

May 2007

JOURNEY

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tsunami report

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Toowoomba



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What is the agender?



The Uniting Church will...provide for the exercise by men and women of the gifts God bestows on them.

The Uniting Church...will seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to recognise among its members women and men called of God to preach the Gospel, to lead the people in worship, to care for the flock, to share in government and to serve those in need in the world.

(The Basis of Union)

By Mardi Lumsden

WRITTEN MORE THAN 30 years ago that in itself was a radical statement, but 30 years on have we really achieved what the Uniting Church set out to do?

Trinity Theological College Lecturer Rev Dr Neil Sims said there was a "significant proportion of women ministers in the Uniting Church in Queensland".

"Ordained women in congregations, I believe, are contributing to a significant change in our culture," said Dr Sims.

However, there are still many churches that believe the ordination of women is against Biblical teachings and that reworking sacred texts to use inclusive language is incorrect.

The *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible using inclusive language was released in 1989, the preface of which speaks of the "danger of linguistic sexism arising from the inherent bias of the English language towards the masculine gender".

A revised version of the *Basis of Union* using inclusive language was released in 1992.

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God created them male and female

ALL HUMAN beings are created in the image of God.

Notwithstanding the amazing diversity that characterises the human race this is a profoundly spiritual reality.

This principle establishes in every time and context that every individual is of equal significance in the mind and heart of God; is the subject of God's unconditional, self-giving love; and has the capacity to respond to that love with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.

Being made in God's image also means being made for relationship, both with God and with others.

We are called to live in community in a way that honours the community inherent in the Godhead itself, that unique expression of relationship apparent in the unity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit that defines and illuminates all other forms of relationship.

As the Eighth Assembly of the Uniting Church declared, being created in the image of God means that each one of us has dignity and is of value.

Each one of us has a right to be welcomed and to participate within the community of God; we celebrate the uniqueness of each individual and respect our differences; and we allow opportunities for each individual to use their gifts within the community of faith.

Down through the centuries these fundamental biblical principles have been ignored, corrupted, subverted and reinterpreted by those pursuing actions and outcomes in direct conflict with the truth these principles declare.

This truth confronts all those who devalue human life in any way and who engage in the manipulation or abuse of others.

It also confronts those who discriminate against others based on race, religion, culture or gender; those who (even in the 21st Century) condone or practise



Message from the Moderator

Rev Dr David Pitman

slavery; and those who use other people for their own selfish ends.

The same distortion of biblical truth is apparent when, by inference or through actual behaviour, women are treated as if they are

“

The Uniting Church holds that any form of discrimination that would hinder women's full and free participation in the life of the church is unacceptable and must be addressed and dealt with.”

less important or less competent than their male counterparts.

The Uniting Church holds that any form of discrimination that would hinder women's full and free participation in the life of the church is unacceptable and must be addressed and dealt with.

Our church exercises significant leadership in both society and the wider ecumenical arena in this matter.

While the stand we have taken is not always understood or appreciated, it is vital.

We rejoice in the growing maturity of the Uniting Church and the willingness and capacity of its members to embrace and uphold this principle.

It is a matter for deep regret that there continue to be some serious discrepancies between the ideal and what actually happens in particular circumstances and situations.

Some women, though eminently well qualified and experienced, find themselves excluded from opportunities for significant leadership.

Women in specified ministries suffer from discrimination in the placements process and men still dominate the membership of certain Boards and Committees.

Sometimes the prejudices that perpetuate these practices are carefully disguised, but cause real pain and frustration all the same.

When the Apostle Paul declared to the Galatians “there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female”, he was not proposing the abolition of difference but advocating a new dynamic reality established by Christ.

To be “one in Christ Jesus”, Paul said, is to experience a unity of heart and mind and spirit that gladly affirms and embraces the uniqueness of each person, along with the gifts and graces each possesses, with which they can bless the community of faith.

In 1977 we began a journey together believing that we were called to be a church in which women and men would share equal opportunity and responsibility for leadership and ministry.

Along with that intention we brought some baggage from the past that has hindered our progress toward a fuller realisation of that goal.

As we approach our 30th birthday, it is my prayer that set free from our fears and prejudices we will determine to leave that baggage behind and discover and celebrate the amazing truth and potential of what it means to be created (male and female) in the image of God.

From the Editor

I remember when my congregation appointed its first woman minister in 1997.

How exciting it was, as a young woman that we were to have a woman minister. It was an empowering and uplifting notion.

There was only one problem... if the minister was a woman, we wouldn't have a minister's wife!

Who would do all the motherly things like cook biscuits and help in the kitchen at church events? These were the concerned mutterings heard in hallways and shopping centre aisles around the suburb.

What we got was something quite unexpected; we got a minister's husband! Not only could he cook and make a killer cup of tea, but he could play the bass guitar, was a great musician and very knowledgeable when it came to sound and PA and the like.

He was also a good role model for young men of the congregation. He was living out his call and even put up with being called “the minister's wife”.

At the time I thought it was funny, but looking back it all seems a little odd. Why was it such a joke? It was, after all, the 1990s. Had we not accepted that women could be ministers, or truck drivers, or engineers in 1997? The *Basis of Union* said it was OK twenty years earlier.

The congregation got quite attached to our minister and her husband, but there remained some who were not comfortable with the whole idea.

Perhaps we should embrace the concept of the minister's husband. In all the Partners in Ministry photos I see there seems to be only women, not to diminish the great work and commitment that is shown by those women.

Surely 30 years after the Uniting Church made an official statement that women should be leaders in the church there is room for more ministers' husbands?

Mardi Lumsden
Associate editor

Sign of the Times



The talents of congregation member Judy Gallagher and the generosity of a local paint shop provided this sign based on the *What came first?* Easter campaign. The sign attracted lots of attention on the busy main road location of the Bundaberg Uniting Church. Photo by Leonie Gaffel

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

JOURNEY

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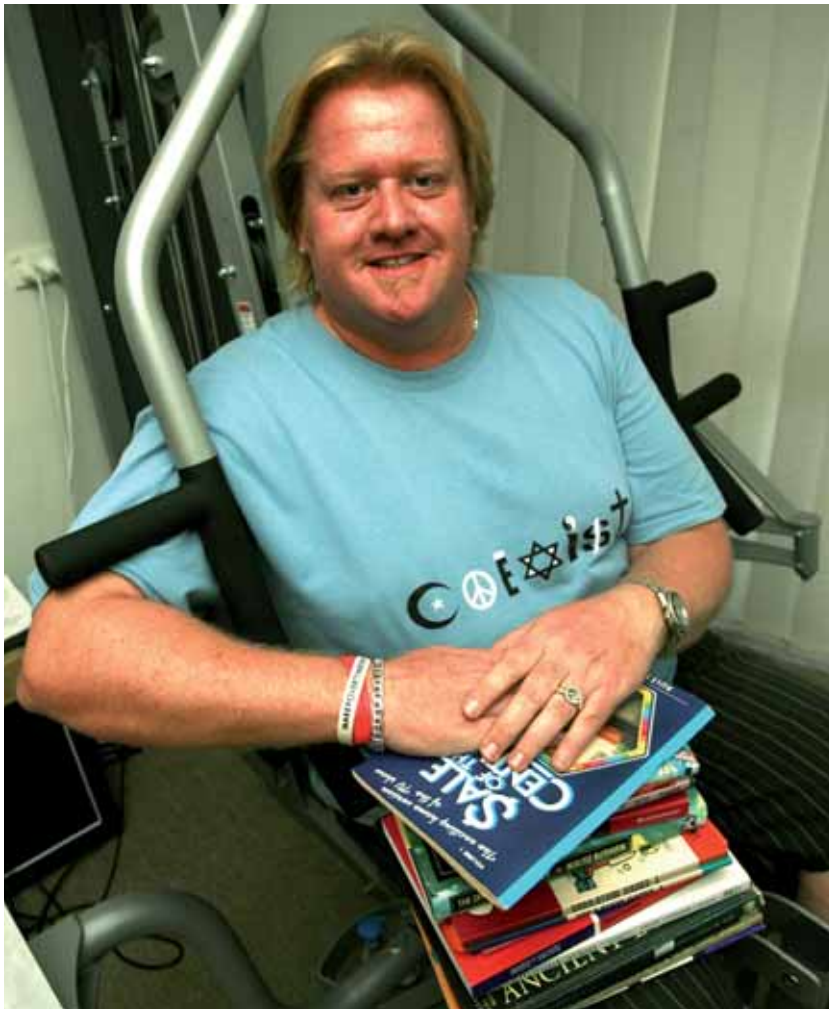
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Andrew Fox relaxes on his home gym equipment prize. Photo by Kari Bourne, of the *Sunshine Coast Daily*

Youthworker wins over Temptation

By Bruce Mullan

"I'M NOT that smart I'm just quick," Youth Worker Andrew Fox told *Journey* after his winning cleanup of television's Temptation game show.

Minister of the Kawana Uniting Church Congregation on the Sunshine Coast Mr Fox had a five night winning streak in the week before Easter taking home a total \$105,000 in cash and prizes.

This was Mr Fox's third try at a TV quiz show and the best result ever.

"I did Sale of the Century a couple of times. The first time was 15 years ago but I failed miserably and finished with \$15," he said.

With the encouragement of his wife Karen, he had another go and is now the proud owner of a new Volvo turbo diesel SUV.

The biggest gaffe of the event was Mr Fox's answer to the question "What day do Christians celebrate the anniversary of Christ's death?" which was broadcast on Good Friday.

Journey asked why he stumbled and only got to Good Friday after the lockout bell.

"Embarrassing wouldn't really begin to describe it but the pain

is lessened somewhat by the new Volvo in the garage.

"It added stress too – if I couldn't answer what should have been a 'specialty' question how was I going to go for the rest of the show?"

Mr Fox said that by that stage of filming his head was spinning so much he was lucky he could talk.

Asked if he was "tempted" to try yet another game show Mr Fox said, "Absolutely. It's pretty much the only chance I have to look smart and make use of all the otherwise useless information floating around in my head.

"Besides which it's a lot of fun and winning is pretty nice if you can do it."

Andrew Fox's prize list:

\$531	Hair care
\$545	Ralph Lauren perfume
\$594	Roses Only package
\$895	Vase and platter
\$1590	Safilo sunglasses
\$1800	Loula designer shoes
\$2809	Henry Jones Art Hotel
\$3593	Home gym
\$21,115	Cash
\$72,950	Volvo XC90 D5
Total \$105,815	

Traveston: call for care

GOVERNMENTS NEED to be more compassionate and understanding of the human cost of their decisions, said the Moderator of the Uniting Church in Queensland in a submission to the Senate's Traveston Dam inquiry.

Rev Dr David Pitman reflected on his visit to the proposed site of the dam in June last year in his submission to the *Inquiry into Additional Water Supplies for South East Queensland - Traveston Crossing Dam*.

"I personally feel a deep sense of outrage on behalf of the residents of the Mary Valley," Dr Pitman said.

"They have been treated very badly by a Government that constantly declares that it cares for people.

"There is no evidence of that here.

"Regardless of the final outcome, a great injustice has been done.

"Whenever communities are going to be disrupted and destroyed by the decisions of government, those governments have an obligation to act in a more responsible and humane way to the people in those communities."



Cyclone Larry rebuilding task group leader Major General Peter Cosgrove (left) with Uniting Church Minister Rev Glenn Louttit

Innisfail gathered to say thanks

By Bruce Mullan

ON BEHALF of the Australian and Queensland Governments Major General Peter Cosgrove presented Innisfail Uniting Church Minister Rev Glenn Louttit with a Certificate of Special Commendation in recognition of outstanding leadership in the Cyclone Larry Relief Effort 2006.

The presentation was part of an Anniversary service to commemorate one year since Cyclone Larry hit North Queensland on 20 March 2007

Mr Louttit said it was a great honour. "I certainly did not expect

this and I do not even know who nominated me."

Speaking at the service Rev Louttit said Cyclone Larry had destroyed houses, businesses, people's livelihoods and even took away some peoples hopes.

"Through all the adversity we have seen the spirit of North Queensland come to the fore, we have also seen the spirit of what it means to be Australian come to the fore as we received help from many quarters, nearby and far away.

