

June 2007

JOURNEY

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Synod saves water

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When the church leaves town

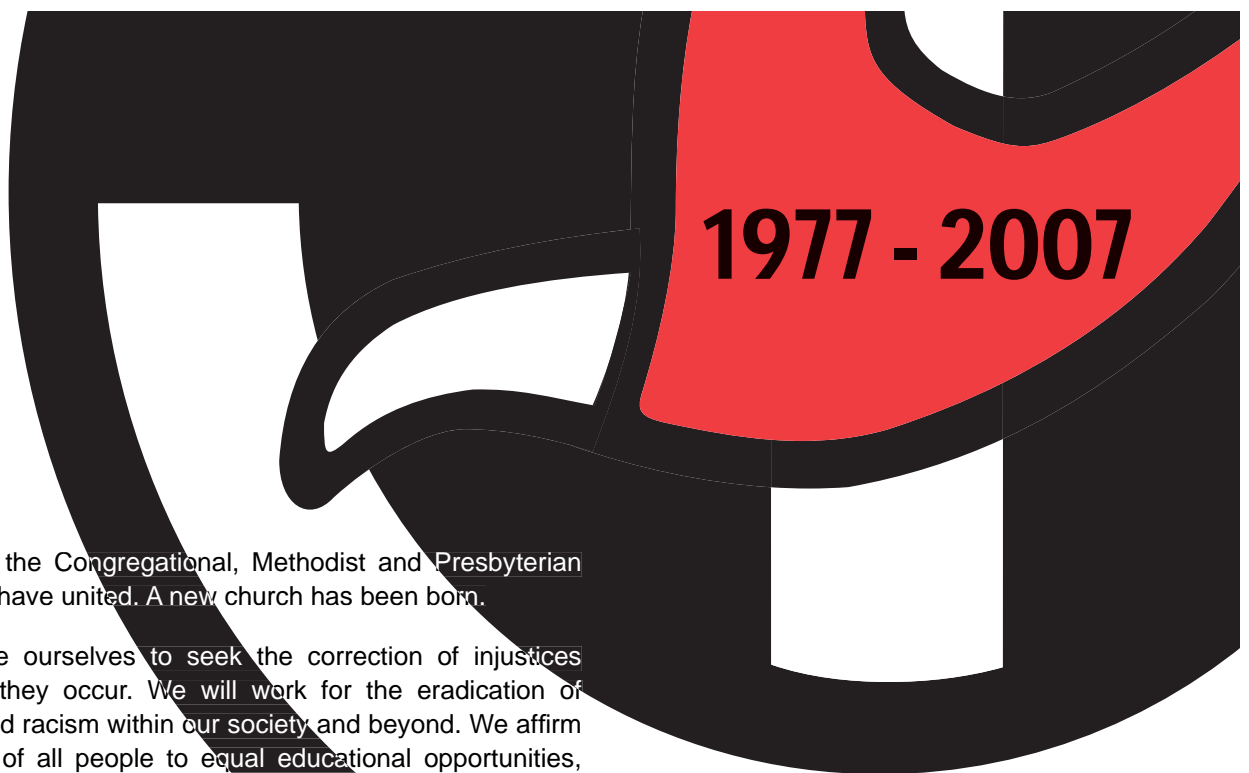
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Anzac Day at Gallipoli

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Happy Birthday Church



People of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches have united. A new church has been born.

We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur. We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond. We affirm the rights of all people to equal educational opportunities, adequate health care, freedom of speech, employment or dignity in unemployment if work is not available. We will oppose all forms of discrimination which infringe basic rights and freedoms.

We will challenge values which emphasise acquisitiveness and greed in disregard of the needs of others and which encourage a higher standard of living for the privileged in the face of the daily widening gap between the rich and poor.

We are concerned with the basic human rights of future generations and will urge the wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth's resources for their use and enjoyment.

From the Statement to the Nation - Inaugural Assembly, June, 1977. Read the full statement on page 14.

More about the 30th anniversary

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Older, wiser, and still a pilgrim people!

IN JUNE 1977, I was one of about 250 people who gathered in the assembly area of the local school for an ecumenical celebration to mark the inauguration of the Uniting Church.

We had already been a joint Methodist-Presbyterian Parish for ten years.

I had spent a year there as a Lay Pastor before entering Theological College, and had returned to be the minister of the Parish just six months prior to this special day.

Notwithstanding our existing ecumenical partnership we experienced strong feelings of excitement and expectation.

This was a new beginning in many ways, not least because we knew that many thousands of people were gathering for the same purpose across the nation.

We also believed that this very public act of commitment to journey together was a sign of that greater unity into which Christ continues to call us.

It was very significant to us that, represented amongst our own members that day, were people from thirteen different nationalities and nine different denominational backgrounds.

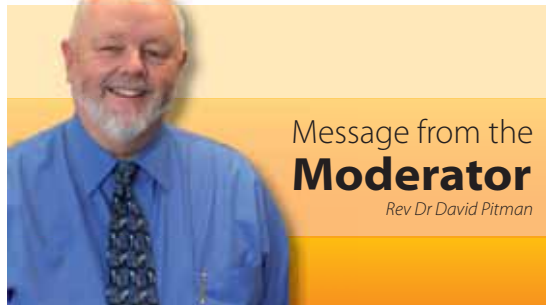
So began a new phase in our life together.

During my first term as Moderator we celebrated the 20th anniversary of the UCA. Now we are thirty!

I have had the (probably unique) opportunity to travel widely across the Synod on both occasions and observe and interact with the church in all the rich and diverse dimensions of its life and work.

Without doubt, we are older, wiser, and still a pilgrim people!

In many ways we are a very different church now and the inevitable process of change is continuing.



Message from the Moderator

Rev Dr David Pitman

We have struggled with those aspects of being an institution that inhibit and stifle the Spirit.

Yet there is life, energy and growth in many places as ministers and people together discern what it means to live and share the Gospel, and as new expressions of being church begin to develop.

We have experienced the pain and division of conflict, yet I see a growing willingness to build relationships of acceptance and

“In many ways we are a very different church now and the inevitable process of change is continuing.”

trust in the midst of difference, and to embrace our calling in Christ as our first priority.

In contrast with some past experiences, I take delight today in the greatly increased measure of respectfulness for one another now apparent across most of the church.

We have sought to honour our denominational heritage, yet are increasingly conscious that there are growing numbers of people in the Uniting Church for whom this has no personal significance.

Proposals now to be considered regarding membership by baptism and local congregational covenants reflect a positive response to this contemporary reality.

We have seen a diminishing of direct congregational oversight of community care programs, yet the relationships are alive and well in many places, and the comprehensive mantle of care provided by Uniting Care and Frontier Services across the nation is truly amazing!

We have maintained, in the face of political expediency and policies of economic rationalism, a strong prophetic stand on behalf of the poor and the voiceless in our society. In this we have sought to be faithful to the Statement to the Nation made at the inaugural Assembly in 1977.

We have been at the forefront of ecumenical endeavour, dialogue and partnership, both nationally and locally, throughout our thirty years.

This is an ongoing expression of who we are as a Uniting Church and our desire to worship and work together with other Christians wherever and whenever we can.

We have entered into a significant covenant, still not fully understood or practised, with our Indigenous and Islander people through the UAICC, and welcomed amongst us many people from many other national and cultural origins.

These relationships enrich our life together as a church and we rejoice in the way they are exercising increasing influence and leadership in our midst.

We give thanks to God for the past 30 years and look forward in faith, hope and love to what the future holds.

From the Editor

As a young adult participant in the Presbyterian Church, I found myself captivated by the discussions in the early '70s canvassing the pros and cons for Church Union.

Because each congregation was virtually making on its own decision on whether to become part of the Uniting Church in Australia (at least in terms of who would "own" the property) I felt I needed to become a member in order to exercise my democratic right to vote.

It was not a particularly good reason to engage in the confirmation process but at least I felt a part of the decision and could make my choice for what seemed to me at the time to be a quixotic venture.

My little congregation voted to remain Presbyterian and despite my vote for Church Union I also remained – for a time.

Eventually, I came to the Uniting Church to find it offered me encouragement and opportunity to exercise a ministry, serve God in mission, work for justice and engage with a dynamic new way of being the church.

I have never considered going back. For all its flaws and frailties, this is a remarkable thing that God has done and the Uniting Church in Australia holds such wonderful potential to be a catalyst for the transformation of both the individual and corporate lives of our nation.

Thirty years on, this potential is even greater and more promising than before.

Bruce Mullan

Historic feature



JOURNEY'S PREDECESSOR Queensland Uniting Church newspaper *Life and Times* produced a special edition dated for the inauguration of the Uniting Church in Australia on 22 June 1977.

Killarney Uniting Church member Mr Ivan Hancock

presented *Journey* editor Bruce Mullan with a prized copy of the paper earlier this year.

We are pleased to reprint four fascinating pages as a lift-out in this month's *Journey*, offering a glimpse of the excitement in the Uniting Church 30 years ago.

JOURNEY

Journey is published 11 times a year for the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Opinions expressed in *Journey* do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the policies of the Uniting Church.

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Journey cannot guarantee the publication and/or return of submissions but makes every effort to do so if requested.

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Sign of the Times



THIS MESSAGE from The Gap Uniting Church congregation reminds us that church noticeboards don't always have to "tell" but sometimes can simply say "thanks" to the community. Email your Signs of the Times church signs to journey@ucaqlld.com.au.

