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a Bali prison

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Money Matters\$

As the word °stewardship° has lost traction across the Uniting Church the need to secure funds to resource the mission agenda of local congregations and beyond has become more difficult for a cash-strapped church.

By Bruce Mullan

Few Uniting Church congregations in Queensland are still running full-blown stewardship campaigns and many congregations never intentionally encourage their membership to consider an increase in their contribution to church offerings.

More conservative congregations emphasise the biblical notion of tithing or the giving of one tenth of income to the work of God while others leave the decision about how much to give to individual members.

Uniting Church Investment Service (U.C.I.S.) Senior Manager Stephen Peake said many give more than 10%.

“Sometimes it’s gob-smacking to sit across the table from someone and discover the phenomenal amount of their income that they actually give away to the church and charitable endeavours,” he said.

Lead Minister at Robina Uniting Church Rev Stu Cameron said his family had discovered the joy and liberation of making tithing a foundational principle in their giving but acknowledged that other Christians would see things very differently.

Mr Cameron said while some choose to give a tenth of their net income his family decided to tithe their gross earnings.

“I believe there is no definitive answer to this question, and an unhealthy preoccupation with it can distract us from God’s desire that we give willingly and cheerfully,” he said.

“A budget is a theological document. It indicates who or what we worship.”

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Dealing with the demons within

ALL OF our most important struggles are spiritual, and the arena in which those battles are fought lies within us.

This is most certainly true in regard to the management of our financial resources.

The problems we have as Christians in relation to money (apart from feeling that we never have enough of it) are essentially spiritual problems.

In the final analysis, our giving in support of the work of God is a matter of faith and commitment, no more, no less!

In the Gospels, we have a number of stories about people who are demon-possessed. Exactly what that meant then, and what it might mean now, is a matter for serious study and reflection.

Without exception, these demons represent powerful and evil forces acting in opposition to the will of God as that will was expressed in the ministry of Jesus.

In some of these Gospel stories the demons speak and their words reflect their alienation from, and opposition to, the purpose of God.

We all have our share of demons who speak from inside us, always absolutely intent on persuading us to turn away from God's will and purpose for our lives.

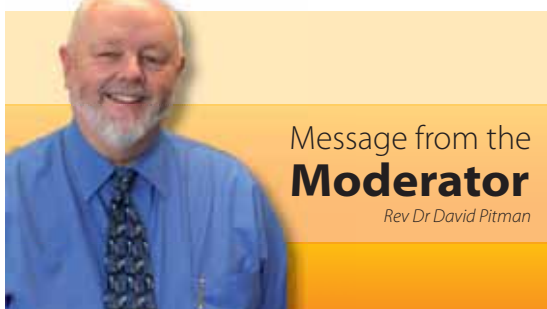
We hear these voices in many guises.

Sometimes their purpose is to undermine our faith in God and sow doubts about God's love for us.

Sometimes they speak to create in us a sense of self-loathing and make us feel really bad about ourselves.

Sometimes they speak with the express intention of destroying our relationships and breaking down any desire we have to be trusting, compassionate, caring, generous and responsible.

And these voices are really loud and insistent whenever we engage in reflection about our money and how we use it.



Message from the Moderator

Rev Dr David Pitman

Jesus was so aware of the existence and influence of these demon voices that he devoted a significant proportion of his teaching ministry to issues about money. For every demon voice, Jesus had a word from God.

When the demon voices in the rich young man said, "What's yours is yours!" Jesus replied: "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me."

“we are responsible... not only to multiply the gifts that God has given us, but also to understand that all we have accumulated still belongs to God.”

But the rich young man succumbed to the tempting words of the demon within and went away sad and unfulfilled. (Matthew 19:21-22)

When the demon voices wooed people with the words, "The more you have, the more secure you'll be!" Jesus responded, "Do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." (Matthew 6:31-33)

When the demon voices were seducing people with the words, "Whatever you have left over is good enough for God!" Jesus pointed to a poor widow who was nearby in the Temple putting two small coins in the offering box, and said: "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them; for all of them have contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in all she had to live on." (Luke 21:1-4)

When the demon voices were undermining the will of the people with the words, "All they want is your money!" Jesus went home with a rich tax-collector named Zaccheus, who was so changed by this encounter that he gave back, with interest, the money he had extorted from the citizens of Jericho and, in addition, made substantial donations to the poor and needy. (Luke 19:1-10)

And when the demon voices were luring people with the words, "It's not your responsibility!" Jesus told the parable of the talents to remind everyone that we are responsible, whether we like it or not, not only to multiply the gifts that God has given us, but also to understand that all we have accumulated still belongs to God. (Matthew 25:14-30)

If we are to live within the will and purpose of God, we have no option but to deal with the demons within as Jesus did in the wilderness.

The demon voices are silenced by the word of God! When God speaks the demons have no answer!

They are always, without exception, subject to the authority of God and the word of light and truth that God speaks!

What we do with our money is first and foremost a matter of the heart.

In his book, *Creating Congregations of Generous People*, Michael Durall writes, "Two commonly held beliefs persist in many congregations. The first is that members don't have much to give. The second is that people are already giving as much as they can. Both are myths."

It's time to deal with the demons within!

Once, by the grace of God, and with the word of God, we have dealt with the demons, anything is possible!

From the Editor

Sometimes it can be the most uncomfortable time of the service, especially if you are sitting in the front row and that big open bowl comes past for your offering.

If you're first, whatever you put in, the next person along is going to know how much it was. Maybe that's why people like envelopes – at least that way only the recorder will know how much your contribution was.

It is always easier when a congregational hymn is sung during the offering rather than a quiet organ voluntary which might not hide the clinking of coins. I sometimes suspect that the point of the music is to not to draw attention to the offering but to distract us from it.

Stewards shuffle apologetically and try not to look at what others are putting in. Thank heavens for those enlightened congregations which use deep, soft bags to hide the amount and muffle the clinking of whatever might be deposited.

For those who sincerely wish to offer God a fair slice of the pay-packet there is the modern day rush to the handy teller each Sunday morning to make a quick cash withdrawal so the stewards can collect it, count it, record it and then deposit it back in the same bank.

Praise the Lord for direct giving through bank transfer. But then there is the possible embarrassment of having to pass the plate by because you already made your offering direct.

You could just put some loose change in but then someone might notice and think you're a tightwad.

Let's face it, offering plates were first passed eons ago when people brought home their pay in cash in a little brown envelope and sat at the kitchen table dividing it up for rent, food, savings and regular payments. Some went into another little brown envelope that the church supplied in annual bundles for the offering.

Back in those days it all made sense but, to those who live in 2007 and pay for every bill by credit card or bank transfer and only carry enough cash for a parking spot or cup of coffee, a plate for cash seems a pretty lame way to finance a church.

It's like the story of the Abbot's cat which would run around disturbing the evening devotions. The monks complained so the Abbot tied the cat in the corner of the hall during devotions so it would not cause a disturbance.

Several years later the abbot died, but the monks continued to tie the cat in the corner.

Eventually the monks changed and in time the cat died.

The new monks were not sure why there was a cat inside the hall during devotions but they bought a new cat anyway and continued to tie it in the corner.

While bringing an envelope of cash to place in the offering each Sunday may have been an appropriate, liturgical act of worship in a bygone age, in the day of plastic cards and a cashless economy it's just a bit like tying a cat in the corner.

Bruce Mullan

Sign of the Times



Glasshouse Country Uniting Church has this new sign placed along Steve Irwin Way (formerly Glasshouse Mountains Road). The Church Council voted unanimously to promote local events in Beerwah such as the Orchid Show, Charity Sports, Dog Shows and Australia Zoo (above) at no cost to build pro-active links in the Community.

Photo by Chris Bell

Send your Sign of the Times to journey@ucaqld.com.au.

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Jesus loves Osama?

By Bruce Mullan

UNITING CHURCHES are among a number of congregations around Australia which have displayed the controversial Outreach Media poster with the words, "Jesus loves Osama."

The notion that the Son of God would demonstrate affection for the world's most wanted man, and that Christian churches might want to point out this gospel truth raised a storm in the Australian and international media.

Prime Minister John Howard criticised the poster saying that while he understood the motivation it was wrong.

"I hope they will understand that a lot of Australians, including many Australian Christians, will think that the prayer priority of the church on this occasion could have been elsewhere."

Malcolm Williams a representative from Outreach Media an organisation which provides posters for church billboards around Australia said that Prime Minister Howard's criticisms were uninformed.

"He needs to read his Bible," Williams said.

Williams noted that the sign also quotes Jesus from Matthew 5:44: "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

Queensland Uniting Church Vision for Mission Advocate Rev

Duncan Macleod said that looking at Jesus' track record we discover a tendency to search out people who had been rejected by their peers.

"In some cases he's befriended people who have been spurned because of their despicable actions. In other cases it's people who have been unfairly treated.

"What appears to be consistent is Jesus' capacity for undeserved mercy (grace) for 'sinners'."

A common interpretation of the word 'love' is centred on concepts of affection and fondness.

Mr Macleod said with that meaning inserted into the 'Jesus loves Osama' statement there is a distorted perception of Osama, Jesus and love.

"The kind of love consistently shown by Jesus is more about the capacity of our creator to engage with creation, with compassion, concern and call for renewal.

"This is the kind of love that sees beyond our perceived grievances and sees God's gift of humanity even in the lives of abusive men and women.

"Jesus forgave even those who treated him unfairly and brought about his death. "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." And yet God's love is not about blind tolerance of destructive attitudes or behaviour.

Outreach Media's next poster, will simply say, "Forgiveness: One size fits all."



South Rockhampton Uniting Church's great Australians, from left: Edith Plumb, Evan Hooper, June Edwards, Aurilea Augustine, Amanda Acutt, and Karen Soanes (Pat Fitzgerald absent). Photo by Lindsay Soanes

Prized Rocky citizens do it again

THE UNITING Church in South Rockhampton can once again lay claim to the Citizen of the Year honoured on Australia Day.

Over the past three years members of the Uniting Church in South Rockhampton have dominated the Australia Day Awards.

In 2005 Aurilea Augustine was Rockhampton's Citizen of the Year. 2006 was a particularly big year with Evan Hooper awarded

Rockhampton City Citizen of the Year, Karen Soanes awarded Rockhampton City Young Citizen of the Year, Pat Fitzgerald the Fitzroy Shire Citizen of the Year and Amanda Acutt named the Fitzroy Shire Young Citizen of the Year.

Uniting Church members have been rewarded for the work once again with June Edwards named the 2007 Rockhampton City Citizen of the Year and Edith Plumb receiving a Community Service award.

The awards reflect the significant contribution many Uniting Church members make to their local communities.

South Rockhampton Uniting minister Rev Glenn Ingram said these people had done a variety of work both within the church and community.

"They have all been involved in significant fields of care which have given them the opportunity to exercise a special ministry," he said.

"God gives each of us special gifts. These people have found a use for their giftedness in helping others in the body of Christ, but also reaching out to those outside the body of Christ.

"None of them are extroverts; they are all just normal, caring, beautiful people."

By Mardi Lumsden

Uniting members included in Australia Day 2007 honours list

By Bruce Mullan

A NUMBER of Uniting Church members were among the 577 recipients in the 2007 Australia Day Honours list announced by the Chancellor of the Order of Australia Governor-General, Major General Michael Jeffery.

