA) refuses to sign the Kyoto Protocol, it distances itself from a joint commitment to reduce the level of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, and acts as if we can do as we like without reference to anyone else!

We should be in no doubt. The problem is real, it is urgent, and it demands a unified approach from the nations of the world.

The response called for includes a commitment by wealthy nations to address the economic inequities that encourage poorer countries to engage in rapid industrial development, often without regard

for the inevitable destructive impact on the environment and the atmosphere.

For Christians, the current crisis is informed by our understanding of the biblical witness regarding the creation of the earth and responsible stewardship. The world God has made is a gift entrusted to our care.

The use of the words "subdue" and "have dominion" in the creation story found in Genesis Chapter 1 do not infer the right to ravage, exploit or destroy. They are words that establish the biblical notion of responsible stewardship.

God not only saw that everything he had made was "good", God entrusted what was good into the care of the human race.

In the beginning, God saw that what the divine wisdom had brought into being was "good".

In his letter to the Colossians, the Apostle Paul reminds us that Jesus is the Lord of creation.

As Son of God he was present and active in the creation of the earth. As the risen Christ he will be present and active when God brings everything in heaven and on earth to its ultimate and perfect fulfilment.

In the meantime we have a special responsibility to care for the earth and its people.

The stewardship of creation is not just for now. It remains with us until Jesus comes again!

How's the weather where you are?

From the Editor

Those who are older know how the years seem to come and go at a faster rate every time around and already it's 2007.

Those who keep track of what is happening around us are all too aware of the rapid change of pace and an incredible redefinition of values and culture that is taking place in the Australian community.

Those who have been part of the Uniting Church for a while recognise that we now face an entirely new set of challenges which will require creative and energetic responses if we are to be faithful to the task that God has given us.

Here in the Synod's Communication Services Unit we understand our role to include helping the church discover and enact appropriate and imaginative responses to the changeful context in which we live out our faith.

Journey will do three things this year to meet this important challenge.

First, we will look back to remind ourselves of the rich traditions and incredible resources we have been given as a church. As we approach the 30th anniversary of the inauguration of the Uniting Church in Australia we will particularly remember those who brought the vision into reality and created a uniquely Australian church which has both the resources and the ability to face the present challenges and those that will face us in the future.

Second, we will engage with the present. We will endeavour to find the connecting points between our faith and what is happening in our world, and will tell the stories of how Uniting Church people are resourcefully engaging with their local communities as individuals and congregations.

Third, we will look to the future. *Journey* wants to be part of creating a vibrant and dynamic Uniting Church that demonstrates ingenuity and faithfulness in being witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We won't always get it right and we guarantee to step on toes on a regular basis, but it will always be done out of a love for God and a strong commitment to the Uniting Church in Australia.

Thanks as always to the many, many people who make each issue of *Journey* happen: our writers, reviewers, photographers, cartoonists, proofreaders, printers and distribution workers.

It's an amazing team and a regular inspiration to us.

Bruce Mullan
Mardi Lumsden
Osker Lau

Sign of the Times

TOOWONG TEAparty congregation had noticed the recent excitement in *Journey* about the *Christmas - We are not alone* postcard campaign and one Saturday afternoon before Christmas Naomi Waldron came up with an idea as they were watching the cricket.

The idea was to make a Christmas banner (using the *We are not alone* theme) to temporarily replace the Toowong church sign.

Just 24 hours later the sign was complete and by the start of Sunday evening worship it was proudly adorning the front of the church property.

Within an hour of the sign being up two new people had come to church, but the TEAparty are not sure if that could be attributed to the sign.



Signwriters Naomi Waldron, David Weddell and Ben Reid from the TEAparty congregation. Photo by Neil Waldron

JOURNEY

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Churches working together for Townsville communities

UNITINGCARE has announced the proposed sale of Townsville's Wesley Hospital, to the Mater Misericordiae Hospital, which is owned and operated by the Townsville Congregation of the Sisters of Mercy.

The Council of Synod and the UnitingCare Board recently approved the sale which is subject to formal approval by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

The hospital was purchased by the Uniting Church in 1999.

The Mater has confirmed that they propose to convert the Wesley Townsville site into Australia's only regional women's and children's hospital.

The Moderator, Rev Dr David Pitman said he supports the Wesley Hospital being sold to another not-for-profit organisation which shares similar Christian values, mission and beliefs.

"While the sale is inevitably accompanied by sadness, we realise that it represents a positive step forward in terms of health care in Townsville" he said.

"Any pastoral issues raised by the sale of a Uniting Church hospital to a Catholic Church-based organisation would be overcome by the practical need to do what is best for the community."

Dr Pitman said both Churches are committed to the principle of ecumenism, and both the Uniting Church and the Catholic Church at a national level have agreed to develop clear and sensitive guidelines to deal with how our churches together can best meet the needs of the local people, and that this approach has underpinned

the thinking about the sale as the hospital changes hands.

"Ultimately this should not be seen as the Uniting Church pulling out of the hospital, but a recognition of the effectiveness of the witness of the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church as expressed through the mission and ministry of the Mater Misericordiae Hospital Townsville."

UnitingCare's Director Ms Anne Cross said that discussions between the Mater and Uniting HealthCare, have also confirmed that all Wesley Townsville staff will be transferred to the Mater.

"Both parties understand and agree that the experience and skills of our current staff members are critical in ensuring that the health needs of the local people are met," she said.

Ms Cross said a major benefit for the people of North Queensland is that the merger will reduce costly duplication of services and competition for highly-skilled staff, such as medical specialists, who are in short supply particularly in regional areas.

Ms Cross emphasised the sale of the hospital in no way marked a trend for UnitingCare to focus its service delivery away from regional areas. "In fact, it is quite the opposite," she said.

"UnitingCare's mandate is to reach out to the whole community especially those most in need, wherever they are.

UnitingCare has an ongoing commitment to the North Queensland region through UnitingCare's other service providers, Blue Care and Lifeline Community Care.



Robina Uniting Church Minister Rev Stu Cameron (left) and Youth House Project Coordinator Mr Doug Mayes prepare for the auction

Robina builds more than a house

THE MINISTERS may have been disappointed that the fabulous 300 square metre house built by the congregation wasn't a new manse.

Offering modern open plan living in line with the Gold Coast lifestyle, the house had four large bedrooms, study, parents' retreat and fully equipped alfresco entertainment area, kitchen with European stainless steel appliances and stone benchtops and numerous other "wow factors".

A small project team had

developed the design and worked with local award winning builder Adpoint Developments to construct the house for sale to raise funds for the youth of the local community.

Project Coordinator Mr Doug Mayes said a strong advertising campaign was conducted on completion to ensure maximum exposure not only for the house but also for the project.

"The result in financial terms raised in excess of \$30,000 for youth

facilities but of equal importance were the other outcomes such as the involvement of a great number of our Church family through provision of goods and services for the house, working bees for landscaping, fencing, investing with UCIS to help fund the project and so on," said Mr Mayes.

He said the church was also grateful to the 40 corporate sponsors who assisted the project, most of whom had no association with the church.

Search for new staff has begun

THE UNITING Church in Queensland has begun the search for a number of key staff to take the church forward for its next stage of development.

The Council of Synod has appointed a Search Committee chaired by the Moderator to oversee the process of filling a number of positions which will need to have appointments made in 2007.

Central to this hunt for highly skilled and experienced people will be for a new General Secretary to take over from Rev Jenny Tymms who will conclude her current term sometime after the Synod meeting in May this year.

The Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman has described the General Secretary's role as a demanding one for a Church facing a challenging context.

"Working with other key leaders, the person appointed will focus on strategically facilitating the Queensland Synod's capacity for mission and ministry in partnership with Presbyteries and

Congregations as well as providing oversight and development of the Synod staff team."

Dr Pitman said the person sought could be either lay or ordained but would have a comprehensive understanding of the Uniting Church in Australia and have demonstrated exceptional leadership, team building, and strategic planning skills.

The Synod is also seeking a Director of Mission for UnitingCare and a Mission Consultant to have a focus on spirituality and discipleship formation, and will need to fill the position vacated when Mr Bruce Binnie retires as Director of Financial and Property Services after the May meeting of Synod.

With a number of other key vacancies later in 2007 the Search Committee is keen to look at all the positions and engage in conversations with potential applicants to discern the best possible matches when looking at the whole picture.

Dr Pitman said, "While formal applications must wait until positions have been advertised, people who may be interested in providing key leadership in the Synod should feel free to contact me at this stage if they would like to do so."

The Downs Presbytery has also advertised for a Presbytery Minister to replace the indefatigable Rev Evan Stenlake when he retires yet again during 2007.

Mr Stenlake says that the Downs Presbytery faces some particular staffing issues which will require a person with considerable strategic ability together with skills in coaching and mentoring leaders.

"We're looking for someone who can support congregations that don't have specified ministers and provide sufficient education, support and communication over huge distances."

Full information kits for each position will be available on the Synod website www.ucaql.com.au

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What came first?



www.ucaqld.com.au

An old question becomes an Easter invitation

THE OLD chicken and egg question will be the hook that invites the Queensland community to consider what really matters this Easter.

After the successful Christmas postcard promotion campaigns the Synod's Communication Services Unit has invited congregations to express their interest in the provision of similar high-quality, low-cost resources for Easter 2007 outreach in local communities.

This campaign will present the local Uniting Church as a great place to come and consider life's important questions during the Easter season: "What came first? - Explore life's bigger questions".

Communications Manager Mr Bruce Mullan said it

was another step in an ongoing partnership between congregations and the Synod to raise awareness of how the Uniting Church celebrates two key times in the Christian year and to ensure people were invited to attend worship to hear the Good News.

"People may not always accept the invitation from a card in their letterbox but they are reminded that the church is there, the Gospel is preached and that they are always welcome," Mr Mullan said.

Congregations can order online now at www.ucaqld.com.au/easter_signup/ or contact Bruce Mullan on 07 3377 9801

International mission groups join forces

IT WAS with both excitement and sadness that the Overseas Mission Auxiliary held its final meeting in November in readiness to joining with the Uniting International Mission Auxiliary this year.

Evolving from the Women's Auxiliary of the London Missionary Society in Queensland (which was established in 1887), the Auxiliary has assisted countless people in mission all over the world.

President Pat Riddel said the Auxiliary plays an important role in assisting people in mission.

"The role of the Auxiliary may have changed somewhat in recent years and some activities have had to be scaled down, but there is still a need to support people serving in mission with partner churches and Uniting Church people serving in



Retiring Overseas Mission Auxiliary President Pat Riddel

many places with other mission agencies."

"We look forward to a reformed mission support group and praise God for the Auxiliary and its predecessors."

Mardi Lumsden

NCYC award for dodgeball film-makers

QUEENSLANDERS MADE their mark at the National Christian Youth Convention held in Perth in January 2007.

Redlands Uniting Church members Rebecca Gilmour and

Emma Nichols won the inaugural NCYC film competition with a film about their youth group starting a dodgeball league.

The league started two years ago with an idea nurtured by the local youth worker, Beth Nichols.

"The young people decided to start a dodgeball competition on Monday nights," said Ms Nichols.

"So we asked the church council to stop hiring out the church hall on Monday nights."

These days there is a tuck shop which turns over \$60 a night, a computerised draw and the league has moved to a bigger venue at the local high school.

Proving that mission work can be a ball, the dodgeball league attracts two-thirds of participants from outside the local church youth groups.

Anyone can dodge balls, but it seems you can't dodge the fun.

Emma, who is a leader at Priority One, explains. "Some of the kids say that dodgeball is the highlight of their week."

Maybe it's a good model for mission, as dodge-ball is no cake walk.

"You can throw the ball so hard that you throw your shoulder out," Emma said.

Whilst only a few girls are involved in dodgeball, Emma said that it can be an advantage.

"The boys don't want to throw balls at the girls, so I stay in, then substitute for one of our best players."

"That gets them every time," she laughs.

More information about the Redlands Dodgeball league can be found at www.beatdodgeball.tk.

Nahum Ayliffe and Mardi Lumsden



Prize winning film-maker Emma Nichols





MODERATOR'S COMMUNITY SERVICE MEDAL

Do you know a volunteer who has contributed in an outstanding way to the Church's mission in community service in Queensland?

The Moderator's Medal is one way to honour them.


Nominees must:

- be a volunteer, past or present
- have exhibited outstanding service over a number of years
- be involved in community service work other than congregational work (e.g. Blue Care, Lifeline Community Care, Hospitals, or community service agencies outside the Uniting Church)
- were/are not in paid employment connected to their volunteer work

This year all nominations must be received electronically, a link to the form can be found on the UnitingCare Queensland website <http://www.ucareqld.com.au>

NOMINATIONS CLOSE ON FRIDAY 9 MARCH 2007

Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of Western Australia



General Secretary

Applications are invited from members of the Uniting Church, either ordained or laypersons, to fulfil this senior executive position within the church.

The task embraces a dual function as Secretary of the Synod and of the Presbytery.

The Synod is seeking a person who is able to apply a theological perspective to the mission directions of the church; can then plan strategically towards the achievement of those objectives; and is able to marshal the resources necessary for their implementation.

It is a challenging role for a church embracing challenging times. A sound knowledge of and commitment to the ethos and polity of the Uniting Church is essential.

The full information pack is available via our website www.uca.wa.org.au

Applications will close on Friday 2nd March 2007

Delegation found problems and hope in aboriginal community

By Gavin Melvin

TROUBLED BY the unmet needs of Aboriginal people in the area, leaders from the Uniting Church were also encouraged by the work of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress faith community in Port Augusta.

The five member delegation, including Uniting Church President Rev Gregor Henderson, South Australian Moderator Rev Graham Vawser, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress National Chair Mr Vince Ross made the three day visit in November in response to a request from the Congress at the

11th Assembly in Brisbane.

Originally asked to look into the living conditions at a transient camp for indigenous people at Lakeview, the group soon realised the decision to erect tent accommodation on the edge of Port Augusta was just the tip of the iceberg.

"Although our site visit to Lakeview allayed some of my personal concerns, it is still troubling that, in this day and age, any Government would respond to the accommodation needs of Australian citizens of any circumstance by erecting tents inside a wire fenced enclosure," Mr Henderson said.

"It was also difficult to avoid

the sense that Lakeview, which is located well out of town, was built as a quick fix which gets the issue of Aboriginal transients out of sight and out of mind.

"But more importantly, the three days we spent in Port Augusta, listening and talking with our brothers and sisters from the Congress, with local Aboriginal people and with the authorities, was stark reminder of our continued failure as a country to properly deal with the divide between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australia.

"It was clear to us that the problems in Port Augusta were also problems being faced rights across the country by Aboriginal people."

As well as the troubling issue of the Lakeview Centre, the delegation was also faced with a raft of unresolved issues including drug and alcohol abuse, physical violence, homelessness, poor health and unemployment.

The delegation was also concerned about broader issues of the disempowerment of Aboriginal

voices within the community and the process of mainstreaming social service programs, where programs specifically directed to indigenous people, or take into account their different circumstances, or those that are governed and delivered by indigenous people are gradually being brought into the mainstream programs of government.