UnitingCare gears up for a Federal election

IN THE lead up to this year's Federal poll UnitingCare Australia has been busy meeting with politicians said UnitingCare National Director Lyn Hatfield-Dodds.

"The Shadow Minister for Ageing, Disability and Carers, Senator Jan McLucas, met with leaders from our aged care network and had two hours of discussion about all facets of aged care policy and service provision," she said.

Ms Hatfield-Dodds has also met with the Minister for Communities Senator Nigel Scullion who has portfolio responsibility for volunteers and volunteering.

"He was amazed to hear the number of volunteers and their importance to the UnitingCare network.

"We also talked to the Minister about the workforce issues for the service sector in a time of high employment in many areas.



UnitingCare National Director Lyn Hatfield-Dodds during a press conference. Photo courtesy of UnitingCare

"Because the Minister has responsibility for three of the recommendations of the Council of Australian Governments mental health report we will be working further with him on this."

UnitingCare also emphasised the increasing complexity of needs being presented by clients of the Job Network in conversation with the Minister for Employment and

Workforce Relations, Joe Hockey's Chief of Staff.

"We also talked about these issues with Shadow Minister for Employment and for Social Inclusion Julia Gillard's office.

"We talked about people needing support and training to help them into the workforce not just punishments and breaches," Ms Hatfield-Dodds said.

Issues surrounding affordable housing for UnitingCare service and the delivery of human services and benefits were raised in a meeting with Shadow Minister for Human Services, Housing, Youth and Women Tanya Plibersek.

"We met with Shadow Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett, to talk about the impact of environmental

policy on people on low incomes and disproportional effect that environmental damage has on people on lower incomes."

Ms Hatfield-Dodds described the recent meetings as introductory ones, "setting up working relationships and exploring where we can best work with these offices".

Uniting Church Moderator deplores council amalgamation proposal

MODERATOR OF the Uniting Church in Queensland Rev Dr David Pitman has condemned the decision of the Government to abandon a process of consultation already underway and appoint a Commission to redraw Council boundaries across much of the State.

"During my recent visit to Longreach, this was the most common topic of conversation everywhere I went," Dr Pitman said.

"People feel angry and betrayed that those rural shires very large in area but quite small in population will be most affected.

"It is extraordinary how this process parallels what happened with regard to the Mary Valley and the proposed Traveston Dam."

Dr Pitman said the previously established protocols and processes for consultation were simply abandoned without warning.

"This action appears to be based entirely on economic grounds without reference to other issues such as the impact on the people and the communities in which they live."

Dr Pitman said despite requests from rural communities for information about the impact of such decisions on employment, service levels, local representation and geographic distances, the government has not provided adequate or detailed responses to their concerns.

"The time frame imposed severely limits the capacity of the Shire Councils and members of the community to contribute meaningfully to the process and for the Commission to adequately consult with rural communities."

Dr Pitman said this decision adds to the stress levels of small rural populations still in the grip of a seven-year drought and who, because of their remoteness, have limited capacity to influence the political process.

"Rural people feel they have not been heard despite protest about the way they have been treated and their calls for greater consultation."

Dr Pitman said concerns remain that any forced merger of Shire

Councils carries a very real risk of increased unemployment, loss of services and the further decline of rural communities.

"City people need to support those whose lives, and livelihoods, will be adversely affected, by holding the government accountable

over the implementation of this decision.

"I deplore this Government's ongoing indifference to the unnecessary confusion and distress caused by its decisions and actions.

"When will they learn?"



Rev Dr David Pitman urges the Government to consult with local communities. Photo by Osker Lau

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Judy Douglas
Customer Service Officer

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Music: a life line for the soul

By Mardi Lumsden

LIFELINE BRISBANE'S Community Development Unit has created another musical offering featuring songs inspired and performed by refugees.

The Community Development Unit has had a series of successful musical projects stemming from their continued partnership with music producer Simon Monsour.

The new release, *Normal Days*, will be released during Refugee Week this month.

Lifeline Brisbane's Brian Procopis said this long awaited follow-up to the highly acclaimed *Scattered People* album will be promoted nationally and internationally with the hope that "once again the music of the scattered people will find its way into the consciousness of ordinary citizens who perhaps take safety and basic human rights for granted".

He said the team hoped the work would awaken community interest and awareness to the plight of refugees in Queensland.

"That their senses may be

engaged and their awareness stimulated to the point where they too in their own way and in their own time will challenge the escalating societal hard-heartedness and make a stand."

UnitingCare Queensland contributed generously to the production costs together with partnering organisations including the Mercy Sisters, Amnesty International, the Presentation Sisters, Oxfam/Community Aid Abroad, The Sisters of Charity, the Romero Centre, Griffith University and Sweet Freedom Inc (a non-profit production and promotion unit aiming to advance social justice while celebrating creativity and artistic expression).

The Community Development Unit is already working on their next project *Live Long Live Strong* with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation Counselling Services, Gallang Place.

Mr Procopis said young people from three Indigenous communities throughout Queensland will be invited into a music-based program focussed on suicide prevention and resilience building.



Gaby Heuft, Afonso Corte-Real, Yani, Jeni McCormack and producer Simon Monsour rehearse for the *Scattered People* cd. Photo courtesy of Lifeline Brisbane

"Such community development projects have often been described as the proverbial 'pebble in the pond' where relatively simple beginnings have precipitated various (sometimes bewildering) outcomes.

"Their common characteristic has been the establishment of an

affirming and accessible context where the pooling of skills, efforts and resources of participants, practitioners and kindred-spirited organisations become the life blood of the venture," he said.

"While music has been (and continues to be) a non-intrusive and engaging vehicle welcomed by

often precarious communities, its use doesn't completely characterise the work of the Lifeline community development team."

For more information on Lifeline Brisbane's Community Development Unit visit www.lccq.org.au/page.asp?pageid=118



Billycart competitors Daniel Downs (pushing) and Tim Crouther (steering). Photo by Malcolm Armstrong

Making history with billycarts and scarecrows in Burdekin

CONVINCED THAT the church can still make great memories Burdekin Minister Rev Paul Clark and his congregation organised an old-fashioned billycart race meeting as the centrepiece for a day of family fun.

"In many churches we have great memories of the church being full, Sunday schools of 100 kids, and crowds flocking to our flower shows," he said.

Mr Clark said the Burdekin Uniting Church is no longer falling for the lie that the gospel and the church can not make great memories and planned a Country Fun Day complete with scarecrow building and billycart racing.

"The idea captured the local community's imagination with front page newspaper coverage and even the pollios agreeing to a celebrity race."

Seventeen Scarecrows were made by teams from around the community, 16 billycarts were raced in many different races and \$2,000 was raised for local school chaplaincy.

"One of the highlights was seeing families or all ages, kids and grandparents, dads and daughters, racing and building together."

Mr Clark said the Country Fun Day is only one of the memorable events the church is engaging in as part of their mission to the community.

Uniting in baptism

A SPECIAL baptism was held at the regular 5pm Christian service of the 'Open Church' at Unity College in Caloundra West in April.

Liza and Ross Farrell's son Tate was baptised during an ecumenical service led by Caloundra Uniting Church minister Rev Brian Gilbert and the Caloundra Catholic Parish priest Fr John Dobson OAM.

Tate Farrell, a first grade student at Unity College, was welcomed into God's family of faith in a ceremony that was combination of elements of both churches.

Unity College is a unique partnership between the Uniting and Catholic Churches that opened in 2006.

The school seeks to provide a holistic education while striving for excellence through the teaching and demonstration of the Christian message.

It aims to provide a student-focussed education in a safe environment which creates equal opportunity for all to develop their full potential.



Right: Tate Farrell holds the baptismal candle with parents Ross and Liza. Photo by Michael Poncini

Synod plumbs to save precious resource

A MAJOR water-wise overhaul of the Synod Centre in Auchenflower, Brisbane, together with Raymont Lodge and associated buildings will net a saving of around 1,000,000 litres of water each year said Mission Support Enterprises Business Manager Eddie Carleton.

The Synod installed 32 dual flush toilet cisterns, 41 restricted shower roses, 59 inline flow restrictors and 48 spring-loaded taps, and an anti-evaporation blanket was fitted to the Raymont Lodge pool.

Mr Carleton said the \$30,000 water-wise makeover was part of

the Synod's commitment to being more environmentally responsible.

"We recognised the severe water situation Brisbane currently faces and wanted to ensure that the synod was doing its bit to reduce water consumption across the entire Auchenflower property," Mr Carleton said.

Justice and International Mission Advocate Andrew Johnson said he hoped congregations across the state might take similar action as part of their stewardship of water resources.



Mission Support Enterprises Business Manager Eddie Carleton inspects the Raymont Lodge pool blanket. Photo by Osker Lau



Retiring Department for Financial and Property Services Director Mr Bruce Binnie. Photo by Osker Lau

Ian Hayes heads for new ground

MR IAN Hayes, who has led the Queensland Synod's investment strategy since 1993 as General Manager of the Uniting Church Investment Service (U.C.I.S.), will step back from the role next month to take up private consultancy work in the not-for-profit sector.

Looking back over his 14 years of service Mr Hayes said, "Our U.C.I.S. strategic focus has allowed us to increase the money available to the church to put it in a good financial position."

"We have been able to operate in a secular financial environment and add value though the ethical standards of the church."