Awards in the honours system represent the highest level of recognition for attainment of outstanding achievement and service in the Australian community.

Among the Queensland recipients of the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) were:

Mrs Betty Born of Robina for service to people with intellectual disabilities through the Uniting Church's Crossroads program, and to the community. As the wife of a Minister of the Uniting Church in Australia Rev Dr Lewis Born, Mrs Born has supported and assisted many people, within both the church congregation and the wider community, for over 50 years.

Mrs Laurel Asimus of Buderim for service to the community of the Maroochy Shire through church, service, welfare and aged care groups. A Uniting Church elder for 25 years Mrs Asimus has also been a volunteer Telephone



Mrs Betty Born OAM

Counsellor with Lifeline Sunshine Coast and Lifeline Board Member for 8 years.

Mrs Edna Wright of Yungaburra for service to the community of the Atherton Tablelands through a range of musical, performing arts and church organisations. Mrs Wright is a former elder and organist at Atherton Uniting Church.

Chairman of the Council of the Order Sir James Gobbo said, "All Australians are encouraged to nominate their fellow citizens who have made outstanding contributions to the well-being of others and who they think are deserving of national recognition in the Honours List."

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Wycliffe and Reuben educate everyone on HIV

By **Mardi Lumsden**

REUBEN MORGAN, Australian singer, songwriter and music pastor at Hillsong Church in Sydney, has just released his second album, titled *Everyone*.

Morgan is not resting though; rather he and wife Sarah are working with Wycliffe Bible Translators in Papua New Guinea on a project to help educate people on HIV/AIDS prevention measures.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Papua New Guinea have been infected with the HIV/AIDS virus, an epidemic to rival Africa's AIDS crisis.

"We've started to realise there is a huge, huge need in the area of HIV/AIDS," explains Sarah.

"If people aren't taught about it, if somebody doesn't do something about it, the population could be halved in the next 10 to 15 years because of the HIV/AIDS problem.

"AIDS is such a shameful disease over there. People just go to the morgues and drop off dead bodies. So the morgues are overflowing with bodies of people who have died of AIDS."

Ms Morgan said the Wycliffe literacy centre based in Rabaul, will help train teachers so that they can teach people in their own language in their home villages.

"We see this Wycliffe project as a huge answer to that problem. It's



Australian singer, songwriter Reuben Morgan

teaching people to read and write in their own language. You can get a message out there at a high level with lots of advertising, but people actually need it in their own language.

"People need to understand HIV/AIDS prevention at a grassroots level. What Wycliffe do

well is connect with people at the grassroots level."

Having grown up in PNG, the future of the country is close to Reuben's heart.

"I went to a United Church in PNG," he recalls. "They would belt out those hymns. I remember baptism services down by the sea.

They would all wear white.

"Whenever I hear old hymns like 'There's Power in the Blood', I still hear our church singing."

Included in Reuben's song writing credits are praise songs 'Lord I Give You My Heart' and 'My Redeemer Lives'. His new album was released in October and



To celebrate the release of Reuben Morgan's new album, *Journey* has five copies of *Everyone* to give away.

To win you need to email, post or text your name and address to:

journey@ucaqld.com.au

Journey GPO Box 674
Brisbane Queensland 4001
or text mobile phone
0407 702 344.

Two cds are available for email entries, two for postal entries and one for text entries.

Good luck and happy listening!

features a mix of reflective and high energy worship songs.

"*Everyone* is about every Christian, every believer, every person, getting involved and getting a heart for the mission of Christianity – the mission of Christ," he said.

"It's about us really putting legs on what we believe. We don't just sing songs and get involved in God's presence and then not become part of the answer.

"Everyone should be involved."

Passion for walking globally

WHEN LAURA Moore of Deception Bay Uniting Church signed up for a Global Walking program she knew she wasn't going on a Christian Contiki tour.

Ms Moore participated in a Short Term Exposure Trip to Manila for three weeks just after Christmas last year.

Global Walking is a program designed to be a transforming experience for the traveller.

It makes no attempt at pretending to be a holiday tour.

It aims "to provoke and empower" travellers to commit to long-term missional activity.

As the brochure states, "Our desire is to open the minds and hearts of the traveller, by exposing them to the joys and struggles of the Uniting Church's partner churches in the Asia Pacific region."

And it certainly did that for Ms Moore.

"I saw the words of God in a whole new light while in the Philippines. When the Bible tells us that we must lose our life to save it, in the Philippines, that passage is literal," she said.

"People fight for justice and get falsely imprisoned, tortured or murdered for their trouble. We visited a small church in the island of Palawan – small, because most of the congregation fled when their Pastor was assassinated a year earlier. He was murdered in a drive-by shooting because he was active in the fight for land and human rights, which are constantly abused by the government.

"At this church, we met his widow and his five children. They were the most amazing, alive, faithful, active people I'd ever met.

"They weathered the tragedy of losing their father, clung firm to the promises of Jesus and bravely trod paths of advocacy that their father had walked."

Team leader and youth worker at Centenary Uniting Church,



Global Walking Team leader and youth worker at Centenary Uniting Church, Jason Bray.
Photo by Osker Lau

Jason Bray told *The Transit Lounge* (www.thetransitlounge.com.au) that overseas travel allowed him to gain an appreciation of how the majority of the world's population lives.

He said as a team leader he had hoped the trip would open the eyes and hearts of the group to the struggles of Christians abroad.

"We hoped that by going, we'd see some sort of reaction from those who went, to get them to engage in some sort of mission in response to what they had seen, whether that be overseas or in their own backyard.

"So many young Aussies are hot-footing it over to London for a year, but that represents how the minority of the world's population lives – we really need to see how the majority of people live to get a real worldview.

"We in the west live in a bubble of ignorance; when we choose only to explore those [western] places we perpetuate that bubble."

The trip certainly adjusted Ms Moore's worldview. She began to understand the Bible differently as a result.

"As poor as they are (because abject poverty is rife), they are rich in hope – they have Jesus. I realised when the Bible says 'Blessed are the poor . . . woe to the wealthy', that we are the wealthy."

By **Mardi Lumsden**



Australia Day celebrations at Burnett Heads. Photo by Matt Gees

Burnett Heads proves to be true blue

THE 2007 Burnett Shire Council Australia Day Celebrations were held overlooking the ocean at Burnett Heads near Bundaberg so the Burnett Heads Uniting Church got behind the celebrations and showed their patriotism by selling home made biscuits with a cup of tea or coffee.

Pictured here ready to serve were (from Left) Phyllis Black, Laurel Waldren and Gwen Brown, a small representation of the many volunteers that helped make the day a success.

Journey's Wide Bay reporter Matt Gees said it was a great way for the church to be more visible out in the community and a fantastic opportunity for fellowship at the same time.

The Burnett Heads story was one of many wonderful Uniting Church Australia Day events connecting congregations with their local communities.

Intern confronted by ministry to Bali nine

EATING CHRISTMAS lunch with Australian prisoners in Bali was typical of the challenging experiences Uniting Church Deacon Intern Tanya Richards encountered during her recent five and half months of volunteer work with Bali Protestant Church.

"As we sat together and ate food that reminded us of home, true emotions came out as we once again realised where we were and what that meant for some of the people in that room," Ms Richards said.

Prison ministry was not an involvement Ms Richards had expected when she headed for Bali but it became one of her major focuses.

After attending a daily Indonesian church service in Kerobokan Prison, Ms Richards noticed Australian prisoners sitting in the service but not understanding the language.

She approached the prisoners, including those known as the Bali Nine about doing a Bible study.

"They all jumped at the chance," she said.

"I spent two days a week in the Prison leading a Bible study, visiting and pastorally caring for both Indonesian and Australian prisoners.

"It was in this experience that I saw the power of God really working in the lives of people who

were and still are experiencing things beyond my belief."

During Ms Richards' time working in Kerobokan Prison, the sentences of four of the Bali Nine were changed from 20 years to death.

"It was an unexpected ministry. I had only been there three or four weeks and all of a sudden I was talking to these guys about the fact that they had just got the death penalty. So from the very start I was responding with a response of 'I can see that you are really hurting

"[Schapelle Corby] has been abused by people in the media posing as Christians to get access to her"

and I am at least someone who can speak English fluently'.

"A couple of them are from Brisbane so we could talk about the Brisbane River or Riverfire, things that they remember but can't experience anymore.

"I was very aware of not talking about their sentences or their crimes and just treating them as individuals. And certainly at times, particularly in September when the death sentences came, that became the topic of conversation but that was more one-on-one. But it did come up at times in the Bible study."

Ms Richards said the Indonesian Government provides only one meal of cold rice, meat and vegetables each day to prisoners and the prison grounds are continually infested with animals of all descriptions.

"The prison was built for 300 people but it currently holds 800. Each cell has about 15 people in it and there is only room to lie down right beside the other people. If you need to walk during the night you would have to walk on people.

"Abuse of all kinds takes place on a regular basis, and fights are a common sight – not just yelling but physical fights ending with major injuries."

Ms Richards told *Journey* how corruption is a common occurrence as guards encourage bribes in return for simple things like fresh water.

"These bribes also go as high as buying drugs for prisoners and sexual favours."

There are currently ten Australians in Kerobokan Prison, six of them on death row.

"For the Indonesians, the Bali Nine and Schapelle Corby are almost a money making scheme. There are so many people trying to bribe their way in to get access to them, but then there are also visitors that come from everywhere."

Speaking of Kerobokan's most famous prisoner, Ms Richards said Schapelle Corby was very weary of visitors trying to get access to her.

"She is very private. She has been abused a lot by people in the media posing as Christians to get access to her and get photos and get their story."

The Bible studies that Ms Richards lead in the prison were always full of surprises and often confronting.

"A girlfriend showed the depth of her love for her boyfriend by performing oral sex in the visiting yard while I lead a discussion about the Kingdom of God and how do we find God in our lives.

"This was followed the next week by someone getting bashed while I lead a discussion about how do we love our neighbour?"



Deacon Intern Tanya Richards spent five months in Bali ministering to prisoners, including the Bali Nine. Photo by Osker Lau

In addition to learning to deal with almost anything while leading a Bible study Ms Richards found the one-to-one conversations with prisoners the most rewarding.

"I spent many hours talking with many people about how to hold to God, in moments when nothing made sense.

"A lot of them are still struggling to find that Christ and understand the depth of love.

"They are on a roller coaster twenty four hours a day. They see things in the prison that challenge their faith and understanding of God every second.

"Then at other times they witness amazing stuff like when people share their resources."

After such a powerful trip, Ms Richards has found coming back to day-to-day life in Brisbane difficult

but has remained in contact with members of the Bali Nine via text messaging.

"I have a heart for them. I've met them, I've spoken to them, and I've seen them as real people with real emotions so it is hard to walk away.

"It was Andrew Chan's birthday two days ago so I was able to send him a text message.

"At the end of the day, I am a servant of God and it is up to God where I end up.

"At the time I saw myself just as an Australian there to talk to them and then realised that I had some training that could help these guys. Then I discovered that these guys are really hungry to hear about God, so that is where the journey really started."

By Bruce Mullan and
Mardi Lumsden



The first Wynnum Blue Nurse Sister Wilma Kleindienst with the Morris car. Photo courtesy of Blue Care

It all started with a Morris Minor

BLUE CARE Wynnum is celebrating 50 years of service, and Community Care Manager Noela Sorensen said the service is extremely excited about celebrating the milestone.