"Today we express our thanks to the wider community and to our God for helping us through what has been one heck of a year."

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A year serving as a trainee was a life changing experience for Monique Mawbey. Photo by Bruce Mullan

Trainees test the call to ministry

By Bruce Mullan

A YEAR WORKING as a Ministry Trainee in the Emerald/Fernlees Uniting Church Congregation has confirmed for Monique Mawbey that she has a call to the ordained ministry.

"It has made me aware of ministries I wasn't even sure existed and helped me discover where I think my true calling might be," said Ms Mawbey who also said while the experience wasn't necessarily easy it was "one of the greatest and most worthwhile ones".

"It has opened my eyes to different aspects involved with the church and has allowed me to develop great relationships with people I never would have thought of getting close to."

Emerald/Fernlees Minister Rev Russell Reynoldson said it had been a privilege to be a supervisor for three trainees and to journey with them as they listened and discerned God's call on their lives.

"The call of God on people's lives does not come in isolation but from within a context of

community, and the traineeship puts the young person into this community context, so along with the young person the Church community is able to explore this call," Mr Reynoldson said.

Ms Mawbey said the traineeship had forced her to get out of her comfort zone.

"The traineeship has also allowed me the opportunity to study through Trinity Theological College and Coolamon College, giving me an insight into the life of a college student."

Mr Reynoldson sees himself in a coaching role as he works with ministry trainees.

"I believe that the Church in the future will not be lead by people like myself, who are fast reaching 50. Rather our task as Ministers will be to support, encourage and equip these young people as they exercise ministry."

He said Emerald/Fernlees congregation had stepped out in faith to take on another trainee for 2007 and would welcome any support to help fund the placement.

2007 ministry trainee Rebekah Wein will participate in primary and secondary school Religious Education and Chaplaincy programs, and assist a Priority One group, youth groups and Sunday School.

"We also had to step out of our financial comfort zone and accept the challenge so this could happen," he said.

Ms Mawbey would definitely recommend the experience to others, even those "who think they might even have the slightest call towards ministry".

"Even if at the end of the traineeship you do not believe this is where you are meant to be it definitely gives you something to carry with you through life."

For information about traineeships or to offer financial support to assist with trainee placements contact the Traineeship Coordinator Mr Paul Yarrow at the Youth and Children's Ministry Unit (YACMU) on 07 3388 9866 or email paul.yarrow@yacmu.ucaql.com.au

Hervey Bay scores a Brand name star

PICTURED ARE Uniting Church Minister Rev Brian Hoole (right) and country music star Adam Brand in one of 50 hot rod and vintage cars on show at the Hervey Bay Uniting Church Easter Fair.

Adam Brand is one of Australia's most popular and successful contemporary country music artists and has won eight Golden Guitar Awards and three "MO" Awards.

Brand was a special guest at the event attended by over 3000 people.

The Fair raised \$10,000 half of which was for a special care nursery at the local hospital.

"It has made a real statement to the community about what this church is on about," Mr Hoole said.

Photo by Graham Huth



Rethinking church membership

NATIONAL CONSULTANT for Theology and Discipleship in the Uniting Church Rev Dr Rob Bos believes it is time for congregations and presbyteries to consider the role of baptism, confirmation, covenant, and membership.

"How do we live with the tension of being an open, hospitable, welcoming community and having a committed, covenanted membership whose sole loyalty is to Jesus Christ?" he asks.

Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods, and individuals are encouraged to engage with the paper *A church of passionate disciples: rethinking church membership*.

Young adults act globally in Fiji

EVER WANTED to explore the South Pacific and experience life like the locals, not like the tourists?

If you are a young adult then now is your chance to get on your hiking shoes and experience a new mission activity, Global Walking.

Global Walking is designed to be a transforming experience by exposing young people to the joys and struggles of the Uniting Church's Partner Churches in the Pacific and South East Asia.

Organiser and youth worker Louise Edwards said the idea sprang from similar trips she does with teenagers in Schoolies Week and she realised there was nothing similar for young adults who may be interested in mission or aid work in the future.

"Our desire is to open the minds and hearts of young people, to empower and provoke them to a long-term missional commitment," she said.

"Global Walking is not a holiday or Christian Contiki tour. It is a



Louise Edwards with a local child in Taveuni, Fiji

short-term trip designed to be a missional stimulus.

"Global Walking is about cross-cultural and faith experience not mission trips or work parties.

"It is about taking a humble place of listening and learning and entering into a relationship with the hosts.

"It is about growing to appreciate the reality of the host country's journey.

"Global Walking deliberately encourages young adults to be motivated to follow through with action after the trip."

For more information contact Louise Edwards at Broadwater Road Uniting Church on (07) 3849 8548 or email edwardslj@hotmail.com



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Wesley Mission Brisbane celebrates its Centenary in 2007 - 100 years of supporting people in need within our community, and our 70th anniversary of providing support and care for seniors at Wheller Gardens Chermiside. Continuing with the original vision of our founders, in April 2007 we commenced construction of our new retirement community, *Wheller on the Park* and a new aged care facility at Wheller Gardens.

For more information call Rob at sales (07) 3621 4517 or email us on sales@whelleronthepark.org.au

Wheller on the Park, watch us grow...

An Activity of the Albert Street Congregation of the Uniting Church

Alamoti Lavaki continues the proud ANZAC tradition

By Phil Smith

WHAT DO you say when your three year old son cries on the phone and says, "Daddy come home"?

There was not much Captain (Rev) Alamoti Lavaki could say.

His son was in Brisbane and he was serving with the ANZAC Battle Group in Timor Leste.

It was one of those moments only soldiers understand.

The Uniting Church chaplain had a job to do as one of a thousand Australian service personnel still serving in the fledgling nation.

"Soldiers just get on with it," said Captain Lavaki. "I was with young men and women, some of

whom had served in Iraq just before coming to Timor, and even when they were under pressure it was my job to look after their welfare."

And there was pressure. The sixth battalion Royal Australian Regiment had deployed from Brisbane in September 2006, and it was 6RAR that faced the rioting and violence that damaged so much of Dili earlier this year.

It was not like parish ministry according to the quiet Captain Lavaki.

"A chaplain tries to bring a Christian perspective where most of his flock have no belief in anything."

Most of the few Christians

within the Battle Group were glad to gather for regular worship, happy to be with fellow countrymen who understood the daily challenge of faithfulness in difficult duty.

"Those serving Christians amazed me," recounted Captain Lavaki. "No one wore a tag saying what church they were from."

"Baptists and Catholics stripped away the things that didn't matter and very few put up denominational barriers."

Any veteran is changed by a tour of duty, no matter what they believe.

"We have a good life as church communities. Often we take that good life for granted."

Pickerings head to India

By Mardi Lumsden

DEACON CANDIDATE Sue Pickering is packing up her family in May and heading to Chennai in India for five weeks to work with local communities.

The family, Sue, Alan and daughters Mollie (12) and Abbie (15), are looking forward to what they expect to be an amazing and possibly daunting experience.

"My hope has always been that I would one day be able to share my gifts, skills and knowledge in a developing area, in particular India, and while it's one thing to talk about it I believe it will be quite a different matter to actually get out there and do it," Sue said.

"To be honest I'm not sure what to expect. As for my hopes, I hope that I will be able to journey alongside people that I meet, listening to their stories and experiences."

"During his radical ministry Jesus broke down barriers whether



Mollie, Alan, Abbie and Sue head for a life changing experience

those barriers were based on gender, race, culture, religion or status within the community. Jesus dared to tread where others would not."

Alan is hoping to share his craftsmanship skills. "Basically he wants to live the experience as well but admits this is way beyond anything that he thought he would ever do," said Sue.

While their daughters think the experience will be exciting, they have some reservations about living in a developing country far

from friends and other family.

"Mollie is 12 and basically her response has been that she thinks it will change her forever and make her realise how lucky she is in to live in Australia."

"As for Abbie, she'll be 15 when we leave and she is honest in saying she would rather not go but believes it will be a life changing experience."

For Sue this has been a long time in the making and we wish her and her family all the best with their adventure.



Chaplain Alamoti Lavaki as part of the ANZAC Battle Group, offers prayer at the change of command parade, Camp Phoenix, Dili. Photo courtesy of the Australian Department of Defence © Commonwealth of Australia

Unity College gets greener

WITH OMINOUS rain clouds looming, March saw the opening of a sporting field for Unity College on the Sunshine Coast.

Special guest Olympic medalist Raylene Boyle officially opened the new sporting field and offered her inspirational story as incentive for the students to embrace their natural talents and their love of sport.

The 400m track and football fields will be maintained with bore water and future developments will include cricket nets, a baseball diamond and long and triple jump pits.

The ceremony concluded as College students tested the new grass by racing Ms Boyle across the field. Unity College is a community partnership between the Uniting and Catholic Churches.



Olympic medalist Raylene Boyle runs away with Unity College students. Photo courtesy of Unity College

MORE THAN JUST AN EDUCATION

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Paradise shattered by tsunami destruction

By Bruce Mullan

EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS of the earthquake and tsunami that devastated the Western Province of the Solomon Islands early morning on Monday, 2 April have told a tale of death and destruction in one of the world's least developed nations.

Uniting Church in Australia partner church the United Church in Solomon Islands (UCSI) has endured the worst of the disaster.

United Church Pastor Silas from Saeragi village said they were just beginning their daily activities when the earthquake shook at about 7.40am.

"The earthquake was very strong, the people run here and there.

"Our son, who is studying in PNG, was on holiday and gave us quick instruction which saved our lives.

"He told us to leave everything and run to the hills because from his PNG experience the next thing to come is waves. So people took his advice and started moving."

Not long after they watched the waves come through the village and sweep away everything in its path.

"We are now in the bush on hills totally homeless and impoverished. We feel hopeless. We do not know what to do next."

Mission co-worker from the Methodist Church of Great Britain and Ireland Richard Jackson had been visiting schools in and around Sasamuqa on the south coast of Choiseul Island when the earthquake and tsunami hit.

Principal at the United Church Community High School at Kokeqolo, Mr Jackson said the first thing was a small wave that came over the road.

"This was followed by four or five waves of about 1½ to 2 metres



The primary school at Sasamuqa on the south coast of Choiseul Island was destroyed by the waves. Photo by Richard Jackson

in height that hit the beach," he said.



Bishop Rollinson Zappo was killed by the tsunami. Photo by Ron Reeson

"All the buildings which were part of the hospital complex on the sea side of the road were washed away.

"This included the administration block, the pharmacy, main laboratory, malaria testing facility and dental clinic.

"The waves washed through the main hospital block which is a little further from the sea but fortunately it did not suffer major damage as most of the force of the waves had been taken by the buildings near the beach.

"All of the medicines from the pharmacy have been damaged and those that could be found were later spread out on the road to try to dry them out for possible use"

Mr Jackson confirmed that two elderly men had died because of the tsunami and many others were injured.

"One man was trying to grab his daughter as the waves came through and suffered broken ribs as a result of being smashed against a coconut tree when one of the waves hit.

"The primary school, kindergarten and church hall were also hit hard by the waves and have been mostly demolished.

"The large old house where the minister lived and where we were staying has lost one whole wing of the building and the rest of the house is in danger of falling down."

Approximately 300 bush material and "permanent" houses have been lost in the area.

Fortunately, the main church itself has not suffered any damage, as it is located on a hill at the back of the mission station.

Bishop of the Central West Region Rev Rollinson Zappo was one of many killed by the tsunami.

A key leader of the United Church in Solomon Islands, Bishop Zappo had travelled from his home

in Gizo to Simbo Island to induct a Superintendent Minister at the local United Church.

The Moderator Rt Rev David Havea attended the funeral for Bishop Zappo at his village Uzamba.

"The whole United Church is mourning for the loss of one of our great leaders Late Bishop Rollinson Zappo," Mr Havea said.

Mr Havea reported that the Bishop's wife Marama Zanice Zappo was recovering in the Federal Hospital at Honiara.

Youth and Sunday School Director Mr Caleb Saiqoro reported that residents of Kokeqolo where the UCSI Assembly Office and Goldie Hospital are located are among thousands of Solomon Islanders who are living without adequate shelter in the hills.

"Most of us here at Kokeqolo are still living in the bush at Tavasare campsite (Tavasare means 'protected' or 'being protected') because the water level is still very high with us here, but in the other parts of Parara Island the water is very low," he said.