Director of the Department for Financial and Property Services Mr Bruce Binnie praised Mr Hayes' ability to think ahead strategically.

"When I compare the financial reports for 1993 and last year, in almost every aspect the financial capacity of U.C.I.S. and its contribution to the Mission and Service Fund has quadrupled and this has been an amazing gift to the Uniting Church."



Retiring U.C.I.S. General Manager Mr Ian Hayes. Photo by Osker Lau

Bruce Binnie calls it a day

AFTER SERVING the Queensland Synod for 16 years Director of the Department for Financial and Property Services Mr Bruce Binnie said he is retiring.

According to Mr Binnie he is all set to "join the grey nomad set for long service leave and then see what God calls after that".

Mr Binnie commenced work in the Synod office in 1991 as Director of the then Department for Administrative Services.

He has worked tirelessly to raise the professional standards of his department and its commitment to serving congregations, and he believes that the church is financially stronger and a safer workplace than it was before.

Moderator of the Queensland Synod Rev Dr David Pitman said,

"The outstanding characteristics of Bruce Binnie's service have been his genuine love for the church, his ability to connect with congregations and presbyteries and his commitment to build a strong financial foundation for the future of the Uniting Church in Queensland."

To the position of Director, Mr Binnie brought practical financial and management skills acquired while working in the public sector, together with his formal tertiary qualifications in accounting.

He has applied this knowledge wisely and fairly in managing the Synod's financial and property transactions.

The recent report of the Synod Role and Functional Review provides positive testimony to this fact.

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What happens when the church leaves town?

By Bruce Mullan

"MY FAITH is what has kept me going. We have had a really tough time here and we needed our church. I can't tell you how much I miss it," was the response of one rural woman to the closing of her local church because they could no longer afford a minister.

In his research into the role of the church in rural communities retired Uniting Church minister Rev Dr Noel Park came across many such painful stories from the residents of South-West Queensland

Dr Park's research found the loss of the Fire Brigade, Ambulance, Hospital, courthouse and other services represented the diminishing community of which they were a part, and in a number of localities this was exacerbated by the loss of resident clergy and sometimes of services of worship.

"For many, the services of worship had provided a time away from the pressures of the farm and a time of some spiritual importance," Dr Park said.

"For some the issue was more deeply significant. They valued the presence of a spiritual and pastoral carer who knew them and their situation.



Dr Park found when a denominational authorities determined that a priest or minister could not be supplied to a particular area people believed

such an action needed to be seen against the decisions taken by other denominations.

"They reported cases where each of the Christian denominations

which had previously been active in their areas had taken similar action, leaving the district without any resident priest or minister.

"There was a general view that it was not necessary for each denomination to maintain an individual presence but that one ordained minister from one of the mainstream Christian denominations should be resident in each region.

"This feeling was evident even among those who had not been closely connected with any Christian congregation."

As one person responded, "If a city church closes there are always others not too far away. I have nowhere to go now and it makes me really sad."

From the perspective of the church, Dr Park found most problems stemmed from a decreasing population base and a reduced proportion of that population being available to perform tasks such as arranging worship, providing Christian education and arranging or conducting baptisms, weddings and funerals.

"Those clergy who remained in rural areas had to cope with professional isolation and

family and individual stresses, both personally and among congregational members."

Dr Park said reference was often made to traditional family events such as weddings, funerals, baptisms, confirmations and family celebrations which had involved clergy and the Christian community.

"While there was acknowledgement that most of these events could still be held, it was stated that they were more difficult to arrange and were often conducted by strangers or visiting clergy who had little knowledge of the family or their circumstances."

Dr Park's thesis evaluated data from four rural counselling and support programs conducted by Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland through the telephone counselling service and through face to face contacts with hundreds of rural families.

A copy of the research *The Role of the Church in the Rural Communities of South West Queensland* (2006) can be downloaded from <http://www4.gu.edu.au:8080/adt-root/public/adtOGU20070117.112020/index.html>



Director of Mission

- Unique Scope
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As part of UnitingCare Queensland, Blue Care is committed to quality holistic services that express the Uniting Church's Christian values and address clients' physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs.

Blue Care is one of Australia's largest providers of community health and residential aged care. We are committed to our Mission "to promote and deliver quality caring services based on the compassion of Christ" and a social justice focus that drives our care services. With 9500+ staff across more than 260 centres, and 24 chaplains in service, Blue Care provides care for more than 11,000 people daily.

This role comes about with the retirement of Gale Hall, who has given leadership in this role over the past 5 years at Blue Care.

Based at our Head Office in Toowoong, you will contribute as part of the Executive Team to achieving Blue Care strategic and operational plans, guiding that they reflect the Mission & philosophy of the Uniting Church. You will also evaluate and monitor Chaplaincy services and provide leadership, professional support and consultation in the planning and enhancement of these services to meet best practice in pastoral care within Blue Care.

The key outcomes in this role focus on Relationship Management; Faith Foundations, Mission Development and Communication; and Chaplaincy leadership.

You will have relevant qualifications in Theology and/or Religious Education, or other equivalent qualifications and broad experience in Clinical Pastoral Education and/or Pastoral Care. Experience in policy development, including Social Justice and sound researching and evaluation skills are also required. You will be able to demonstrate a high level of counselling and advocacy skills and a considerable aptitude for influencing others. Experience working in a large business organisation will be an advantage, preferably in the not-for-profit sector.

For further information, including more details of specific responsibilities please visit our website www.bluecare.org.au. Your enquiry is also welcome by telephoning Gale Hall on 0410 346 573.

To apply, please email a covering letter briefly outlining your experience in relation to the responsibilities outlined, and your resume to recruitment@bluecare.org.au

Closing date 15 June 2007.

www.bluecare.org.au



Just some of the Tingalpa congregation with just some of the balloons.

Photo courtesy of Rev Ruth Tracey

Tingalpa floats a Mother's Day idea

JOURNEY CONTINUES to be amazed by the creativity of Queensland Uniting Church congregations.

Rev Ruth Tracey reported that an enterprising young member of the Tingalpa Uniting Church congregation asked Big W at Carindale what they would be doing with their display of one hundred or so Mothers Day balloons at closing time on Saturday, 12 May.

"The answer she was given was that if she wanted to come with a few cars at 5.30pm on Saturday she could have the lot." Ms Tracey said.

Some congregation members turned up and filled the church with the balloons.

"They really added to the joy of the day and the more enthusiastically we sang, the more they waved!"

After the service, the rest of the "Mums are special" balloons were distributed in the community.

Church Union was greeted with celebration and sadness

By Bruce Mullan

"THE UNITING Church burst onto the Australian political and ecumenical scene with renewed energy for presenting a relevant Christian message in the Australian context," said ethicist and retired Uniting Church Minister Rev Dr Noel Preston.

While those who led the union of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches were singing songs of praise in the streets of Sydney, not everyone shared the excitement or found the "uniting" experience positive.

Judith Dowrie from Sunnybank Hills recalled listening to two persuasive sermons – one for union and one against.

"We read all the information sent to us and attended a meeting," she said.

"We voted in favour of union.

"On the Sunday of our last Presbyterian service, I took my Sunday School class up into the church to hear the three-fold amen for the last time.

"The children saw I had tears in my eyes. I felt we had sold our birthright."

Thirty years on Mrs Dowrie still longs for her Presbyterian roots. "Yet we voted to unite and must continue to work to make the marriage successful."

Trinity Theological College Faculty member Rev Dr Neil Sims had been ordained four years prior to church union.

"The formation of the Uniting Church meant leaving behind some familiar Presbyterian 'things' but it meant much more than that," Dr Sims said.

"On 21 June, I had friends and fellow-ministers in the Presbyterian Church in which I had been involved for all thirty years of my life. On 22 June, one-third of them



Neil Sims with daughter Jo in 1976. Photo courtesy of the Sims family

were now members of a different denomination from me.

"There had been some painful times leading up to our 'separation'."

Dr Sims said the years around the formation of the Uniting Church were not easy.

"Along with the grief and hurt, there were new structures and new ways of doing things as well as new people to get to know and understand."

Minister with the Pine Rivers Uniting Church Rev Barry Allen recalled the Drummoyne Methodists and the Drummoyne Presbyterians in NSW had been meeting together for Good Friday and Christmas Day services for a very long time.

"Good Friday was traditionally held in the Methodist Church with the Presbyterian Minister preaching and Christmas Day in the Presbyterian Church with the Methodist Minister preaching,"

Mr Allen said.

"In early December of 1977 I contacted the Presbyterian Minister to work out the details for the next Christmas Day service only to be told that they would not be joining with the Uniting Congregation for any services.

"So union had its joys which brought some Christians closer together and pushed others further apart."

Nev and Joyce Cole from St Lucia Uniting recalled three generations of their family enthusiastically taking part in the inaugural service at the Milton Tennis Courts on 22 June 1977.

"The children wore clothing of colours selected to display the new Uniting Church logo as they sat high on the western grandstand," Mrs Cole said.

"We enthusiastically and wholeheartedly committed ourselves to life, work and worship within the Uniting Church."

The Coles have since wrestled with many theological and cultural issues and the strong disagreements that have sometimes resulted in splits.

"It is certainly the ideal to have a union of Christ's church, yet why are we left with feelings of disillusionment, sadness and disappointment?"

Marjorie Head from Gympie Uniting also remembered the bitterly cold night at the Milton Tennis Courts and the excitement in the air.