"Our service has, in some way, touched the lives of nearly every person who has lived in the Wynnum-Manly area," she said.

The Wynnum service began through the vision of Reverend Ralph Heaton.

He was inspired by the Christian message of care and compassion to reach out to people in the community who were sick, unsupported and vulnerable.

In September 1956 he organised a train tour to North Queensland, which raised enough money for the church to buy a Morris Minor car.

It was Sister Wilma Kleindienst who drove the Morris car to see the first client on February 18, 1957 – a Mrs Hoare who lived in Bay Terrace, Wynnum.

Sister Kleindienst's base of operation was the home of Mr and Mrs E Lewis at 112 Glenora St, Wynnum.

"The service has grown from very humble beginnings," Ms Sorensen said.

"It was the willingness of ordinary people, taking small but significant steps that made possible the Blue Care Wynnum we have today."



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The ordinands in 1957 (from left) Rev Reg Hirche, Rev Alan Hartshorn, Rev Doug Mitchell, Rev Graham Ross, Rev Paul Trigge and Rev Colin Baxter

Fifty faithful years

FOUR UNITING Church ministers this month celebrate 50 years since their ordination.

Six ministers were ordained together at Albert St Methodist Church in March 1957.

The four surviving ministers Rev Doug Mitchell, Rev Paul Trigge, Rev Graham Ross, and Rev Colin Baxter will celebrate with their wives and the wife of Rev Reg Hirche at Albert St Uniting Church in Brisbane City on 11 March.

Rev Reg Hirche died in 1976 and Rev Alan Hartshorn in 1980.

The combined ministry of the six has been a blessing to the Uniting Church with service in Queensland, other states and abroad as well as two chaplaincy commissions for more than 20 years in the Australian Defence Force.

Fifty years flashback

What was happening in Australia in 1957 when these men were ordained?

- The Australian Prime Minister was Robert Menzies
- The Governor General was William Slim
- Australian National Airways (ANA) merged with Ansett to form Ansett-ANA
- Slim Dusty won his first gold record for *A Pub With No Beer*
- Architect Jørn Utzon won the design competition for the Sydney Opera House
- Bob Dyer's quiz show *Pick a Box* began on television.
- The first commercial cotton was planted in the St George area.
- The National Aboriginal Day of Observance Committee (NAIDOC) was formed.

The Uniting Church in Australia Northern Synod



GENERAL SECRETARY

Applications are invited from a member of the Uniting Church, either ordained or lay, to fulfill this senior executive position within the Synod commencing January 2008.

The Northern Synod General Secretary position offers exciting challenges of distance, remoteness, cultural diversity and extensive interaction with Aboriginal people.

The Synod is seeking a person who is able to provide leadership to the Church's operations and provide sensitive support to two diverse Presbyteries: Northern Regional Council of Congress and Pilgrim Presbytery of Northern Australia.

An important part of the role will be to communicate the needs and work of the Northern Synod to the wider Church. The successful applicant will

- be committed to and have an understanding of the mission and ethos of the Uniting Church
- have an affinity with and understanding of Aboriginal people
- have a thorough knowledge of the Uniting Church and the polity of the Church including governance, regulations and procedures
- have experience in administration with a knowledge of finance and property matters.

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

Applications will close Tuesday 10th April 2007

Bequests: helping God's work

ONE WAY to continue contributing to God's work is to leave a bequest in your will.

Each year many Uniting Church members leave a portion of their estate to charities and church organisations.

One such organisation is the UC Foundation and manager Ken Edwards calls this "enduring stewardship".

People leave bequests for many reasons.

For some it is an opportunity to assist God's work in a monetary way that they were unable to do while alive.

For others, it is a continuation of the financial blessings given to them during their lifetime.

But you don't have to wait until you die to give a bequest.

Journey spoke with one retired couple who have set up a UC Foundation fund, in the family's name, to be used straight away for the benefit of God's work.

"We didn't feel that there was any point in just accumulating



Photo courtesy of Jennifer Marr

assets. It would be better if our surplus could be put to good use," said the benefactor.

After discussing the proposal with their family, the decision was made to go ahead with the fund.

"Previously we had in our will to make a contribution to the church organisations. In our present situation we are comfortably off in retirement and our income was considerably exceeding our requirements.

"We thought rather than wait until we pass on for the organisations to benefit, we would

establish a fund so that they could benefit while we were still alive and it would carry on after we do pass on.

"We were making some annual donations but we felt we could do more by establishing a fund and have the income from the fund used for particular causes that we have an affinity with - Blue Care, Lifeline and Frontier Services."

There are many ways to assist in the work of the church, be it financially or in another way and all assistance is appreciated.

By Mardi Lumsden

Who goes to church?

IF YOU are female, over forty years of age, with a university degree, in your first marriage and either working or retired then you are the model of a church attendee in Australia according to a National Church Life Survey.

61% of people attending Christian churches across Australia are women, a percentage partly related to the older age profile of the churches compared to the wider Australian community.

The Uniting Church had the lowest percentage of people between the ages of 15 and 29 with 8% compared to the Pentecostal church's 30%.

75% of all church attendees were born in Australia and 62% are in their first marriage, however, significantly higher levels of separated or divorced attenders are found in the Salvation Army and Pentecostal denominations.

Around half of all church attendees are employed and 30% are retired.

23% of attendees have university degrees, compared to 13% of all Australians over 15 years of age.

Anglican and Baptist churches had the highest levels of university-educated attendees.



Where would Jesus invest?

By Bruce Mullan

AS THE Uniting Church handles more complex portfolios of financial resources, applying biblical and social justice principles about where to invest money has become an increasingly important issue.

Churches which have long traditions about issues such as gambling and alcohol are understandably nervous when it comes to seeing their money invested in share portfolios which include breweries and companies managing or producing gaming facilities.

The Queensland Synod first set down an ethical investment policy in 1982 and this was revised and expanded by the Council of Synod in 1996.

As well as concern for issues of the physical and emotional health of people the policy asks that the church avoid investing in companies that create or perpetuate excessive reliance on militarism or manufacturing armaments or weapons of mass destruction.

The policy states that investment decisions should also take into consideration any serious inhibition of human rights in Australia or overseas that might exploit underprivileged people by providing wages or working conditions which are significantly below the accepted norms in the society in which they work.

Ethical investment issues are key considerations for the Uniting Church Investment Service (U.C.I.S.) and Uniting Church Superannuation.

Uniting Church Superannuation General Manager Neil Kent said that an option for allocating superannuation to ethical investment is now available to the 12,000 clients who hold their superannuation funds with the Uniting Church.

Mr Kent said that the ethical investment fund used by UC Superannuation will not invest in companies which mine uranium for weapons manufacture, produce alcohol or tobacco, manufacture weapons and armaments or have been subject to human rights or environmental prosecutions.

He said it looks to invest in companies which focus on renewable energy, eco-tourism and sustainable agricultural products.

Of particular interest in the current climate are the environmental issues covered by the Queensland Synod's Ethical Investment Guidelines.

The Guidelines reject investment in areas that do not comply with acceptable international minimum standards for pollution control or involve substantial change to the environment which will not be made good at the conclusion of the activity.

It also rejects investment which is dependent upon the destruction or wastage of non-renewable resources for which viable alternatives exist.

Member of St Andrews Uniting Church Yeppoon and enthusiastic environmentalist Mr Arthur Hunt sees ethical investment as a big part of his personal eco-responsibility.

"There is little point in being environmentally and socially responsible at home if we support companies that do the opposite on a bigger scale," said Mr Hunt who distributes an electronic newsletter *Sustainable Housing in CQ* (Central Queensland).

"Some financial commentators



Uniting Church Superannuation General Manager Neil Kent. Photograph by Osker Lau

are still sceptical about socially responsible investment of superannuation and other funds, but our experience is that it has proven to be a rewarding option, both financially and ethically."

The Victoria/Tasmania Synod's Funds Management captured national media attention when it sold its BHP Billiton shares after its takeover of uranium miner WMC in 2005 and, in a submission to a parliamentary inquiry into uranium resources, that Synod argued that any economic benefits

gained through increased uranium mining were outweighed by moral concerns about nuclear technology.

While ethical investment has been on the church's agenda for the past 25 years, it seems agencies of the Uniting Church will increasingly take into account unacceptable levels of social injury or environmental damage when making decisions about where the church's money is invested.

To read more about Uniting Church Superannuation visit www.ucsuper.com.au

300 years of hymns

In December the tercentenary of Charles Wesley's birth will be celebrated in a series of events around the world.

To millions of Christians worldwide Wesley will be remembered with his elder brother, John, as co-founder, of the Methodist movement.

Estimates vary but Charles wrote between 7,000 and 10,000 hymns - one every couple of days throughout his adult life

To the wellsprings...

Ecumenical meditative prayer during Lent using the songs and prayers of the Taizé community.

5.30pm Sundays during Lent.
All welcome

St. Philip's Anglican Church,
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tel. 3391 3915.

NURSES

Translate your faith into action serving the people of the Top End

Frontier Services is the major provider of aged and community care across Australia's remote Top End. For more than 90 years we have been serving the people of the Outback with a growing range of residential and in-home care in regional centres and beyond.

We need **Registered and Enrolled Nurses** who can combine professional skills with the flexibility, commitment, cross-cultural understanding and humour that working in the Outback demands. Various full-time and relief positions are available in the Kimberley region of WA and the Northern Territory.

In return, Frontier Services - which has a reputation as an employer of choice - can offer a working environment that is supportive, professional and fun, with flexible conditions and salary arrangements. There are also the many intangible rewards of working in this unique part of Australia and bringing much-needed services to remote communities.

To find out more about this special opportunity, call Greta Howard on (02) 8270 1344.



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Growing generosity is more than a program

By Bruce Mullan

SYDNEY BASED Church Consultant Carolyn Kitto says that resourcing the mission of the church is like the story of a young bride who always cut the roast leg in half before she put it in the oven.

When her husband asked her why she did this – she said because her mother had. Curious, she phoned her mother to ask why she had done it and discovered that she did because her mother had.

Further research revealed that Granny’s oven had been too small to fit a roast without cutting it in half.

Church treasures treasurers

By Mardi Lumsden

BEING A church treasurer can be a daunting task, but in almost every congregation there is someone who commits to organising the Church’s money on a day to day basis.

Chief Financial Officer for the Queensland Synod Mr Jim Barry said that being treasurer of a congregation was often seen as a thankless task but was incredibly important and greatly appreciated.

“They give a lot of time for the good of the church doing a difficult job that no one else wants,” he said.

In other synods local church treasurers also look after the minister’s stipend, but thanks to Queensland’s central banking system, church treasurers here don’t have to worry about that.

Basically the job of the treasurer is the responsibility for all of the financial operations of the congregation.

As part of a finance committee in his local congregation, as well as being Director of Financial and Property Services within the Queensland Synod, Bruce Binnie knows the challenges local church treasurers face.

“The challenges are about how

When it comes to raising money for the church Ms Kitto said we often ask people for money, using motivations and methods which Granny and Gramps used.

“I never planned to know anything about church finances. I worked on the theory that if a church was being effective in its mission then the money would sort itself.

“While the theory is actually correct, what I hadn’t taken into account was that the church was still using methods for inviting people to give which had worked 50 years ago.”

Ms Kitto said congregations that have difficulty raising money usually focus on the methods they use, either the ones they have used for years, the latest fashion of the moment or the easiest to find on the internet.