"Normally this time of the year we would have low tides during the day, however the sea remains at its height since the first day."

Mr Saiqoro said the church was particularly valuing prayer support and he was thrilled to know that Australian Christians "have been standing along with us in this very special and powerful way".

Project Officer with Uniting Church Overseas Aid (UCOA) Mr Jeff Kite has flown to the Solomon Islands to assist the United Church to evaluate the needs of their communities.

This evaluation will help determine where relief is most urgently needed and will form the basis of Uniting Church Overseas Aid's support as the rebuilding phase begins.

THE SOLOMON Islands is made up of nearly one thousand islands to the east of Papua New Guinea.

Together they cover a land mass of 28,400 square kilometres and are inhabited by around 550,000 people.

It is one of the least developed nations in the world with more than 75% of its labour force engaged in subsistence farming and fishing.

The earthquake and most of the damage from the 2 April tsunami was in the Western Province and Choiseul areas that are the stronghold of the United Church in Solomon Islands.

The General Secretary of the United Church in Solomon Islands Mr Atterley Tabepuda Kaniki said about 80% of the people affected by the earthquake and tsunami were United Church members.

"As I look through the list of those who are confirmed dead, I recognise many names of United Church people," Mr Tabepuda said.

"This will include the most effective ways for support to be sent so that it is used to assist those most in need," an UCOA statement said.

Mr Kite said the identified priorities so far are the backup water supply and outboard motor for Helena Goldie Hospital for mobile health clinic work.

With the destruction of the hospitals at Gizo and Sasamuqa, the pressures on Helena Goldie Hospital will increase dramatically and more medical staff may be needed.

Uniting Church in Australia National President Rev Gregor Henderson has written to the Moderator of the United Church in Solomon Islands to convey sympathy and concern following the earthquake and tsunami disaster.

"We feel very deeply for the people of the Solomons, knowing that the death toll from this tragedy is bound to increase and that many thousands have been left homeless and destitute," said Mr Henderson.

Funds are urgently needed to assist in this crisis and to support the rebuilding of communities once the emergency has passed.

Uniting Church Overseas Aid has established a special Solomon Islands Emergency Appeal and members of the Uniting Church in Australia and others are encouraged to give generously in this time of great need.

Tax-deductible donations can be made by phone (call toll free 1800 998 122) or by cheque payable to:

Uniting Church Overseas Aid
Solomon Islands Appeal
PO Box A2266,
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For more information on this exciting opportunity, please access the College Website. An Information kit is available by emailing cmiddleton@educang.qld.edu.au

Closing Date: 5:00pm Monday 18th May 2007.





Browns Plains State High School Chaplain Wes Morgenstern and Browns Plains State School Chaplain Chloe Tickle with students. Photo courtesy of Scripture Union

Churches encouraged by school chaplaincy funding

By Charlotte Durut

THE FEDERAL government decision to openly support Chaplaincy in schools has provided a \$90-million, three-year funding bonanza to initiate or help support existing school chaplaincy services.

Keen to see how the National School Chaplaincy Program (NSCP) can provide support for local chaplaincy services are Rev Andrew Ross of Sunnybank Uniting Church and Rev Stu Cameron of Robina Uniting Church.

Collaborating with their communities and schools, Mr Ross and Mr Cameron hope Runcorn Heights State School, Stretton College, Merrimac State High School and Robina State High School will be able to appoint new chaplains.

Two hundred school chaplains now work in schools around Queensland, engaging with students and staff by providing support, advice and pastoral care

in both good times and bad, filling the gap that exists between parents, peers and principals.

Scripture Union (SU) Queensland coordinates employment, training and support for school chaplains, while representatives from local churches, schools and communities form Local Chaplaincy Committees to administer and raise funds for their relevant chaplain.

The two ministers are pleased that the federal government has recognised the significance of pastoral care in schools as both have witnessed firsthand the impact of dedicated and hard-working chaplains as a frontline force in schools.

"I've seen kids who are real trouble-makers eventually take up leadership roles and take responsibility for their actions, and all through contact with a school chaplain," Mr Ross said.

"It's really exciting to see the changes that occur in kids through chaplaincy services."

"The program is a real answer to prayer and a great opportunity to kick-start new chaplaincies," Rev Ross said.

Mr Cameron said while the NSCP funding came as an out-of-the-blue surprise, he was still taking a cautious approach to it.

"The government funding is an incredible opportunity and an economic way of providing pastoral care in schools," he said.

"But we shouldn't be relying on the government for total financial support.

"We need to draw local churches and schools together to create new chaplaincy services which will engage with students.

"I believe this engagement is at the heart of the mission field Jesus Christ calls us to join, and it would be incomprehensible to turn our backs on it."

For more information on school chaplaincy and NSCP funding, contact SU Queensland on 3632 2222 or visit www.suqld.org.au

Being church differently

By Meera Atkinson

THE UNITING Church has thousands of fine schools and valued community services in Australia and the 11th Assembly report *Being Church Differently* calls for a greater balance of worship, witness and service, the functions of the church as outlined in the *Basis of Union*.

Being Church Differently invites presbyteries, congregations, schools, and community service agencies to explore innovative ways of creating an opportunity for worship in these contexts.

The National Assembly's Consultant for Theology and Discipleship, Rev Dr Rob Bos, said faith formation is not possible in isolation and that a Christian community is essential.

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

"If we do not provide opportunities for faith development outside of the inherited 'normal' structures, people will go elsewhere, or miss the opportunity to come to faith."

At the 11th Assembly, President Rev Gregor Henderson called for the church to accept the challenge of new ways of being.

"We have to face squarely the reality that we are, overall, an ageing church."

Mr Henderson is concerned for "those 80% of Australians who have no regular contact with any church, despite the fact that most of them claim some sort of Christian affiliation."

The *Being Church Differently* discussion paper encourages the church to look towards congregations in schools and community services.

The Mary Burnett Presbytery and Blue Care are working on a project to create a partnership in chaplaincy between Blue Care and congregations.

Regional Director of Blue Care Suncoast Hinterland Mr Kerry Lawrence describes the venture as "an invitation to work together in serving the community".

"We need to strengthen the links, strengthen the partnerships and the relationships, think more broadly about what church looks like today and into the future," said Mr Lawrence.

"We might have residents attend and be part of the congregation.

"We might have people from the congregation providing some ministry and chaplaincy and times of reflection to groups of residents."

Mr Lawrence admits that there are many questions still to be answered and some challenges ahead.

"There are people on our staff who wouldn't understand necessarily what congregations, church, and chaplaincy mean.

"There are probably a number of people in the congregations that don't have a good understanding of Blue Care and agency."

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

To download a copy of *Being Church Differently* visit the Theology and Discipleship website, <http://nat.uca.org.au/TD/resources.htm>

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Being a woman is a way of life

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.

Trinity Wilston Uniting Church member Lesley Irvine fits this description to a tee. Journey asked her to share a few thoughts about her life as a woman.

THE FIRST seven years of my childhood were spent in Adelaide. I remember a very simple and carefree period.

We seemed to know the whole street and would regularly spend time at friends' houses. We would often put on neighbourhood plays.

Family holidays were spent in caravans, usually at the beach.

My mother did not work outside the home; she spent a great deal of time looking after our family.

I am very grateful for all she did for me. She was, and still is, a real nurturer and I always felt safe and loved.

I cut a lot more corners than my mother when it comes to cooking and cleaning.

I have been very fortunate to have caring men in my life.

My father always believed that my sister and I were capable of doing anything. He continues to be a loyal supporter and shares in all our achievements.

As a former news editor, he regularly supplied me with just the right line to finish an assignment.

I often think back to my student days when helping my daughters with their homework.

My father always talked about the 'eternal debt' – that life keeps moving between being cared for and caring for others.

As with many women today, I have struggled with the balance between work and home life.

I choose to work and choose to take on new challenges. However my husband Ralph and I have made a conscious decision to make family life a priority. This affects every thing we do.

The importance of simply spending time with my children is

something that my mother taught me.

We have two lovely daughters – Lydia and Emma.

They are clever, funny and caring girls who have brought tremendous joy to our lives. I believe they will make a difference in whatever they choose to do.

I have always had strong female friends. I feel very privileged to have a core group of wonderful women in my life.

My faith has always been important to me.

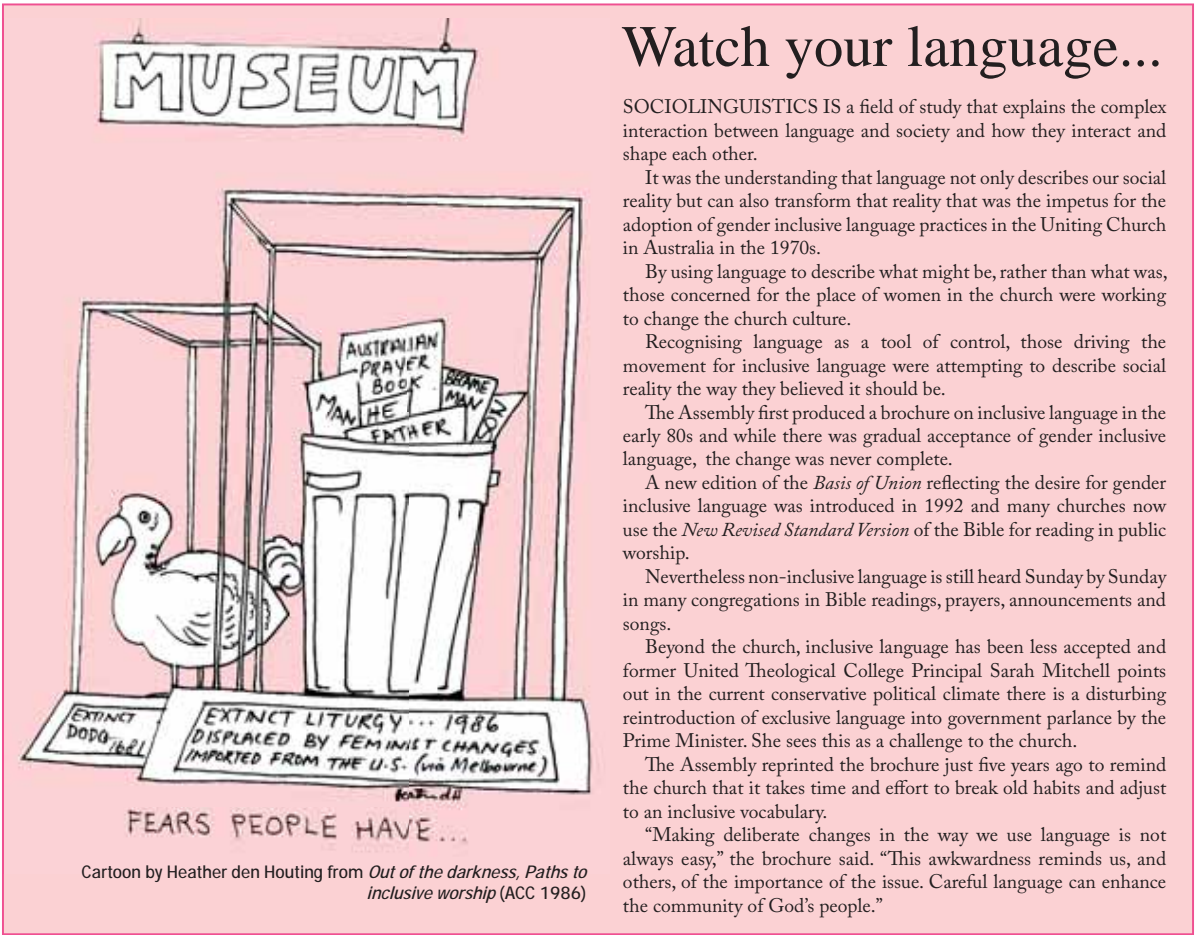
During my teenage years, I was part of a very active youth group. Many of those friends are still my good friends today.

I do not confuse faith with religion. I believe we are all on a journey and that we are here to help each other along the way.

For me faith is not simply a series of rules and regulations but a way of life.

My faith continues to develop and change and I think this is a very good thing.

I believe that God is big enough to handle my questions.