"Looking back thirty years later, I think it was this sense of expectation of something new about to happen that I remember most vividly," she said.

"During the communion large crosses made of Lego were passed around, and everyone was invited to break off a piece, and take it home. I still have mine, a symbol of the unity that we all hoped for.

"I often wonder if that same sense of excitement is still there and whether that sense of hope has been fulfilled."

Union celebrations occurred across the nation and throughout Queensland.

Minister's wife Marie Woodley attended the gathering in the Assembly Hall of the Aspley High School on 22 June 1977.

"It was a cold night, but a very warm Spirit prevailed indeed!"

Supreme Court Judge and Uniting Church Lay Preacher the Honourable Justice Alan Demack

was a member of the last General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia when it voted for union in 1974.

He recalls the elation when they were informed that the Presbyterian General Assembly which met in Melbourne at the same time had also voted for union.

"The elation quickly ended when we realised that there would be a significant number of Presbyterians who would not be part of the Uniting Church."

Mr Demack said, "It would be a pity if we are tempted to concentrate too much on the inauguration of the UCA on 22 June 1977."

He believes the ecumenical imperative calls for a response in 2007.

Jenny Noble from Taroom is another who experienced "ups and downs" with the Uniting Church.

She remembered being present at a meeting where the issue of buying the new Australian Hymn books was being discussed with great heat.

"Why did we need to waste good money on new hymn books, when these perfectly good Methodist ones would last for – oh another 10 years."

Ms Noble thought it was a great undertaking to bring three denominations with all the varying thoughts and traditions together.

"In hindsight, [the leaders] must have been blessed with the Wisdom of Solomon."

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Paraphernalia process produces lasting legacy

By Mardi Lumsden

IN 1975 a Brisbane based group of 12 people drawn from representatives of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches was given the task of coming up with, among other things, the logo for what would be known as the Uniting Church.

Called the 'Committee on Paraphernalia and Titles', the group was also charged with deciding the name of the intended church, the dress and titles of ministers and



Many submissions were rejected as they didn't reflect the new church

said such widespread acceptance of the logo was an unexpected surprise.

"We didn't have a long term vision for it," he said.

"When we finished the job and passed it over and it was adopted, I think we felt that that would be a symbol for the establishing of the church and it might just disappear. But it has been adopted by the church everywhere. It is amazing how it has been accepted."

"It has become owned by the people of the Uniting Church. We wear it on our name tags and have it on the backs of our motor cars."

From start to finish the design process took about a year to evolve into the symbol we know now.

At first a firm of graphic designers was asked to come up with some ideas, but Mr Gibson said the resulting images didn't reflect what the new church was trying to say.

"None of them struck a chord with us, although they are all quite clear in presentation and would all reproduce well, but they didn't say what we wanted to say theologically, and I am not sure we knew at that stage anyway."

"At the time I believed that the symbol incorporated a theology that was believed should be at the core of the Uniting Church and that was what we were trying to express, although we didn't know where we would find it."



The cross was a common theme

Consequently the committee took a different path that involved a call-out to the three churches for designs and thoughts on what they believed the logo should include.

Many of these designs included a Trinity theme as well as the Southern Cross, the cross, a boat and the letters UCA.

"We focussed on two symbols that came out of these. One was the dove with wings of flame, the other was the cross over the broken circle."



One of the later designs

"We felt that those two symbols encapsulated the sorts of things that were at the core of the church as it was coming in to union."

It was Mr Gibson's job to turn these ideas (submitted by Rob Evans, Christine Gillman, and Don Hutton) into a graphic symbol.

The result was an image where the combination of the parts reflected the Uniting Church's place in the world.

"A white cross over the darkened world, the people of God gathered at the foot of the cross reflecting the light of the cross (both blotting out the darkness of the world) and then the image of the Holy Spirit which brings both peace and

energy emanating from the cross and touching the people of God."

In recent years there has been talk of modernising the logo. *Journey* asked Mr Gibson what he thought was the right decision about reworking the logo.

"If there are moves to make it an image that is considered to be modern, that is fair enough and might lead to a much better symbol, but I think it would be very important not to lose the meaning and the intent of the various parts of the symbol and the correlation of each bit," Mr Gibson said.

"The interrelationships of those parts of the symbol have great importance and in any modernising



The now very familiar final design

or reworking of the symbol I think those elements should be retained so clearly that it wouldn't be seen to be a new symbol at all, otherwise the association that has been built up over the thirty years could be lost."



One graphic designer submission

officers of the church, stationery, and the name given to ministers' residences.

Thirty years on, the Uniting Church logo they designed is one of the most recognised Christian symbols in Australia.

Committee member and final designer of the logo Jim Gibson

New Church launched with a rising inflection

By Bruce Mullan

THE HISTORIC first worship service of the Uniting Church in Australia was held in the Sydney Town Hall on 22 June 1977

Described by *Life and Times* as the "most significant ecumenical event in Australia's history" (see the four page lift out this issue) the inauguration service was the culmination of more than half a century of negotiations between the three uniting denominations.

Youngest person on stage at the inaugural service was Christine Gapes who saw herself as representing both young people and women.

Dr Gapes told *Journey* how the first General Secretary of the Uniting Church Rev Winston O'Reilly asked her to read the New Testament Scriptures at the service.

"He was a master of organisation and took great care with the presentation," Dr Gapes said.

"He organised for me to

have lessons in public reading so the verses would be read with appropriate solemnity."

Dr Gapes, who in the 1990s served as Lecturer in Ministry and Mission with Trinity Theological College in Brisbane, recalled the reading was from Romans 8.

"The elocution teacher was superb as she explained that the series of questions should be read with a lifting inflection and with pauses.

"If God is for us, who is against us? Who is to condemn? Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship... and so on.

"Then I was to declare in as strong a voice as possible, 'No, nothing can separate us...'

"The declarations of conviction also were to be read with a rising inflection to increase the tension of the passage. As I read, I had chills up and down my spine."

After the service, Dr Gapes recalls the congregation spilling



Christine Gapes (centre seated) read the Romans 8 passage at the inaugural service of the Uniting Church in Australia at the Sydney Town Hall on 22 June 1977

out down the steps of the Sydney Town Hall singing hymns.

"Along George Street small groups of people gathered on the footpath and in coffee shops to celebrate this historic event.

"There was a positive and almost euphoric mood."

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8: 38-39)



LIFE and TIMES

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Air Extra

The First Queensland Moderator



The Rev. Prof. Rolland A. Busch

Uniting Church Beginning is Ecumenical Event

"THIS most significant ecumenical event in Australia's history" is the description given to the coming together of a very significant number of Christians on Wednesday, 22nd June. Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians will find themselves in a new Church.

On the afternoon of that date, in Sydney, in the presence of 216 delegates, representative of all States and the three denominations, the Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church will move the motion constituting the First Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia. The motion will take note "that all necessary action has been taken to give effect to the decisions of the respective Assemblies and Conference to unite upon the Basis of Union", which was agreed upon in 1971.

It will be a great moment and full of historic significance for it will bring into being a new Church, whose total membership will make it the third largest denomination in Australia, and is the first distinctly Australian Church with something like 240,000 members and 1320 ministers in parishes.

Of the total expected membership a little over two-thirds will be Methodist.

The Inaugurating acts and celebrations will be the culmination of many years of discussion and planning by a large number of people at various levels of Church life. It has also involved parliaments in every State as it was necessary to pass enabling legislation to provide for the Church to hold property, employ its servants and carry out the varied activities in which it is engaged.

THE FUTURE OF AN AUSTRALIAN CHURCH

A Message from the Moderator (Rev Prof Rolland A. Busch) on the eve of Inauguration — in an interview with "Life and Times".

RECOUNTING a story which helps to realise the significance of what is about to happen the Moderator says, "A young friend of mine has recently been appointed to a College of Advanced Education in the South.

"He is delighted with the appointment for he is to set up a new department at the College. His is to be the excitement of arranging the actual layout of the new department, selecting staff, planning courses and doing all the other things that are necessary if the department is to function smoothly and well. It is a great opportunity for him and offers him many exciting challenges."

"I called to see him the other day as he was leaving the home to which he had taken his young bride some five years ago. The heavily loaded furniture van was pulling away as I arrived and all that was left in the house were my two young friends and the personal gear they were shortly to pack in their car.

"As we talked, it was obvious that their emotions at this time were very divided. On the one hand they were looking forward eagerly to what lay ahead. Yet at the same

behind. The pull of the familiar and the secure was very strong, and one had the feeling that now the time had come to leave, there were disappointed to be going.

"It's a very natural feeling, of course. But a letter we received this week shows that, already, the pain of parting is fading as the thrill of the new takes over."

THE INAUGURATION — Professor Busch sees the above story as an analogy.

"On the twenty-second of this month," he says, "the Uniting Church in Australia is inaugurated in Sydney. For those of us who have worked and watched and waited for twenty years for this day it is a time of celebration and great excitement.

"But our joys and hopes, too, are tinged with nostalgia. We will miss time-honored ways of doing things, familiar names for meetings and officials which shall be no more—even our familiar hymns and hymn-books if we are among those who have to change their place of worship.

"Many very naturally will be having second thoughts at this time, wondering if all of this change is really necessary, whether

"But this is not the time to turn back. The God we serve is the God of the future as well as of the past. He calls us to go forward and He looks to us for obedience. I have no doubt that we shall have our moments, as we go forward together, into the new Church. But I also believe that as we talk together, plan together, work together, pray together, we shall grow together. And as the thrill of the new Church takes hold, the familiar patterns of the past will recede.