"This is a frightening development and almost seems counterproductive to creating good, effective policy," Mr Henderson said.

"By mainstreaming services and support for Aboriginal people in this way we run the risk of further marginalising their voices and making it harder to understand their unique needs and provide appropriate and effective support on the ground."

Mr Henderson was widely reported in the media for urging all Governments to slow down on their mainstreaming agendas.

"Aboriginal people must have a say in their own future and in

programs that are established to improve their lives.

"This march toward service mainstreaming that we witnessed could well have the result of further setting-back the possibility of reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians."

While the delegation heard many tragic stories, they also left with a sense of optimism for the future, according to Mr Ross.

"It was a real joy to see how the local Congress faith community is digging in and ministering in the community," Mr Ross said.

"As well as running personal development and education programs targeting kids who have dropped out of school, they're also meeting the urgent need for practical aid and have established a strong and vibrant Christian community."

Mr Ross said the trip was a practical example of the church living out the commitments it has made in its Covenant with Aboriginal people.

Pancakes prove food for life

COMMUNITIES around Queensland will have stacks of fun with Pancake Day this year, as they cook and sell \$2 pancakes to help raise money for those who need it most.

Over 600 groups and businesses around Queensland will be supporting UnitingCare's Pancake Day on Tuesday 20 February, to help the elderly, homeless and vulnerable members of the community.

All funds raised from Pancake Day events go back into the local area that raised the funds.

This means, it's a chance to not only help people in need, but to help people at a local level.

Last year over 600 organisations throughout Queensland and 2000 Australia wide participated in Pancake Day events with schools, businesses,

community groups and churches raising more than \$500,000 across the country.

The slogan of Pancake Day, "share it 'round", promotes the idea of sharing with those in need in our communities - "There's enough for everyone if we share it 'round".

UnitingCare is the health and community services provider of the Uniting Church and is the largest not-for-profit provider in Queensland with 15,000 staff, 5,000 volunteers, providing services in over 330 geographic locations across the state.

To be a part of Pancake Day or to hold an event log on to www.ucareqld.com.au and click to the Pancake Day page or phone 1800 060 543



Bob Morley who plays Drew Curtis in Home and Away stacks his pancakes



South Australian Moderator Rev Graham Vawser, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress National Chair Mr Vince Ross and Uniting Church President Rev Gregor Henderson visit the Lakeview tent camp in Port Augusta.

Photo by Nick Kerr

WHICH SCHOOL FOR YOUR CHILD ?

Moreton Bay Boys' College

(In partnership with Moreton Bay College - a Uniting Church School)

Day school for boys

07 3906 9444

from Prep to Year 7 in 2006

www.mbbc.qld.edu.au

Clayfield College

Girls: Prep to Year 12

07 3262 0262

Boarding: Girls over 10 years.

www.clayfield.qld.edu.au

Boys: Prep to Year 5.

Somerville House

Day and boarding school for girls

07 3248 9200

Preparatory to Year 12

www.somerville.qld.edu.au

Brisbane Boys' College

Boarding and day school

07 3309 3500

for boys in Prep to Year 12

www.bbbc.qld.edu.au

Sunshine Coast Grammar School

Co-educational day school

07 5445 4444

Preschool to Year 12

www.scgs.qld.edu.au



Presbyterian and Methodist
Schools Association
www.pmsa-schools.edu.au

A ministry of the Uniting and Presbyterian Churches, providing excellence in education in a Christian and caring environment.

Green is the new black

By Scott Stephens

AFTER YEARS of ignored warnings, when predictions of imminent ecological cataclysm were dismissed as fringe opinions of feral dissidents, environmentalism is now all the rage.

Spurred on by the immense success and world-wide appeal of Al Gore's documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, environmental issues have dominated the airwaves and print media over the past eight months, tapping into the public's latent green sympathies, and sending corporations scrambling to acquire 'green friendly' endorsements and logos for their products.

Even *Vanity Fair*, the undisputed barometer of all things chic and fashionable, devoted its May 2006 issue to profiles of significantly green celebrities and designer labels.

Sensing a shift in the popular mood, many politicians who formerly claimed that the 'jury is still out' on a direct link between climate change and the concentration of anthropogenic (or man-made) greenhouse gases (GHG) now seem only too happy to assert their green credentials.

Indeed, the renewed push for a reassessment of nuclear power in Australia has been greenwashed by the newly conservationist Coalition – "Nuclear is clean and green!"

But the deeper question – leaving aside the still contentious issue of the actual science of climate change, the effect of CO₂ build-up on global weather patterns, concerning which there remains considerable debate – is this: *Why now?* Why are these environmental concerns suddenly centre stage?

After all, the predicted consequences of a 'business as usual' approach to development and energy consumption are far from new, and very little additional

hard data has been presented to warrant such a radical shift in public opinion and Federal policy.

In a time such as ours, which is remarkably devoid of any altruistic motivation – the willingness to make a decision on the basis of its inherent rightness, irrespective of personal gain or indirect benefit – it would not be surprising to discover another, more self-absorbed impulse behind this sudden environmental concern.

Paradoxically, the Federal Government's current stance is the logical correlate to its refusal to ratify the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, despite the extraordinary concessions granted to the Australian delegation (including permission actually to *increase* its GHG emissions by eight percent until 2012).

At that time, the expressed reason for its refusal was not the failure of climatologists to demonstrate a direct correspondence between global warming and

carbon emissions, but rather an unwillingness to act against "our unique national interests."

In other words, environmental sustainability would not be allowed to take precedence over robust economic growth.

But now that a political and economic climate exists that makes heightened environmental awareness expedient, even profitable – fuelled, in part, by the immense economic potential of a broadened nuclear industry – the Federal Government seems willing to acknowledge the need to actively explore alternate energy models.

The philosopher Immanuel Kant once said that the greatest ethical travesty is to do the right thing, but to do it in the interests of personal reward. If this is true, then what often passes for public morality in our time, being a responsible global citizen, is in fact little more than a thinly disguised, particularly vile form of self-interest.

This kind of fake morality

was displayed prominently in a document that marked the turning of the political tide late last year: *The Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change*.

Its approach – both to highlight the economic consequences of failure to curb GHG emissions and to outline cooperative strategies for climate stabilisation that will not adversely affect economic growth – is a troubling indication of our unquestioned assumption that everything must ultimately be weighed up against the dominant economic realities of our time.

Further, while stressing the need for "international collective action," *The Stern Review* effectively condones national self-interest by offering the reassurance that, through technological innovation and a complex series of financial incentives, "stabilisation of greenhouse-gas concentration in the atmosphere is feasible and consistent with continued growth."

Despite all this dialogue and debate carried out under the constant scrutiny of the public eye, the one possibility that *must* be considered – altering the seemingly immutable laws of economics themselves, which means curtailing the very excesses we call 'freedom' – is *never* considered.

We have no choice, it seems, but to place everything in the service

of the ebbs and flows of the global economy. This is reminiscent of the prophet Isaiah's blistering critique of idolatry. The one who fashions an idol from a block of wood, he says, is then incapable of saying, "Is not this thing in my hand a fraud?"

But before we hurl too many invectives at the Federal Government for being out of step with the public on the sincerity of its commitment to environmental issues, perhaps the Government is just mirroring back to us our own insincerity.

For many people, it is fine to indulge moderate green sympathies, but only once the effects of climate change touch us directly, and only up to the point that we have to pay some personal cost. George Megalogenis has made a particularly chilling observation regarding such self-serving environmentalism in his book, *The Longest Decade*:

"Even support for the environment, the ultimate expression of altruism, can be traced back to house prices. Labor pollsters Hawker Britton found in early 2004 that concerns for green issues were greater in those suburbs where property was more expensive. In other words, the ordinary Australian who favours protecting the environment can source his or her green values to the selfish calculation that more development in their neighbourhood equals fewer trees equals poorer views equals lower house prices."

So, over against Al Gore's slick advocacy, pop environmentalism is in the end the *convenient lie* of our time: a way of baptising lives that are already excessive, self-seeking and idolatrous with a sickly green tinge; of not changing our consumption habits, but feeling much better about them (rather like drinking Diet Coke).

Given the similar function of religion in our culture, maybe Michael Crichton wasn't too far off the mark when he called environmentalism "the religion of choice for urban atheists."

Scott Stephens is an author, theologian and minister at Chermide Kedron Uniting Church. He teaches ethics at Trinity Theological College and is a regular contributor to *Journey*.



Invitation

Kamp Stacey is 50 this year!

Saturday 21 April 2007 10am-3pm

Come one, come all to celebrate and share lunch and memories.

Lunch will be catered on site at a cost of \$12.50 per person, or \$20 per couple. Numbers are limited so book early.

Reserve your place by contacting **Kamp Stacey** on **07 4666 1240**.



Global faith effort gathers against warming

By David Weddell

THE SEARCH for a response to the impending ecological crisis is warming up with churches across the globe taking action to bring about change in attitudes and action.

In Britain, "Eco-Congregation" is an ecumenical program helping churches make the link between environmental issues and Christian faith, and respond with practical action.

In the USA, the Regeneration Project focuses on putting faith into action which includes educating congregations, helping them buy energy efficient lights and appliances, providing energy

audits and encouraging more fuel efficient vehicles.

In India, Sikh temples have kitchens to feed the poor. It's a huge operation, feeding 30 million people nationwide. They have pledged to take measures to reduce the power consumption by 15%.

In Britain, ULPS (a group of Jewish synagogues) has undertaken environmental audits of all its synagogues, communal buildings and commercial operations to determine how best to decrease their CO₂ emissions.

In Canada, the United Church of Canada has partnered with the Climate Change Centre and the Nova Scotia Department of Energy to offer workshops on the energy

efficiency of church buildings and climate change.

In the USA, the Presbyterian church has challenged its members to make a bold witness by aspiring to become 'carbon-neutral', by reducing and offsetting their CO₂ emissions.

It's a boy!

Journey offers congratulations to Deacon Michelle Cook and husband Youth Worker James Hughes from North Queensland on the birth of Zane Dawar, 4.3 kg, 52 cm long, born in Brisbane on 12 January 2007.

Is repentance the starting point for eco-mission?

By Bruce Mullan

NOT ONLY scientists and politicians are talking about climate change. These days it is a topic of conversation over many Uniting Church cups of coffee and a "hot" discussion on Uniting Church e-groups.

Many Uniting Church people are refining their eco-theology and looking for practical ways to respond to current climate change and other environmental issues.

Manager of the Queensland Sustainable Energy Industry Development Group and Uniting Church member Wendy Miller is increasingly seeking to make links between climate change and her Christian faith.

"As a Christian who works professionally in the area of climate change, I have been increasingly alarmed by the extent of the social, environmental and economic challenges that face our global community as a result of climate change," she said.

"I have also been personally challenged to question the role that Christians could and should play in addressing both the causes of global warming and the adaptations that we will need to make in order to live with the effects of global warming."

Trinity Theological College Director of Old Testament Studies Rev Doug Jones has also been on a journey of discovery regarding his own personal impact on climate change and how he should respond.

"I suggest that we need to confess that we have bowed down and worshipped the god of mammon and have adopted a relaxed and comfortable lifestyle whilst leaving the living God on the mantelpiece as our western personal household god whom we dust off when it suits," said Mr Jones.

Uniting Church member Mr Tim Trudgen agrees but sees a lack of motivation for care of the environment and calls for a radical approach based on repentance.

"Guilt and love should motivate the living generations to sow painfully back what we have taken from the future," Mr Trudgen said.

"I think a large healthy amount of guilt is necessary for repentance. I am glad that I feel guilty every time I drive a car or make toast or flush the toilet for that matter.

"This helps us to change but I am afraid humanity's collective guilt and love will not be enough to turn the tide."

Clayfield/Hamilton Uniting Church minister Rev Peter Lockhart believes it is about recognising our place in the bigger whole.

"In the past, human dominion over the creation has been interpreted as people simply seeing the earth as a resource to support our needs and wants but I think we are realising what some other

ancient and indigenous cultures understood far better. We are not above the creation but a part of it.

"The current ecological concerns for global warming, sea level rises, changed weather patterns and so on serve as a stark reminder of dominion being not about subjugation but symbiosis."

Theological student Stephen Clark talks about "eco-mission" which is focused on a commitment to the environment as more than just material resources available for the benefit of humanity.

"It is God's creation that has been deemed 'good'," he said. "Because of this, the natural environment is to be celebrated and enjoyed for its intrinsic value as part of God's good creation and relationship to God in its own right."

"We have a particular privilege and responsibility to humanity to tend and care for the world as a participation in divine purposes."

Ms Miller said much of our response is based on how we determine the value of creation, of our natural environment.

"Our society says that natural environment is useful only if we can get something out of it, usually in an economic sense - for example, the presumption that we can conduct atomic testing or bury nuclear waste in Central Australia because 'nothing lives out there'."

"Or look at Australia's accounting methods for resources. Only resources that can be bought, sold, traded, or licensed such as coal, oil, gas and uranium appear on the balance sheets, whereas those resources that cannot (yet) be traded such as sunshine, rainfall, wind, fresh air are given no value;

they are not even mentioned."

Ms Miller believes the Bible says otherwise.

"The natural world is not valuable purely for the services it provides us, for the things that humans declare useful. It was not made just for us."

She also believes the problem is linked to the question of ownership of the land itself and of the natural resources that are on or under the land.

"Our whole economic structure is premised on the presumption that creation can be 'owned', that it can be traded and sold, and that the 'owners' therefore have a right to do whatever they want with 'their property'."

"Even our sense of national identity, of being Australian, is reliant on this piece of land, with its physical boundaries clearly delineated, belonging to us collectively, that we can make decisions as to who can or can't step foot on our land, who can own parts of it, and what we can or can't do with this part of creation."

Convinced that this exploitation of the earth for economic and political gain is the single greatest cause of social and environmental problems globally Ms Miller believes it is not consistent with biblical truth.

"The Bible clearly states that God owns creation."

She quotes Deuteronomy 10:14, "Look around you: everything you see is God's - the heavens above and beyond, the Earth, and everything on it."

Mr Jones looks to the recent discussions between the Prime Minister and several state Premiers

about water trading as an example of this problem.

He hears an implicit understanding that the market will sort water resources out and that government is loath to get involved in the market.

"If, as Sir Nicholas Stern has asserted, our current predicament is the result of massive market failure, I believe that I have reasonable basis for scepticism over the capacity of the market to determine an equitable distribution

of this valuable resource that is fundamental to life.

"Is it morally neutral to live a lifestyle that knowingly contributes the highest rate of green house gas emission per capita in the world and thus contributes to the potential destruction of major components of the ecosystem?"

Mr Clark calls for a network of like-minded eco-congregations which will support and encourage one another in eco-mission.

"Enthusiastic congregational members will need to be identified and recognised as the contact people and local drivers of our missional initiative."


"Such motivation must come from within a congregation in order to more readily effect a transformation of awareness into action."

Ms Miller is one who has taken up the challenge.