Cartoon by Heather den Houting from *Out of the darkness, Paths to inclusive worship* (ACC 1986)

Watch your language...

SOCIOLINGUISTICS IS a field of study that explains the complex interaction between language and society and how they interact and shape each other.

It was the understanding that language not only describes our social reality but can also transform that reality that was the impetus for the adoption of gender inclusive language practices in the Uniting Church in Australia in the 1970s.

By using language to describe what might be, rather than what was, those concerned for the place of women in the church were working to change the church culture.

Recognising language as a tool of control, those driving the movement for inclusive language were attempting to describe social reality the way they believed it should be.

The Assembly first produced a brochure on inclusive language in the early 80s and while there was gradual acceptance of gender inclusive language, the change was never complete.

A new edition of the *Basis of Union* reflecting the desire for gender inclusive language was introduced in 1992 and many churches now use the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible for reading in public worship.

Nevertheless non-inclusive language is still heard Sunday by Sunday in many congregations in Bible readings, prayers, announcements and songs.

Beyond the church, inclusive language has been less accepted and former United Theological College Principal Sarah Mitchell points out in the current conservative political climate there is a disturbing reintroduction of exclusive language into government parlance by the Prime Minister. She sees this as a challenge to the church.

The Assembly reprinted the brochure just five years ago to remind the church that it takes time and effort to break old habits and adjust to an inclusive vocabulary.

"Making deliberate changes in the way we use language is not always easy," the brochure said. "This awkwardness reminds us, and others, of the importance of the issue. Careful language can enhance the community of God's people."

Why men don't go to church

By David Weddell

FROM TIME to time, in church circles, I hear the question "Why aren't there more men going to church?"

Sometimes it's asked by the mothers of young women, keeping an eye out for future prospects.

At other times – like when the National Church Life Survey shows only 39% of church attendees are male – the question is also asked by those concerned about a church with an unhealthy imbalance.

So when I came across the book *Why Men Hate Going to Church* by David Murrow, I was intrigued. "Hmmm, this could be helpful" I thought.

Was it ever! More than understanding a church trend, I actually came to a greater understanding of myself, my gender and my faith.

You see, I had often wondered why I don't enjoy church more than I do.

After all, I follow the footy – so I enjoy going to the game. I'm a follower of Jesus, so why isn't Sunday as enticing as Friday night?

Why doesn't my enjoyment of church reflect the strength of my commitment to Jesus?

It turns out that God made men differently. The amygdala, the corpus callosum, serotonin and testosterone – they make men biologically different.

Added to the different ways we are raised as kids (boys to be strong and independent, girls to be caring and nurturing) and it's no surprise

Playing dress-up: no longer a game

By James Pembroke

HIGHLY SEXED images of women in the media are leading young girls to believe they need to be sexy in order to be attractive and accepted.

An American Psychological Association (APA) report warned the sexualisation of girls is one of the most serious issues confronting our society and that such expectations are leading to poor physical and mental health.

The *Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls* showed links between the sexualisation of girls and self-destructive behaviours such as excessive dieting, eating disorders, drug abuse and binge drinking, self harm, anxiety, depression, lower academic performance and poor health.

Anti-depressant drug prescriptions for young girls are increasing every year and eating disorders such as anorexia or bulimia have reached epidemic proportions, affecting children as young as eight.

Television, music videos, music lyrics, movies, magazines, sports media, video games, the Internet and advertising have all been shown to depict women as sex objects.

In 2006, the Australia Institute's Emma Rush and Andrea La Nauze produced a discussion paper on the sexualisation of children.

"The emphasis on 'sexy' looks and behaviour can also engender a skewed view of how to initiate and sustain healthy, reciprocal and caring relationships," Ms Rush said.

Director of Women's Forum Australia Melinda Tankard Reist said instead of turning girls into sexual objects, society should teach them to "be resilient and to defend their dignity and self respect."

Popular culture is teaching girls that they need to be sexy at a very young age and there are now lingerie clothing lines for pre-teens, bras for girls under 10, t-shirts with sexual slogans and, unbelievably, a pole-dancing kit with a DVD that features 'sexy dance tracks' for six-year-olds.

The APA report found relationships with parents, teachers and peers can also contribute to the sexualisation of girls.

Parents may send their daughters the message that the most important goal is maintaining an attractive physical appearance and the APA called on parents to take a more active role in forming their children's sexual self-image, and to exert consumer pressure on manufacturers and advertisers.

Director for UnitingJustice Australia Rev Elenie Poulos said it is a privilege and a blessing to grant children a childhood.

"It is a privilege we deny them



when we encourage them to think they have to be sexy to be successful."

Originally, women were supposed to be liberated by being able to expose themselves but the expectation for them to be sexy and sexually active has become another form of oppression.

"It is not liberating for young women to be told every day that their only power is in their sexual currency. It is not liberating to convey to women that their freedom lies in participating in their own exploitation," Ms Reist said.

She believes young women are facing huge pressure to conform to a sexualised norm, that women have an insatiable appetite for sex, and that if a woman is not having sex daily there is something wrong with her.

Ms Reist also highlighted the need to raise decent men and that boys are also demeaned and brutalised by a culture that conditions them to treat women as sex objects.

Associate Director for

UnitingCare Colleen Geyer said as a society we don't put enough attention into valuing children and "valuing children's right to a childhood".

"Having to have a certain look, act a certain way, and be sure of themselves sexually, is not a realistic way of growing healthy adults," she said.

The APA report recognised organised religion and other ethical instruction as important alternatives to popular culture.

Ms Poulos said it is unrealistic to expect the practice of sexualising children will change on its own.

"It's up to all of us to take up this issue...we can't expect things to change if we're not prepared to act ourselves.

"The Church's commitment to the dignity of every person as a child of God, the commitment to the wellbeing of our children would call us to respond to this."

James Pembroke is a second year journalism student at the University of Queensland

From Page 1

Some women ministers told *Journey* about feeling threatened in ecumenical settings and in one case, a minister from another church refused to work with a female Uniting Church minister.

Rev Yvonne McRostie found out after a wedding that the couple had requested not to have her because she was a woman.

"But they were glad that they went ahead with it and that I did a 'good' wedding," she said.

"I found out later that my male colleague had told them that they either had me or they went to another church," she said.

Minister of the Word candidate Melanie Perkins said there are still some in the Uniting Church who are against the ordination of women.

"I think it is fair to say that there are still some, including women, who do not believe that ordained ministry is the place for women.

"While they have their reasons, I think it is very sad that they would accept women in almost every other conceivable role and yet don't believe that women could be called to ordained leadership.

"Either God's got it wrong calling women when God has no business to, or we as women have got it wrong."

There are also many within the Uniting Church who instantly discount the views of feminist Christians because of their ideology and image as women.

Ms Perkins said she quickly shakes off any negativity when it comes to her gender.

"Like most women I have met in Ministry, any objections I encounter



Minister of the Word candidate and photographer Melanie Perkins. Photo by Osker Lau

on the grounds of gender I usually ignore, or find some creative way around them," said Ms Perkins.

"I have spoken with a number of women ministers who have been expected by some in their congregations to be both 'the minister' and 'the minister's wife' – helping out in the kitchen, cleaning, baking, etc – rolled into one.

I don't hear male ministers having the same problems."

Central Queensland Presbytery

Minister Rev Kaye Ronalds said affirmative action gave her the opportunity to learn the ropes and to see role models beyond her local church.

She spoke of learning from trail blazing women in Uniting Church ministry like Rev Norma Spear, Rev Elizabeth McChesney-Clark, Rev Geraldine Wheeler, and Rev Jan Chalmers.

"In order to have gender, cultural, theological, age balance in senior

roles there needs to be a large enough pool of candidates with the mix of skills and experience.

"Affirmative action helps to achieve that, although there is sometimes resentment expressed by the ones who feel they missed out because the organisation had to get its quota of women/ youth/ ethnic representatives."

Thirty years after the initial statement endorsing women in ordained ministry, parts of the church remained male-dominated.

The Uniting Church has had a female President, but the Queensland Synod is the only Synod not to have had a female Moderator and women serving as Presbytery Ministers have been rare.

Ms Perkins said that leadership roles in the church should be gained on merit, but doubted there has never been a woman qualified for the job of Moderator in Queensland.

"I can't believe that either no woman has had the necessary credentials or that the Spirit couldn't find any suitable women so far.

"I have often wondered why a church such as the Uniting Church, that by and large really seems to value the leadership of women, has struggled to elect one to Moderator in Queensland.

"I can only believe that this is one place or role that is slow to change, particularly in Queensland.

"Perhaps we still believe that we are in a hierarchical system and there are enough scared to have a woman 'in charge'."

Ms Perkins said gender itself is not the issue when it comes to being called to ministry, the issue is other people's attitudes to their call.

"All the women I have met in

The delusions of Richard Dawkins

By Peter Harrison

IN JANUARY 2007 I moved from Australia to Oxford to take up a Chair in Science and Religion.

When I explain to people over here what I do, the conversation takes a fairly predictable course: 'Science and religion? – uhhh, that's an interesting combination' or, 'science and religion – how do they go together?'

In short, I encounter the kind of puzzlement that I might have expected had I said that I was a Professor of 'philosophy and sheep-dip', an antipodean academic specialty that readers of a certain age will no doubt recognise.

I usually respond to this bewilderment by mumbling something about being a historian, and deliver a brief and now well-rehearsed speech about how science and religion have had quite intimate and generally positive interactions throughout history.

Almost invariably the conversation next turns to Richard Dawkins. 'Have you met Dawkins, yet?' Or, 'What are you going to do about Dawkins?'

Richard Dawkins, as many of you will know, is an evolutionary biologist who writes books on popular science. His official position here at Oxford is the 'Charles Simonyi Chair in the Public Understanding of Science'.

In the past few years Dawkins has become a vocal and increasingly shrill critic of religion, apparently believing that attacking religion assists the public in their understand of science.

His efforts to discredit religion reached their zenith with the publication last year of *The God Delusion*, which appeared with an

accompanying Channel 4 television series called 'The Root of all Evil' (and no, it's not money). The book has since become a *New York Times* best seller, and both it and the television series have generated lively discussion.

The God Delusion sets out a two-pronged attack on religion.

First Dawkins attempts to show the irrationality of religious belief by attacking some of the standard philosophical arguments for God's existence.

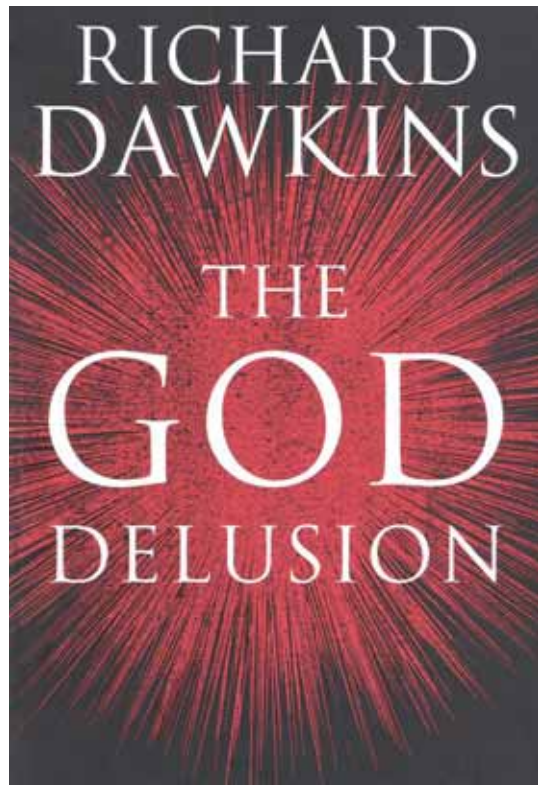
Unfortunately, Dawkins has blundered into a field he knows very little about. He misunderstands the logic of the arguments and how they function in a religious context. His own naïve and plodding counter-arguments would make a philosophy undergraduate cringe, and a number of reviewers have mercifully dispatched them (the arguments, not the undergraduates).

Philosopher and self-professed 'hard line Darwinian' Michael Ruse has remarked that Dawkins' efforts make him 'embarrassed to be an atheist'.