“They take a program approach rather than a process approach.

“Inviting and growing giving is about having a focus on mission and about growing people in their generosity. The method is secondary.”

Ms Kitto claims a culture of generosity can be grown in a church in a number of ways and focuses on

two points for giving invitations.

“First is a focus on mission. Too often ‘stewardship’ is done as a response to financial difficulties and the message is, ‘Give a little more so we can keep going a little longer.’

“Our purpose as the church is not just to keep going but to play our part in God’s mission to the world shown to us through Jesus.

“Second, is to invite people to be generous as a response to God’s generosity to us.

“Too often churches have a culture of scarcity which both denies God’s generosity and ignores the enormous mission we have.”



Carolyn Kitto works with Spirited Consulting which offers giving invitations for congregations based on mission and ministry directions with a focus on growing a culture of generosity. For further information email carolyn.kitto@spirited.net.au



the congregation deals with lots of accounts,” he said.

“The other challenge is just balancing the books. People always want to spend more money than there is available. That is no different to being a treasurer anywhere. BHP has the same problem I suspect. But it is a reality particularly in terms of people who have a high missional

vision for what the church should be doing.

“The other practical challenge for treasurers these days is about compliance and the increased complexity with things like GST. Every treasurer has to do a quarterly BAS statement.”

As a result it is getting harder to

find people willing and able enough to be church treasurers.

“As congregations are getting smaller, costs are going up and just balancing the books is becoming harder and harder. A lot of treasurers take that personally, they see it as their responsibility. Sometimes they don’t like telling the congregation

about bad news so they will grapple with it internally. But it is not the individual’s problem, the whole congregation has got to own it.”

Mr Binnie said the aim for some treasurers is to find a financial strategy for the church that fits in with a missional plan.

There are hopes in the future that, as an extension of the service, the Synod would be looking towards developing a web based arrangement.

From Page 1

Mr Peake believes that while other churches offer tithing as a formula it’s a very personal thing.

“The Uniting Church has tended to take a stand-off approach in terms of dictating to people how they should respond personally.”

Moreton Rivers Presbytery Minister Rev Murray Fysh said that it can be unhelpful to apply percentage formulas and tithing too rigorously without taking personal situations into account.

“Sometimes it’s too much and sometimes it’s not enough,” he said.

Mr Fysh said deciding how much to give needed to be more intentional than just how much cash you have in your pocket when the plate comes around on Sunday morning and pointed to a second key question – deciding how to give.

A keen advocate for direct giving through bank transfer, he pointed to the higher than average contribution of almost \$200 per month that occurred when people used direct

giving rather than putting cash in the weekly collection of offerings.

Michael Ballenger, treasurer of Pacific Parks, one of Queensland’s smallest congregations, said that his congregation took no open plate offerings at all and that all offerings to the annual budget came through members contributing by GivingDirect, a program run by the Uniting Church Investment Service (U.C.I.S.).

While some point back to the planned giving programs which were popular in the 1900s, new

language for describing how churches approach the giving issue has emerged.

Sydney based Church giving consultant Carolyn Kitto uses the term “growing generous givers” to describe an holistic approach to what was once called “stewardship”.

Mrs Kitto said that too often churches have a culture of scarcity which both denies God’s generosity and ignores the enormous mission they have.

Mr Peake said it is really about how well the congregation can

Carolyn Kitto’s tips for growing generous givers

Invite people to respond in a giving invitation.

Acknowledge people’s current generosity by allowing them to validate their generosity through responding to a giving invitation. The more people respond the greater the sense of generosity in the church.

Invite members and participants in the church to be a part of a grassroots planning process to shape the mission objectives of the church. Not only will more people volunteer to be part of achieving the goals. They will also want to support them financially.

Shape the church’s budget around the mission plan instead of expenses. This helps people understand the budget and see how their giving makes a difference in people’s lives rather than just paying the bills.

Grow a range of giving opportunities both for the mission of the church and for the wider church, community and world. Christianity is a give away faith, when we live with those attitudes both our generosity and our resources will grow.

People are made in the image of God, who is generous and they want to respond generously to make a difference.

Provide immediate expressions of thanks and intentionally follow-up to give people a second chance to respond.



Uniting Church Investment Service Senior Manager Stephen Peake is a GivingDirect enthusiast. Photo by Osker Lau

Karana Downs: a giving congregation

By Bruce Mullan

RESPONDING TO the more traditional approaches to stewardship Rev David Baker from Karana Downs says they are just trying to be simple, open and honest.

“One of my concerns is that stewardship is just about how to get money out of people and it comes down to mechanisms and stuff.

“I’ve got this idea that people are so smart about that all you can do is say this is what we intend to be on about next year, this is what we will need and we’d like you to journey with us.

Chair of Karana Downs congregation Mr David Chilton said that Karana Downs conducts a stewardship campaign every year.

“We know that our giving at Karana Downs is well above average for the Uniting Church,” Mr Chilton said.

Mr Baker said, “We’ve come out of a real suspicion of marketing and program stewardship stuff and when we’ve been pushed in that direction we’ve always tried to nuance it a bit.

“For a couple of years we were dropping behind budget and one church council member said ‘you’ve got to do something about this’ and we were going, ‘Oh we don’t really want to do this we hate asking people for money.’

“But he prodded us to be honest and say it. So we did and people responded.”

Mr Chilton, an engineer who describes himself as “one of those people who hates writing essays” is the one who presents the message to the congregation.

“The stewardship campaign has been my baby... I think it’s important that a lay person talks to



Karana Downs Minister Rev David Baker sees stewardship as part of the congregation’s life. Photo by Osker Lau

the congregation otherwise it just looks like Dave is singing for his supper.

“The church needs to get away from the ordained ministers having to do that.”

Mr Baker said David Chilton hated doing it. He is an introverted

kind of guy but he saw he should do it because he had the respect of the congregation.

“He believed in what he was doing and the values consistency was there which liberated him to be quite open.”

Mr Chilton said he repeats the

same message every Sunday for three weeks.

“The reason we do that is because even regular attendees only turn up 1 in 3 and to make sure we hit 90% of our attendees we do the same thing three weeks in a row.

“To be honest I get quite self conscious by the third time. We haven’t done it because I’ve enjoyed it, but because we believe it’s the right thing to do.”

Mr Chilton said people are given a second invitation if they don’t respond the first time, a job that also fell to him.

“We got a response from about 30 to 40% of those we asked a second time and some very definite “NOs” too. I can live with a “no”. People really want to tell me why they don’t give.”

After that, they stop asking. “If we can get people to make a commitment and they stick to that commitment we don’t keep hounding them week after week for more and more things,” Mr Chilton said.

He also spoke of a constant need to inform people where the giving is at and thank them for their contributions. “We’re good at that at Karana Downs.”

Mr Baker agrees. “Affirmation is about keeping a loop of communication going all the time – this is how it’s going.”

After talking with the leadership at Karana Downs *Journey* came away with the impression that stewardship is very much woven through the ethos of the congregation.

As Mr Baker said, “Working away at it bit-by-bit over years has meant that it’s part of our life and part of who we are, it’s not a big issue.”

GivingDirect transfers the benefit straight to congregations

IN A CHANGING financial climate most people carry plastic cards rather than cash in their purses and wallets and many now make regular household payments by direct bank transfer.

In the “cashless” economy the church offering plate has been hit hard but now in a sign of the changing times for churches Uniting Church Investment Service (U.C.I.S.) Senior Manager Stephen Peake reports that over one thousand Queensland Uniting Church members are making their offerings to the work of local congregations by using GivingDirect.

With GivingDirect, a church member nominates an amount to be debited from their bank, building society or credit union at regular intervals (each week, fortnight, month or quarter) and the U.C.I.S. automatically transfers the nominated amount from their account to their congregation’s account.

“It costs no more than any other every day transaction through their account for the individual to use GivingDirect and there’s no need to worry about having cash on hand to take to church each week,” said U.C.I.S.

Marketing and Public Relations Officer Jane Moad.

U.C.I.S. General Manager Ian Hayes said in many cases using GivingDirect results in an increase in offerings because it’s a planned way of contributing rather than giving what’s left in the wallet.

“GivingDirect really appeals to young adults as a front end thing; as I pay my superannuation and insurance, I do my tithing,” said Mr Hayes.

Mr Peake reported that over \$2.3 million per year is given by Uniting Church Members to their congregations through GivingDirect.

Because it’s automated, GivingDirect also improves the regularity of giving during holiday periods or when people are away.

Ms Moad said that giving in this way helps congregations to budget more effectively as week to week fluctuations in offerings are minimised and regular amounts are received all year round.

“GivingDirect represents a tangible way for members to clarify, commit and prioritise their giving to the church.”

You cannot serve God and Mammon

By Scott Stephens

IN HIS review of Don DeLillo's highly acclaimed novel, *Underworld*, James Wood observed that "the book is so large, so ambitious, that it produces its own antibodies and makes criticism a small germ".

That same description could apply just as easily to capitalism. Every attempt to curb its voracious appetite, to 'humanize' its worldwide dominion, to place the economy back in the service of the greater good and thus temper its lust for unregulated growth, has not simply failed, but has been assimilated, folded back into the existing economic order and turned into yet another expression of capitalism itself.

Take, for example, the widespread use of 'anti-globalization' rhetoric by designer labels and marketing firms, or even the current wave of chic enviro-fundamentalism.

In both cases, there is a kind of coming together of opposites, where two trends which are logically opposed (like popular consumerism and radical conservatism) come to occupy the same space, and seemingly without contradiction.

So, the exemplary products of global capitalism are T-shirts made in Chinese sweatshops bearing the "World Without Strangers" motto.

An astounding instance of this absorption of a potential criticism of capitalism into the inert safety of pop culture can be found in the book version of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. Its back cover features an endorsement, not from Sir Nicholas Stern, nor even from Tim Flannery, but from none other than Leonardo Di Caprio!

I suppose there is a connection between Leo and big chunks of floating ice – but wasn't his problem that the ice hadn't melted?

Yes – capitalism, too, produces its own antibodies. And nothing is outside its grasp.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of global capitalism is to have made choice one of those inalienable human rights, to have ensnared the very notion of democracy within an indiscriminate right-to-excess.

This is an achievement that DeLillo grasped in a remarkable way. As he put it in *Underworld*:

A penny for your thoughts - money wisdom

Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can (John Wesley)

Whoever said money can't buy happiness simply didn't know where to go shopping. (Bo Derek)

Money often costs too much. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Don't tell me where your priorities are. Show me where you spend your money and I'll tell you what they are. (James W. Frick)

If you want to see what God thinks of money, just look at all the people he gave it to. (Dorothy Parker)

I don't care too much for money, for money can't buy me love. (The Beatles)

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life. (1 Timothy 6:17-19)

"Capital burns off the nuance in a culture. Foreign investment, global markets, corporate acquisitions, the flow of information through transnational media, the attenuating influence of money that's electronic and sex that's cyberspaced, the convergence of consumer desire – not that people want the same things, necessarily, but that they want the same range of choices."

Choice itself has thus become the true object of human longing, a longing that goes right down to our genes. The latest of Michael Bay's awful films, *The Island*, expresses this point particularly clearly. Lincoln Six Echo (Ewan McGregor) and Jordan Two Delta (Scarlett Johansen) are two survivors of an alleged nuclear holocaust, who now live, along with hundreds of others, in a sterile, asexual, infinitely regulated

environment – part fitness-centre, part preschool, part prison.