"I believe that God has called me to be actively involved in challenging and criticising our current reality, in challenging our political and economic systems that allocate the bulk of the earth's resources to the minority of the population, and in challenging our rampant consumerism that results in the actions of the rich minority having global impacts that threaten to destroy much of God's creation."

People interested in networking with others who have an interest in climate change issues and a commitment to work for change should contact the Social Responsibility Advocate Mr Andrew Johnson on 07 3377 9111 or email andrew.johnson@ucaqld.com.au






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**The Uniting Church in Australia
- Queensland Synod**
(An Equal Opportunity Employer)



GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE SYNOD
(Full time; 5 year initial contract)

The General Secretary's position is a challenging role for a Church facing a challenging context.

Working with other key leaders, this important position will focus on strategically facilitating the Queensland Synod's capacity for mission and ministry in partnership with Presbyteries and Congregations. The position will also co-ordinate the oversight and development of the Synod staff team.

The successful applicant (lay or ordained) will be a committed Christian who has extensive experience in the management of large organisations and/or complex systems. He or she will have an comprehensive understanding of Church governance and have demonstrated exceptional leadership, team building, and strategic planning skills that concentrate on delivering quality service provision that will energise a complex organisation.

Ideally, applicants must have:

- A thorough knowledge of the Uniting Church and the polity of the Church, including governance, regulations and procedures.
- The capacity to think strategically and to facilitate strategic planning.
- Disciplined thinking and a capacity in practice to manage change, resulting in improved service delivery.
- The ability to implement policy decisions, coupled with compassion.
- The capacity to provide strong leadership and to make decisions.
- Membership of the Uniting Church in Australia.
- Commitment to and understanding of the mission and ethos of the Uniting Church.

DIRECTOR OF MISSION
(Re-advertised. Full time)

UnitingCare Queensland is the Uniting Church's health and community service provider in Queensland. Its network of services, in more than 300 locations across Queensland includes Uniting HealthCare, Blue Care, Lifeline Community Care Queensland, Wesley Missions - Brisbane & Ipswich, and Crossroads. Employing over 14000 staff with 5000 volunteers and an operating budget in excess of \$730m, it is the largest not for profit provider of health and community services in Australia.

This important role will work with the Director UnitingCare Queensland in ensuring that the development and the implementation of UnitingCare strategic and operational plans reflect the faith foundations and mission of the Uniting Church. In addition, the role will act as the Director of Mission for Uniting HealthCare.

Applications are invited from suitably qualified individuals (lay or ordained) who will have knowledge of and/or skills in the following areas:

- Health and community services particularly in hospital/healthcare leadership and delivery
- Policy and ethics research in healthcare
- Change in a large and complex organisational setting
- Communication and education in a variety of forums
- Commitment to and understanding of the mission and ethos of the Uniting Church.

Applicants should hold relevant qualifications in theology and/or religious education or another relevant area. Ministers of the Word, Deacons and other specified Ministries within The Uniting Church are encouraged to apply.

MISSION CONSULTANT
(DISCIPLESHIP FORMATION AND SPIRITUALITY)
(Re-advertised. Full time 5 year initial contract)

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

To be successful, the applicant will have:

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

These positions will be based in Brisbane, with travel throughout Queensland and interstate as required.

Full information packs are available via the website (<http://www.ucaql.com.au/career.php>) or by contacting Shayne Hearley on (07) 3377 9705 or shayne.hearley@ucaql.com.au

Applications close Friday 16th March 2007.

Super-size housing comes at a cost

By Bruce Mullan

AS A BUILDING designer familiar with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) John Crossley from the Vineyard Community of Faith and Knox Moorooka Uniting Church Congregation is concerned about the "obesity" of our current suburban building practices.

He explained to *Journey* that one issue that is not covered by the BCA is how large a house does a family need, and notes a disconcerting trend is the increase in house sizes.

Australian Bureau of Statistics reports an increase in average floor area from 160 square metres in 1986 to 240 square metres in 2004.

"At a personal level, many of us may not be 'obese'," says Mr Crossley, "but we are aware of 'fighting a little weight problem' and realise that a little more exercise and a little less food would be better for us."

But, Mr Crossley feels, we are being super sized into an obese use of building resources by our consumerism and he worries about what happens in our consumerist society when we decide "a few extra kilos" are acceptable.

"A key question in this debate is whether it is a responsible use of our environment to super-size that item we already have when we feel it only just meets our need.

"Does God supply a sufficiency or an excess for our needs?" he asks.

Mr Crossley points to the turn of the century workers cottages which housed most lower income and middle income families which had two bedrooms, a living room and kitchen with sleep outs on the veranda. All rooms were small with an average size about 60 square metres plus 20 square metres of veranda.

He points to the more recent swing to brick clad, slab-on-the-ground houses in the 80s and 90s as less environmentally friendly.

"One kilogram of aluminium creates 6 kilograms of CO₂



Modern day mansions are a long way from the traditional workers cottage

and one 1 kilogram of concrete produces 1 to 2 kilograms of CO₂ while using recent growth timber in construction traps only 0.5kg to 1kg of CO₂."

Together with her family Uniting Church member and Manager of the Queensland Sustainable Energy Industry Development Group Wendy Miller has been putting her professional interest into practical outcomes by modifying their original 1970s Corinda home into a more environmentally friendly dwelling.

The addition of insulation to roof, ceiling and some walls, sliding windows with casements to "catch the breeze" and shade to western windows was complemented by solar hot water and electricity generation, efficient appliances, low-flow plumbing fixtures and rainwater tanks.

"Today this passive solar home enjoys year-round comfort with a little assistance from pedestal fans in the middle of summer," said Ms Miller.

"The wood heater has been removed as no heating is required in winter and energy services are met through solar (electricity and hot water) and gas (cooking).

"This transformation has been achieved gradually as we have become aware of ways we can reduce our impact on the environment and as family finances and time have allowed.

"The process of transformation is by no means complete with more improvements planned for the future."

For Mr Crossley the question for Christians is what do we do without to help others?

"What do we sacrifice to let God's grace bring a balance back into our environment?

"As we know, Jesus taught us to give without expecting to receive so how do we show Christ through our environmental actions?

"I think I might miss that next update to the car, or extension to the house, or even move to something smaller. Can we get one more year of use out of that church carpet?

"I know, coming from a good Methodist and Presbyterian background, such stewardship already may be in the blood, but as my mother taught me I will say at the next slightly smaller evening meal, 'I have had a sufficiency of every delicacy' and thank the Lord for his grace.

Assembly to live out its environmental commitment

By Gavin Melvin

The National Assembly is set to live out its commitment to preserving the environment.

It will undertake an energy audit and look to identify policies and processes that will limit the impact it has on the natural environment.

The commitment comes on the back of a new statement from UnitingJustice on climate change which was adopted in November by the Assembly Standing Committee.

For the Sake of the Planet and all its People: A Uniting Church in Australia Statement on Climate Change outlines the Church's commitment to the environment,

the special relationship Christians have with the environment and its value as part of God's creation.

Addressing the Standing Committee, UnitingJustice National Director, Rev Elenie Poulos, said evidence on the effects of global warming and climate change was now indisputable and it posed a serious threat to the future and integrity of life on earth.

Addressing climate change, she said, requires us to think creatively about the organisation of our social and economic institutions, our relationship with each other across national and cultural boundaries and our relationship with the environment.

"As one of the world's major

producers of greenhouse gas emissions on a per capita basis, Australia must acknowledge that it has a responsibility to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels," Ms Poulos said.

As an outcome of this resolution, the ASC committed the Assembly to examine its own environmental credentials and look to how it can reduce the impact it has on the environment.

The Assembly will assess its production of greenhouse gas emissions through an energy audit, to be undertaken this year, and will investigate how, through the use of such initiatives as renewable energy and carbon offsets, it can seek to become "carbon neutral".



2007 Lent Studies Called to plant a future

Introduction

THESE FIVE studies are for groups or individuals, connecting the theme of the Lent Appeal, *Planting a Future*, with the renewal of call.

The sessions link Biblical stories of call and other writings with a series of questions designed to explore the subject of being in Christ's community.

If used in groups these sessions are designed in a way that do not necessitate the group having a leader. Group members share in facilitating the conversation and encouraging all to participate in the discussions. This is also a reason for the suggestion that a different person speak the blessing each week. The role of ministry in the Uniting Church is a shared responsibility.

The material in this Lent Studies "lift-out" is prepared by the Queensland Synod Theology and Worship Committee. It is copyright free for use in congregations.

Group process

The studies follow a standard format but differ in content and emphasis.

Opening prayer

An opening prayer from *Uniting in Worship 2*, a book of prayers and resources for leaders of worship. The same opening prayer is used for each session.

Read

Read the Biblical passage in a translation of your choice. Part of each study's Bible reading is provided, usually from the *Contemporary English Version*. There are also quotes from other writers relating to the theme.

Reflect

A brief reflection on the theme for the week.

Talk about

Some questions for group discussion or individual reflection are given. The purpose is to explore the scripture, the understandings of the people of faith and the theme for the session. Feel free to pick and choose those questions which are most helpful to the group process.

So what?

This question is to focus us on the practical application of the theme in our daily lives.

Closing prayer

People are invited to participate in a shared prayer. Feel free to use other prayers or an open prayer time.

Blessing

The same blessing is used for each session. It is recommended that a different person offers the blessing to the group each week.

Opening prayer to use each week

Creator Spirit, wellspring of our lives,
as the refreshing rain falls on the just
and the unjust alike;
refresh with your mercy
God who knows our own injustice

As the stream flows steadily on,
defying all the odds of stone and water
flow over every boundary and border
that separates us from one another

As the waters of our baptism washed us and welcomed us
renew us now in the newness of life and the unity of love

As we were once held in the waters of our mother's womb
hold us in the power and peace of your abiding peace.

Iona Worship Book

Blessing

May God give you meaning and purpose,
Jesus the Saviour give you confidence and hope,
and the Spirit give you courage and vision.
The God who is three and yet one,
fill your days and your hours,
that you may live as those who are created,
saved and called to serve.
Amen

Uniting In Worship 2



Week 1 Living the future with Jesus

Opening prayer

Ask one person in the group to lead the prayer with group members reading together the words in bold print.

Read

Read Luke 5:1-11, 27-32

Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at the place for paying taxes. Jesus said to him, "Come with me." Levi left everything and went with Jesus. In his home Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. Many tax collectors and other guests were also there. (Luke 5:27-28 *Contemporary English Version*)

So the evangel, the good news of the gospel, is that we enter into life in Christ as his disciple right now. It is not that we believe now, enrolling as his disciple at some later point if we are so inclined (as if it were possible to believe without being his disciple). Believing in Jesus and discipleship to Jesus are part of the same action.

Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, 1999, p.220

Reflection

In both these stories of call, the people 'leave everything and go with Jesus'. It appears, on first reading, to be all about leaving an occupation to become a full-time worker with Jesus. Maybe it's not that simple.

The call of Christ can be an abrupt event which shifts the course of our whole life. When we hear the call and accept the invitation to enter into the life of Christ we're invited to live out the good news in whatever context God places us. Being a disciple is likely to take us beyond our comfort zones, even without leaving home.

Many of us will have seen or heard the story about the person called by God to be the missionary serving in some far flung corner of the world.

Time after time the person provides God with another reason he or she shouldn't respond to the call to share good news. "It must be someone else God has in mind." "I don't know enough." "I'm scared of dark jungles." "I get tinea."

Do we have to give up the life we know, our familiar surroundings, in order to share

the good news? Do we have to go to the other end of the earth to fulfil the call that God places on our hearts? Can we not serve God in the place that we are in?

We may need to be prepared for the job ahead through education, on the job experience and a honing of natural gifts and abilities. But it's important to be open to God's call right now, even as inexperienced people with limited knowledge and abilities.

We are called to be disciples now, being continually alert to the opportunities to live out good news in the situations we find ourselves.

What changes for us when we are called to stay where we are?

Talk about

Matthew began his discipleship by throwing a party in his own home, among his own friends. If you were to throw a party who would you invite? Where would you hold the party?

Simon and his workmates left a stable life and a fishing business to follow Jesus. Have

you ever sacrificed anything in your life to follow Jesus?

Have you felt God's call on your life? Was it a call to move beyond your familiar surrounds? Or were you called to go deeper into your community? Or have you experienced both kinds of call?

So what?

How is God calling you now? Are you still open to the call of God?

Prayer

God of life, allow us to be open to your call on our lives. Give us the discernment to hear your call and the strength to act upon it. Help us to be your people in every aspect of our daily lives. This we pray in Jesus name. Amen.

Blessing

Ask someone in the group to offer the blessing.

This study was written by
Andrew Gunton, Arana Hills, Brisbane



Week 2

A future with our own people

Opening prayer

Ask one person in the group to lead the prayer with group members reading together the words in bold print.

Read

Read John 4:5-30.

The disciples returned about this time and were surprised to find Jesus talking with a woman. But none of them asked him what he wanted or why he was talking with her.

The woman left her water jar and ran back into town. She said to the people, “Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! Could he be the Messiah?” Everyone in town went out to see Jesus. (John 4:29-30)

You see, we can never confine the ‘call’ to ‘full-time Christian service’ to clergy-related vocations. Farmers and plumbers can be equally ‘called’ and equally ‘full-time’ and equally ‘Christian’, and they can equally render ‘service’. The really crucial decision comes, not when we decide to be a pastor rather than a biologist, but when we decide to allow our entire life to be a channel of divine love.

Richard Foster, *Streams of Living Water*, 1999

Reflection

Experienced by different people, and in different contexts, each person’s call to ministry is unique. For some, it is a call to be in pastoral care, for others, a call to service. Others experience a call to preach, to heal, to mission, to make music or engage in silent and continued meditative prayer.

Many experience different calls to ministry at different times, and this is often shaped by new experiences or contexts.

The Uniting Church recognises the ministry of the whole people of God, acknowledging the range of opportunities for ministry that can manifest in the world. Some are called to ministry within their workplace, or their congregation, or within community services, and for some, ordained ministry.

In this passage we encounter a woman who was engaging in an essential routine of domestic life, the collection of water. Did she imagine that morning, that by the evening she would be leading her community to Jesus?

Because she was a woman, it is unlikely that her community would have regarded her as a person of religious significance. However, her encounter with Jesus shows us that our expectations about whom Christ might use in ministry are fallible.

Not only was she a woman, but also a Samaritan woman. The writer of John’s Gospel was writing for a Jewish community and verse 9 illustrates the antipathy between the Jewish

and Samaritan people. And yet in this text we also find the theme of betrothal.

In the Old Testament, stories of men and women meeting each other at the well, usually signified the beginning of a marriage. In this story Jesus calls the Samaritan woman to be in relationship with him, not as a wife, but as a disciple.

The Samaritan woman understands her context all too well. Why would Jesus even speak to her?

In this conversation Jesus names the radical message of the Gospel; that customs and beliefs pale in significance when worshipping God through God’s Spirit.