The second theme of the book is that religious folk—'faith-heads', as Dawkins fondly calls them—are not only irrational, but plain dangerous. To support this proposition, Dawkins has compiled a catalogue of rabid fundamentalists and religious fanatics. These figures are presumed to be representative of the whole of the religious enterprise.

Here our author betrays a curious inability to distinguish between the suicide bomber and Mother Teresa.

The book contains more factual and logical blunders than can be dealt with here. However, it has two general weaknesses that are



worth highlighting. First, the case presented violates a standard principle of academic debate—that the most powerful critiques are those that succeed against the strongest version of the opponent's position.

Dawkins has simply not bothered to familiarise himself with the vast literature on philosophy of religion and science and religion. He has not taken on the most sophisticated representatives of the religious viewpoint. Instead, he finds himself a few easy targets and scores cheap points.

On the same theme, as we have seen, his exemplars of religion are an assortment of religious extremists whom few persons of faith would recognise as fellow travellers.

Dawkins has nothing to say, for example, about William Wilberforce, whose religious convictions motivated his mission to abolish the slave trade, or Bishop Desmond Tutu who campaigned against apartheid, or, for that matter, the millions of ordinary people who act charitably and seek to do justice out of a sense of religious calling.

The second general weakness of the book is that Dawkins persists with a quaint and erroneous nineteenth-century view of the relation between science and religion that historians of science now routinely refer to as 'the conflict myth'.

In reality, science and religion were rarely at odds in the past.

Indeed, the science which Dawkins lauds as the only rational approach to reality originated in the Christian West. Its seventeenth-century founders—Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Robert Boyle, and Isaac Newton—were possessed of deep religious convictions and their scientific endeavours were grounded in religious presuppositions about the ultimate intelligibility of the natural world.

Another instance of Dawkins' old-fashioned nineteenth-century perspective is his blind faith in atheistic humanism. 'If only we did not believe in God, the world would be a wonderful place', is his simplistic nostrum. (John Lennon said it much better in *Imagine*.) This is just wishful thinking.

Perhaps it was a credible position before two World Wars, the horrors of Nazism, and the purges of Stalin and Mao.

These human catastrophes can hardly be attributed to religion.

Neither do they provide much comfort to those, who like Dawkins, seem to think that atheism is a panacea for the world's problems.

Yet in all this, it is worth conceding that religious individuals can be deluded and that there are wicked and corrupt manifestations of religion.

But this is hardly new. Warnings about the dangers of perverted religion have been a central aspect of the Judeo-Christian tradition from its beginning.

Witness the attacks in the Hebrew bible on false gods and idolatry; the prophets' condemnation of religious ceremony divorced from social justice; Jesus' denunciation of pharisaic hypocrisy.

Consider, too, the religious reformations of the sixteenth century; scientist-theologian Blaise Pascal's dismissal of the over-rationalised 'proofs' for God's existence; the critiques of state religion mounted by Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard; and the contention of neo-orthodox theologian Karl Barth that all human religion is 'unbelief'.

Beyond this, in the Christian tradition we also find a sobering account of human nature that provides an explanation of why good things are easily perverted.

This view is consistent with both the dismal record of human history and with the existence of depraved forms of religion.

Thus while it accords with the unfortunate examples that fill the pages of Dawkins' book, it is fundamentally at odds with his wide-eyed optimism and his atheistic and rationalist prescriptions.

Yes, Professor Dawkins, religion can go horribly wrong. But we didn't need a dogmatic diatribe from you to tell us that.

Peter Harrison is the Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at the University of Oxford

VISION FOR MISSION TEAM

The Vision for Mission Facilitation Team has recently clarified the roles of its members and is calling for expressions of interest for these positions:

CONVENANTORS

Assist congregational groups and individuals to develop proposals for missional projects.

PROCESS MANAGER

Manages support, evaluation and refining of mission projects.

TEAM LEADER

Coordinates activities of the team, works with the Advocate to connect with the wider church.

FINANCIAL COORDINATOR

Is responsible for the financial monitoring of the Vision for Mission.

PASTORAL SUPPORT PERSON

Develops prayer support for projects and their sponsors, offers theological reflection and monitors group health for the Vision for Mission Team.

For the position descriptions or for more information on the Vision for Mission visit

www.visionformission.org.au or call

Duncan Macleod, 0439 828 718 or 3377 9809

Expressions of Interest due by 1 June 2007



Ministry with a difference – Wesley Mission Perth Full time placement

Wesley is one of four congregations making up the Uniting Church in the City. The purpose of the Uniting Church in the City is missional - to enable the four congregations to work collaboratively to initiate new mission and ministry projects which will touch and transform the lives of the people of the city.

There are four ordained placements within the Uniting Church in the City with each accountable to the UCIC Church Council. All are expected to work as part of a team ministry, sharing responsibility for the total mission and ministry of the UCIC.

Wesley Mission Perth, located in central Perth, is a welcoming, inclusive and accepting congregation with a generosity of spirit. As a result it is a very diverse congregation, including people from a range of cultures, people with disabilities and people from a variety of backgrounds. Wesley has developed varying styles and times of worship. Wesley is a permission-giving congregation.

The profile is available from

Rev. Dr Ian Tozer, Joint Associate General Secretary (Pastoral), WA Uniting Church, GPO Box M952, Perth WA 6843

email: ian.tozer@wa.uca.org.au

OR from <http://home.wa.uca.org.au/> (Wesley Mission Section).

Applications should be forwarded to Revd. Dr Ian Tozer and close on 31st May 2007

Easter gathering rocks Toowoomba

By Phil Smith

THERE'S SOMETHING tribal about worshipping with a few thousand other Christians on the pivot-point of the Church calendar.

If ever you have wondered how hymns of praise sound when around 10,000 people belt them out, the Resurrection Sunday evening service in Toowoomba is not to be missed!

The congregation sang *How Great is Our God* as the Bible Society combined churches service closed the Australian Gospel Music Festival (AGMF) for 2007.

Nine years since its humble beginning in the Garden City's Queens Park, AGMF is still about the music and tent camping in the city, and more.

The headline acts came from New Zealand, the United States and South Africa, backed by dozens of quality national and local musicians.

From ear splitting Day of Fire and chart topping Super Chick, to the jazz of SCAT and the didgeridoo of Adrian Ross, all tastes were catered for.

With The Lads unable to arrange appropriate visas at the last minute, local heroes Soulframe stepped into the breach with lead singer Mutto showing there was life after *Australian Idol*.

On Easter Sunday morning dozens of local churches enjoyed the musical ministry of the visiting bands helping to lead worship around Toowoomba.

Yet there was more than good times and entertainment this year.

The Cross Alone

From the first hymns of worship in the Good Friday church service, the Australian Gospel Music Festival took a harder edge in its ninth year.

The festival has become a significant national event in terms of music, culture and economics, with around 30,000 attendees injecting millions into Toowoomba's economy.

While AGMF is a key avenue for promoting Australian independent musicians, and a very profitable venue for some, the festival's currency is still beyond the not-so-mighty dollar.

Toowoomba City Church minister Pastor Ian Shelton warned the Friday congregation against worshipping a good time, slick worship, mega churches and denominational pride.

Calling the young families and teenagers to take up the cross, Mr Shelton quoted Paul's message to the Corinthians regarding God's eternal wisdom in Christ crucified.

Biker and Reverend Doctor John Smith may have been reading 'WWJD' wrist bands when he asked, "Who would Jesus bomb?"

The God Squad founder expressed his anger at a generation

that has largely succumbed to a comfortable western Christianity and does not even raise its voice against war and violence.

He asked why the Church has bought into the gross materialism of Australia in the 21st century.

"When I started youth work, old people got depressed. Then it was the mid-life crisis. Then people

in their thirties. Then it became the highest suicide rate was among young men in their twenties.

"Now we have primary school age and kindergarten kids going to therapists every week because of depression!"

"A good stock exchange will not save the human soul. When are we going to wake up?"



Dressed in a "suit of newspaper", Logan Uniting Church Creative Arts Coordinator Craig Burnett entertained 5000 people at the Fancy Pants Ball in Toowoomba as lead vocalist of the explosive jazz band SCAT. The Ball was the closing celebration for attendees at this years AGMF. Mr Burnett's smooth vocals and SCAT's toe tapping rhythm has seen the band quickly develop a reputation for entertaining, high energy gigs.

Photo courtesy of SCAT

"That is why I am committed to the teaching of Jesus, who said 'what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and loses his soul?'"

Applied Faith

The challenge to action was reflected in new initiatives for 2007.

In the Scripture Union Café, the Australian Christian Lobby (ACL) hosted a series of political forums.

A former prostitute asked listeners to consider the real impact of selling sex, legally or otherwise.

One of the 43 West Papuans now living in Melbourne under a protection visa told about life under the Indonesian military. Opposing members of parliament shared what it is to apply Christian faith within their political parties.

In a federal election year, ACL Chief of Staff David Yates admitted the Lobby was walking a tightrope.

"We've got to be a voice for values, speaking in a balanced, measured way, presenting a mainstream Christian perspective.

We feel both major parties are responding in a positive way to that, and that can only add to the

influence of Christian voices when it comes to the federal election."

Church Unity

AGMF organisers remain committed to the witness of an effective, unified Christian church through the festival.

Chief Executive Officer Isaac Moody began his work as a volunteer with the festival nine years ago.

"The things a community chooses to celebrate are an indication of its spiritual health," he said.

The unity within Toowoomba's Christian community has become a powerful witness to the many organisations involved in the mammoth event.

Local and state government, police and logistics contractors all commented on the sense of one Church.

Organisers have deliberately positioned the festival as a vehicle to promote denominational cooperation, even down to the release of this year's compilation of original worship songs on a CD.

The tracks on *The Cross Alone* point directly to the central point of Christian faith: Christ's death and resurrection.



Executive Assistant to the Director

UnitingCare Queensland is the health and community service provider of The Uniting Church in Australia (Qld. Synod). UnitingCare's work is characterised by:

- Delivering high quality, client focussed care
- Reaching out to people in need
- Speaking out for fairness and justice
- Working for the good of the whole community.

With over 15000 staff in more than 400 geographic locations across Queensland, it is one of Australia's largest not for profit health and community service providers, delivering quality and compassionate care through its network of agencies including Blue Care, Lifeline, UnitingCare Health, Wesley Missions – Brisbane and Ipswich and Crossroads.

An interesting opportunity is available as Executive Assistant to the Director of UnitingCare Qld. This role will see the successful candidate support the Director in a complete range of responsibilities including diary management, minute taking, meeting and function coordination, document preparation, coordination of office support and completion of small projects. The position will particularly appeal to candidates wishing to work in a community service organisation committed to the values and ethos of the Uniting Church.

We are inviting applications from Executive Assistants with a minimum of five years experience, including advanced Microsoft Word, and solid PowerPoint/Excel skills.

If you can offer excellent communication skills, feel comfortable in dealing with people from all levels, have the ability to prioritise and manage a large workload, and would like the opportunity to take on a one-on-one role with the Director, then this position may be for you.

If you would like further information and/or would like to obtain a job description you can email uc.pa@ucareqld.com.au. Alternatively please submit your resume and a covering letter by close of business on **25 May 2007** by email or by post to Human Resources, UnitingCare Queensland, PO Box 2248, MILTON 4064.



MINISTER

St Andrew's Uniting Church, Richmond NSW seeks a Minister of the Word to provide vision, leadership and spiritual nurture to a growing and energetic congregation. This exciting position requires a commitment to support, equip and encourage a diverse congregation across a wide range of ages and backgrounds.

The successful applicant will be Leader of a ministry team which includes three part time Lay Ministry Workers, and will be involved in equipping, resourcing and encouraging a range of leaders within the life of the church.

A sound knowledge of and commitment to the Ethos and Polity of the Uniting Church in Australia is essential.

CONTACT: Pastor John Thornton (JNC Convenor)
jthorn14@tpg.com.au OR 0419 630 602
INFORMATION: www.richmonduniting.org.au/minister.htm
CLOSING: Friday 8 June 2007

WHAT'S ON

May 4-7. Round-About Arts & Crafts show at Bulimba Uniting. Contact Wendy on 3399 8657 or email wendy.mason@hotmail.com.