But a deep desire grows within these innocents, a spontaneous genetic mutation that craves the corrupting excesses of life (in the form of five strips of bacon at the beginning of the film, and the "lots and lots of sex" that causes Lincoln's liver failure at the end), leading them to break out of their

“God and Mammon are now in cahoots?”

prison and find their own 'garden of earthly delights' on the streets of Los Angeles. The terrifying, but all too actual vision we get in *The Island* is of capitalism that has gotten into our genes and colonised human nature itself.

Karl Marx was right: the vision of capitalism that embraces the entire globe, that can generate more money *ex nihilo* through the mysteries of financial derivatives and futures speculation, that can bring together polar opposites in apparent economic harmony – is, in the end, *theological*. Or, to put it another way, capitalism is Mammon.

So the question is, how can we take Jesus' statement – "You cannot serve God and Mammon" – seriously when God and Mammon are now in cahoots?

While some love to poke fun at Hillsong's slick corporate image and the ridiculous platitudes of

prosperity theology, the conspiring of God with Mammon is much older.

Max Weber's work *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, famously proposed that the capitalist disposition to earn and accumulate arose directly from the Puritan sense of calling which embraces all of life.

But now that the capitalist drive has shifted from thrift to choice, from prudence to experience, the way religion operates within capitalism has also changed.

Instead of a secularised motivation for work, the function of religion today more closely resembles those mediaeval rituals that provided sinners with the means whereby to atone for their sins.

We have our own thinly veiled forms of penance – like tithing, charitable donations, watching SBS – each of which makes us feel better about participating in decadent consumerism.

And not only that, these forms of penance *allow* us to participate by relieving any sense of guilt.

And so it is that capitalism and charity can cohabitate. The one lets you indulge, and the other lets you get away with it. The problem at the heart of the matter is that Christianity traditionally has geared itself to dealing with the guilty conscience of the West – how to escape from the consequences of our wrongdoing.

No wonder it has so readily been accommodated by capitalism as its ideal religious accessory.

And if one person can be blamed for consolidating this state of affairs, it is the flutulent bull of Wittenberg himself, Martin Luther.

For it was Luther who provided capitalism with its religious underpinning by means of the formula, *simul iustus et peccator* – by faith, the Christian is at once righteous and a sinner.

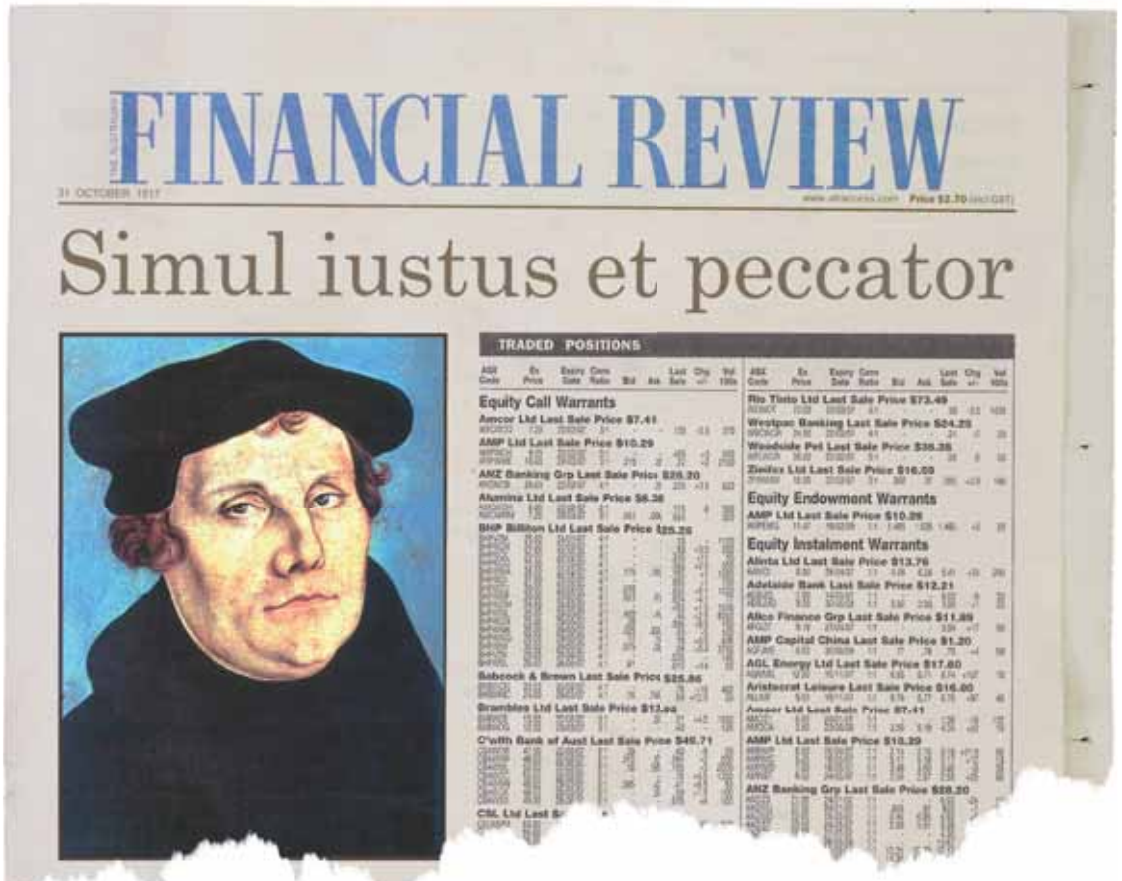
He thereby secured the place for a corrupt religion, whose ethics are invisible but whose guilt has been assuaged by some deeply held conviction (so deep, in fact, that it never surfaces) or meagre act of charity.

When Marx claimed that a critique of capitalism must begin with a critique of religion, wasn't he simply repeating Jesus' warning, "Beware of practising your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them"?

Such expressions of disingenuous charity – performed for one's own peace of mind and in the service of Mammon – are the oil in the capitalist machine.

Perhaps the best way of breaking today's alliance between God and Mammon, then, is to refuse ourselves the false comfort of token acts of charity and fashionable faith, so that we can see our behaviour for what it really is and dare to live differently.

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



Sun shines on UCAF celebration

THE UNITING Church Adult Fellowship national celebration will be held in Caloundra from 19-23 September, 2007.

The theme, 'Let the Son shine through', reflects the Queensland experience.

Keynote speaker and Bible study leader will be Theologian and author Dr Val Webb who is also an adjunct faculty member at Augsburg College, Minnesota, USA; Whitley College Melbourne and United Theological College Sydney.

Dr Webb's goal in her writing is to "make contemporary theology available to lay readers – bringing the academy to marketplace and pew, especially for those disenchanted with the traditional church."

Included in the costs is twin share accommodation, most meals, official fellowship dinner, a day trip to the Sunshine Coast Hinterland and a night of fellowship and fun with the locals.

The cost is \$465 for 5 days. Early bird registration closes on 30 April.

There is also the option to extend your stay with pre and post celebration tours available.

For more information contact Mr Barry Kerr on (07) 3385 9915 or email clankerr@primus.com.au.

By Mardi Lumsden



Vice president Angela Lester looks forward to the national celebration in September. Photo by Osker Lau



Bayside Watoto Building Project Coordinator Tim Griggs with a model of the proposed house. Photo by Andy Griggs

Uniting Church condemns unfair trial for Hicks

THE UNITING Church in Australia has condemned the Government's acceptance of the new draft charges against Guantanamo detainee David Hicks and expressed deep concern for his wellbeing and about the trial process.

Uniting Church President Rev Gregor Henderson said that the Australian Government must immediately act to ensure that David Hicks is afforded a fair trial.

"David Hicks has been locked up without being charged or tried for more than five years, and the conditions in which he is detained have been beyond cruel.

"Now the Australian Government is willing to let David Hicks be tried under a system that permits evidence gained through coercion. Both the Australian and US legal systems understand such evidence as unreliable at best and a gross abuse of human rights at worst," Mr Henderson said.

"We are also concerned that the Government believes that charges laid retrospectively are unacceptable in Australia but is comfortable and relaxed with Australians facing such a prospect overseas."



Uniting Church President Rev Gregor Henderson

Mr Henderson reiterated the Uniting Church's strong support for democracy and the human rights of all people.

"The Uniting Church believes that every human being is precious, and that it is a fundamental responsibility of the Australian Government to ensure that its citizens are treated with dignity and respect," said Mr Henderson.

At its 10th National Assembly in July 2003, the Uniting Church made a statement calling for David Hicks to be returned to Australia and tried under Australian or international law.

"We believe that the Australian

Government has a responsibility to advocate for a fair trial for all its citizens charged overseas regardless of the nature of allegations and charges. We do not condone terrorism and believe that terrorists should be brought to justice, but justice is not served when prisoners are abused and the right to a fair trial is removed.

"The rules of the new Military Commission do not meet basic democratic principles and international standards of justice. If we allow the quality of our democracies to be worn away in the face of terrorism then terrorism wins," said Mr Henderson.

Building more than a house

A TEAM of 28 Brisbane people will be travelling to an area just outside Uganda's capital city Kampala to build a house for eight AIDS orphaned children and their adoptive mother.

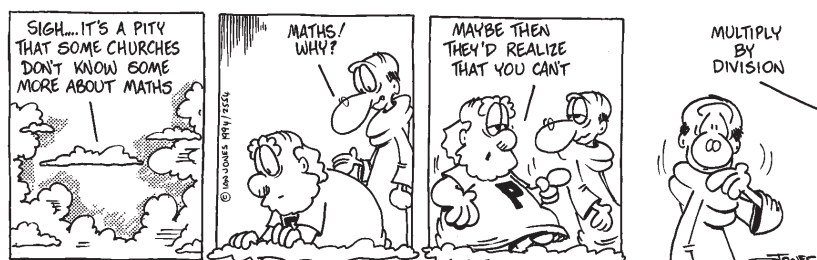
Project Co-ordinator and Bayside Uniting Church Youth Worker Tim Griggs said the vision is to pay for and build both a house and a school classroom.

"There are seven Churches represented within the team with ages ranging from 16 to 60 years of age," he said.

Mr Griggs has a passion not just for building a house but for building leaders who can organise future projects from within their own Church communities.

The group includes members from Bayside Uniting Church, Sunnybank Uniting Church, Emmanuel, Camp Hill Uniting Church, Bulimba Uniting Church and Capalaba Uniting Church.

For more about Bayside Watoto Building Project or to offer prayer or financial support contact Tim Griggs on ph 3890 2395 or email tim_griggs7@yahoo.com.



7.30PM SATURDAY 31ST MARCH
Conservatorium Theatre

Conductor: Richard Gill

Penelope Mills: Soprano
Tobias Cole: Counter-Tenor
James Egglestone: Tenor
Greg Massingham: Evangelist
Stephen Bennett: Christus & Bass Arias
and
Canticum Chamber Choir

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www.thequeenslandorchestra.com.au

WHAT'S ON

Wednesdays, 9.15-11.30am. Craft Experience, 1050 Waterworks Road, The Gap. Scrap booking, Appliqué, Handcrafted Teddy Bears, and BYO. Morning tea, a "God's Spot" reflection time and childminding for \$3 per child. Contact Janice Harris 3300 6293 or email thegapuc@inet.net.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 9, 7.30-9pm. Dangerous Stories - Forge National Summit at The Factory, Mitcham Baptist, Melbourne. Contact Duncan Macleod, Vision for Mission Advocate on 0439 828 718 or email duncanm@ucaqld.com.au.