The woman leaves her water jar behind and goes to tell her community about her encounter. She is not called out of her community and sent to far flung places to convert others. Instead, she does what is required of her, perhaps a more difficult task – she returns to the place where everybody knows her and tells her story. It is this story which starts the transformation of her community.

The woman has been called to a ministry that cannot be denied. She is the one chosen to witness to her own community in order that they might encounter Christ.

Talk about

The Samaritan woman was collecting water when she experienced a call to follow Jesus. What are the everyday settings where

you might experience God’s call in your life?

What do you consider as ministry?
What forms of ministry can you name?
What distinguishes ‘ministry’ from everyday living? Or can they be the same thing?

So what?

Have you ever thought of yourself as engaging in ministry?
What is God calling you to do today?

Prayer

In your wisdom Lord, you call us, even when we do not expect to be called.

In your mercy Lord, you keep us waiting until the time is right.

In your grace Lord, you provide us with the things we need, to do the things we can do.

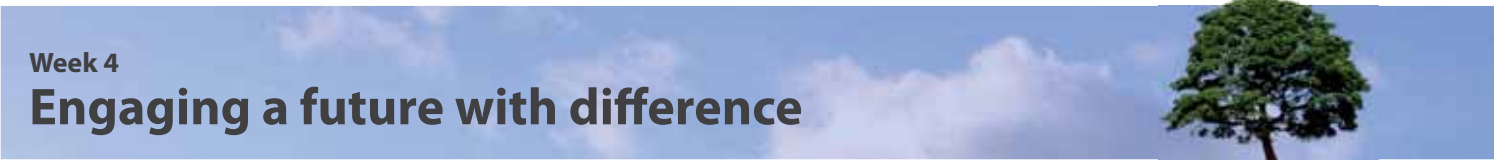
Lord, we ask for the gift of discernment to know when to stay and talk with you and when to go and minister in your name.

Amen

Blessing

Ask someone in the group to offer the blessing.

This study was written by Heather den Houting & Sue Pickering, Brisbane



Week 4

Engaging a future with difference

Opening prayer

Ask one person in the group to lead the prayer with group members reading together the words in bold print.

Read

Read Galatians 2:11-14.

When Peter came to Antioch, I told him face to face that he was wrong. He used to eat with Gentile followers of the Lord, until James sent some Jewish followers. Peter was afraid of the Jews and soon stopped eating with Gentiles. He and the other Jews hid their true feelings so well that even Barnabas was fooled. But when I saw that they were not really obeying the truth that is in the good news, I corrected Peter in front of everyone and said:

Peter, you are a Jew, but you live like a Gentile. So how can you force Gentiles to live like Jews?

We find ourselves wishing...that we had more than one account of this confrontation - Peter’s, for instance...But in fact it is not difficult to imagine how Peter would have defended his action. He would have claimed that he acted out of consideration for weaker brethren - the weaker brethren on this occasion being those back home in Jerusalem. Tertullian...reads his motives thus, and puts Paul’s critical reaction down to his immaturity:

later on, he points out, Paul ‘was to become in practice all things to all people — to those under the law, as under law’ (1 Cor. 9:20).

F.F. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, 1982, p.133

Reflection

To live faithful to God’s calling sometimes leads to situations of conflict. How we deal with these situations is a test of our courage, integrity, and graciousness.

When I was a young man, I was appointed leader of a faith community to the chagrin of a middle aged man, “Jack”, who fully expected that he would be given the leadership role.

Shortly after, a female Christian leader, “Mary”, who had ministered for many years in India teaching, as she put it, “Indians who had forgotten how to meditate the art of Christian contemplative prayer” came to us to give a teaching week on prayer.

In the workshops she couldn’t help but notice that Jack was quite unsettled and disgruntled.

Mary asked me if I knew what was going on and I told her what had happened just a few weeks before.

She responded by arranging a mediation session involving myself, the other leaders, and Jack. I was deeply impressed by the calm and gracious but yet very firm way that Mary handled things.

What we have in the Antioch conflict is a clash of calls. Paul felt a very clear call to

preach the Good News to the Gentiles (the “pagans” or non-Jews). Peter, on the other hand, was called to lead the Jewish Christian Church in Jerusalem. Jews who embraced the new message of Christ as Lord and Saviour were bound to still want to hold on to the old things of the Torah (the Jewish Law) – circumcision, ritual cleanliness, table fellowship etc.

Peter seems to have vacillated between a new sense of freedom and a desire to uphold the old teachings. Paul, being true to his call, felt a need to chastise Peter for putting obstacles in the way of the Gentile converts.

Was Peter really being wimpish (fear of the Jewish Christians)? Or was he simply being faithful to his particular call? Perhaps he was afraid that his liberal actions (which he personally felt comfortable with) might put too much strain on the faith of the weaker Jewish Christians back in Jerusalem. Maybe Peter was acting out of pastoral motives, and Paul was not giving him enough credit. Perhaps Paul needed to learn a bit more about the meaning of Christian graciousness!

Talk about

What do you think? Is Peter simply lacking courage? Or is Paul missing something in his attack on Peter?

Can you think of a modern situation in which two Christian leaders might be in conflict as a result of receiving different callings?

How flexible can we be without compromising the integrity of our call?

What are some principles for handling conflict in a way that is faithful to gospel values?

So what?

What have you learned from the readings and discussion that might lead to some changes in the way you think and act?

Prayer

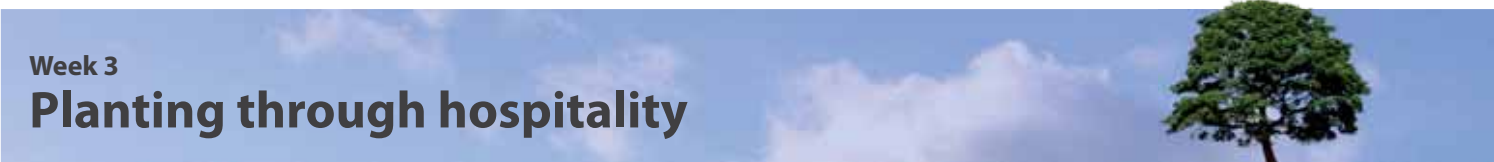
Loving God,
Sometimes being true to our calling leads us into conflict with others. Jesus was in conflict with his opponents, but also at times with the members of his own family. May we reflect his way of handling tough situations in our own lives. Grant to us through the power of the Spirit working in us courage, graciousness and integrity.

In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

Blessing

Ask someone in the group to offer the blessing.

This study was written by Neil Pembroke



Week 3

Planting through hospitality

Opening prayer

Ask one person in the group to lead the prayer with group members reading together the words in bold print.

Read

Read Acts 16:11-15, Philippians 1:1-11, Philippians 4:15-20.

We spent several days in Philippi. Then on the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to a place by the river, where we thought there would be a Jewish meeting place for prayer. We sat down and talked with the women who came. One of them was Lydia, who was from the city of Thyatira and sold expensive purple cloth. She was a worshiper of the Lord God, and he made her willing to accept what Paul was saying. Then after she and her family were baptized, she kept on begging us, “If you think I really do have faith in the Lord, come stay in my home.” Finally, we accepted her invitation.

The Congregation is the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit of Christ. Its members meet regularly to hear God’s Word, to celebrate the sacraments, to build one another up in love, to share in the wider responsibilities of the Church and to serve the world.

Basis of Union, Paragraph 15a

Reflection

There are several notable and surprising aspects to this story in Acts.

Paul, Silas and other companions have sailed across the north Aegean Sea from what is now Turkey to what is now northern Greece. It was a trip from Asian to European soil. Paul was responding to a vision in a dream to go across to Macedonia.

It was Paul’s usual practice to find the local synagogue and to address the people there. If there were women present they would have been separate from the men.

For whatever reason, at Philippi on the Sabbath, he and his companions went to a place outside the gate of the city by the river, expecting to find there a place of prayer.

A group of women were gathered. Paul and the others sat down and spoke to these women.

He did not send them off to get the menfolk from the Jewish community. The women listened and Luke (the writer of Acts) tells of one woman, usually known as Lydia, who listened carefully and the Holy Spirit opened her heart to faith in Jesus. Lydia is described as a business woman, a dealer in purple goods, which probably means that she traded in the purple cloth worn by the wealthy. Presumably she was the head of her house. When she was baptised so were the others in the household. Once they were baptised, she asked Paul and his companions to stay in her home.

The church in Philippi began with the conversion and call of one woman, Lydia, and

her response was to offer hospitality as her first act of service.

From Paul’s later letter to the Philippians we may see how warmly he felt about the church which subsequently grew in that city.

Talk about

Has there been an element of surprise for you to realise that the church in Philippi began with the conversion and call of a woman? Why may this come as a surprise to some people?

Paul and his companions sat and talked with the group of women they found gathered in the place of prayer. The gathering was informal rather than formal, in a public space. Do informal gatherings play an important part in your life of faith, and, if so, in what ways?

Luke says that the Lord opened Lydia’s heart. Have there been occasions in your experience when you have been moved by God to listen and to respond with all your heart? You may like to tell the group what you were led to do.

Lydia’s response of service, following her conversion and baptism (and the baptism of her household) was to offer hospitality to Paul and his companions. Her call was not to go somewhere else, but to witness and serve where she was. How important do you believe the gift and practice of hospitality to be for the Christian community? What examples do you know about or participate in?

So what?

Are there Christian groups, congregations or communities to whom you could write the words which Paul wrote in Philippians 1:3-5? Are there particular groups for whom you have a ministry of prayer? Reflect on this and discuss it if you wish.

Prayer

Gracious and loving God,
We thank you for those times when you have inspired us and opened our hearts to listen to you and to serve others in the community where we live.

We thank you for all your people who share with us in faith and joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessing

Ask someone in the group to offer the blessing.

This study was written by Geraldine Wheeler



Week 5

Speak out for the future

Opening prayer

Ask one person in the group to lead the prayer with group members reading together the words in bold print.

Read

Read Jeremiah 1: 4-11.

The LORD said:
“Jeremiah, I am your Creator, and before you were born I chose you to speak for me to the nations.”
I replied, “I’m not a good speaker, LORD, and I’m too young.”
“Don’t say you’re too young,” the LORD answered. “If I tell you to go and speak to someone, then go! And when I tell you what to say, don’t leave out a word! I promise to be with you and keep you safe, so don’t be afraid.”
The LORD reached out his hand, then he touched my mouth and said, “I am giving you the words to say, and I am sending you with authority to speak to the nations for me. You will tell them of doom and destruction, and of rising and rebuilding again.”

There are two interlaced convictions that characterise a prophet. The first conviction is that God is personal and alive and active.

The second conviction is that what is going on right now, in this world at this time in history, is critical. A prophet is obsessed with God, and a prophet is immersed in the now. God is as real to a prophet as his next-door

neighbour, and his next-door neighbour is a vortex in which God’s purposes are being worked out.

Eugene Peterson, *Running with the horses*, 1983

Reflection

I was sixteen when I first started preaching. I was adopted by a local lay preachers organisation and given opportunities to share with little country churches. I remember wondering what it must have been like for a congregation to have a high school student in the pulpit. Like Jeremiah, I struggled with lack of confidence in my capacity to speak in public. The more nervous I felt, the more quickly and quietly I spoke.

Preaching, however, has not been the primary challenge of my life. Speaking without fear in environments where people can easily answer back, ask questions, not listen - that’s been the calling of my life. I’ve experienced God’s call to ‘speak out’ at home, at work, in the Christian community, and sometimes in the public arena.

Every community needs people who are prepared to speak up with wisdom, courage and creativity. We need people who struggle to listen to what God is saying. People who work hard to understand the context in which God is calling. People who have the courage to call for a halt to unhealthy practice. People who have the capacity to help others dream of a new future. People who are able to admit that they may be wrong and can learn from the shared experience of those around them.

The reality is that the more we benefit from

the status quo, the less likely we are to speak out and suggest an alternative. That’s why we need to listen to and encourage the voices of those on the margins – the young, the exiles, those who are not in positions of power.

Talk about

Have there been situations in which you have felt stretched, where you’ve felt too young, inexperienced or inadequate in any other way?

What situations have you seen that needed someone to ‘speak out’?

Talk about a time when you needed courage to speak out what needed to be said.

What advice would you give a young person who is wondering about how to recognise what God is saying to their world through them?

Jeremiah had the responsibility of helping leaders face the realities of both defeat and restoration. What kinds of reality checks could you help others keep in balance?

So what?

People who are experiencing God’s call in their life for the first time often need encouragement from others. Who can you encourage in their capacity to speak out?

Prayer

Eternal God, you have called us to follow Jesus and you have commissioned us as disciples to a double-edged task - to make your love known and live the Good News, resist wrong and

REVIEWS

A clearing season: reflections for Lent

By Sarah Parsons
Upper Room Books
RRP \$20.45 from MediaCom

I recommend Sarah Parsons' book *A clearing season: reflections for Lent* for all those wanting to be refreshed in their faith this Easter. I did not do it justice by skim reading it in a week. I look forward to Lent when I will revisit the book and read it as it is meant to be read.

As the title suggests the book



is about clearing time to be with God.

Ms Parsons invites us to journey with her through the wilderness and find a clearing space where we can be with God.

As with many Lenten traditions we are encouraged to either give up something for Lent (like watching TV) or add a spiritual discipline to our regime (such as journaling).

And in that space over the weeks we will look at the rhythms of our life and explore opportunities for new growth.

As you read the book you are invited to join the conversation.

The book doesn't concentrate on the penitential nature of Lent and avoids a legalistic approach to Lenten study. Instead Parsons presents us with a grace filled tool for exploring our imperfections.

We are invited to join with the author in conversation as we explore our relationship with God.

We are invited to look at what obstructs us from closeness with God and to journey with God down a road that will lead us much closer to the love that gives us life, whose triumph we celebrate on Easter morning.

As a Young Adult I found the book relevant and authentic and

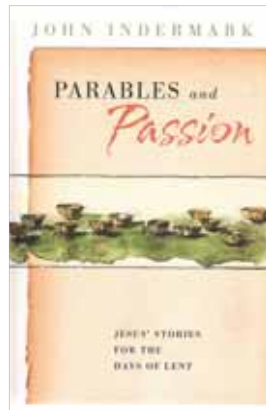
would recommend the book to other young adults and to people of all ages.

The study can be used individually or in small groups. It is well worth the \$20 investment.

Linda Hansen is a Minister of the Word in the Gympie area

Parables and Passion

John Indermark
Upper Room Books RRP
\$22.25 from MediaCom



The Uniting Church *Basis of Union* affirms that we belong to the people of God on the way to the promised end.

While a pastor of the United Church of Christ USA, John Indermark's God-given gifts of insight and communication will prove to be invaluable to us as we journey on the way.

In *Parables and Passion* Indermark invites us to travel with Jesus along the 40-day Lenten path to Jerusalem, listening as we go to our Lord's stories, and then applying them to our lives.

His rationale for using the parables is that "they invite our imaginations as well as our memories to envision anew what Jesus reveals about God and the coming realm that lies not only ahead of us but within us".