"Our children will come to know no other Church. And our children will be glad, too, that we have given to them a Church which is truly Australian, a Church that is part of the Australian landscape, a Church that is truly and distinctively Australian, a Church that reflects the native ethos, the native hopes, the native traditions."

Professor Busch places great stress on this distinctively Australian nature of the new Church. At the Celebration at Milton on 26th June he will develop the theme further in these terms:

"I believe God is calling us to a great task — to contribute to the Church Universal a distinctively Australian understanding of and witness to the Gospel. For the Uniting Church is wholly Australian in conception and genesis. It is Australian theologians who have wrestled with biblical and theological

expression to these understandings, and who have shaped the structures through which we of the Uniting Church are to make practical application of our faith.

"We are being called to continue the task of seeking forms of theological expression and developing Christian life styles that are largely indigenous or, where borrowed from others, are clearly stamped with our own mark. For whilst a church's life and thought can profit from cross fertilisation and the interchange of ideas, it benefits no less from independence and self-confidence, from being well rooted in its own soil, from taking the shape given to it by native instincts and traditions."

Concluding this pre-Inauguration Message the Moderator said: "It is a great and exciting task to which God is calling us. We may not realise just what a historic milestone it is that we have reached — but those in our sister denominations are well aware of the exciting moment that we face.

"I have had many letters and many phone calls from brothers and sisters in other Churches who are rejoicing with us at this time and praying for us in what they consider to be a historic moment on the Australian Church scene."

THIS IS YOUR SPECIAL

To Each a Share

Decisions on Presbyterian Properties

THE Commission set up by the Presbyterian Assembly and by Act of Parliament to arrange for the apportionment of present Presbyterian property between the Uniting and the continuing Presbyterian Churches has completed its work.

The apportionment of local Church and Parish property has followed the result of the vote of members in 1973. As provided in the Act, where more than a third of voting members voted to remain Presbyterian, the property has been allotted to the continuing Presbyterians. In other cases the property passes to the Uniting Church.

"Assembly Institutions"

The apportionment of institutions and properties operated in the name of the Presbyterian Church as a whole has not been an easy task but the decisions of the Commission are expected to be accepted in a spirit of amity by both sections of the present Church.

SCHOOLS

Fairholme at Toowoomba will pass to the Continuing Presbyterians whilst the two Colleges at Warwick (Scotts and the Presbyterian Girls College), will be controlled by the Uniting Church.

HOSPITALS

St Andrew's Memorial Hospital in Brisbane is separately incorporated and will be administered by a Board of Governors, on which there will be 50 per cent representation of the Uniting and Presbyterian Churches. However, this will take several years to effect as the terms of the present Governors will run its course.

St Andrew's, Toowoomba, is expected to be incorporated and will operate in the same manner of shared control.

St Stephen's at Maryborough is a Parish Project and will be operated by the Uniting Church Parish.

St Andrew's Hillcrest at Rockhampton is also a Parish project, this time a continuing Presbyterian one.

Incidentally, Wesley Hospital, recently completed by the Methodist, will belong entirely to the Uniting Church. So will St Aubyn's Hospital at Kingaroy.

CARE OF THE AGED

A number of homes and institutions run by the Presbyterian Church will pass to each Church.

Uniting Church Homes

Iona aged people's homes at Kenmore; Newhaven units at Redcliffe; Amity nursing home at Caloundra; Buderim Nursing Home; Winston House nursing home at Gympie; plus a site for a nursing home at Ashgrove.

Continuing Presbyterian Homes

Hopetoun at Corinda; St Michael's at Ipswich; Morrison Park at Rockhampton.

Life and Times subscriptions make acceptable gifts at all

By the Editor:

A BEGINNING — NOT AN END

IN Melbourne on May Day, 1974, it seemed that June '76 was a long way ahead. Then, when the Inauguration was postponed for twelve months, we needed the President-General's word that it could be one of God's waiting times.

Now it is June '77 and the new Uniting Church in Australia comes into being. Our emotions are stirred and it is not easy to maintain the traditional journalistic detachment in writing about it.

Your editor is plainly and unashamedly enthusiastic about the prospect. Like many others of course he has some misgivings, for we are venturing on untried paths. But he shares the feeling of many within the church that this could be one of God's Times and that, through what is about to happen, He will impart new life to us all as individuals and as a worshipping, serving Pilgrim People.

This newspaper will attempt to present that "LIFE" that comes from God and to be aware always, that the great moments in history and experience are God's "TIMES". Whatever else our title may come to mean we shall endeavour to do these things and to be both Lively and Timely.

"Weary was our heart with waiting and the night-watch seemed so long" has been the experience of some as they waited more or less patiently and wondered why we had to have so prolonged a waiting time. Like the children we all are, we look forward with expectation and wonder when the day will dawn. Then when it does arrive we find it hard to realise that this is really the day we have been awaiting.

We dare not overlook the fact that many good people view the prospect with some apprehension. So much of the tried and accustomed must be left behind. For some it will seem that landmarks

will disappear. In some cases there will be parting from old companions. For all there will be a learning of new ways.

Those who feel such apprehensions concerning the unknown elements in our future should be counselled to be patient. Wait and see! There is nothing sacrosanct about either the past or the future. Dear friends who fear they may not be at home in the new Church, make no hasty decision to look for another spiritual family.

Former Methodists, particularly, should use their sanctified commonsense to assess the claims of any group that seeks to present itself as "continuing Methodist". The Methodist Church of Australia is legally at an end. No one can prevent a group calling itself some other kind of Methodist but, before anyone joins that group, they should be quite clear that they are joining another Church, just as distinct as any other Church that has existed for a considerable time.

Because there are good people sensitive and fearful about too rapid change, church officials in high places would do well to make sure that change is not too drastic and too fast. As far as possible there should be full consultation with officials at all levels of church life. The case of the complete change in the matter of handling minister's stipends is a case in which change may have been unnecessarily disturbing by its suddenness.

On a more positive note let us consider the special features of this new Church.

It will be a BIG Church. Not that numbers are all important. But we shall be the third largest in Australia. God is not always on the side of the big battalions but the fact that so many Christians have agreed to be together in the one Communion is a very significant development.



THE Editor — Gordon L. Cook, former editor of the "Methodist Times".

It will be an AUSTRALIAN Church, as the Queensland Moderator has pointed out. It will not despise its ancestry nor cease to draw upon the resources of the world-wide churches to which its members belonged. But it will seek to develop a truly Australian outlook. It will seek to serve the present age and the immediate milieu.

It will be a UNITING Church. Let us not confine the significance of that term to the fact that people of three denominations have become one. It means also that we shall be open-hearted to others, individuals or Churches, that may seek to unite with us in the future. Even that is not a full enough content to put into the word Uniting. How splendidly God could use us if we see our role as a UNIFYING ONE, not merely uniting with each other but bringing the uniting Spirit of Christ into all inter-church and ecumenical activities in which we become involved.

We would be presumptuous in the extreme if we imagined that we have worked out the perfect blueprint for Church Union. But in the very act of uniting, we could be setting in motion influences which will bring advancement to the Kingdom of God and Glory to His Name. In a very real sense it could be that God is starting a new thing in us and through us. And in that sense rather than in any man-made plans we are not at the END of something, but at the BEGINNING.

SYNOD OFFICE ARRANGEMENTS

ON and after Monday, 4th July, 1977 The Department of Administrative Services will be located on the second and third floors of Wesley House, 140-146 Ann Street, Brisbane, Q. 4000 (GPO Box 674, Brisbane, Q. 4001), telephone 221 6788.

The principal offices of the Synod located at this address will be: Secretary of Synod, and Secretary of Department of Administrative Services — Rev D. F. Kirkup
Assistant Secretary — Mr K. J. Richardson
Property Officer — Mr R. P. Gresham
Financial Administrator — Mr P. G. Henderson
Editor, Life and Times — Rev G. L. Cook

The Department of Parish Services will function from 4th July at CBC House, 30 Wharf Street, Brisbane, Q. 4000 (GPO Box 1465, Brisbane, Q. 4001), telephone 221 2888.

The principal functions and officers of this Department will be: Superintendent, Department of Parish Services and Director of Division of Home Mission — Rev R. W. Every
Director, Division of Christian Education — Rev Dr L. A. Born
Director, Division of Discipleship — Rev D. J. Harrison
Director, Division of Women's Services — Mrs Lola Mavor
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THESE MEN WILL LEAD IN UNITY



THE Foundation President of the Uniting Church will be the Rev Dr J. Davis McCaughey. Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1914 he holds the academic degrees of M.A., D.D., F.A.C.E.

After ordination in 1941, he served in a Presbyterian Pastorate in Belfast.

During World War II he was a YMCA welfare officer. Later he was Study Secretary of the Student Christian Movement in Great Britain and served on the editorial staff of SCM Press.

Dr McCaughey came to Australia in 1953 to take up the position of Professor of Biblical Studies, Ormond College. In 1959 he became Master of Ormond College.

He is a Member of the Councils of Melbourne University and Latrobe University.

As a member of the Joint Commission on Church Union since 1954 he has played a vital part in preparing for Union.

At World Council of Churches level he has been a member of various commissions.

Guest at Inauguration



THE Rev Setareki Tuilovone, of Fiji, a visitor at the Inauguration.