May 9, 9-11am. Critical incident/crisis management workshop at Wesley Hospital Auditorium Foyer, Auchenflower, Brisbane. Consulting and Counselling Psychologist Dr John Barletta leads workshop on "Supporting Others (and self) through critical incidents" (crisis management). Workshop \$15 (un-waged), \$20 (waged). Bookings essential. Contact Rev Rowena Harris on 3322 7266 or email rowena.harris@wesley.com.au.

May 16. Frontier Services Auxiliary and The Gap Day Fellowship musical morning tea at The Gap Uniting Church 1050 Waterworks Rd, The Gap. Contact Jessie Logan on 3278 1868 or Vera Buchley on 3351 3793 for more information.

May 17-19. Wheller Gardens Auxiliary rummage sale. Uhl Hall 930 Gympie Rd, Chermide. 17-18 open 8.30am-3pm. 19 open 8.30am-12 noon. Pre-loved clothes, books and knick-knacks.

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

May 24-26. Aspley Uniting Church 18th Annual Arts & Crafts Show. 748 Robinson Rd Aspley. Official Opening 7.30pm 24 May. \$10 inc supper and music by The Cascades. 25th/26th May open 9.30am-3.30pm. \$5 including morning/afternoon tea. Contact Helen Dart on 3312 4541 or email belendart@bigpond.com.

May 25-27. John L Bell visits Chermide-Kedron Uniting Church. John L Bell is a writer, composer, musician, liturgist and inspiration. Contact Sara Brunt on 3359 9642 or email mrpres@dovenetq.net.au.

May 26, 2pm. Thanksgiving in flowers, song and dance at Sandgate Uniting Church, 116 Board Street, Deagon. Demonstration by florist Robert Manton with choral music, liturgical dance and afternoon tea. Entry \$10. Arrangements for sale. Contact Bobbie Jeays on 3269 6565 or email djeays@bigpond.net.au.

May 29, 10am. Meeting of retired Ministers, their Spouses & Widowed Members at The Gap Uniting Church 1050 Waterworks Road. Morning Tea from 10am, lunch at 12noon. \$13.50/person. Guest speaker Uniting Church President Rev Gregor Henderson speaking on aspects of 'Living in our Missionary Church'. Contact Jim and Jill Tame on 3891 6462 or email jnjtame@dovenetq.net.au or jnjtame@bigpond.net.au.

May 30, 10am. Australian Church Women musical morning tea. St Andrews hall, Creek St Brisbane City. Note change of day to Wednesday. More information phone M.J. Hunt on 3358 4349.

May 31-June 1. National Working Group on Worship (Brisbane).

June 8-10. Fijian National Conference (Brisbane).

June 13-14, 9am-4pm. Orientation to Mental Health Pastoral Care at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Hawthorne St, Woolloongabba. Ecumenical training event including a workshop, story listening, observing a role play, supervised visit to someone with a mental illness. Registrations close 25th May. \$30. Contact Helen Prior on 3240 2111 or email helen_prior@health.qld.gov.au.

June 18-24. Blue Care Awareness Week. Participate in 'Blue Dress Day', or visit a Blue Care centre near you. Contact Hugo Muianga on 3377 3372 or email hm.muianga@bluecare.org.au.

June 28, 10.30am. Mission Thanksgiving Service, St Andrews Uniting Church Ann St, Brisbane. Guest speaker Kerry Enright, the new National Director for Uniting International Mission. Bring lunch and meet for fellowship after the Service. Tea/coffee available. Service organised by the U.C. International Mission Support Group (Qld.). Contact Pat Riddel at vpriidel@optusnet.com.au.

July 1-17. Global Walking in Fiji. A cross cultural experience in Fiji for 18-25yr olds. Contact Louise Edwards on 3849 8548 or email edwardslj@hotmail.com.

July 15. Children's Ministry Workshop at Broadwater Rd UC, Mansfield. Contact Paul Yarrow on 3377 9866 or email Paul.Yarrow@yacmu.com.au.

Want to promote an event?

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



John Bell

Bell's bonus visit for Brisbane

INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED hymn writer, author and occasional broadcaster Rev John Bell, pictured, will be visiting Brisbane in May for a series of workshops on worship and spirituality.

Mr Bell will present on models of worship leadership, Celtic spirituality and his primary passion - congregational song.

Workshop organiser Rev Yvonne McRostie said Bell's visit was a real bonus for church communities in Brisbane.

"Rev Bell's ecumenical and inclusive approach to music for worship has received acclaim world-wide," she said.

"He is an inspirational man who is primarily concerned with the renewal of congregational worship at the grass roots level."

Mr Bell, an ordained minister of the Church of Scotland, is a member of the Iona Community where he develops resources in the areas of music and worship with the Wild Goose Resource Group.

His work has been honoured by the Royal School of Church Music of which he is a fellow and the University of Glasgow, which bestowed an honorary Doctorate.

The workshops will be held at the Chermide-Kedron Uniting Church in Brisbane from May 25-27.

For more information and registration details contact Ms Sara Brunt on 07 3359 9642 or email mrpres@dovenetq.net.au

Study crucifixion and art at Trinity

TRINITY THEOLOGICAL College is offering two brand new courses in Semester Two 2007.

On Wednesday evenings Rev Dr Geoff Thompson will be teaching 'God Crucified'.

This course will explore what actually happened when Jesus was crucified.

Particular attention will be given to the way certain atonement theories have prevented many Christians from seeing the cross as the revelation of God's character and identity.

The course will explore some of the key strands of such theologies, with a particular focus on the work of the twentieth century theologian Jurgen Moltmann.

Rev Dr Geraldine Wheeler will

be teaching 'Worship, Theology and Visual Art' on Thursday evenings.

This course will teach how worship, theology and visual art can explore the visual dimension of worship throughout Christian history and in the different traditions of Christianity.

It looks at the use of icons, images and visual art and the theological debates associated with this use, including the periods of iconoclasm.

Students will be encouraged to develop their own theological understanding and study the approach of particular artists.

For more information contact

Trinity Theological College on 3377 9951 or email ttc@ucaqld.com.au



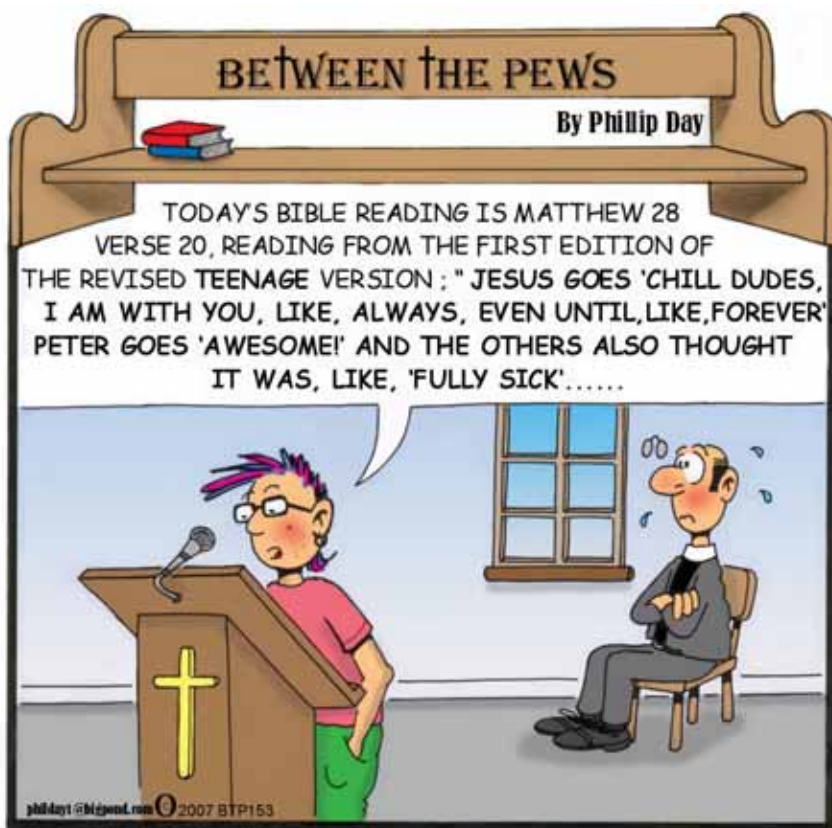
Mission services need

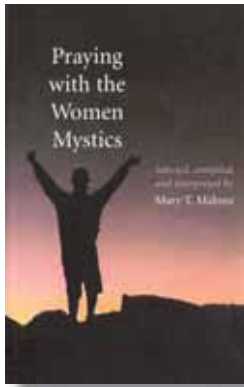
MEET DR Kerry Enright, above, the new National Director for Uniting International Mission.

Dr Enright will be the speaker at the annual Mission Thanksgiving Service in St Andrews Uniting Church in Ann St at 10.30am on Thursday, 28 June.

You are invited to bring your lunch and meet for a time of fellowship in the Hall after the Service.

This year the service is organized by the U.C. International Mission Support Group (Qld.).





Praying with the Women Mystics

By Mary T. Malone
The Columba Press
RRP \$19.95

In this simple book, Mary Malone reclaims the voices of twenty-six women mystics.

Their writings, which were often birthed from experiences of suffering, offer glimpses into the ways in which Christian women experienced and expressed their faith.

Malone invites us to share something of the mystic journey through seventy-five prayer-poems from these women.

Praying with the Women Mystics consists of three parts. The first is an easy to read overview of the riches of women mystics largely unknown within the Christian tradition, and an explanation of the way in which their writing sought to give expression to their awareness of God and God's love.

Malone's hope is that the recovery of these voices will release new sources of Christian wisdom for the benefit of the wider community.

The second part is a brief biography of each of the women.

It was an educational delight to read these simple and informative stories of such women as Perpetua of Carthage (martyred in c.203); Dorothy Day (1897-1980) a mother from Brooklyn, New York; and Macrina (327-379) who influenced the vocational choices of her brothers Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa.

The third and largest part of the book is the prayer-poems of these women. Malone has re-interpreted many of them into contemporary contexts and language in order to make the writing accessible to people of faith today.

The prayer-poems connect with both reflective and active

REVIEWS

spirituality offering a resource for personal devotion and an invitation to share in another's experience of the holy.

For those who appreciate the richness of feminine God language this book is a feast for the journey.

Carol Bennett is minister with the Toowong and Bardon congregations



The Manga Bible - NT Raw

By Siku
Hodder & Stoughton
RRP \$19.95

Christian fans of comic books might remember the picture Bibles from the 1980s, an ambitious attempt to illustrate the whole Bible in comic book form. I haven't seen anything like it since - until now.

The Manga Bible is a picture Bible for the next generation. Rather than taking the comprehensive approach, the authors in this case have chosen a minimal 'edited highlights' version. Almost every book gets a mention, but the whole package is only a few dozen pages.

Manga is a specific kind of comic that is very dynamic and fast moving, with an emphasis on conveying emotions and action. It's quite stylised, with lots of flowing lines and sharp edges.

I really enjoyed the fusion of western and Japanese styles that make up the artwork in *The Manga Bible*. The nearest thing I can compare it to is Joe Madureira from the Uncanny X-Men or Hawk from www.applegeeks.com.

The one reason I have for not unreservedly telling you to immediately go and buy this is the editing. In all fairness, when trying to fit the whole New Testament into a few dozen illustrated pages you are going to be leaving some stuff out.

I was secretly hoping for a really meaty story which leveraged the comic form to really set the scene.

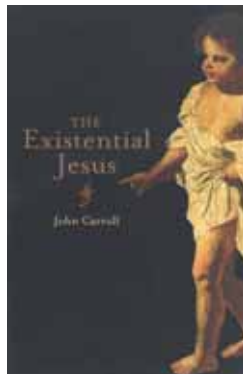
Unfortunately, I find they have tried to put so much into such a small space, it all feels a bit breathless. None of the characters are developed in any real way (even Jesus is somewhat two-dimensional, so to speak). It felt like watching a teaser trailer when you were expecting a feature film.

Overall, this would be a great book to have in the back of the church, or give to a friend who likes comics.

It doesn't take long to read and it touches on so many stories in the NT that it's bound to start some conversations.

I can't wait for the planned (larger) Old Testament version!

Frith Footitt is a PhD Candidate in the School of Engineering Systems at the Queensland University of Technology



The Existential Jesus

By John Carroll
Scribe Publications
RRP \$35.00

This is an intriguing, fascinating, beautifully written, but ultimately unpersuasive book. Carroll is LaTrobe University's Professor of Sociology, and one of Australia's leading public intellectuals.