His hope is that, as we listen again to Jesus telling his stories, we will hear them afresh and so come to experience Lent in particular, but more importantly our whole life of discipleship, from a different and life-giving perspective.

There are six chapters, each with five daily readings which look closely at the parables. The language is plain English and the illustrations and anecdotes help to earth the message.

The daily spiritual exercises included connect the theme of the day with the reader's own spiritual journey and growth.

Our pilgrimage may be undertaken individually or, with the help of an included *Leader's Guide*, in community. Either way, this is not a journey for the faint-hearted.

Every Easter reminds us that a cross remains central to the life of discipleship...but then, what a LIFE as we travel with Jesus on the way!

Warwick Church is a retired lay preacher and member of the Proserpine-Whitsunday Coast Congregation

Oil and Water: Two Faiths: One God

By Amir Hussain
Published by CopperHouse
Canada \$34-95

Amir Hussain is Associate Professor who teaches World Religions writing for "people who want to learn more about Islam and Muslims, particularly as they relate to Christians and Christianity." He feels that if we are to survive in the 21st Century we must learn to live together and understand our great spiritual traditions.

Oil and Water is a clear description of points of contact and agreement amongst Islam, Christianity and Judaism as well as differences. All three worship the same God, albeit calling God by different names, and having varying insights.

Hussain clearly outlines the basic faith of Islam, explains the growth of the religion, and explores the different sects which have developed within Islam, comparing them with similar splits within Christianity.

I liked the clearly explained differences between groups, and how they came about.

He explains the Qu'ran (Koran) and how it was formed and outlines the obligations of worship for believers.

What particularly interested me is how much of the Bible is contained in the Qu'ran – though worded differently. Beginning with Adam and Eve and the early Patriarchs and with an undoubted reverence for Jesus and for Mary, there is much that is familiar despite the differences.

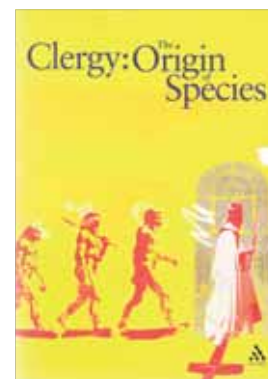
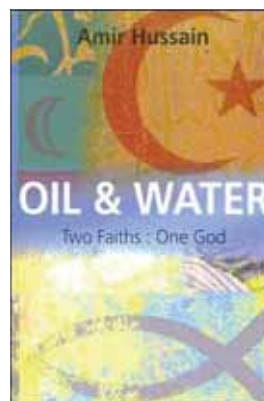
The author also disabuses the reader of some of the popular myths about Islam.

Some of the history, especially about the rapid growth of Islam in the first five centuries, is unconvincing but is intended to show the religion is not war-like.

As with early Christianity and the teaching of Jesus, Islam, as first propounded by its founder Muhammad, has worthy ideals and beliefs.

This book should be required reading for all theological students, and indeed all Christians and I recommend a reading if only to allay some fears and prejudices.

Joan Cook is a retired teacher and member of the Wavell Heights Uniting Church congregation



Clergy: The Origin of Species
By Martyn Percy
Allen & Unwin
RRP \$45.00

Drawn by the title and witty cover, I was nevertheless expecting to find this book heavy-going as it was written by the principal of a theological college, and described as a "serious treatment" of the role of clergy.

What a delightful surprise to find it provides robust research and rigorous arguments, yet in a highly practical and readable form.

Rather than an ivory tower academic, I found Percy very personable, even earthy (interrupting his discourse to inform readers that "Presbyterians is an anagram for Britney Spears").

Perhaps the fact that Percy is both honorary professor at two theological colleges and has been an honorary chaplain to a professional rugby club best illustrates the richness of this fascinating man.

Utilising the language of Darwin, Percy sets out to explore the formation of the clergy role to date, and the risks and challenges facing clergy if they are to survive as a discrete "species".

I actually found the book to be more about the evolution of the clerical identity, than about its origins.

Speaking from a British perspective (a welcome relief from all things American!), Percy uses two specific case studies (Methodism and Revivalism) to pose such questions as: what kind of creature is the clergy person? Has the role of clergy been subsumed by other professions? What's unique about the role? How must the role adapt to cultural shifts, and "the ever-mutating Christian tradition"?

What I found most helpful is Percy's conclusion that clergy are called to ongoing incarnation; to a lifelong commitment to be transformed.

He concludes that the clergy person's role and task is "to become central in the more marginal and ambiguous moments of life", and to embrace their "unique and evolving paradigm" of "belonging to both the wilderness and the city".

I highly recommend Percy's work to anyone involved with ministry formation.

Meryem Brown is a psychologist who provides professional supervision for ministers, and member of the Redcliffe Uniting Church Congregation



Beginning on Ash Wednesday, the forty-day period before Easter has been observed since the very earliest days of the Church.

Traditionally a season of soul-searching and repentance Lent was a preparatory time for Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves, and when converts were instructed in the faith and prepared for baptism.

By observing the forty days of Lent, Christians imitate Jesus' withdrawal into the wilderness for forty days.

During the season of Lent 2007,

Uniting Church people will have the opportunity to contribute a 'second mile' offering to the work of God for justice and mission.

Last year the Lent offering raised over \$75,000 and the Synod says thank you on behalf of the project recipients.

The theme for this year's appeal is "Planting a future".

To make your gift to six worthy projects in Queensland and beyond ask for a set of offering envelopes from your local Uniting Church or visit www.ucaqld.com.au.

11 February:
Isis Childers

The Isis Uniting Church covers the shires of Isis and Biggenden, with services held at Woodgate Beach, Childers, and Biggenden.

Currently, as minister Jan Rossow comes to the end of her term, ministry needs for the area are being reassessed by Presbytery.

The Woodgate congregation, very few of whom are actually members of the Uniting Church, are a committed and enthusiastic group of retirees who enjoy their involvement in their local community.

Their ministry includes RE and other assistance at the local school, and support of school chaplaincy.

Worship is held in the community hall which gives freedom from concerns about property.

As other denominations worship in the same building, ecumenical endeavours are thereby enhanced.

A home group worships, prays, and studies the Bible together on a weekly basis.

With a considerable portion of the Childers congregation leaving the district over recent years, there has been a decline in numbers, noticeably including a decline in numbers of children.

We are grateful that a small Sunday School has been able to continue to date, but are uncertain what the future will bring in this regard.

The ladies who have worked very hard in our Op Shop are also finding this increasingly difficult.

A small Bible Study group is experiencing the joy of sharing deeply of themselves in connection with the Word.

Our Sunday worshipping congregation in Biggenden is tiny. However they are folk who have experienced the power of prayer. They gather together for Bible Study during the week.

The excitement of the past year has been to see the establishment of a new after-school Kids Club.

This year, the leader intends to prepare lessons each week with the assistance of one of the parents on a rotational basis. Major decisions need to be made soon in regards to buildings, which have deteriorated and are beyond the ability of the congregation to maintain.

Prayer points:

- For spiritual uplifting, hope, energy and direction for the future for all members.
- That we be filled with the life of the Spirit so that we become the means of breaking the spiritual drought of our district, even more than that the physical drought be broken.
- For the congregations and presbytery as they discuss together possible directions into the future, that good decisions will be made.
- That children's ministry in all areas grows and develops in ways that bless many children, and through the children, their families.
- That God's leaders be raised up for this ministry.

PRAYER DIARY

18 February:
Aspley

Aspley is a large congregation in Brisbane's northern suburbs.

Morning service is traditional with an excellent choir.

Evening service is contemporary in style, and is prepared and led by the youth of the congregation, with music from a very talented music group.

The congregation has been served for the last nine years by the Rev Alan O'Hara who has now retired.

A call has been issued to and accepted by the Rev Johan Loots, formerly of South Africa.

Planning is underway for an early childhood education centre which will form the basis of a new children's and family ministry.

Following the end of the regional arrangements a new Youth Group at Aspley will begin in February and further ministry is planned to the number of retirement villages in the area.

A third worship service is also under consideration.

Classes for Seniors is an ecumenical venture with the Anglican and Catholic Churches and provides adult education for a considerable number of people.

Aspley is also involved in interfaith activities, and has a close relationship with local members of the Hindu and Islamic faiths, as well as contact with folk of other denominations.

Prayer points:

- The incoming ministry
- The early childhood education centre
- New youth group
- The general life and ministry of the congregation
- Interfaith relationships

25 February:
Centenary

Centenary Uniting is a congregation of about 200 regular worshippers based in Middle Park in Brisbane's south western suburbs.

Over the past few years we have been working to restructure the 'committee' system within our congregation to allow the potential and gifts of more and more members to be developed.

Under this new system we have a Navigation Team; a Ministry Development Team and an Operations Team.

Already we are seeing the benefits of recognising the gifts of a greater number of people to facilitate the spread of God's Word in this community.

Prayer points:

- Wisdom and discernment for the teams, which have the responsibility for the implementation of the mission and ministry of the congregation.

• Members of the congregation to discover their spiritual gifts and to seek God's direction in how to use them.

• All small groups within the congregation – pastoral care groups; home groups including Disciple Bible study groups and others; our outreach group to retirees; youth groups that meet on Sundays, and Sunday School.

• Outreach to young people through Youth Group and P1, and through the South West Outreach Van which aims to contact young people on the streets in Centenary, Carole Park and Inala.

• For God to bless preparations for groups to go later in the year to Rarongo Theological College in PNG to assist with rebuilding of their college; and to the Mwandi orphanage in Zambia. Pray that those who go may return with energy and vision for God's mission here.

• The ministry team: Rev Paul Walton; Jason Bray, the youth worker; and Sarah Schmidt, who commenced as part-time Discipleship Coordinator in January.

Her role is to facilitate the implementation of the Assembly's 'Becoming Disciples' process, particularly encouraging young people to grow as Christian disciples.

As we move into 2007, please pray that all in the congregation would hear and obey the call of God on their lives to impact our community.

Queensland Churches focus on Aboriginal issues

AT THE same time as the investigation into the death of Mulrunji on Palm Island, 2007 marks 40 years since the referendum on Aboriginal rights in 1967, ten years since the release of the *Bringing Them Home* Report and 50 years of NAIDOC.

The Queensland Churches Together (QCT) will continue to help churches focus on Aboriginal issues through its Churches Together Indigenous People's Program (CTIPP).

Queensland Churches Together is seeking a new person for their part-time position of CTIPP Coordinator and welcomes inquiries regarding this position.

Phone 07 3369 6792 or email qctsec@tpg.com.au.



Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) national coordinator Rev Shayne Blackman. Photo courtesy of *Crosslight*

Palm Island: We need to do better

By Mardi Lumsden

REV SHAYNE Blackman, national coordinator for the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC), has spoken out about Aboriginal deaths in custody, particularly the death of Mulrunji Doomadgee on Palm Island on 19 November 2004.

Mr Blackman, writing in an extended article for the *Koori Mail* in November 2006, called for "the equal treatment of all Australian citizens, regardless of race, background or social standing".

"This tragic and controversial death... is yet another case in point of an Indigenous person succumbing to what can only be described as a system of inequitable justice," said Mr Blackman.

He said this particular case has caused many Aboriginal and Islander people to question the integrity behind the Queensland justice system.

"I believe the extreme anguish felt by the family and residents of Palm Island in relation to this case is indicative of the way many Aboriginal and Islander people feel about the state of inequality they face and their continual struggle for basic rights, not only limited to matters of justice.

Mr Blackman said it was not just about retribution.

"The biblical principles of righteousness, truth and justice that affirm human beings, regardless of their background, are far more powerful than any human made law and resultantly need to be recognised, respected and practised within our criminal justice system."

Moderator of the Queensland Synod, Rev Dr David Pitman, also expressed deep concern over the decision of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Leanne Clare, to take no further action in regard to the death of Mr Doomadgee.

"That this decision is in such clear conflict with the findings of the Coroner creates a situation of uncertainty and distrust. It is no surprise that Indigenous people are left feeling outraged and frustrated," he said.

As a result of the conclusions reached by the inquiry, Dr Pitman said it would seem "entirely responsible and appropriate to test the evidence in the Courts".

"This would give Indigenous people a reason to believe that justice had been done."

The Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody Report (1991) produced 300 proposals to reduce the number of Aboriginal deaths in custody. Mr Blackman said most of these were ignored.

"More than ten years ago, the evidence showed that Aboriginal people were being imprisoned at more than ten times the rate of the Australian population, and that this discriminatory outcome was due to bad laws, biased justice systems, racist policing practices and the poverty experienced by Aboriginal people," said Mr Blackman.

"What good has this costly report achieved when one considers that in 1992 - 14 percent of total prison population was Indigenous with this figure drastically rising to 21 per cent in 2004.

"Any moves to improve the social and economic situation on Palm Island must be grounded in both mutual understanding and negotiated outcomes with its residents, so that pathways for a brighter future can be implemented."

In January the Queensland Government appointed former NSW chief justice (and former Royal Commissioner) Sir Laurence Street to review the decision of the DPP.

Queensland Attorney-General Kerry Shine and Acting Premier Anna Bligh emphasised his review would be a "second opinion, not an assessment of the competence of Queensland Director of Public Prosecutions Leanne Clare".

"We commit ourselves to help reduce the threat of climate change through actions in our lives, pressure on governments and industries, and standing in solidarity with those most affected by climate change." (World Council of Churches, 2005)

"Why is the faith community concerned about global climate change? It is a matter of justice. Justice for poor people who will be most severely impacted by changing weather and rising seas and who have the least capacity to adapt. Justice for future generations who will inherit an unstable climate and potentially catastrophic rises in sea level, migration of tropical diseases, and disrupted agricultural production. Justice for all of creation that is threatened by climate change." (Interfaith Climate Change Network, 2006)

"We desperately need a change of spirit and attitude. Sustainable development is one of the most urgent moral tasks of our time. An appropriate response begins from recognising the inter-relatedness of all life." (National Council of Churches in Australia, 2002)

Australia's religions united on climate

IN WHAT is believed to be a world first, 16 Australian faith communities representing the world's great religious traditions have united to speak out on climate change.

In the document *Common Belief: Australia's faith communities on climate change* every faith community affirms that action on climate change is a moral imperative for individuals, communities, business and governments.

Inaction by Australia cannot be justified for any reason, the faith communities say.

The faith communities which have contributed to *Common Belief* include Aboriginal religion, Anglicans, Baptists, Buddhists, Bahais, Catholics, Greek Orthodox, Hindus, Jews, Lutherans, Muslims, Salvation Army, Sikhs and the Uniting Church.

Climate Institute founder Mark Wootton said it had been a privilege to be involved in developing the report, which considers climate change through the lens of morality and ethics.

"The response has been unequivocal. Australia's faith communities demand a firm government response to climate change which protects our children's future and prevents further harm to the world's poorest people who are already living with the impacts of climate change."

The full report *Common Belief: Australia's faith communities on climate change* is available at http://www.climateinstitute.org.au/cia1/downloads/041206_common_belief.pdf.

Brisbane: the new Rockhampton

CLIMATE CHANGE will greatly affect life throughout Australia, particularly in Queensland where we can expect at least some of the following.