March 14-16. Series of seminars in Brisbane given by Kathy Galloway, the first woman Warden of the Iona Community. For further information contact Christine Fensham, Convenor of the Brisbane group of Wellspring, on 3392 1246 or chrisfen@ibug.com.au.

March 21-22. National Youth Roundtable. A discussion of the implications arising from recent research into youth spirituality - The Spirit of Gen Y. Treacy Conference Centre, Parkville, Victoria. For more information contact Mark Hillis (02) 8267 4231 or email markh@nat.uca.org.au for registration pack.

March 24, 10am-12.30pm. Assembly of Confessing Congregations regional meeting at St David's Uniting Church, Coopers Plains. Guest speaker Rev Dr Max Champion. North Queensland meeting at Cairns Emmanuel Uniting Church on Sunday March 25 at 5pm. Contact Rev Ivan Kirk on 3323 3483 or ivankirk@bigpond.net.au.

March 25, 2pm. Marvellous Musical Celebration at Bayside Uniting Church Wondall Road Manly West. Featuring the Birrallee Blokes (ABC Classic FM Choir of the year), Mirusia (2006 recipient of Dame Joan Sutherland award) and Terzetto (acclaimed local artists). Adults \$20, Concession \$10. Proceeds to support Wynnum Manly Chaplaincy. Contact Madeleine Harasty on 3399 9925 or email harastyw@bigpond.com.

March 31, 6.30pm. Wesley Mission Brisbane's Centenary Dinner Dance at Brisbane City Hall. Dinner composed 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.

May 4-7. Round-About Arts & Crafts show at Bulimba Uniting Church. Contact Wendy on 3399 8657.

May 18-23. Queensland Synod meeting at Alexandra Park Conference Centre, Alexandra Headlands.

May 31-June 2. Working Group on Worship (Brisbane)

June 8-10. Fijian National Conference (Brisbane)

Want to promote an event?
Go to www.journeyonline.com.au and click on 'What's On'

Is there a heart for further union?

THE WORLD Council of Churches Assembly meeting at Porto Alegre in February 2006 issued a new statement on unity, *Called to Be the One Church*.

The sub-title of the four-page statement, *An invitation to the Churches to renew their commitment to the search for unity and to deepen their dialogue*, comes with particular poignancy to the Uniting Church in Australia as it moves towards the 30th anniversary of church union.

Former Uniting Church President and member of the Christian Unity Working Group Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood responded to the frequent question about whether the steam has gone out of the ecumenical movement.

"The answer could be 'yes' or 'no', depending on where you look for evidence," said Dr Wood.

On the positive side Dr Wood points to such things as local co-operation amongst congregations in many parts of the world; united efforts for justice and human development - especially where there are wars and natural disasters; growth of dialogue between denominations and confessions around the world; and agreements for inter-communion and sharing of ministries at national and regional levels.

"While some churches in the West are experiencing disillusionment with ecumenism, others, for example in the Orthodox family, are regaining their enthusiasm."

On the negative side Dr Wood believes that the high hopes for organic union, especially from the 1950s to the 1970s, have been only partially realised.

"The Roman Catholic Church



Former President Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood. Photo © Peter Williams / WCC

has re-affirmed its non-recognition of the ordained ministries and sacraments of other Churches.

"The Eastern Orthodox, similarly, have not moved far toward recognition of other traditions."

Dr Wood says that from a Uniting Church perspective dialogue with other churches is proving quite difficult.

"Interestingly, one of the most productive dialogues at present, involving the Uniting Church, is dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church."

"In this context, global and local, some voices are heard which say, 'The goal of organic union is so far off that it should be put on the back burner for a generation or so.'"

Proponents of this view say it would release resources to pursue other more urgent goals, such as local co-operation, relief efforts on behalf of the poor and victims of oppression, and addressing issues of justice locally, regionally and internationally.

Dr Wood said other voices insist that organic union or at least mutual recognition of members, ministries

and sacraments is so central to the whole purpose of ecumenism that it must remain a top priority.

He points to the *Called to Be the One Church* statement by the World Council of Churches as a sign that the search for unity is continuing.

The statement calls the churches to work together on short-term as well as long-term projects reaffirming such things as "one eucharistic fellowship" but also focussing on the needs of the world.

It also calls for a range of ecumenical strategies to be adopted such as: cooperative efforts to meet human need; affirmation of diversity as well as unity; open and honest dialogue; and mutual accountability.

The Uniting Church has already made its official response which can be found on the Christian Unity Working Group's website <http://assembly.uca.org.au/cunity>.

But Dr Wood says the Assembly's Christian Unity Working Group hopes that individuals and groups will continue to study and act on the statement.



Vital Signs. The wisdom of James for a life of faith
Bible Alive Series: Bridging Scripture and Daily Life.
Vol1.

By John Dickson and Simon Smart
 Aquila Press

RRP \$19.95



I've had an interest in John Dickson ever since I was a young youth worker and arranged a tour of his then band, *In the Silence* through my hometown. So it was with relish that I reviewed his latest book, *Vital Signs. The wisdom of James for a life of faith* which he co-authored with Simon Smart.

The book is the first in a series called *Bible Alive* aiming at "bridging Scripture and daily life".

Written in 28 bite-size, ten-minute chapters, it's a cross between a commentary and a daily devotion. This is a daily reading you can undertake on your own, in a study group or with a friend and takes you exegetically through the book of James and then into everyday life; I suppose taking seriously James 1:22!

The book is written in easy conversational style with 'stories, statistics, song lyrics, hypotheticals and real life drama'. It isn't afraid to delve into the historical and

exegetical issues of each reading, before going past the usual simplistic moralising and into a more reasoned and considered application of the sentiment of the text.

I found myself challenged and convicted by not so much the authors' words, but James' words, and I think the writers would have it no other way.

I must admit I also found myself wanting to go further and deeper after reading each chapter. They had only just whet my appetite although it is perhaps exactly what they are trying to achieve as each chapter ends with points to ponder by yourself, with a friend or in a group.

If you are looking for a book that gets beyond pious platitudes

by exegeting the biblical text and wrestling that into your own life (and James is your book of choice) this is a good book to grab.

Paul Clark is Minister of the Word in Burdekin

Something There

By David Hay
 Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd
 RRP \$49.95

You'll notice that the succinct title of David Hay's book *Something There* has neither a question mark or explanation point.

As the result of over 30 years research into the spiritual experiences of Britons who don't attend church, Hay neither questions nor aggressively champions the existence of the spiritual realm.

Rather his book offers a humble yet comprehensive justification for the reality of the Spirit as the most plausible explanation of a widespread human experience.

Drawing on the work of British zoologist Alister Hardy, Hay maintains that spirituality is not a social construct but a biological phenomenon. It helps us survive as a species.

Hay claims that it was their attention to spiritual awareness that gave our human forebears the capacity to cope with life's dangers and difficulties, and "subsequent random genetic mutations that enhanced this kind of awareness would be selected because they gave an advantage in the process of evolution."

Something There is a scholarly piece of work yet written in a very accessible style.

While relevant to philosophers, theologians and social scientists, readers don't need a professional academic background to find this book interesting and instructive.

Hay honestly considers alternate cultural and materialistic philosophical explanations for spirituality, particularly the positions of Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Thomas Hobbes.

He also critiques developments in psychology over the 20th century that have presented spiritual experiences as expressive of dysfunctional personality and

points out how recent developments in neurophysiology can detect changes in the brain's activity when the subject is engaged in deep meditation and prayer.

These changes can be shown to lead to an enhanced life coping capacity and a more holistic engagement with creation.

Something There contains several stories of significant spiritual experiences of people who don't see themselves as religious. Hay claims that 70% of people surveyed could cite experiences that caused them to know the certainty of the spiritual dimension.

Writing as a scientist who is also a Christian Hay calls the church and all religious institutions to the recovery of contemplative prayer to enrich the life of their communities and develop an enhanced awareness of the Spirit.

Graham Beattie is a mission consultant in the Queensland Synod



Ten Canoes
 AV Channel DVD
 Rated M

The narrator of *Ten Canoes*, actor David Gulpilil, says the film is "like a paradise story"—and it is; though a somewhat cheeky one.

Rolf De Heer, co-director Peter Djigirr and cinematographer Ian Jones show us a veritable Eden, filming in the Top End's Arafura Wetlands and among the Ramingining people who co-wrote the script and star as key players in this intriguing movie.

De Heer was inspired by a photograph shown to him by Ramingining-born David Gulpilil of ten Aboriginal people in ten canoes from the anthropologist David Thomson's 1936-37 expedition to Arnhem Land.

What resulted, thankfully, is no ethnological hagiography.

Instead, there's a story of goose hunting that the Ramingining people were keen to include, interwoven with a more dramatic, mythological tale of lust, jealousy, sorcery, kidnap, warriors, payback and fickle destiny.

Dayindi (Jamie Gulpilil) hankers after the youngest of his brother Minyngululu's (Peter

Minyngululu) three wives. Knowing this, Minyngululu enlightens Dayindi with the tale of Yeeralparil (also played by Jamie Gulpilil) who lived long, long ago.

The story blossoms like a tree with many branches and there are cautionary notes about being covetous, jealous, too easily drawn into warfare and impatient to get to the end of the story.

"A soft wind could change their destinies forever," we are assured.

The first Australian feature shot entirely in a number of indigenous languages, predominantly Ganalbingu, ambled a little slowly for my liking and I wasn't as fond as some reviewers of the crass (often body-oriented) jokes.

However, *Ten Canoes* shows the astonishing beauty of the Arafura area, the rich heritage and good natures of the Ramingining people and their trusting relationship with the boundary-pushing De Heer.

The Extras Disk affirms all this ten times over.

Grab a paddle. This wild goose chase yields some unusual bounty.

Marjorie Lewis-Jones is the editor of *Insights* the magazine of the Uniting Church in NSW

Let all Creation Sing
 Music CD
 EMU Music
 RRP \$27.95

Emu Music has put together another collection of new music, with a few older songs thrown in.

This is a professional collection of modern songs that could easily find their way into the repertoire of any 'contemporary' church.

The album has a particular focus on the person of Jesus, and the writers take their evangelical task seriously to write lyrics that are meaningful and biblically sound.

This does not stop their music also reaching the heart.

Also included are a couple of psalms sung in a contemporary fashion. Most of the songs were recorded live but the CD still has a studio feel.

Let all Creation Sing does not contain the sheet music, which is becoming common these days, but sheet music can be purchased from the EMU Music web site www.emumusic.com.au.

I really liked this album and like what EMU Music does. This is a strong, robust album that grows on you the more you listen.

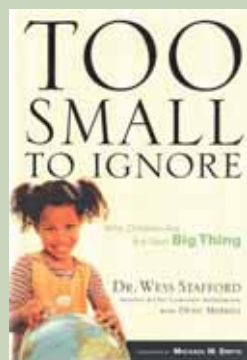
However it may not particularly stand out among the many other worship albums available.

Becky Clark sings and leads worship at the Burdekin Uniting Church



Too Small to Ignore - Why Children Are the Next Big Thing

By Wess Stafford, with Dean Merrill
 WaterBrook Press
 RRP \$23.95



Too Small to Ignore argues strongly for the importance of children, outlining the negative consequences of neglecting them and the benefits of carefully nurturing them.