He is an agnostic fascinated by Jesus. Acknowledging Jesus' pivotal place in the formation of Western culture, he proposes (surprisingly for an agnostic) that the present ills of modern Western culture require a return to Jesus' pattern of human existence.

Carroll offers a reading of the gospel of Mark. In his own re-telling, he highlights Mark's literary genius, and brings to the surface the uneven, subversive

and haunting elements of Mark's narrative too often ignored by the church.

His literary exposition of Mark's passion narrative is brilliant: he highlights how Mark takes many themes treated separately in earlier sections of the gospel and subtly weaves them together in the passion.

Carroll sees Mark telling a very different story of Jesus from the story classically told by the church, of which he is especially dismissive.

Carroll interprets the agony of Gethsemane and the cry of dereliction, as Jesus forsaking any belief in God in order to be truly human.

The idea that the Jesus story raises fundamental questions about the meaning of 'God' should not overly trouble Christian faith.

After all, some early Christians were charged with atheism: by identifying Jesus and God, they unsettled prevailing ideas of 'God'.

This is quite different, however, from using the story of Jesus to reject the very idea of God.

Carroll achieves the latter only by projecting his own agnosticism upon the text and ignoring much of its first century context. First-century Judaism displayed much ferment about God's nature - but not God's existence.

The Existential Jesus should not be too readily dismissed by Christians. It is a reminder that the Christian faith does unsettle conventional ideas of 'God'. As such it could serve as a starting point for genuinely public discussions of Jesus' significance and the content of the church's faith.

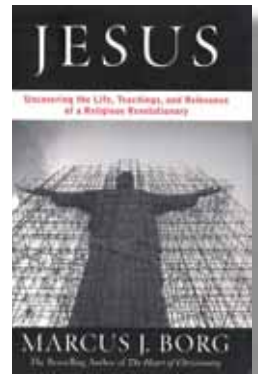
Geoff Thompson is the Academic Dean at Trinity Theological College

Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary

By Marcus Borg
HarperSanFrancisco
RRP \$39.95

The cover of *Jesus: Uncovering the Life, Teachings, and Relevance of a Religious Revolutionary* displaying a statue of Christ enclosed in a scaffold makes a great deal of sense as you work your way through Borg's writing.

For Borg, the Jesus we know is constructed. Borg is quite confronting as he tackles important questions concerning the construction of Jesus as he attempts to take readers back to an understanding of the "pre Easter Jesus."



There is little doubt that much of Borg's scholarship is excellent as he engages in historical and contextual issues relating to Jesus' identity and teaching.

His conceptualisation of the "pre Easter Jesus" may seem helpful, in particular, his critique of the development of a kind superman view of Jesus. On the other hand there is a lack of coherence between the pre and post Easter Jesus.

Despite his scholarly approach there is a 'reader beware' to add.

Borg is clear in his assertion that he does not see the pre Easter Jesus as God, nor that Jesus understood himself to be God.

This is inconsistent with the accepted Christian understanding.

Whilst questions about how Jesus understood his identity may be important, the conclusion Borg reaches embroils him in the Christological debates of the first four centuries of the church.

Borg's tendency to lump Christians into two groups, conservative 'Biblical literalist' and 'emerging more than literal', is too simplistic.

His classification seems to deny a tradition of interpretation that has long seen the scriptures as far more than literal whilst maintaining key doctrinal positions. Many readers may find it difficult to identify with either group he describes.

Overall I found this book interesting, especially in terms of his exegesis. Borg's language is not overly intellectual and thus is accessible to a wider audience.

Ultimately Borg plots a course away from rigid literalism without totally undermining the Scriptures as unique, prophetic and apostolic.

Whilst some of his claims are difficult to agree with he challenges us with how to be Christian and how to read the Scriptures without blinkered eyes.

Peter Lockhart is the minister with Clayfield / Hamilton Uniting Church

More reviews available at www.journeyonline.com.au including:

The Cross Alone: Songs of Unity

by AGMF Worship

I found *The Cross Alone* an approachable alternative to the Hillsong style. While it's possible to apply the Uniting Church doctrine of singing every chorus twice, these are not necessarily repetitive, clap-along songs.

The CD comes with a booklet of lyrics.

Phil Smith



Behold the Man: A Therapist's Meditations on the Passion of Jesus Christ.

By Brian Thorpe



While it is unlikely that Thorne's small, fairly traditional book of meditations will evoke great passions it will find a place in some local study groups.

Noel Park

The Fragrance of God: Reflections on Finding God through the Beauty and Glory of the Natural World

By Vigen Guroian



A series of extended meditations by an Armenian Orthodox theologian and passionate gardener. Meditative material that brings you prose and poetry from the loam.

Heather DenHouting

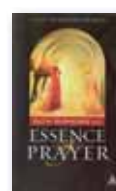
Essence of Prayer

by Ruth Burrows OCD

Are we to be Mary or Martha? Carmelite Nun Ruth Burrows, challenges the way we pray.

Ruth Burrows persistently yet gently "took me in," achieving a transforming, intimate appreciation of prayer for which I am grateful.

Krishna Buhler



6 May: Pine Rivers

The Pine Rivers Congregation located in the North Brisbane area has approximately 450 members. Three services of worship are held each Sunday.

Pine Rivers has a very active youth, children's and family ministry including very active Girls' and Boys' Brigades.

There is a growing number of enthusiastic young adults who give spiritual support and encouragement to each other under the guidance of dedicated leaders.

The families and children's ministry area is ever expanding.

'Grandmas', members of the congregation give support to mums and generally help where they are able.

Our congregation continues to provide ministry to the wider community by holding Divorce and Recovery workshops and parenting courses regularly.

Crossroads brings people together from a number of different areas. Emergency Relief has contact with many of the needy people in our community and they provide this service twice each week.

"Time Out" for women provides a weekly contact with women in the community as well as meeting a vital need for members of the Church community.

The congregation also has a Ladies Fellowship group, a craft group, a 'caring program', ministry to men and all members are encouraged to link with a home group or Bible study. The *Just Walk Across the Room* study enthused and challenged us to develop real relationships with people outside the Church.

Here are our Prayer Points:

- For the person who God has his hand on to lead this congregation into the future, to hear and respond to that call.

- For the congregation to look forward to where God will lead us, while acknowledging grief at the retirement of our minister of 17 years.

- Praise God for the large number of volunteers who work tirelessly in our congregation. Pray for their continued enthusiastic involvement.

PRAYER DIARY

- For the leaders of our children's groups, the Brigade leaders and youth group leaders.

- For ministry to the community through R.E and other programs.

13 May: Emerald/Fernlees

At Emerald/Fernlees Parish we provide two places of worship: Emerald every week with family worship and Sunday school, and Fernlees where worship occurs on the 2nd and 4th Sundays.

Our core values as a Church are to worship, serve and care. It is our hope and prayer that these three core values will be the basis of who we are and what we do.

Emerald is in a unique situation within Central Queensland as it is the centre of the Highlands.

Emerald's major source of growth comes from the coal industry and the numerous services that seek to support this industry.

One of the major concerns within this community is the cost of housing. Many people on moderate incomes cannot afford to stay in this community, creating a recipe for financial and emotional hardships.

This year the citrus farmers will be given permission to replant after a Citrus Canker outbreak. Fruit will take five years before it is picked.

Pray for the farming community as it seeks to replant.

The Emerald Uniting Church is seeking to develop a more effective pastoral care model this year. Pray for us as we seek to do this.

We are focussing on Youth Ministry, in particular the Growing Apostles model. Pray for leaders to emerge to run these groups.

Pray for our youth band as they prepare to lead worship.

We combine with the Baptist Church to provide a Priority One group to Grade 6 and 7's.

We are seeking to grow an evening worship service.

A small group of people who have participated in the Lenten Bible Study are keen to explore some sort of evening fellowship. Pray for discernment for this group.

We are seeking to involve more lay people in worship leadership in 2007. Pray for leaders and in particular lay preachers to emerge.

In 2006 we commenced a Playgroup as a way of reaching parents and children we have

baptised. We pray for the ongoing success of this group.

Our Church participates in the cooperative program offering Religious Education to children in over six schools. The schools have recently submitted joint funding applications for future Chaplaincy positions. This is a statement about the importance of providing teaching and pastoral care to children. We pray that these applications will be successful.

Pray for our September event 'Past, Present and Future'. The Uniting Church is turning 30, our building in Emerald is turning 20, Lifeline in this town has just turned 10, and Avalon (our new Blue Care aged care facility) is having its official opening.

Celebration is a high priority as we give thanks for God's work in the past and as we seek his guidance for the future.

We also give thanks for the faithful men and women who have served our Church over the years who have either moved away or have entered their eternal rest.



Queensland Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman presents Justice Alan Demack with a 50-year lay preacher certificate Photo by Evan Hooper

Alan Demack: 50 years of lay preaching

"I HAVE learned that lay preaching is a whole of life activity drawn from the whole-minded study of the whole of the Scriptures," said The Honourable Justice Alan Demack AO when the Moderator presented his 50-year certificate for lay preaching.

"This is a wonderful time to be a Christian", Justice Demack told the Central Queensland Presbytery.

"We face two great challenges: to express the Christian faith in words and concepts which can be understood by people living in the twenty-first century, and to find ways to express that faith in the community life which surrounds us."

"The first task is proving extremely difficult and the second can only happen if churches train lay people to be scripturally literate and then listen to their attempts to express that knowledge in their daily lives."



Former Telstra engineer Trevor Smith, left, got plenty of help during his volunteering stint with Outback Links on a Northern Territory cattle station. Photo courtesy of Frontier Services

Lending a hand Outback style

SENIORS ARE increasingly getting involved in Outback Links, a program run by Frontier Services which places skilled volunteers for short periods with remote rural families who can use a helping hand.

Over the past two years Outback Links volunteers have assisted for two to three weeks with everything from computing to childminding, accounting and fencing. Volunteers range from retired farmers to plumbers and senior travellers taking a break during a round-Australia holiday.

"Frequently, the most urgent request from rural families, apart from rain, is for someone to fulfil a short-term need," said Co-ordinator Davida Melksham.

"Childminding is a good example, if one parent has had to leave the property to find work. Assistance with routine farm work, such as fencing, is another, as many farmers can no longer afford to pay for outside help."

For their part, volunteers gain unique experience and insights working in remote areas and help sustain a way of life that is central to our heritage.

Bobbi Perkins found herself at a cattle station near Barcardine

looking after three young boys while their mother was in hospital.

"Thankfully the three boys were very good, because I'm not young, I'm 70 this year," Bobbi said.

"I shared their problems, their challenges as a family running a rural company, the distance – just driving so far to meet the school bus each day. It really opened my eyes."

Outback Links ensures the best fit between volunteers and host families.

For more information go to

www.frontierservices.org/outbacklinks,

phone 1300 731 349 or email outbacklinks@bigpond.com

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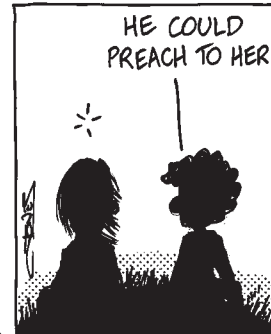
ACCOMMODATION

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.

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



Disjoining theology

In Graham Wright's letter (March *Journey*) linking our response to global warming with the second coming of Christ, he seems to be referring to the dispensational theology developed by John Darby in Ireland and England early in the 19th century.

Dispensational theology says that we are currently in the "end times" and provides us with a timetable of events including a secret rapture of the church seven years before the actual return of Christ. Christ will then reign for 1000 years on earth before the final judgement.

This view is at variance with one of the basic points that Jesus taught about his return; namely that we do not know the day nor the hour.

Darby's dispensational theology became popular in America after the publication of the *Scotfield Reference Bible* in 1909, and is currently a popular view amongst the Christian Right in America.

Because of their end time view, many in this group believe that concern for the future of our planet and careful management of our resources is irrelevant, and some even go as far as saying that environmental destruction is to be welcomed as a sign of the coming Apocalypse.