The CSIRO estimates that temperatures in Australia could be up to 2°C hotter by 2030 and up to 6°C hotter by 2070.

Doesn't sound like much does it? But considering that in the last 25 years average global temperatures only increased by 0.5°C (still much faster than previous centuries), to jump by 2°C in almost the same period of time is alarming. A fall of just 3°C prompted the last ice age.

A discussion paper prepared by the Queensland Government entitled *Climate Smart Adaptation* showed one aspect of climate change is the increase of extreme weather. The study also stated that climate change "by this magnitude over what is a relatively short period of time is unprecedented".

According to the paper, the number of summer nights above 35°C will increase across the state.

At present Brisbane and Cairns both have an average of three nights per year above 35°C. Barcaldine has an average of 55.

By 2030 it is projected that Brisbane could have as many as six nights per year above 35°C.

Cairns up to eight and Barcaldine up to 69.

Similarly, the number of winter nights below 0°C may drop in Stanthorpe from 37 nights per year to as few as 24 and in Charleville from 12 nights to four.

It is expected that the national rainfall could decline another 15% by 2030 and 40% by 2070. Hotter temperatures increase evaporation, both from the ocean and from the soil.

According to this paper, "the results of these changes will mean in the next 25 years Brisbane's average climate will be more like Rockhampton, Mackay's climate will be more like Townsville, and Longreach's climate will be more like Winton."

More than one quarter of Australia's population growth in the next 25 years is expected to be in South-East Queensland.

A higher population means higher energy usage and the increased need to move towards renewable energy.

According to the Australian Conservation Foundation's overview of climate trends in

Australia and projected impacts entitled *Australia's Inconvenient Truth* an increase of 1-2°C would see \$12.4 million needed each year to manage the southern spread of the Queensland fruit fly and 60-80% of the Great Barrier Reef would be devastated by coral bleaching.

An increase of up to 2-3°C sees a 20-30% increase in tropical cyclone rainfall and a loss of 80% of the Kakadu wetlands.

An increase of up to 3-4°C means 8,000-15,000 more elderly Australians would die each year from heat related causes. Half the species unique to the wet tropics would become extinct with a 3.5°C increase in temperature.

Millions of people will be affected by rising seas levels, particularly those living on low lying Pacific islands, creating thousands of climate refugees, many looking to Australia to settle.

According to a study by the World Resources Institute, Australia is one of the World's top 20 greenhouse gas emitters, comparable to South Africa and Mexico.

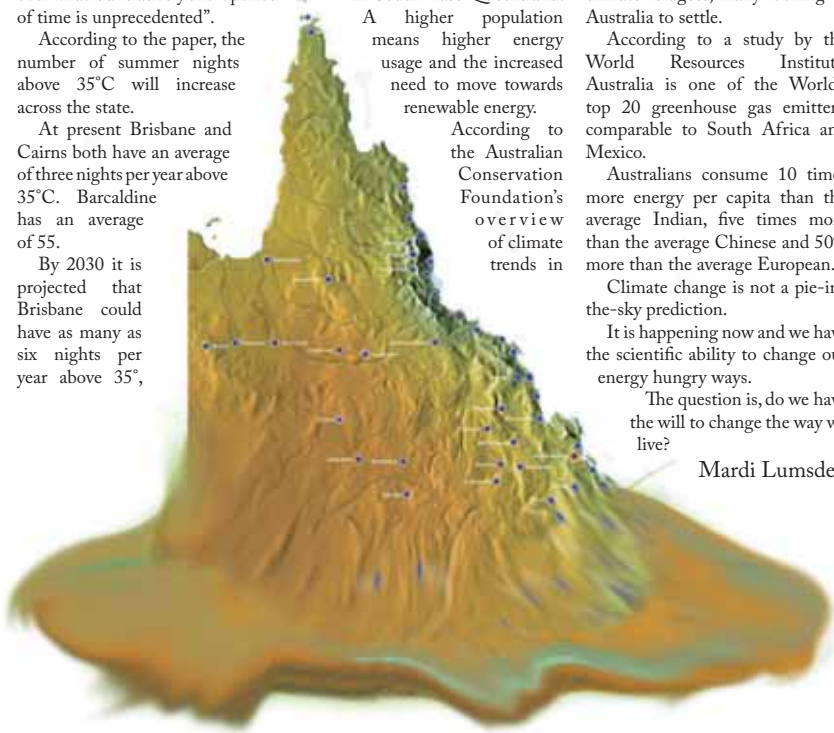
Australians consume 10 times more energy per capita than the average Indian, five times more than the average Chinese and 50% more than the average European.

Climate change is not a pie-in-the-sky prediction.

It is happening now and we have the scientific ability to change our energy hungry ways.

The question is, do we have the will to change the way we live?

Mardi Lumsden



Lenten Study! A STONE REMOVED

Six Studies of the Easter Story from Uniting Church people for Lent 2007!

\$6 ea incl. GST
Order from Unichurch Books,
Melbourne on 03 9251 5291

Journey volunteer needed

Journey is looking for a volunteer to assist with **distribution** of Journey newspapers **one Tuesday each month** February to November this year. The task is to prepare small subscription copies for posting. The company is fun and lunch is provided. The task is done at Auchenflower.

Please contact Bruce Mullan on bruce.mullan@ucaql.com.au or call 07 3377 9801.

Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Western Australia

Minister of the Word



Full-time placement – Dynamic multi-age congregation in northern suburbs of Perth, W.A. Established approx.

30 years with 200+ regular attendance at Sunday worship, featuring full band/s at modern worship facility. Focus on family ministry with Youth renewal and provision for Children's/Youth worker.

Greenwood Uniting congregation worships in a multi purpose building in Greenwood, 12 kilometres from Perth GPO. Substantial re-development within our suburban reach has ensured that a large number of young families are involved in all activities of the congregation, and this is a rapidly growing change in our congregational demographic.

A minister is sought whose experience and skills are such as can move the congregation to develop further from a solid basis of core values and strategic planning undertaken in 2005/6.

The Profile is available from Revd Dr Ian Tozer, Joint Associate General Secretary (Pastoral), W.A. Uniting Church, GPO Box M952, Perth WA 6843. ian.tozer@wa.uca.org.au

Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Western Australia



Minister of the Word

Full-time placement – **joint congregations: Fremantle Wesley and Spearwood, W.A.** (A Parish Mission with outreach welfare programmes.)

Fremantle Wesley congregation worships in a heritage building in Fremantle, 20 kilometres from Perth. Spearwood is a nearby suburban area undergoing rapid redevelopment.

Experience in a similar placement is desirable and willingness to give enthusiastic and energetic leadership for some years is essential.

The Profile is available from Revd Dr Ian Tozer, Joint Associate General Secretary (Pastoral), W.A. Uniting Church, GPO Box M952, Perth WA 6843. ian.tozer@wa.uca.org.au

Closing date for applications **Wednesday 28 February 2007.**



New policies tighten up RE and Chaplaincy in State Schools

By Bruce Mullan

CHANGES TO Education Queensland policies for both Religious Instruction (RI) and Chaplaincy in state schools will have significant consequences for schools, parents, ministers, church councils and RE volunteers.

Uniting Church representative on Education Queensland's Religious Education Advisory Committee (REAC) and Queensland Churches Together RE/Chaplaincy Committee Rev David MacGregor says this is the culmination of over five years work, and comes within months of the government's 'about-turn' on their proposed changes to the Education General Provisions Act.

"Both policies, Chaplaincy and Religious Instruction, significantly 'raise the crossbar' for all interested parties," said Mr MacGregor.

"It is worth noting that for the first time we have more than 'guidelines' for Religious Instruction in our state schools; we have policy which reduces the chance, and likelihood of arrangements being half-hearted and lacking in uniformity across the state.

"Religious leaders at local level

will need to be more diligent and vigilant in accrediting volunteers and 'Blue Card' expectations are upfront in the RI policy.

"Co-operative programs, in operation for many years now across Queensland will need input, detail and 'sign-off' by schools, volunteers and their churches alike.

"Parents enrolling their children will need to offer more detailed information about their preferences when it comes to religious education.

Mr MacGregor said there had been particular interest in the new policy about FORM C - *Parent Notice for Religious Instruction in School Hours*.

"This was the form that parents were to fill in at enrolment, to specify their choice of RE.

"On 15 December 2006, this new form was removed from the policy."

Mr MacGregor said the Chaplaincy policy is stronger on issues of accountability, the role (if any) of the chaplain in faith-based activities, local chaplaincy committees and appointment processes.

More details will be sent direct to ministers and Church Councils through *UC Information*.

More prisons: not the answer says Moderator

By Bruce Mullan

QUEENSLAND Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman has called on the Premier to reconsider the construction of a new Super Prison.

"I am dismayed at the determination of the government to proceed with the construction of a 4000 bed prison," Dr Pitman said.

"This is the worst way of dealing with the corrective services needs of Queensland and the desire to build more prison beds rather than looking at alternatives for dealing with criminal behaviour shows a short-sighted approach.

"Simply incarcerating people fails to deal with the root causes of crime and does not decrease the likelihood of persons re-offending.

"The current corrective services system fails to deal adequately with the rehabilitation of prisoners which in turn undermines the long-term safety of the community."

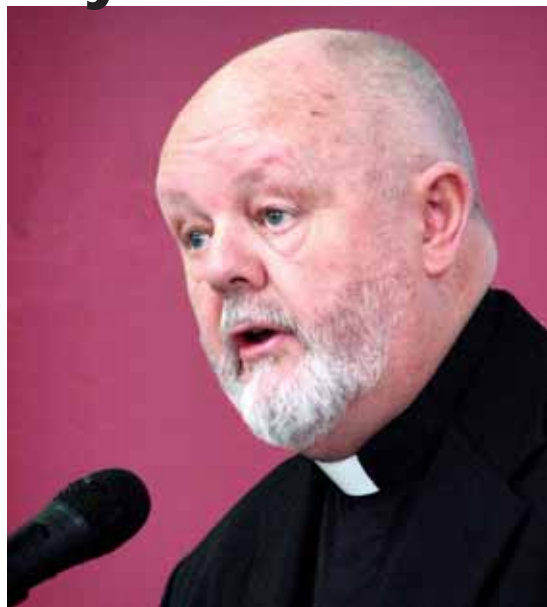
Dr Pitman believes that alternative approaches to correctional services should include a greater emphasis on restorative justice, pre-release programs, post-release housing and support, and diversionary programs for young offenders.

"All of these models have shown to result in a decrease in re-offending rates and would lessen the need for more prisons.

"The economic arguments put up by the government with regard to a Super Prison also represent a false economy because they fail to take into account the total impact on the surrounding community."

Dr Pitman said there has been no evidence produced assessing the impact on the community of large numbers of prison families moving to the area surrounding the prison.

"The significant welfare, health, school and police services required have not been adequately canvassed by the Government."



Queensland Synod Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman.
Photo by Mardi Lumsden



**Uniting Church in Australia
- Queensland Synod
(An Equal Opportunity Employer)**

**Presbytery Of The Downs
Presbytery Minister
(Full time; 5 year initial contract)**

The aim of the Downs Presbytery is to help each Congregation / Parish fulfil its mission to bring people to the Kingdom of God and to nurture them in their faith, and to encourage and support agents in ministry within the Presbytery.

Crucial to the achievement of the aim is the role of Presbytery Minister. Working closely with the Presbytery Standing Committee, the applicant (lay or ordained) will be a dynamic spiritual leader who can work creatively within the tensions of the Church to engage with others to facilitate the exploration, development, implementation and evaluation of a vision for the Presbytery. The position will be responsible for ensuring quality ministry provision including appropriate pastoral care, further education and resourcing for all agents (lay and ordained). The position is seen as a spokesperson for the Church to the local community of the Presbytery as well as Presbytery Nominee for a variety of Synod committees and forums.

Ideally, applicants should have:

- The capacity to think strategically and to facilitate the development of vision and mission.
- The ability to work in a variety of ways to energise and motivate others to develop, engage with and achieve the vision and mission.
- The capacity to provide strong leadership and to make decisions in a compassionate and understanding way.
- The ability to work effectively within team settings, establish work priorities, meet timelines and work with minimum supervision.
- Strong and demonstrated communication skills in the areas of facilitation, coaching, counselling, mentoring, networking and report writing.
- A thorough knowledge of the Uniting Church and the polity of the Church, including governance, regulations and procedures.
- A sound biblical and theological knowledge that expresses itself through a dynamic Christian faith.
- Membership of the Uniting Church in Australia.
- Commitment to and understanding of the mission and ethos of the Uniting Church.

This position will be based in Toowoomba or by agreement at some other location within the Presbytery. There will be regular travel throughout the Presbytery and beyond.

A full information pack is available via the website (<http://www.ucaqlld.com.au/career.php>) or by contacting Shayne Hearley (07) 3377 9705 or shayne.hearley@ucaqlld.com.au

Applications close Friday 16th March 2007.

Boonah congregation grieves accidental death of member

THE BOONAH Uniting Church and community has been shocked by the accidental death of an elderly church member who was knocked over by a car after worship in January.

Mrs Mavis Bell was getting into a car to be taken back to the Fassifern Retirement Village when it suddenly reversed knocking her to the ground.

Mrs Bell was 87 and died in the Boonah hospital.

A 93 year old resident also received minor injuries in the accident but is recovering.

The driver of the car who had taken three women, including Mrs Bell, to church every Sunday for many years was distraught.

Mrs Bell's son Peter Finney told *The Courier Mail*, "She [the driver] is a nice lady who was doing a good turn. I feel very sorry for her. She phoned me about the accident.

"She said she thought the car was in park and it must have slipped into reverse. It started to move and

she went to put her foot on the brake but got the accelerator."

Rev Noel Fraser and other Uniting Church ministers and leaders are offering support to the community.



United Theological College Lecturer

PASTORAL THEOLOGY and the PRACTICE OF MINISTRY

United Theological College, Sydney, theological college for the Uniting Church in Australia NSW Synod, seeks to appoint a lecturer to take responsibility for the oversight of the teaching of Pastoral Theology and the Practice of Ministry programme.

The appointee will be expected to be an experienced practitioner, teacher and researcher in the areas of:

- a contemporary ministry practice
- b the discipline of pastoral theology
- c integration of ministerial and theological education.

The appointee must be willing to accept and adhere to the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia.

The position is available from 1 July 2007. Full details of the position may be obtained from:

Rev. Associate Professor Clive Pearson, Principal
16 Masons Drive, North Parramatta NSW 2151 Australia
Phone +61 2 8838 8927 Fax +61 2 9683 6617 or email utc@nsw.uca.org.au with whom applications close on 28 February 2007.



WHAT'S ON

January 30. BEAT Dodgeball Season 5 begins at Alexandra Hills, Redlands. Tuesdays nights from 6:30-9:45pm. Go to www.beatdodgeball.tk for more information or contact Ian Gilmour on 3207 5812 or email beatdodgeball@gmail.com.