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THE EMBLEM OF UNITY



THIS emblem has been chosen for the Uniting Church and will soon become a familiar sign on letters, books and in newspapers.

The official interpretation is as follows:

The Cross of Jesus Christ, in its light and love, stands over a darkened world — redeeming it through grace and truth.

By that Cross, his people in heaven and earth are bound to him and to each other. The Holy Spirit, symbolised by the dove with the wings of flame, empowers and guides us to be witnesses to Jesus Christ.

The wide 'U' at the bottom of the emblem points to the fact that we are uniting. As a semi-circle it reminds us also that the renewing of both church and world are as yet incomplete.

The emblem symbolises something of the vision we have glimpsed and the hopes we hold for the future. In particular it reminds us:

- of the centrality of the gospel message in all that we seek to do;
- of the need for constant reform and renewal;
- of the commitment of us all to worship, witness and service in this world.

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HOW THE CHURCH WILL FUNCTION

THE organisational pattern of the Uniting Church seeks to reflect the essential nature and purpose of the Church.

Local congregations are the basic unit of church organisation and activity.

In addition to their acts of worship, congregations are required to hold regular meetings of the full membership to evaluate their activities and to make guiding decisions about future policy and programs.

Such meetings will also appoint the members of two councils each with specific responsibilities. One is the Council of Elders. Its duties lie in the area of pastoral care and spiritual nurture.

The other body is the Parish Council. Its role is one of organisational management and administration of the Parish. A Parish may consist of one or several congregations.

A grouping of Parishes on a regional basis is known as a Presbytery, within which, through their elected representatives, Parishes confer together for mutual encouragement and stimulation. Presbyteries may also undertake co-operative activities on a district basis. They also have administrative responsibilities in such matters as the selection of candidates for ministry and the placement of ministers.

The presiding officer of the Presbytery holds office by election and has the title of Chairman.

On an even wider basis there is the Synod, being a grouping of Presbyteries.

The responsibilities of Synods include general oversight of the constituent Presbyteries and Parishes, and the provision of facilities for their use. Synods will undertake a range of community services and have oversight of a number of institutions such as schools, hospitals and other caring agencies.

At the national level, the Uniting Church is under the oversight of the Assembly.

This body comprises ministers and lay persons elected by the Synods and the Presbyteries. It will normally meet once in three years.

The Assembly has the final responsibility in matters of doctrine, and Church law. In all matters considered vital to the life of the church, the Assembly is obliged to consult with the Synods and Presbyteries before making final determinations.

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THE UNITING CHURCHES OF ANN STREET

Passing along Ann Street, Brisbane from the City Hall, there will be found three Churches of the Uniting Church.

Albert Street Methodist Church, now known as Wesley Central Mission, will be a Uniting Church. Just across the street is the Ann Street Presbyterian Church which will continue as such.

Down past Central Station stands St Andrews, soon to be a Uniting Church.

And still further down the street, flanked by the YMCA and a disused industrial building, is the City Congregational Church, also to be a Uniting Church.

The three Uniting Churches will operate as separate parishes but will work in close liaison and with frequent shared Services of Worship.

With St John's Cathedral, the Church of Christ and the Salvation Army Temple, Ann Street is truly a street of churches.



OFTEN referred to as the "Church on the Square," the Albert St Church is now the Wesley Central Mission. Minister: Rev Ray Hunt.



CITY Congregational Church, where the President of the Congregational Union (Rev T. Rees Thomas) is the Minister — a preacher whose pulpit messages are often quoted.

ESTIMATED MEMBERSHIP OF UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

The Uniting Church will be the third largest church in Australia.

The confirmed membership of this Church is in effect only about 10 per cent of the total number of people who would identify themselves as belonging to the three churches that make up the Uniting Church. Therefore the membership figure of 240,827 in effect means that the actual membership plus adherents both adult and child would be in excess of 2,000,000.

Likewise the list of Ministers, of whom 1320 are in Parishes of the various Synods, would be in excess of 1500 when those serving in Administration, Chaplaincy and various colleges are taken into account.

The distribution in the various states is approximately as follows:

STATE	CONFIRMED MEMBERS	MINISTERS IN PARISHES
New South Wales	81,000	400
Northern Australia	1,450	18
Queensland	31,400	175
South Australia	37,810	159
Tasmania	8,000	40
Victoria	84,567	475
Western Australia	11,000	60
TOTAL:	240,827	1,320

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DEATH OF METHODIST THEOLOGIAN

THE Rev William Ellis was born in Victoria in 1914 and entered the Ministry of the Methodist Church in 1938. He died recently in Perth.

In the course of his ministerial activities he served in several circuits in Victoria and Tasmania including the CMM Hobart as well as serving as a Chaplain in the armed forces.

William Ellis and his wife Norma moved to Western Australia in 1969 when he was appointed Vice-Master of Kingswood College and Director of Theological Studies in the Methodist Church.

In both of these appointments he gave to the Church service of remarkable effectiveness. He was elected president of the Conference in 1972, in which office he gave the Church a year of firm, but kindly leadership.

"Throughout the years of his ministry William Ellis applied himself to serious study and, even though he was in Circuit appointments, he gained the following qualifications: MA, BD, TheolM, DipRe, FSNTS, achieving a standard of scholarship which was recognised throughout Australia and in other countries as well.

As Vice-Master of Kingswood College he gave truly dedicated service.

His eye was quick to see, and his hand quick to perform, the services needing to be done. In his capacity as Director of Theological Studies he gave to students and probationers the results of his years of study! Because he was able to detect weaknesses he was able to help overcome them and in these ways his human sympathy was frequently expressed.

William Ellis became Master of Kingswood College in 1972.

"Isolated Christians" gather in Cloncurry

CONTACT '77, the second annual convention at Cloncurry Methodist Church, for Christians living in the isolated areas of north-west Queensland, was held over the Queen's Birthday weekend. Commencing on Friday night with an informal barbeque, where the warmth of the fellowship more than compensated for a biting southerly wind, CONTACT '77 drew Christians from Camooweal, Dajarra, Kajibbi, Gunpowder, Mt Isa and Mary Kathleen to join with the regular Cloncurry congregation for the weekend.

The guest speaker, Rev Graham Hine, superintendent minister of Pine Rivers circuit, north Brisbane, gave four lively and thought-provoking addresses under the general title "Knowing God", and many people will be recalling for some time to come his moving exposition on the life of Samson entitled "Knowing God — His Pardon".

On the Saturday evening Rev Les Nixon and George Galech, evangelists from Sydney led an entertaining and relaxing evening rally concluding with a most powerful presentation of the gospel.

This convention was an integral part of the whole work of the North-West Mission, reinforcing the work of the aerial and land patrols conducted by Rev Dennis Robinson and Pastor Brian Smith.

Anything interesting happened in your Parish lately? Our readers would be interested to read about it.

Basis of Union points to the future

Queensland born Rev Dr Andrew Dutney is Principal of Parkin-Wesley Theological College in Adelaide and Lecturer in Historical and Systematic Theology. Dr Dutney is one of Australia's most respected commentators on the *Basis of Union* and he reflects for *Journey* on its importance for the church after 30 years.

By Andrew Dutney

AS THE data from the 2006 National Church Life Survey begins to become available it's becoming pretty clear that the church's future is all about mission.

The future? No, the present. Today.

The church is all about mission or it's all about finished.

The church's focus must be on evangelism, serving those in need, reconciliation and community building, and in all of these areas the church needs to be open to innovation, encouraging initiative and empowering its members for their ministries.

So what would a church look like if it was all about mission?

That's the question for today but that was also the question that guided the Joint Commission on Church Union from 1957 until 1971 as it gradually prepared

an agreed *Basis of Union* for the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

A church which is all about

mission has only one message: Christ "the risen crucified One" who is "Lord over its own life", "Head over all things" and "the

beginning of a new creation" (para.3).

The message about this Christ is "controlled by the Biblical witnesses" (para.5) and as the church proclaims him, Christ himself "reaches out to command attention and awaken faith", personally transforming the lives of those he touches and gathering them into his church (para.4).

A church which is all about mission will seek "continual renewal" and so "remain open to constant reform under [Christ's] Word" (para.1).

It will "keep its law under constant review" to ensure that its regulations and procedures release people for mission and evangelism and do not hamstring them (para.17).

It will pray that God "will constantly correct" it through the Holy Spirit (para.18), keeping it on track as "a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal" (para.3).

A church which is all about mission will constantly draw from the wellsprings of faith: worship, the Scriptures, the sacraments, the creeds, the insight and example of its forebears, the contemporary world and its opportunities to "confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds" (paras.3-11).

A church which is all about mission will do everything it can to ensure that each member gets to share the gift of ministry that they've received from the Spirit in mission (para.13).

It will know that some ministries are crucial to the health of the church and ensure that members called by God to those ministries are recognised, equipped and released for service (para.14).

It will know that submission to Christ and effectiveness in mission requires taking counsel together (para.15).

One of the things I really appreciate about the *Basis of Union* is that it was produced by the churches at a time when they were strong and confident.

It was not a response to decline.

It was not the fruit of fear or anxiety so there was no pressure to sacrifice Christian authenticity to pragmatism.

It's visionary stuff, intended to resource the churches for the most radical changes that any of them had ever made – all for the sake of becoming fit for the mission of God in Australia.

Radical change is required of us again – for the same reason, mission.

A generation on, the *Basis of Union* will still resource us if we're game.