Wess Stafford campaigns for children as integral members of church and community, aiming his book at the wider church, not just children's workers.

The book is heavily anecdotal, which the author acknowledges. Stafford basically describes his own childhood in the 1950's, contrasting an idyllic life with his missionary parents in a small African village with appalling experiences at a mission-run African boarding school, and later with his difficult transition back to the United States.

In addition, he offers endorsement from Scripture, supporting statistics and practical advice for nurturing children.

The large proportion of anecdotes makes *Too Small to Ignore* very easy to read. Stafford writes honestly, with great feeling and humour. At the same time, he is overly fond of metaphors and his style can be excessively dramatic. He uses dramatic licence when recounting Biblical examples in order to labour his point.

He also stresses the work of his own children's aid agency (Compassion International), though it is clear that he is passionately committed to child advocacy in general, not to promoting his particular organisation.

While he is inclined to overstate his case, he also disarmingly admits as much.

The book is generally well structured, with minimal technical language and straightforward statistics. Nonetheless, Australian readers will have to make allowances for the pointedly American references and practical advice (an allusion to the "Enchanted Tiki Room at Disneyland" was lost on me!).

Sensitive readers should be alerted to a few slightly disturbing sections, including brief descriptions of sexual abuse and the 1994 massacres in Rwanda.

Too Small to Ignore is at once enjoyable and challenging, disturbing and encouraging.

Renee England is from the Ipswich Central Mission



4 March: Collinsville

Collinsville is going through a time of transition.

There is a new coal mine opening just on the edge of town which is great for employment, but is bringing with it other problems. For example, house prices have more than doubled in the past two years, and private rent has probably tripled, hurting those who do not earn big wages and especially hurting pensioners.

The coal industry is characterised by long working hours, and many workers have to travel long distances – so it is common to stay out of town in barrack-style accommodation. All of this is having a tangible social effect upon the communities.

This is happening across all coal mining towns. The new mines bring a certain prosperity to the communities, but these examples show that there is often a high price to pay for the families left at home, and the social changes that occur in the community.

Pray for Christian workers to come in to Collinsville, and other similar communities in the central Bowen basin area. Pray that they will be disciples who are willing to become part of the Christian family, to join in prayer for the towns, and to help with the ministry.

Pray for God-given chances to talk with, and minister to, these workers and their families, as they come into Collinsville. Pray for safety upon the roads as many travel to their homes and families after long shifts.

11 March: Dayboro

Our church has been an independent lay-led congregation for six years. During this time it has experienced significant growth and development.

Forty-one new members on transfer were added to the roll in February this year. There are now more than 100 worshippers attending the church. Half of these fulfil a role in active ministry or ministry support. With four people supporting the preaching program, three organists, three worship leaders and a significant number of singers, worship is always uplifting and enjoyable.

Worship includes a mix of traditional and contemporary songs, prayers and formats with informality often ruling. Visual technology has been incorporated into services, and children are important participants and presenters.

There is a wide age distribution with the major representative groups being young families and active elderly people who bring an enormous amount of talent and energy to the mix.

Governance is by the whole congregation acting together on all decisions with a minimum of meetings and committees. The recent National Church Life Survey reported growth in all nine core values. There is an increasing interest in Bible study, fellowship, visioning the future, and outreach.

PRAYER DIARY

The word PRAY can be used as an acronym to remind us of how Jesus modelled life for us:

P – Pray to our Father

R – Rely on the Holy Spirit to guide us

A – Act in obedience to the Spirit's promptings

Y – Yield the outcome to our Father

Living this way worked for Jesus!

A strong sense of belonging is demonstrated in the openness of prayer sharing times, and after worship gatherings. There is a very real feeling of a united family working through life's joys and challenges together and relying on God for sustaining them on a daily basis.

The church serves a very large region on the rural fringe of north Brisbane taking in communities at Lacey's Creek, Ocean View, Mt Pleasant, Kobbie Creek, and Armstrong Creek. These communities still have many farms, but 16 new estates are bringing many new residents seeking small acreage living.

The five churches of Dayboro have for many years worked very closely. They cooperate in many fields including community welfare, worship events, Bible study, outreach, choir, youth and children's ministry, celebrations, RI in schools and international mission. They recognise the need to combine limited resources and demonstrate Christian unity to the community. All churches support the development in Bolivia of the Casa Segura orphanage and school by local resident Mik Henzell.

Our 105 year old church building has undergone considerable improvement internally and externally. The major improvement has been air conditioning. There are plans to further improve the facility.

Please pray that the blessings we enjoy in this place continue to flow, and that our mission to this community and the world beyond our borders is an appropriate response to these blessings.

18 March: Goondiwindi

Our congregation is a moderate sized church family with three lay preacher teams taking Sunday services, with a visiting minister organised by the Presbytery to come to Goondiwindi about once every month.

The lay preacher teams are a very dedicated group of people, who firmly believe that they are doing what God has asked them to do. That is to spread the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to keep and maintain the Uniting Church in Goondiwindi as a place where Christians can meet and worship.

There are other groups that use our church facilities including Dads In Distress, Alcoholics Anonymous, Blue Care, Goondiwindi Ministers Circle, Christian Blind Mission

International, and the choral group in Goondiwindi. We are all very proud of our church.

Our prayer points:

Goondiwindi, and much of Australia, is in the grip of the worst drought in recorded history.

We pray that by the time you read this we will be praying for a cessation of the heavy drought breaking rain, and that it will dry up so we can plant winter crops etc.

We pray that all catchments and water storage dams in our Presbytery receive enough rain to be full and overflowing.

Pray for continued energy of the Lay Preacher team members so they can find the time to continue the fine work that was undertaken some three years ago.

We pray that the Lord will continue to inspire us all, and show us the way forward.

Pray for the Goondiwindi, Yelarbon and Tallwood Congregations who together make up our Parish.

Pray for the visiting ministers and for their safe travel to and from Goondiwindi. Pray for the Northern Rivers Presbytery, the members from the Warwick Uniting Church, The Hills Uniting Church, and to the other congregations who help bring God's word to our congregation.

Pray for the different groups that meet in our church that the good work they do will continue.

Goondiwindi Uniting does not have the resources to have a children's ministry, but we support the appointment of the first school chaplain in the High School. Bonnie Tompson, one of our congregation has taken on the position. We pray that she will be guided and inspired by God's hand.

Pray for our church for the preparation for Good Friday and Easter Sunday Services, and for guidance for the Easter article we put in our local newspaper, and as we participate in and organise the annual combined churches Passover Dinner.

Pray for our church ladies who do catering and organise street stalls to raise funds to build up our finances so that we can continue God's work.

Pray for the women who contribute to the church Quilt Ministry, that they will continue to bring joy to so many people in their time of need.

We pray for the continued support of all Christian churches in Goondiwindi for each other.



Three of Queensland's female ministers, Wendi Sargeant, Jenny Tymms, and Christy Allen. Photo by Osler Lau

Women ministers still on the frontier

By Jon Foye

MINISTRY IS a stressful vocation. Long hours, a hectic workload and an inbuilt community all contribute.

The stress and burnout of female clergy represents a gap in current research.

Rev Peter Pereira is currently engaged in researching the issue at the University of New England.

The working title for his thesis is *Still Pioneers*.

Australian research into the stress and burnout of ministry workers has focused on males or has not been gender specific.

Research into the stress and burnout of church women is necessary, said Mr Pereira, because women have different stressors to men. These include gender-based discrimination and balancing work and home life.

Studies into the role of women in American church life point to a barrier for female clergy based on gender. Although women are deemed equal at a denominational level, academic Patricia Chang has demonstrated that at congregational and parish levels the church's view is sometimes different.

In 1992, Chang incorporated survey and interview data obtained from 1,435 clergy and several hundred lay people.

The study indicated that women had made great progress "relative to the pioneers who entered the seminary in the 1970s".

But it also identified areas of ongoing struggle for female clergy. Some issues included lower salaries than male colleagues, "flat" career trajectories and resistance to hiring women at a local church level.

According to Mr Pereira, his research shows female clergy in Australia face the same barriers.

"The frontier has still not been broken," Mr Pereira said.

"We have women ministers but the gender wars that you would hope did not exist still exist at a grassroots level.

"What makes discrimination more dangerous is that, technically, we are a church that accepts women. So any sexism that exists within the Uniting Church is subtle."

One member of the Uniting

Church's female clergy recalled experiences that illustrated Mr Pereira's point.

"One of my female friends was working part-time in ministry," she said. "She got chronically ill and had to retire due to ill health, but is only given a half of a half stipend because she was only working half-time at the time. The reality is she was doing more hours than her male colleague."

Research into the stress of women in the workplace indicated greater responsibilities in home and family life as a significant cause of stress. Karen Mitchell-Lambert, former chaplain to the University of Western Sydney said that was a problem for her.

"For me, some of the biggest stresses are doing my job and all it entails," she said.

"This involves running a household, both financially and through housework, being a significant member of my local and church community, being a good friend, a good partner and a great mum, as well as in there doing some stuff to take care of myself."

Alarmingly, studies show female clergy may be more susceptible, due to the added dimension of discrimination and the greater responsibility that is often taken by women for the juggling of the work-home interface.

According to Mr Pereira, there are signs that women's mental and physical health may be more at risk from occupational stress than is the case for men. This demonstrates the importance of research into female clergy's experiences.

Ms Mitchell-Lambert suggested churches employ a care strategy for burnt out clergy.

"It would be really good to check with them what they need: meals, shopping or just some space. Plan among the church who will be the best people to contact them to find that out, but give them a couple of days to figure it out."

Trinity Theological College in Brisbane currently has equal numbers of women and men training for the ministry.

Jon Foye is an intern with the New South Wales Synod publication *Insights* where this story first appeared.

Claiming creation

I welcome the editorial on the cover of February *Journey*.

It is right and proper for the Church to lead the way regarding issues surrounding environmental health and degradation considering our oft promoted theologies of stewardship and creation.

For far too long the Church has spoken about creation as a sovereign act of God and our role as Church to obey our call to proclaim and live out the kingdom of God in our daily lives.

Yet we have shown an obvious bias in that we have focused passionately on issues of social and spiritual morality whilst ignoring the less convenient morality of resource use.

It is high time that our missional strategies took seriously our over use of fossil fuels consumed in an endless need to travel to meetings and gatherings far in excess of what is truly needed in a more localised vision for mission.

I would suggest that much of our obsession with ministry prompted travel is more about habit than vision.

The way for change must be lead from the top of our institutional tree whereby synods and presbyteries need to redevelop infrastructure and organisation that minimises the need for excessive travel and resource use.

If we believe in the sovereignty of God in creation and the mandate of the Church to be stewards of God's creation then we have no choice but to implement radical organisational change as an act of faithful obedience.

Rev Craig Mischewski
Townsville

Sustaining lifestyle

Putting environmental sustainability into practice has been described simply as "living today for tomorrow".

In the Bible we are exhorted to care for our neighbours.

This is usually interpreted to mean those living nearby, living elsewhere in our country, or those in need in other countries.

However, in a sense, those to come in future generations will also be our neighbours because they will inhabit the same earth, and more seriously, will inherit what we leave behind.

Living today in a way that leaves an inhabitable planet is a fulfilment of the requirement to care for our neighbours.