Unfortunately, the Christian Right has had a strong influence on government and has been partly instrumental in the attitude of

the Bush administration to global warming over the past few years.

Global warming must not be ignored. It will have a profound effect on our climate, particularly affecting those in low-lying areas such as Bangladesh and Kiribati.

Christians are called to be responsible stewards of God's creation and of the resources that he has given us. We have a particular responsibility to help those in poorer countries who will be most affected.

Whether Jesus returns today or not for another hundred years, we are to faithfully carry on his work until he comes.

Keith Carter
Mudgeeraba

Wake up on climate

The opinions attributed to James Dobson and his associates regarding "the great moral issues of our time" (April *Journey*) are almost unbelievable.

There is a mountain of evidence about what is happening to our environment and why, and it is increasingly clear what should be done about it. One wonders where they have been these past few years!

First, Dobson begins with "the sanctity of human life"; so let us start talking about climate change at just that point. But in line with biblical teaching, let us include other life also in our orbit of concern, because what is happening

LETTERS

now at a global level represents a serious threat to all of us.

Second, it is important to note that the Evangelical section of the theological spectrum is well represented in the increasing volume of ecotheological literature, and includes many prominent scholars, including some noted scientists. To suggest that this is "a campaign orchestrated by a single individual" is simply laughable.

Third, while there may be some differences in points of detail, there is a broad consensus on this issue across a wide range of people, including Evangelicals. In fact, some of the more prominent Christian environmental groups, such as A Rocha, Au Sable, and the John Ray Initiative, have strong links to Evangelical Christianity.

To take one book as an example, try *The Care of Creation*, edited by Prof RJ Berry, with a Foreword by John Stott. It begins with *An Evangelical Declaration on the Care of Creation* dated 1994.

Finally, there is a huge amount of concern about the environment and climate change in the community at large, and that represents a real opportunity for eco-mission as part of our overall Christian mission, and as an expression of our theology.

Clive W Ayre
Little Mountain

Prison visit a joke

I write in response to the report (April *Journey*) regarding the Moderator's visit to Wolston Correctional Centre.

What was reported was, in my opinion and that of my support workers, a rose-coloured view of the situation.

Mr Neil Whittaker, Deputy Director of the Department of Corrective Services, was previously their media representative and I am cynical enough to believe only a charitable view of the correctional system was likely to be presented.

This view was further reinforced by a phone call I received on 11 April from an inmate at Darling Downs Correctional Centre who described to me the preparations for a visit by the Minister for Police and Corrective Services that day with everyone out with paint pots and brooms.

I gave the *Journey* article to several inmates with whom I am working on the outside for their opinion and they laughed. Their comments could be summed up in: "Who are they kidding?"

I do agree that there are a number of dedicated staff in the centres I visit who are as frustrated as inmates by 'the system'.

Perhaps it is time for the community and the Uniting Church to say to our politicians that it is in the interests of the community and its safety to encourage inmates to leave prison better and not bitter as appears to be the situation at present.

I am also discouraged by my visits to politicians who quite

openly state that they will, in order to get re-elected, do what the community, fed by dramatic stories about sex offenders in the media, wants.

After fifteen years of frustration, I am tired and cynical but I'm also not giving up.

Rowena Solomon
Sherwood
Coordinator, Community Bridges

And thanks again

I read of the interesting life of the late Rev Elizabeth McChesney-Clark and her last position as Associate Minister at St Andrews.

Elizabeth took on the task of visiting the elderly folk of St Andrews who could no longer attend church regularly, including my parents, Marie and John Peden, who had been active members of the church for seventy years.

She took them communion and brought snippets of information about the church.

She was always cheerful, ready to listen and her visits were eagerly awaited and greatly enjoyed.

My thanks to Elizabeth for the wonderful work she did so well.

Barbara Dungavell
Springbrook

More on mammon

God and Mammon (March *Journey*) was a challenging analysis about Christians and money but, on completing my read through, the question which was in my mind was, "What then, is your list of suggestions to deal with the pitfalls explained?"

When a doctor diagnoses, the next job is to prescribe treatment. No economic system is outside biblical challenge.

If capitalism is such a drastic picture of unholiness, what other system is advocated?

Actually, most systems are now, in effect, liable to a socialist tag, as government control is so immense. As John Maynard Keynes prophesied: what matters is not who owns it but who gives the orders.

Bruce Gulley
Moggill

Scott Stephens' article "You cannot serve God and Mammon" (April *Journey*) gives us a timely warning on our Western cultural and materialistic attitudes in relation to the way we sometimes carry out our charity and also the depth of our Christian charity.

John Steele
Charters Towers

Bypassing the cross bypasses the point

On its surface April's editorial provided *Journey's* readers with a good dose of Mullan-esque pot-stirring, which in itself is no bad thing. But this was pot-stirring at the expense of Christianity's identity.

Bruce desires to bypass Good Friday and move straight to Pentecost. He contrasts his 'simple Protestant' faith with that of Mel Gibson's 'essentially Catholic' faith. Bruce wants to focus on Easter's happy ending whereas Gibson 'dwells on the sacrificial nature of Jesus' death'.

Not only is this an inaccurate – and potentially offensive – caricature of the distinction between Protestantism and Catholicism, it misrepresents the very nature of Christianity.

We do not have the choice of being either 'resurrection Christians' or 'crucifixion Christians'. As a matter of historical fact, there would be no Christianity without the proclamation of the cross.

If the first Christians hadn't insisted on the centrality of the cross there would have been little reason to separate from Judaism. And in their dispute with Gnosticism, the early Christians maintained the centrality of the cross in direct opposition to happy-ending styles of religion.

It is a crass parody of the New Testament to understand the resurrection as the crucifixion's happy ending. The resurrection is God's *vindication* of Jesus' life in the face of human opposition. And here's the rub. Mullan suggests that we can be 'inspired by Jesus' stories, wisdom and interactions with sinners' as a substitute for reflecting on the cross.

The New Testament is at pains to point out that it was precisely these aspects of Jesus' life that led him to be crucified! If Jesus' teaching and life inspired, it was short-lived inspiration which quickly gave way to cries of 'Crucify Him' or self-serving denials of 'I don't know him'.

To bypass the cross is to think that we are somehow above the murderous cries and the betraying denials.

Christianity without the cross is spiritual fairy floss. Pastoral ministry is denied its power. Prophetic cries against injustice descend to platitudes. Worship becomes self-justification. The church transforms into civil religion. The resurrection becomes a piece of magic. The gracious, compassionate God is again pushed out of the world.

Yes, the cross has been – in both Protestantism and Catholicism – the object of morose and morbid reflections. But it is such reflections which are at fault rather than the centrality of the cross *per se*.

The church that does not proclaim Christ and him crucified is, quite frankly, not the church.

Geoff Thompson
Trinity Theological College

Historically Speaking



FROM PADDLEWHEELERS TO THE CITY CATS

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

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

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

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JOURNEY asks...

What has been your experience in leadership in the Uniting Church?

Kaye Ronalds

I was born in 1960 into a family of four girls. I think the first feminist in our family was my father.

He had watched his mother struggle to provide for her sons when widowed in the late 1930s.

He knew first hand that if women got equal pay for equal work then the "widows and the fatherless" would not be so vulnerable.

Our parents inspired us to believe that we could achieve 'anything that we put our minds to' and to get a qualification that we could fall back on in case we ever had to be the breadwinner in the family.

In 1970s when Rev Norma Spear went on the TV show called *I've Got a Secret* no one guessed her secret that she was the first woman in the Methodist Church in Queensland ordained as a Minister of the Word.

At that time femaleness and ordained ministry were not something one expected to come in the same package.

Norma was my minister and a role model for me. She helped me identify my own call.

In the early years of the Uniting Church there was a campaign of

affirmative action to ensure that one third of the positions on the Councils of the Church were occupied by women.

As a young woman I was often appointed to committees and councils gaining valuable experience and confidence.

In my first appointment I followed Rev Elizabeth McChesney-Clark so the congregations had already formed the opinion that female ministers could be capable, discerning and diligent leaders.

Norma and Elizabeth were the trailblazers who made it easy for my generation to take our place in ministry in the Uniting Church.

Sometimes in ecumenical settings I would be challenged by someone (often women) who wanted me to explain how I dealt with Scripture passages like 1 Timothy 3 and 1 Corinthians 14: 33, 34. I think they were always more convinced by my work than my words.

The only place in which I have been a trailblazer has been when I was invited to become an Army Chaplain. In Western Australia, Wendy Snook had become the first



female RAAF chaplain in Australia and I had the honour of being the first female Army chaplain.

At first I was a bit of a curiosity but nowadays most people just accept that if my church thinks

I can do the task then they are prepared to give me a fair go.

A network of women in ministry was intentionally developed in the late 1980s and it still meets to give support to female ministry candidates.

I have been fortunate to have a husband and two daughters who are supportive of the roles I have filled in ministry. Owen has done much of the home making which has enabled me to be away from home with Army Chaplaincy and now with Presbytery Ministry.

My experience is that leadership is more about influence than power.

Being a minister of the word has given me the privilege of influencing the lives of many people in what I hope has been a fruitful and positive way.

The trailblazers of the women's movement and the many men who have been prepared to share leadership and ministry have given me a chance to invest my gifts in the life of the Uniting Church.

Kaye Ronalds is Presbytery Minister in the Central Queensland Presbytery

Yvonne McRostie

My son just got his first job. He started his apprenticeship as a hairdresser and he loves his work. He's a great people person, and his boss says he's a natural.

But one question that nags him: "Why do people make such a big deal out of me being a man in this job?"

We often ponder this question together as we reflect on the direction each of our lives has taken.

Of all places, I think the church should be leading the way on the issue of equality of gender.

This is especially true if we truly

understand what Paul is writing to the Galatians, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (3:28).

Yet somehow, we still have issue with women in leadership roles in the church.

I must say I don't spend much of my day thinking about this. I believe that I am where God has called me to be, and I try not to get sidetracked. It really is a waste of time.

For this I can thank the many women who struggled to have theirs and future women's voices heard;

women who boldly challenged the status quo and showed that we have a different and valid way to lead.

I think women offer an approach to leadership that challenges our current understanding of power and authority. Women know what it is like to be treated as unequal within the biblical story, throughout the history of the institutional church and within most of society.

Jesus teaches a style of leadership that calls us to be servants of all, and we are still learning what this means for how we live as Christians in the world.

The risk for women in leadership in the church is forgetting where we have come from and ending up being seduced by power, position and prestige.

I suppose this is a risk we all face but I wouldn't want to do anything else.

I have had some amazing experiences that my male colleagues will rarely have. I have been invited to stay for the birth of a baby and I have been asked to rub the feet of a woman in her last minutes of life.

The tears cried at both those events are accepted and expected as sharing the fragility of our human journey.

Yvonne McRostie is minister with South East Uniting Community in Brisbane



Stephen Rae

As a young man in the Uniting Church, my experience in leadership has been relatively short and yet quite varied.

This variety has provided me with opportunities to express my passions and gifts while learning about God, others and myself.

Whilst all times in ministry are 'good', sometimes it has been harder to see where this good lies – especially when leading others produces growth in yourself and not the ones you are trying to lead.

Teaching in Sunday School, leading youth groups and running Bible studies have all provided joyous moments when young and old minds suddenly click and a fresh understanding of God's character and work is revealed.

It is these "aha" moments that provide me with both personal justification for my efforts and opportunities for my own new recognitions of God's grace.

One of the biggest lessons I keep learning is that it is by the grace of God and through his strength, our efforts produce fruit.

Administrative leadership, expressed by guiding agenda, does not have the same uplifting people moments but does give me much satisfaction.

Nothing suits my task-orientated personality quite like well thought out, clear, timely



and detailed meeting plans and minutes. This leads to moments of frustration though because, well, people are involved.

In terms of reflecting on the question of gender and leadership, I believe being a man changes the way I look at leadership.

In one sense, it is easier since men can grapple with theological issues regarding authority and leadership objectively and without emotion (or maybe that's just me).

But it is also hard, because with authority comes great responsibility and living up to the holy character described by Paul to Timothy and Titus requires sacrifice, hard work and God's abundant help which he graciously provides.

Stephen Rae is a post-graduate engineering student and member of St David's Uniting Church, Holland Park where he is church secretary and a youth group leader