February 15-17. Wheller Gardens Auxiliary rummage sale. Uhl Hall 930 Gympie Rd, Chermerside. 15-16 open 8.30am-3pm. 17 open 8.30am-12 noon. Pre-loved clothes, books and knick-knacks.

February 18, 10am. St Luke's Uniting Church Centenary (formally Hamilton Methodist Church). See the historical display and renew old fellowships with lunch after the service. Contact Joan Lynn 3268 1477 or Annette Lynn 3268 4131 or annette.lynn@suncorp.com.au.

February 21, 10.30am. The Annual General Meeting of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship, Queensland Synod Committee to be followed by the Dedication of Office Bearers and Communion Service. Emmanuel Uniting Church, South Pine Road, Enoggera. Contact Anne McKay on 3349 3747 for more information.

February 25, 2pm. Questions of faith for modern Christians seminar with ground breaking Australian author and speaker Michael Morwood. Fradgley Hall, Park Ave Burleigh Heads. \$10/\$8 includes a cuppa. Presented by Sea of Faith in Australia GC Group. Contact 5590 9598 or visit www.morwood.org or www.sof-in-australia.org.

February 25, 3pm. 50th Anniversary and chapel service to launch an appeal for the establishment of a Grimmert Memorial Window. King's College University of Queensland, St. Lucia. Contact John Braithwaite on 3871 9826 or j.braithwaite@kings.uq.edu.au.

March 3. Ignite Children's Ministry Expo. Inspiration, ideas and resources for anyone involved in ministry with children. Contact Paul Yarrow on 3377 9866 or email Paul.Yarrow@yacmu.ucaqld.com.au.

March 31, 6.30pm. Wesley Mission Brisbane's Centenary Dinner Dance at Brisbane City Hall. Dinner compared by Australian poet, Rupert McCall and features musical entertainment. Discount for tables of 10. For more information call the Public Relations and Fundraising Office on 07 3621 4677 or email pr@wmb.org.au.

April 27. Rural Muster at Jondaryan Woolshed, Darling Downs. Contact Julie Savage on 3870 2621 or email dsavo@dovenetq.net.au.

Want to promote an event?

Go to www.journeyonline.com.au and click on 'What's On'



A manger scene in an Australian setting was part of the Glasshouse Bush Christmas Festival. Photo by Chris Bell

Glasshouse celebrated a bush Christmas

ASSISTED BY a grant from the Uniting Church Foundation the Glasshouse Country Uniting Church hosted a Bush Christmas Festival in December.

Congregation member Chris Bell said the display in the church consisted of a "Bush Walk" through the church depicting Jesus' life before creation, the arrival of the baby in the manger and Jesus' return to his kingly throne in heaven.

"It was in keeping with the Year of the Outback and featured a pictorial display of the work of

Frontier Services," she said.

"A free sausage sizzle and damper around the camp ovens with bush poetry and bush tales from Rev Bob Philpot and Rev George Woodward at the Starlight coffee shop were other features."

Mrs Bell said that the congregation had used their *Christmas: we are not alone* posters and cards as a promotional tool and that the community festival was a great witness to the many who came along.

Visit the transit lounge

A NEW publication, aimed at fostering faith development and faith sharing, will share a positive message about the Uniting Church and Christianity in general.

A joint venture between the Synod of Western Australia and the National Assembly, *The Transit Lounge*, will be a fortnightly electronic magazine.

It will offer stories in a wide range of news and feature categories; from culture and arts to news and current affairs as well as regular blogs (opinion pieces) and an internet-based discussion forum where readers can discuss the issues raised in each edition.

Subscription is free and the first edition will be launched in mid February. To subscribe visit www.thetransitlounge.com.au.

Bremer Brisbane change of address

The Bremer Brisbane Presbytery has a new secretary.

Mr Grahame Tainton can be contacted at PO Box 901 Sumner Park BC 4074, phone 3279 0185 or email (with the subject line BB Presbytery) gwtandwt@bigpond.net.au.



QUEENSLAND CHURCHES TOGETHER

Applications are invited for the position of **Coordinator, Churches Together Indigenous People's Partnership (CTIPP)**

The ecumenical ministry of CTIPP aims to promote:

- an understanding of Indigenous cultures and spiritualities;
- awareness of shared history and the continuing social and economic disadvantage of Indigenous people;
- action designed to redress such disadvantage, furthering justice and respect.

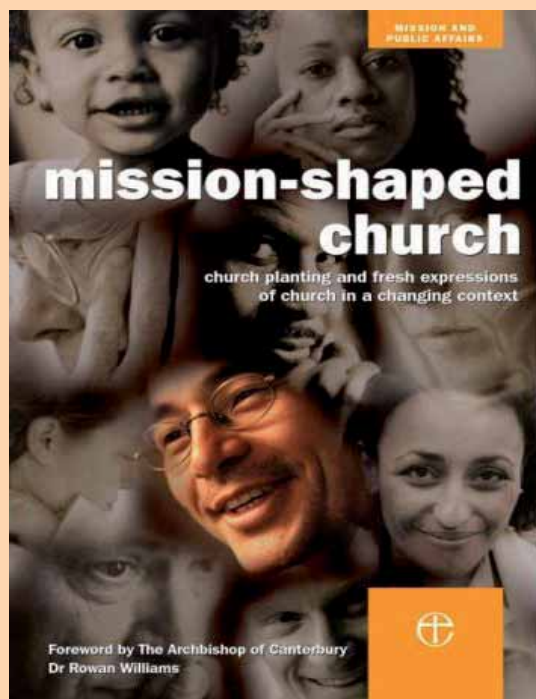
The applicant for this part-time position should be a member of a Christian faith community. She/He could be an Indigenous or a non-Indigenous person.

Applications should be accompanied by the contact details of two referees.

Enquiries and applications should be addressed to:

Glenine Hamlyn
General Secretary, Queensland Churches Together
P.O. Box 2045, Milton BC, Qld. 4064
Ph. 07 3369 6792 Fax 07 3369 8573
Email: qctgsec@tpg.com.au

Closing date for applications: 15th February, 2007



Mission shaped church

Church Planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context

PARISH CHURCHES alone are no longer able to meet the needs of the highly mobile society of today. We need a range of expressions of church to engage with the variety of networks in our communities.

Mission-Shaped Church is a Church of England (UK) report, published in 2004.

At the heart of the report is the need for a 'mixed economy' of parish churches and network churches in active partnership across a wide geographical area.

Most people do not naturally

build their friendship circles on the basis of geography, choosing instead to rely on informal networks.

In many cases people live in isolation, becoming consumers without community.

'Fresh expressions' of church are needed to connect such networks with Christian faith.

'Fresh expressions' generally occur outside the normal Sunday morning worship service.

Most connect with small groups and relational mission and relate to a particular network of people.

Examples given include alternative worship communities, café church, cell church, churches arising out of community initiatives, school-based and school-linked congregations, traditional church plants, new monastic communities and youth congregations.

The *Mission-Shaped Church* report strongly recommends that fresh expressions become legally recognised by the wider church rather than be treated as an interesting experiment or project.

Bishops (read Presbyteries?) are urged to broker the sending of

fresh mission teams to cultures or areas where mission presence is thin or non-existent.

The report pushes for the identification, selection and training of pioneer church planters, both lay and ordained.

Mission Shaped Church is available from Koorong or can be downloaded as a free PDF file from www.cofe.anglican.org/info/papers/mission_shaped_church.pdf or bought at the Planning to Plant conference in Brisbane, 15 February 2007.

Also available: *Mission-shaped Church: A Theological Response* by John M. Hull, and *Building the Mission-Shaped Church in Australia*, by Alan Nichols.

For conversation about the *Mission-Shaped Church* contact Vision for Mission Advocate Rev Duncan Macleod on 07 3377 9809 or email duncan.macleod@ucaql.com.au



Samiuela Toa Finau
11/11/1934 - 5/1/2007

SAMIUELA TOA Finau grew up in Tonga and attended the Sia'atoutai Theological College. He moved to Sydney in 1962 to attend the Evangelists' Training Institute at the Central Methodist Mission, where he met his wife Lurline Judith Dawson. He returned to Tonga to teach at Tupou College, a Methodist school for boys, from 1964 to 1965.

In 1966 Toa and Judith married and had three children - Salesi, Petunia and Elina.

His studies continued at Leigh Theological College Sydney (now United Theological College) and Melbourne College of Divinity. During this time Toa ministered to the Tongan Congregation at Wesley Chapel in Sydney and in 1969 was minister for the Robertson Methodist Circuit (NSW), the first Pacific Island minister to be appointed to a Methodist Circuit in Australia.

Toa served as Chaplain at Tupou High School in the early 1970s until he received a World Council of Churches Scholarship to study at the Pacific Theological College Suva.

He lectured at Sia'atoutai from 1976 until mid 1977. He graduated with a Doctor of Ministry degree from the School of Theology at Claremont California in 1979. On returning to Tonga Toa was appointed Senior Tutor [Tiuta lahi] at Sia'atoutai in 1980.

In 1983 he became Lecturer in Pastoral Care and Counselling at the Pacific Theological College, where he was later Vice Principal (1985-1988 and 1992-1999) and Acting Principal (1995).

He attained a Master of Arts in Religion and Personality Sciences from the Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley, California.

He was the Founding Chairman of the Pacific Community for Pastoral Care and Counselling, based in Suva from 1987 until 1999.

In 2000 Toa became Minister of the Park Church Tongan Congregation of the Uniting Church at Highgate Hill, Brisbane. Unfortunately, due to ill health Toa retired from ministry in June, 2005.

He was a member of the Multicultural Ministry Network in Queensland and remained an Ex-Officio member of the network in retirement.

He passed away peacefully at the Princes Alexandra Hospital on 5 January 2007.

Margaret Frances Cayzer
14/7/1926 - 20/12/2006

BORN IN Brisbane, Margaret completed teacher training at Kelvin Grove Teachers' College. After various teaching posts she studied for the Licentiate in Theology as a prelude to life on the mission field with the London Missionary Society.

Margaret went on to serve her Lord and the people of India for 29 years where she established a school for children with disabilities in Coimbatore Diocese.

In 1980, Margaret had the opportunity to be ordained (30 years after having completed the qualifications required) and to work as a Minister of the Uniting Church in Redcliffe. Marriage to Arthur Cayzer, a long time friend came next, and then retirement in 1986.

The next twenty years saw Margaret continue to serve her Lord through some short term placements as well as a significant long-term (retired) ministry within the community and church in Redcliffe.

She lived life to the glory of God- a witness to us all.



Elizabeth Craigie McChesney-Clark
(Nee Williams)
21/11/1918 - 26/11/2006

BORN IN Scotland Elizabeth spent her school days in Leeds.

She attended Cambridge University and graduated with a Master of Arts in 1940. She completed her Cambridge Teacher's Certificate in Birmingham in 1941.

During her undergraduate studies Elizabeth met Arthur McChesney-Clark, an Australian clergyman preparing for service with the London Missionary Society. They became engaged and Arthur went to China in 1939. Elizabeth was to join him for their wedding in 1940.

World War II destroyed their plans and Arthur spent the war in a civilian concentration camp in north-east China.

Elizabeth remained in England teaching, with little or no news of her husband-to-be.

Arthur returned in 1945 and they were married the same year. Their first child, Eric, was born in 1946, the year that saw the family head for a new LMS posting in Fife Bay, in the far south-east coast of Papua where they served for 21 years.

They moved to Brisbane in 1967 and Arthur tragically died in 1969.

In March 1973, Elizabeth was ordained as a Minister of the Congregational Union of Queensland and was recognised as a Minister of the Uniting Church in 1977. She served in her posting at Rockhampton Uniting Church Parish until retirement in 1984.

She kept active with service at St. Andrews Uniting in Brisbane. As her health needs grew, Elizabeth moved to St. John's Nursing Centre in Chermiside.

We celebrate her life and honour the memory of a gracious lady, loving wife, devoted mother, grand-mother and great-grandmother, hard working missionary and minister, and a faithful servant of the Lord throughout her lifetime.

LETTERS

Rudd goes confessional

The Archbishop of Sydney's response to [Rudd's] essay was "It will cause debate".

With this I agree and hope that it happens. However, so that such debate is based on fact and not on unthought, uninformed allegiance to any political party, the essay should be carefully and prayerfully read.

It is available from Mr Rudd's office phone 3899 4031 or email Kevin.Rudd.MP@aph.gov.au.

R Smith
Sippy Downs

Bonhoeffer and labor politics

Kevin Rudd's proclamation of Bonhoeffer's message comes at an appropriate time in Australian politics.

I was rather surprised to read Scott Stephen's call for us to "hate Dietrich Bonhoeffer" (November *Journey*).

I thought we were commanded to love even our worst enemy.

Bonhoeffer spoke of a 'religionless Christianity', meaning that Christ's message transcends political, ethnic, religious and social boundaries.

The religious and the political right believe that the truth belongs only to them and that others have it in half measures!

John Wesley spoke of a personal salvation but he also worked among society's downtrodden to identify with their suffering.

The path Australia has taken over the last 10 years has given rise to a culture characterised by individualism, materialism, economic greed, religious fundamentalism and a sense of national exclusiveness.

It is time that the political, religious and social leaders of our country speak out against such a culture of excessive indulgence and exclusiveness and begin to focus on matters that form the centre of Christ's message, which is compassion, tolerance, respect and understanding. These stand above morality, religious piety and righteousness.

D Fernando
Bracken Ridge

Virgin birth answer

The question of the virgin birth (December *Journey*) leaves a sense of doubt in the mind of a Christian.

Why can we not take the record in Luke 1:34, as literal, Mary stated to an angel, "I do not know a man".

Surely God, let alone an angel of God, would know if Mary were a virgin or not.

Mary was found with child. Her situation was the most distressing and humiliating that can be conceived. Nothing but the fullest consciousness of her own identity, and the strongest confidence in God, could have supported her reputation. Her honour and her life were at stake.

Roy Ludlow
Geelong

Latest Uniting Church Foundation grant recipients

Thanks mainly to the wonderful people whose Will has resulted in an unrestricted bequest being received for God's work, the Foundation has been able to disburse its tax-free interest earnings on such funds in the form of these general grants. Their special gift to future generations, from their accumulation of a lifetime of God's blessings, is a true reflection of the values and principles they treasured.

The closing date for the next round of general grants is 31 March, for disbursement during June. For more information about bequests to the Church and for grant application forms, please contact the Foundation right now at www.foundation.ucaqld.com.au or phone the Development Manager on (07) 3377 9777.

Applicant	Project	Amount
Boonah UC	Sunday Night Fellowship Group	\$1,100
Calvary Presbytery	Indigenous Christian Youth Development	\$4,200
Centenary UC	South West Outreach Van	\$6,000
Charlter Towers UC	Outreach to families who bring children for baptism	\$1,000
Eternal Life Fellowship	ATSI Children's School Homework Program	\$5,775
Fassifern UC	Community Outreach	\$1,400
Glasshouse Community UC	Christmas Festival Outreach	\$1,100
Oakey and District UC	Resourcing Small Rural Community Congregations for Worship and Witness	\$3,960
Townsville Central UC	City Heart Education Support Scheme (CHESS)	\$5,714
Yalga-binbi Institute for Community Development	Indigenous Leadership	\$5,000
Total		\$35,249

Water Wise

During my years spent working and travelling the outback I was forced to use a variety of different types of water, including recycled water. I thought I would pass on a few tips I learned.