In our home and lifestyle my wife and I have tried to be responsible in our use of energy and water, in recycling waste, in our recreation and our investments.

Our biggest contribution to saving fuel and the reduction of greenhouse gases was the installation of a solar hot water system.

Even on cloudy days, we now use virtually no electric power for hot water, so our energy use has been slashed.

We have also installed low energy light bulbs and rely on ceiling

fans rather than air conditioning. Painting our roof with insulating paint helped to reduce internal temperatures in summer.

For a number of years, while we had two incomes, we paid a little extra each quarter to purchase green energy to encourage the adoption of renewable generation projects.

Our new car was chosen for its fuel economy.

Installation of low flow shower heads and use of dual flush toilets reduces water usage.

We also have a water tank which we intend to connect to the washing machine and/or toilets.

We will also be taking advantage of the new Government rebates for water saving fittings.

Mulching the garden reduces water usage outside the house.

We don't have a kerbside recycling collection but our Council provides collection points around the town. We use those to dispose of plastic, glass, metal cans and paper on trips to town each week. This reduces the pressure on landfill and the energy costs of waste collection and preserves mineral and timber resources.

In addition, we keep our kitchen scraps on site. Our compost bin houses soldier fly larvae which rapidly dispose of vegetable waste.

This system is self-sustaining in tropical areas.

We calculate that in this way we have saved 500kg of waste going to landfill each year.

We also seek to reduce our environmental footprint through our choice of hobbies.

Sailing and cycling use a minimum of carbon energy and leave the planet largely untouched.

Arthur Hunt
Yeppoon

Arthur distributes a simple electronic newsletter, *Sustainable Housing in CQ (Central Queensland)*.

To be added to the mailing list please send a request to arthurhunt@ozemail.com.au.

LETTERS

Global Warming

Why isn't God included in this debate? He alone holds the key to the future, because he is the future.

Some scientists proclaim that the earth will eventually become uninhabitable with dire consequences given about 100 years from now.

At any given time the earth as we know it will last for at least 1007 years and then Christ will form a new heaven and a new earth.

Remember that the wheels for the Second Coming are already in motion.

Jesus at any given time is at least seven years from coming physically to earth.

Then war, famine, poverty, sickness and sin will cease at his return and not one day before.

Unfortunately no Christian will be here to enjoy it. What a shame!

But then we will be enjoying greater riches in Heaven.

Graham Wright
Stafford

Why worry about warming?

In answer to the heading on the Moderator's column (February *Journey*), "How's the weather where you are?"

I am amused at the worry in the press about global warming.

This summer has been the coolest I've known in Gladstone in 36 years. It was also cool in Brisbane late December / early January.

If the Australian community want to do anything about pollution why not try car pooling?

Recently I stood on a busy street at peak hour looking at the traffic while I waited for a lift. A tiny fraction of the cars had more than one person in them.

Lynda Pearee
Gladstone

Local heroes

For the past seven months, I have been supplying ministry to the Rosewood Cluster of congregations.

What has impressed me most are the competent and dedicated teams of lay people who continue to serve quietly but efficiently in the life of so many of our small churches.

I would like to commend to your prayers the faithful lay people who continue to serve Christ in the life of these small churches because they love him, and they love his Church.

For instance, has any one heard of a lady named Isabelle Kearsley? Isabelle lives in Rosewood and whenever she comes to a meeting she takes out her knitting.

That would not be unusual because, in the past, many women have knitted during meetings.

But the other day, I saw Isabelle knitting her number 1,690th beanie for a child in a war-torn country!

People in the church, and the community, give her the wool, and World Vision distributes the finished products.

Isabelle has been a member of Rosewood Uniting Church for the past 40 years, has taught Sunday School for eight years, was an Elder for six years and secretary of the congregation for 10 years. She was President of the Women's Fellowship, now she is its secretary.

Isabelle is just one Christian person in one small Church who demonstrates how rich the whole Church is in the quality and commitment of so many ordinary people who serve their Lord without ostentation or thought of honour.

Isabelle is a remarkable person with so much talent and represents the many unsung heroes of the faith who worship with us every week in so many of our little country congregations.

Rev A Trevor Foote
Eastern Heights

About F.A.C.E.

About F.A.C.E. (Faith and Culture Exchange) for young adults aged 18 -30, provides an experience of life and faith from a different cultural perspective, in Australia, or overseas, building friendships and mutual understanding. About F.A.C.E.8 will run from 1 - 21 July 2007.

Applications to About FACE Coordinator Sandy Boyce at sandy@sa.uca.org.au, Ph 08 8236 4240 or visit the website at <http://aboutface.unitingchurch.org.au/>.

Volunteers needed by the Wesley Hospital Auxiliary

The Wesley Hospital Auxiliary provides funds for the purchase of expensive equipment not included in the Hospital budget.

These funds are raised mainly from the Coffee Shop, the Trolley, the Gift Window and commission from the sale of paintings and fund raising functions.

To do this, volunteers are urgently needed from Monday to Friday.

If you feel you could help to this very rewarding work, please contact the President, Mrs Joan Webber on 33976896 or the Secretary, Mrs Heather Hillman on 33951796 for further information.

CLASSIFIEDS

ACCOMMODATION

Holiday unit, modern, pool. 100m from Kings Beach Caloundra from \$300/wk. Phone Ray 0427 990 161.

Fantastic location for beachfront holiday in charming cottage at Currumbin Beach, Qld. Vacancies available 2006. Phone 3376 4247.

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

MLOC Singers urgently needs more members for costumed performances at nursing homes, seniors groups, churches etc. Rehearse Wednesday 7pm, Nundah. Singing experience useful. Phone Laurelle 3359 7298 or 041 999 5567

Email your classified to
mardi.lumsden@ucaqld.com.au

Historically Speaking



The oldest funeral business in Queensland

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

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

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

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

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

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

Alex Gow Funerals

A Brisbane-owned family business, established in 1840.

Phone 3852 1501

JOURNEY asks...

As a Christian what is your theology and practice of giving?

Evan Bengtson

As a child of the depression born in 1927 I can't recall any theology of giving as I learned my memory verses and recited the catechism.

However, sharing was a way of life and our family's ability along with others to support our minister and his family with milk, cream, butter eggs and vegies was a foundational experience never forgotten.

Four years at boarding school taught me little, though doling out a threepenny piece at Church parade introduced the temptation to use this largesse for other than the offering plate.

My enlistment to church administration at a quite early age ensured knowledge of the costs of operation and raised the question 'where's the money coming from?'

As an apprentice whose income took three years to equal his board at the Church Hostel, surely that wasn't me!

Marriage and transfer to the little country village of Beenleigh in 1949 changed many things.

We soon had an envelope system going and of course put in six pence more than anyone else. Oh, the shame of it now.

The minister's piano began to

fall through the old and borer riddled parsonage floor. Let's build a new one on the horse paddock over the fence.

Borrowing the money from the Conference Department was easy,

now how do we pay it back? There was an American firm, the Wells Organisation, having great results in Australia. "Let's employ them."

Many still regard that name as swearing, however our

understanding of Christian giving took a giant leap from which we've never retreated.

The decision taken in 1957 to tithe, albeit only on 'take home pay' in the early days, has enriched our Christian experience greatly.

We had given our hearts to Jesus many years before, witnessed to others in outreach in various Crusades of Alan Walker, Billy Graham, etc., but had never really given top priority to our need to make a meaningful financial response.

Progressively, large slices of the scriptures brought education, understanding and challenge.

It made such good sense to me this tithing practice - the first tenth for the Kingdom and the blessings will flow to both the church and the giver.

By 1960, the Methodist Young Peoples Department under the leadership of Ivan Alcorn and Lewis Born had established our own Planned Giving/Stewardship division and I was one of the recruited staff, leaving a satisfying career with Energex's forbears.

I worked across the nation and beyond for almost 30 years and some may judge those efforts a failure.

The rising tide of consumerism, the 'must have it now' culture, the necessity for double incomes and more would seem to have won. But, I contest that view.

Many who have embraced the concept and practise it daily know the blessings of a deeper relationship with the One who gave his all for us.

We use the U.C.I.S. GivingDirect scheme to make our 'more than 10%' financial response, not easy after 15 years on the aged pension, and whatever time or talent is helpful.

There are classic 'proof' texts in both the Old and New Testaments.

One of which I hold most dear concludes the classic 2 Corinthians Chapters 8 and 9. *The Living Bible* interprets 9:15 thus, "Thank God for His Son, his gift, too wonderful for words."

Surely that demands a significant response.

Evan Bengtson has served the church in more ways and for more years than most could imagine and is still providing support for the financial management for the South Moreton Presbytery.



Lyne Bates

Lyne sent her thoughts to Journey at 9 p.m. just as the menfolk were arriving home from baling sorghum and began by reflecting on a favourite Bible story.

"Another of his disciples, Andrew, who was Simon Peter's brother, said, "There is a boy here who has five loaves of barley bread and two fish. But they will certainly not be enough for all these people." (John 6: 8)

In this story mention is made of a boy who had a small contribution to make toward the feeding of the five thousand.

I can just imagine his surprise and joy when the little food he had became more

than sufficient!

Ideally we should be able to bring our assets to God in prayer and allow him to direct us in our giving.

I am a country woman and wife of farmer, Tony. We have three grown-up children, two married with families of their own, and we are grandparents to four.

On the land there is rarely a steady income but there are many ways that country folk give.

A lot of the time it happens in a quiet way and I feel it is a very personal matter.

During harvest a load of grain can be kept for the church or graziers can single out livestock sent to cattle sales, as a means of providing monies for their church.

Some families take on paying the rates or electricity accounts for the church building.

Street Stalls still exist, albeit now strictly monitored as far as the donated cooking is concerned.

If there is ever any special need for funds a letter to our parishioners always brings results.

We are fortunate in still having Rev Peter Hall and his wife Lee who have been a true example of giving to the community.

Lyne Bates is on the land in western Queensland and is a lay leader in the Wallumbilla Uniting Church – Maranoa Parish.



Andrew and Lesley Hall

In the Old Testament, the Israelites had to contribute a percentage of their harvest and new born animals to acknowledge the Lord as their God.

Some of these gifts were then given to the Levites, God's chosen priests, so they could conduct ministry.

We believe God is also calling us to tithe to our church so that ministry can occur in our local community and beyond.

We understand that this tithe is for the church's use and it is up to the church leaders to decide where it is to be applied.

In addition to our tithe we found that God was bringing other needs to our attention so we began to budget for what we call our "tithe extra".

This is money that we set aside to be given to needs over and above our church tithe. Of course we try to discern whether God is calling us personally to meet these needs.

We found that although we budgeted for these extra offerings each payday we weren't actually setting the money aside and sometimes we struggled to find the money at the time the need arose. So we opened a separate bank account especially for these funds.

Now each time the pay arrives we transfer

the appropriate amount into this account and, when a need arises that we feel God wants us to be a part of, we can immediately give to it.

Our passion for giving has developed over a number of years partly because of the teaching we received from parents and more recently from our involvement with Crown Financial Ministry courses.



Giving is our first priority when we receive our pay. We budget to give a proportion of our income each payday and we try to do it cheerfully and humbly.

It's awesome to see how God uses what we give for his glory.

Andrew and Lesley Hall attend Sunnybank Uniting Church and are trained as Small Group Leaders for Crown Financial Ministries.