Church historian Rev Dr Andrew Dutney. Photo by Craig Mitchell

Three plus 76 years makes one

By Bruce Mullan

1901 With the Federation of Australia in the air, some of the leaders of the Congregational, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches thought it would be a good idea if their churches caught the mood.

1905 Formal union negotiations were underway between the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

These would continue until 1924 producing four bases of union and a series of votes at every level of the three churches.

On each occasion, the vote was in favour of union, but the existence of the minority particularly in the Congregational and Presbyterian churches made union impossible for fear of creating a bitter division in the church.

1922 and 1923 The Anglican Church sponsored a series of 'reunion conferences' with the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches which continued for about ten years. It was clear early that a union of episcopal and non-episcopal churches was not possible (although it did happen in the formation of the Church of South India in 1947).

1933 The Methodist and Congregational churches began negotiations for a two-way union as a preliminary step towards a wider union.

This plan was not to unite the denominations but rather uniting the national offices and functions of the churches while still allowing a degree of autonomy at state and local levels.

1938 The Presbyterian Church asked to be included in the Congregational and Methodist negotiations. This resulted in a similar scheme that was put to a series of votes at the national and state levels of the three churches between 1945 and 1948.

It was the Presbyterian Church that stalled. Not all the state Assemblies approved the scheme so it was decided to conduct a referendum of members before the 1951 national Assembly.

While the relevant officers were trying to work out how to put the question to members the church's Law Agent died, the referendum was missed and the Presbyterian Church withdrew from the plan.

1954 The Presbyterians decided to test the church's view with a vote which was overwhelmingly in favour of seeking union. In 1957, a new *Basis of Union* was presented to the Assembly but was not accepted.

1959 *The Faith of the Church*, the first of two major theological papers that explored the three churches' common faith was published.

1960s A number of Methodist

and Presbyterian congregations around Australia were working in co-operation with each other, in anticipation of the union.

Nationally, a Joint Commission on Church Union was established with the task of drafting a statement to which the three denominations could agree as a basis to unite.

1963 The second paper *The Church: its Nature, Function and Ordering* was published. Attached to this was a *Proposed Basis of Union*. Both papers were approved by national bodies of the three denominations.

The Joint Commission for Church Union set about submitting them to the memberships for discussion and voting.

1971 A second draft of the *Basis of Union* was submitted to the three churches by the Joint Commission.

This amendment sought to deal with criticisms that the first draft did not define the Bible as "the Word of God" in a way that described the scriptures as verbally inerrant.

1976 The *Basis of Union* was finally adopted by the three national councils of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches.

1977 (22 June) The Inauguration of the Uniting Church in Australia was celebrated around the nation.



The late Rev Eric Moore Moderator 1984-1985. Photo courtesy of Bruce and Cathy Moore

Moderators of the Queensland Synod

1977-1979	Rev Prof Rolland Busch*
1979-1980	Rev Ronald Elvery
1980-1981	Rev Duncan Harrison
1981-1982	Rev Dr Douglas Brandon
1982-1983	Rev Dr Lewis Born
1983-1984	Rev Alan Kidd
1984-1985	Rev Eric Moore*
1985-1986	Rev Ray Hunt, OBE
1986-1987	Rev Barry Dangerfield
1987-1988	Rev Ray Thompson
1988-1989	Rev John Mavor AM
1989-1990	Rev Don Whebell
1990-1991	Dr John Roulston
1991-1992	Rev Bryan Gilmour
1992-1993	Rev Cecil Schloss
1993-1996	Rev Don Whebell
1996-1999	Rev Dr David Pitman
1999-2002	Rev Dr Ray Reddcliffe
2002-2005	Rev Allan Kuchler
2005-present	Rev Dr David Pitman

* Deceased

Have we lost ourselves along the way?

Scott Stephens

ULTIMATELY, IT matters little whether the Uniting Church in Australia is in fact the first 'home-grown', truly indigenous expression of Australian Christianity.

The only question that should concern us now is, have we been faithful to what has been entrusted to us?

Thirty years ago, the Uniting Church had the chance to liberate itself from the tyranny of ecclesiastical inertia, to shed the aura of impotent harmlessness to which the church in general had become so accustomed.

It could begin to develop a muscular theology, framed in language appropriate to its vocation and self-understanding, and blessedly free of unnecessary traditional baggage.

Indeed, this theological task would be the crucial one. By it, the church would determine the role it would play within our suffocating, banalising culture.

It needed to invent a language that was at once resonant with the Australian vernacular and yet sufficiently robust to break free from the debilitating downward pull that every culture exerts on its occupants.

It needed to invent a language that would war against its own basest tendencies, that would trigger an internal revolution if and when the church lost sight of its mission.

Seizing the opportunity, this fledgling church could then exemplify the vocation given to the church as a whole, paraphrasing Karl Barth, to declare the unqualified "Yes!" of God's reconciliation in Christ to all people, and God's unrelenting "No!" to every idolatrous political, cultural and religious fad.

From this perspective, paragraph 3 of the *Basis of Union* is a stunning achievement.



In it, the framers took the unprecedented steps of giving the Christian confession an overtly ecclesiastical shape, and then defining the church as the immediate continuation of Christ's own mission.

But the concentrated genius of this brief statement dissipates rather quickly, until, by paragraph 14, it loses its clarity altogether ("the substance of the faith").

However profound that initial confession may have been, it is this lack of theological clarity that has left the more conspicuous mark on the subsequent experience of the Uniting Church.

For instance, without a sufficiently developed prophetic theology to sustain it, any radical or dissenting dimension of the church's life had to be informed and nurtured by far Left-wing or 'Green' currents already present within Australian culture (ranging from feminism in the late-70s and 80s to the various contemporary forms of eco-spirituality).

As a result, the church's voice has become practically indistinguishable from the predictable brays and barks of the Leftist menagerie, and is frequently dismissed as just another member of the feral herd.

Further, the lack of a theological vocabulary distinctive enough to take on the dominant idolatries of our time and articulate enough to present a real alternative to our societal tribalism has stunted the moral growth of our congregations.

Regardless of the official 'progressive' or Leftist stance of the Uniting Church, our congregations continue to exhibit much of the unenlightened bigotry, chauvinism and even racist feeling that beset Australian society as a whole.

This situation is compounded by the widespread use of 'respect for the rights of another' as the cardinal rule for the church's ethical and practical decisions.

But the ubiquity of this ill-formed principle effectively

makes a mockery of the Christian injunction to self-emptying discipleship ("have the same mind which also was in Christ Jesus") and allows the urgency of the church's vocation to be taken hostage by the propensity – even eagerness – of some to take offence.

There is a frightening parallel between the behaviour that is thus permitted in our churches and Ayaan Hirsi Ali's description of the logic of Western multiculturalism, in which "everyone has the right to their own backwardness."

It is hard not to come to the conclusion that the Uniting Church is more symptomatic of Australia's deep cultural divisions and ethical dysfunctionality than it is truly prophetic.

But perhaps it is among our ministers that the consequences of our insufficient theological development is most obvious.

Isn't there something diabolically fitting about aimless, theologically illiterate congregations being presided over by dispassionate

The *Basis of Union* is available to read at <http://nat.uca.org.au/basisofunion/Basis1992.htm>.

clergy who limp from one week of the lectionary to the next, with some vague sense of the liturgical calendar, but none of the demands of the gospel, much less its transformative power?

The solemn pastoral duty to beckon the congregation to discipleship has thus been replaced by a weak pandering to people's longing to be coddled.

And the old Puritan charge to "preach only that unto others which thou hast preached first to thine own soul" has been replaced by novel forms of liturgical gimmickry and the proliferation of on-line preaching aids.

So what then? Despair? Discouragement? Not at all.

We ought instead to recall the words with which Karl Barth began his colossal Church Dogmatics:

"I hold myself forbidden to be discouraged by these things. For I believe that we shall wait in vain for a Church which takes itself seriously unless we are prepared to attempt in all modesty to take the risk of being such a Church in our own situation."

Thirty years on, it is time for a new revolution, one that changes not our procedures, modes of governance or church 'branding', but our very minds. This, after all, is our truest act of worship.

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

Statement to the Nation June 1977

PEOPLE OF the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches have united. A new church has been born.

We, who are members of the first Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia address the people of Australia in this historic moment. The path to unity has been long and at times difficult, but we believe this unity is a sign of the reconciliation we seek for the whole human race.

We acknowledge with gratitude that the churches from which we have come have contributed in various ways to the life and development of this nation. A Christian responsibility to society has always been regarded as fundamental to the mission of the Church. In the Uniting Church our response to the Christian gospel will continue to involve us in social and national affairs.

We are conscious of our responsibilities within and beyond this country. We particularly acknowledge our responsibilities as one branch of the Christian church within the region of South-East Asia and the Pacific. In these contexts we make certain affirmations at the time of our inauguration.

We affirm our eagerness to uphold basic Christian values and principles, such as the importance of every

human being, the need for integrity in public life, the proclamation of truth and justice, the rights for each citizen to participate in decision-making in the community, religious liberty and personal dignity, and a concern for the welfare of the whole human race.

We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur. We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond. We affirm the rights of all people to equal educational opportunities, adequate health care, freedom of speech, employment or dignity in unemployment if work is not available. We will oppose all forms of discrimination which infringe basic rights and freedoms.

We will challenge values which emphasise acquisitiveness and greed in disregard of the needs of others and which encourage a higher standard of living for the privileged in the face of the daily widening gap between the rich and poor.