In rural Australia water is the primary source of life and must be respected for its value.

In rural areas crop dusting and spraying are the main causes of contamination, as well as the use of chemicals.

Water can also be boiled then stored in the refrigerator. The extreme change in temperature will destroy most harmful organisms.

Tanks should be regularly maintained, especially rainwater tanks, where the roof is the main catchment area.

Tanks can become a breeding ground for mosquitoes and sand flies. A teaspoon of kerosene added to the surface of the water will stop the breeding cycle.

Most roofs are suited for tank run-off providing they are free from dust and leaves. Asbestos roofing is not recommended.

After a long dry spell it is a good idea to disengage the run-off pipes so as to prevent dust, bird droppings and leaves being washed onto the tank. When installing a tank it is wise to wash or flush the tank and pipes to get rid of chemicals left by the manufacturer.

Max Schulze
Gatton

A convenient solution

I have been recently reading of the church's interest in combating climate change.

Various offices of the church have called on the government to reduce our country's greenhouse emissions. This is very good.

However, I'm wondering if (in the spirit of Matthew 7 and removing the log from one's own eye) the church should first clean up its own backyard?

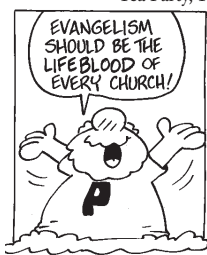
Perhaps church leaders could take action, before calling on the federal government to do likewise.

I read that the NSW moderator has asked all NSW congregations to switch to green power.

However, I have heard no mention of Uniting Church fleet vehicles. At around five tonnes of greenhouse gas per car per year, this certainly adds up.

So isn't it time to switch to hybrid vehicles? Running twice as efficiently, they reduce emissions by half. At around the same price as the equivalent petrol vehicle, it's a decision that wouldn't cost the earth ... but it would help save it.

David Weddell
Tea Party, Toowoong



Unhealthy church?

I have often wondered why the church in Australia is generally in poor health.

Nowadays as the country grows increasingly secularised, it appears that the church and state are heading in different directions.

Some would argue that we should not focus our energy on Christianising Australia (many say a losing battle) but rather we should strive to be God's kingdom in an increasingly hostile world.

Also I can't see how Modernism/Liberalism/Neo-orthodoxy/ Social Gospel have done little to bring the populous to salvation in Christ.

The clear message of the Bible is not improvement of a sinful world, but that the world is passing away.

The Kingdom of God will not come as a result of a gradual growth by man's efforts at social reform.

Success will come I believe when we recognise that Jesus is all that matters and everything else is on the periphery.

These are not my words but those of a Pastor of a small successful ministry who really looks after his neighbour.

Graham Wright
Stafford

Respect mental illness

As a registered psychiatric nurse, I read with much pleasure the article "Mental health brings churches together" (December *Journey*).

The need for these groups is immense and the people of the Chermide-Kedron Community Church should be congratulated for their significant contribution to this major health/ social issue.

However, after turning the page I was concerned to read Val Pym's letter in which she describes the UCA as a "schizophrenic church".

I'm quite sure Ms Pym's choice of the word 'schizophrenic' was probably just careless and not intentionally malevolent, but please understand that it is unhelpful to perpetuate stereotypes.

Medical research has made great progress in developing new drugs which have enabled many folk with schizophrenia (and other major mental illnesses) to lead more productive and fulfilling lives.

Sadly, the area in which we severely lack progress is in the domain of stigma.

I ask that you support the work of SANE, an independent national charity dedicated to helping people affected by mental illness (www.sane.org) and find out how you can actively promote the basic rights and respect for people with mental illness.

Rosemary Dunmill
Indooroopilly Uniting Church

Halloween: not always bad!

An editorial and two letters in recent issues have warned of the dangers regarding Halloween celebrations. Maybe however, there are some positives as well!

We live in a small community of two or three thousand people on Magnetic Island.

It so happened that the last Halloween night coincided with my Minister's Bible Class (an after school gathering of five beautiful twelve year old kids.)

They excitedly asked to go a few minutes early as they had to dress up as witches for the Trick and Treat doorknock.

Later in the evening a couple of groups of primary age children appeared at our door and the treats were given and a good relationship made with the neighbourhood children.

They were having good friendly fun! They certainly didn't deserve the lecture they received from one or two super Christians!

Strangely enough, about seventy years ago when I was a younger primary school child our little Presbyterian church was very staid but incredibly friendly.

It was maybe even wowsersish: against drink, smokes, dancing, Sunday sport etc. However we had a really great Halloween party in the church every year - supposedly an old Scots tradition!

OK, so the kids imbibe American culture on their diet of TV kid-stuff soaps. A pity but so what!

Santa Claus and Christmas trees came to us from the previous superpower!

Alan Renton
Magnetic Island

Most Christians avoid any contact with Halloween celebrations (December *Journey*), but here in Innisfail the Churches Together movement supports 1st November as All Souls, All Saints Day.

It is obviously a Catholic tradition, but it brings together Christians from the Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Churches.

Our Uniting Church is near our cemetery. People gather at the cemetery entrance, pray together, light candles at dusk, sing Amazing Grace while a piper plays, then we follow the piper to the Uniting Church. A combined service is held.

A letter would have been sent to all who had lost loved ones.

The main theme for the departed is that they rest in peace, and that the Lord provide comfort to families who mourn.

Eric Sullivan
Innisfail



Marion Crane and son Bobby bobbing for apples at the Bundaberg Bush Christmas Celebration.
Photo by Matt Gees

Ducking for the Christmas Bowl in Bundy

By Matt Gees

MARION CRANE and son Bobby bobbed for apples as Bundaberg's Christmas Bowl appeal got off to a great start in early December with a bush Christmas celebration at the Bundaberg Uniting Church.

The celebration attracted nearly 200 people to the church kickstarting the Christmas Bowl appeal with an amazing \$500 in just a few hours.

Organising committee member Pat Irvine said the idea of the Bush Christmas was inspired by the way Australian families and people in other countries are struggling with the effects of the drought, especially in the bush areas.

"Christmas Bowl funds raise money and awareness of the struggles that poor countries

like Africa and India are facing," she explained.

Mrs Irvine was overwhelmed at the way the entire church community from both city and coast helped to make the afternoon and evening a great success.

"Everyone chipped in and contributed their skills and gifts. KUCA organised old fashioned games like sack races and apple bobbing, as well as a puppet show for entertainment.

"Creative and Crafty organised the craft stall with home made craft, lucky dips and produce, Twilight worship service led the singing of some carols and Christmas songs and much more".

Mrs Irvine said that community support with discounts and donations was outstanding.

National Servicemen's Association Chaplaincy

THE NATIONAL Servicemen's Association of Australia celebrates its 20th birthday in October 2007.

Born in Toowoomba, the Association is next to the RSL in numerical strength, and is still growing - Nationally 13,000, and in Queensland 3500.

There are 35 branches in the State and most have an honorary chaplain appointed as well as a welfare officer.

Retired Uniting Church minister Dr Noel Wallis is the Association's state chaplain and Uniting Church ministers Rev Dr Ian Mavor and Rev Ian Taylor are branch chaplains.

Chaplains come from most mainline denominations as well as the Salvation Army.

They conduct services under the banner of the Association, and minister to 'Nashos' and their families when requested to do so.

Dr Wallis is also state Chaplain of the National Service RSL Sub-Branch and conducts the Brisbane Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services at their Memorial



Dr Noel Wallis, National Servicemen's Association State Chaplain.
Photo by Osker Lau

Gardens, Norman Park.

"Some [chaplains] are asked to visit local schools prior to these days to speak to the children.

"I go to my old school at Moorooka to assist in the Anzac

Day service...after sixty years," he said.

To know more about the National Servicemen's Association, contact Noel on phone 3372 2145 or email nwallis@aapt.net.au.

Historically Speaking



FROM PADDLEWHEELERS TO THE CITY CATS

Today, sleek, fast City Cats, with aboriginal names associated with areas of the Brisbane River, dart to and fro, up and down the river, while many continue to mourn the loss of the city's cross-river ferries.

One special cross-river ferry was the steam-driven paddlewheeler vehicular vessel, the Hetherington, which saw more than 40 years service on the river. Named after a Brisbane City Council alderman, the Hetherington initially linked Kangaroo Point to Charlotte Street in the city in a service which operated from 1913 to 1921.

From 1925, this slow, but stable lady of the river moved downstream to the Bulimba reach, linking Oxford Street, Bulimba to Commercial Road, Teneriffe. Her original passengers were intended to be horse-drawn vehicles but her latter years coincided with the arrival of the car in numbers and the construction of the Story Bridge, which, ultimately, contributed to her demise in 1953.

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JOURNEY asks...

As a Christian how do you attempt to live a sustainable lifestyle?

Bob Cottam



In 1964 I qualified as a Veterinarian at London University.

Veterinary science moulded me firstly in Scotland and since 1980 in Outback Queensland where we bought a "desert" block. Over the next 20 years we renovated the house with recycled materials.

We depend on a bore for water, and installed tanks to collect 67,000 litres of rainfall. A composting toilet saves 12,000 litres of water each year and improves garden soil. Anyone who pays for their water source and pumping never wastes water, using it twice when possible. A solar power system was installed in 1995.

My association with animals, from bacteria upwards, and the biochemical intricacies involved gives the lie to the evolutionary theory that inorganic elements can come

together to form complex bacteria from which all living creatures developed... well, the tooth fairy comes to mind. God HAS to be the Creator.

I believe in the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) and drew heavily on the Lord's goodness and mercy during the building operations, with many a cry for help going up. In truth these prayers were answered.

For instance, I was taping a proposed track through thick wattle when I became "bushed"; no sun and compass awry. Singing "Guide me, O, Thou Great Jehovah" for three hours I emerged only 20 metres from my target!

Fire threatened our house; it was serious. "Lord, I don't need this. Help!" Immediately the wind changed and the fire burnt back, all okay. (People blame God when it is often their own fault).

To maintain "sustainability" of any agricultural system we must put back what is taken out, otherwise the land becomes sterile. Animals eating the plants succumb to deficiency diseases and require supplements to remain healthy.

We assume God's mercy is infinite, but as we draw heavily on it we should put back what we took out, by prayer, thanks and deed, thereby assuring our spiritual "sustainability".

Bob Cottam OAM, BVetMed and his wife Sue live at "Narbethong" south of Jericho on the other side of the River Jordan, and are members of the Jericho Uniting Church congregation in Central Queensland.

Mike and Julia Chuk

Out here in Longreach we live in a much more natural environment than most of the more settled parts of the country.

We are fortunate in having access to a reliable source of water in the Great Artesian Basin. Our rivers run free and still provide water for the vast floodplains, swamps and lakes of the Channel Country down to Lake Eyre.

Nonetheless trying to live a sustainable lifestyle in the outback can be a challenge.

For us, living distant from the sources of products, food and energy means we have a bigger footprint on the earth's resources than the average Australian - which isn't that good by world standards!

For power to come out to a distant property or small town there are considerable losses with significant greenhouse consequences. We drive further to get services and shop so our demand for oil is greater.

The recycling services enjoyed by people on the coast are largely non-existent. Our local governments are constrained by the same costs of transport too, only recycling higher value items like metal and oil.

As individuals what can we do? Julia and I are fortunate to live in a bicycle friendly town. Wide flat streets and short distances mean that bikes are our preferred means of transport and, as a plus, they don't get stolen out here!

We grow vegies in the cooler months, which reduces our demand on food brought from the coast.

We separate our rubbish and where possible take our plastics and glass on trips

east to places with better recycling services. Our house isn't perfectly air-conditioned, but decent insulation and shading helps to keep our power bill down.

In the end it is a matter of attitude.

In a world where convenience is worshipped it takes commitment to be green - particularly if you live in a remote place.

The day when a sustainable lifestyle comes effortlessly is still a long way away.



Mike and Julia Chuk are members of the Longreach Uniting Church where Mike serves as Chairperson of the Church Council.

Heather den Houting

When I was in High School, we were required to study *Confronting the Future*, a book by scientist and theologian Charles Birch about the way the use of resources might impact on the world in which we live.

The basic premise was that environmental impact equals population, times the amount of resources used per person.

I remember it well because it shocked my adolescent self obsession.

This book took me beyond the concept that it was "all about me and my friends and family", to the understanding that the way I behaved might actually be all about the entire world!

So how did Heather as a teenager deal with such a realisation? Generally, I ignored it.

I remember that I felt sick when I thought that, for all people in the world to live in a place of equal access to resources, I would have to give up things.

I also thought that if we run out of a resource and have to go back to sustainable living principles my particular gifts and skills would be pretty useless. But then, everything around me in my world seemed to be operating pretty normally, so I continued on without changing much at all.

And now? Sometimes, I take the commitment to reduce, reuse and recycle to serious levels. But I have not got to the "conversion of whole house to renewable energy" stage. I don't ride a bike to work.



I shop at a supermarket that ships its products in from all over the country. I don't agitate at council level for sustained and planned development of communities. My church, my shops, the kids' schools and work, are all accessed by car rather than an integrated public transport system.

And yet, as I have lived out my faith, I have seriously considered this stuff. The maxim "think globally, act locally" works for me generally but, in the end, the decisions around resource use have all been too hard.

I pray regularly for strength and wisdom to act within God's grace but I haven't ordered

that water tank yet, I've been too busy.

What will it take to move me from this position of good intentions to being a woman of action? I reckon it might have to be another shock. A shock that reminds me that the way I behave affects the entire world. I think that shock might be here with the rising awareness of climate change.

Now, all of a sudden, most people are talking about this in a serious way. A sense of urgency is building up about this issue. The recent visit of Al Gore, and the release of the Stern report, has meant that even our politicians are using the language of "carbon

emission trading" and "greenhouse reduction targets".

We are living through a point in history where our weather is changing. This is no longer in dispute. Australia is becoming hotter and drier. While there is disagreement about the extent to which human activity is contributing to this, most people agree that at the very least we are contributing to the "enhanced green house effect".

So, guess what! I've installed the energy efficient light bulbs, we are buying a Honda Civic as our new car and the water tank person visited yesterday. I've had the conversion experience.

In my role as Social Responsibility Advocate I have always thought about climate change in the light of broad strategic methods to assist and facilitate change: namely through information, education and advocacy.

Instead, my conversion has taken me back to accepting responsibility for the choices I make concerning resource use. While broad and strategic programs for change are important, I recognise that they can be used as an excuse for personal inaction.

Who knows? Maybe if I can go green, the whole of the Uniting Church in Queensland can go green!

Heather den Houting is a candidate for the Ministry of Deacon and has just completed her time as Social Responsibility Advocate with the Queensland Synod.