We are concerned with the basic human rights of future generations and will urge the wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth's resources for their use and enjoyment.

Finally we affirm that the first allegiance of Christians is God, under whose judgment the policies and actions of all nations must pass. We realise that sometimes this allegiance may bring us into conflict with the rulers of our day. But our Uniting Church, as an institution within the nation, must

constantly stress the universal values which must find expression in national policies if humanity is to survive.

We pledge ourselves to hope and work for a nation whose goals are not guided by self-interest alone, but by concern for the welfare of all persons everywhere — the family of the One God — the God made known in Jesus of Nazareth the One who gave his life for others.

In the spirit of his self-giving love we seek to go forward.

A QUEENSLAND Minister Rev Dr Noel Preston was the inaugural Convenor of the Assembly Commission on Social Responsibility and one of the authors of the Statement to the Nation adopted at the Inaugural Assembly gathering.

"Looking back on the Statement thirty years on it is both pleasing and disturbing to note how timeless and relevant the Statement remains, indeed how in parts it is quite prophetic, especially with its reference to the natural environment and the rights of future generations," Dr Preston said.

"The Statement signified what became the reality in the Uniting Church's early years: a prophetic, politically engaged church especially on issues affecting the most marginalised in our society, indigenous Australians."

Is it a conversation with God?

Uniting Church member Tim Trudgen and his wife have hosted stalls at New Age festivals under a big sign that reads "God Speaks: What does God have to say to you right now?" In this article, Mr Trudgen examines how modern spiritual seekers try to find the voice of God.

By Timothy Trudgen

IN AUSTRALIAN society today there is a messy tangle of beliefs about God, Life and Death. Seekers in this mess are inclined to be drawn to "Spirituality" rather than traditional organised religion.

Three years ago I decided to wade into this mess in a hope of understanding the changing "spiritual" climate and to learn to relate better to those I knew were seekers for God.

I made it a habit to regularly peruse the Spirituality section of major book stores.

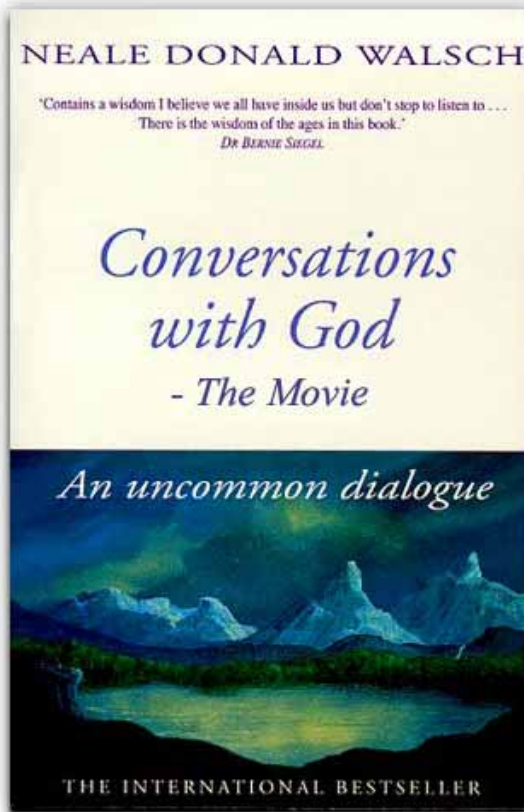
Some of the most popular books on these shelves are those of the series *Conversations with God* by Neale Walsch.

These books give a revealing insight into the beliefs and theology of the New Spirituality movements.

Considering how widely the *Conversations with God* series is read and accepted by spiritual seekers, the books may well represent an emergence of a "holy" text for the New Age movement.

The series accurately reflects the views of many associated with today's "New Spirituality" and its very existence raises a whole series of questions for Christians about what we believe and how we share the gospel.

In the beginning of the first book *Conversations with God: an uncommon dialogue*. Walsch quite honestly describes how the series was written. In fact, he admits it was not written by him but rather "through him."



At a point of anguish in his life Walsch, in frustration, writes down a question to God and discovers that answer immediately came to him.

He describes it like this: "...my hand remained poised over

the paper, as if held there by some invisible force. Abruptly, the pen began moving on its own. I had no idea what I was about to write, but an idea seemed to be coming so I decided to flow with it."

What resulted was a dialogue

with a mysterious other. As Walsch penned question after question the answers came through him onto a yellow note pad.

Walsch indicates that the books are mostly an unedited record of this conversation that continued in this way over years.

It is understood by Walsch that it was God who was answering his questions, and the title of "God" is indirectly claimed by the mysterious answerer throughout the series. Thus the title of the series, *Conversations with God*.

At its simplest, although the theology of the series is not at all simple, the books teach that God is everything, the "All That Is," and we are each and all God.

Perhaps the most significant intellectual motivation for believing in the "All That Is," is the rejection of the God who condemns.

In reaction against the theology of condemnation, those in the New Spiritualities teach that God cannot be offended and offers automatic forgiveness. Furthermore, humans are fundamentally understood to be innately good.

Walsch's God sums up this concept when it says, "Whom shall I command? Who shall I punish should my commandments not be kept? There is only Me."

We cannot attempt to reach out to modern day Spirituality seekers by continuing to force sin and condemnation down their throats hoping that they will be convicted.

Instead, we must start the conversation with the "Spirituality" movement based on the common

theme of love, in order to reveal the truth of our God. Our God loves good and hates evil, but still has unconditional love for us.

God has forgiven us for our failures and our evils even before we have done them, without need for a satisfaction through punishment.

Walsch's *Conversations with God* series challenges Christians in three ways.

First, to know why and what we believe so that we can identify problems with the philosophies of the new age.

Second, we are challenged to "keep it real", to seek God urgently in order to experience the fullness of the promises we have been given from God. We need to know our God intimately and actively in our lives.

Third, there is the challenge to engage with the language of the New Spiritualities to counter the misrepresentations of God from the past life of the Church, and represent the truth of the gospel as water that satisfies the hunger of the new culture that now surrounds us.

Rick Joyner prophesied that the church would be devastated and ravaged by the New Spirituality movement until the church was able to lead them to the water of life.

We have been warned.

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

An older couple join youth at Gallipoli

AS A YOUNG boy growing up in Beaudesert attending the Anzac Day Dawn Service at the tiny

town's war memorial, Rev John Mavor never dreamed of visiting the place where it all happened.

"For most Australians the Anzac legend is etched on our psyche," Mr Mavor said.

"We learnt about Simpson and his donkey at school and our family put wreaths on the graves of interstate soldiers who had died during training in the district.

Now retired, Mr Mavor and his wife Rae booked an eight-day tour on the internet and found their tour group of 25 young adults and three older couples was a microcosm of the crowd at Gallipoli.

"So many died and they were young. 8,700 Australians, 2,700 New Zealanders, 21,200 British and 87,000 Turks died on those terrible hillsides.

"The advance at Lone Pine gained 500 yards at the expense of 1,000 Allied lives. The futility of war was evident."

Turkish and Australian authorities work together to organise the events held each 25 April at Gallipoli.

"In the museum there is a photo of an Australian soldier giving a wounded Turk a drink from his water bottle," Mr Mavor said.

For the Mavors, the Dawn

Service was the most memorable part of the trip.

"There were around 10,000 people present and all participated respectfully as the military ceremony proceeded. Politicians, gave addresses, simple worship was conducted and the National Anthems of Turkey, New Zealand and Australia were sung.

"Most of the people then walked for two hours along the coast and up the steep ridge to Lone Pine for the Australian ceremony.

"As we walked up hill in the heat we could not escape the thought of what it must have been like charging up these steep hillsides of low prickly shrubs with machine guns, rifles and artillery firing.

"As we walked in the heat the younger ones helped us with the gear we were carrying, offered us water and stopped to rest when we did.

"As one of the speakers said, 'While thousands of young people attend these ceremonies the Anzac spirit will never die'."



View of the terrain at Gallipoli and Aegean sea. Photo by John Mavor

WHAT'S ON

May 29, 9.30am. UCAF South Moreton Presbytery 'Celebrate Vision' at Cleveland Uniting Church. An activity day of fun and learning. Mr John Butters, member of U3A will speak on 'Life in Australia'. Open to all UCA people. BYO lunch and a friend. Contact Fran Moss on 3393 5873 or email franmoss2000@yahoo.com.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.

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

June 9, 12noon-2pm. The Barnabas Community Fellowship meeting at the Oxley U C Hall. Share a meal together. Contact Ed and Olive Smith on email eando@optusnet.com.au.

June 11, 5-8.30pm. Shrek 3 fundraising screening at Carindale Birch Carroll & Coyle Cinemas. Money raised will go to the Bayside Watoto Building Project to cover building costs for a house for 8 orphaned Uganda children. Tickets purchased through Moreton Bay College on 3390 8555 by June 1. Contact Jenny Busch on 0407 750 408 or email buschj@mbc.qld.edu.au

June 13-14, 9am-4pm. Orientation to Mental Health Pastoral Care at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Hawthorne St, Woolloongabba. Registrations close 25 May. \$30. Contact Helen Prior on 3240 2111 or email helen_prior@health.qld.gov.au.

June 14-August 2. John Dominic Crossan's study Victory and Peace or Justice and Peace? Four session hosted by Caloundra Uniting church. Day and evening sessions available. Contact church office on 5491 5353 or email caloundra@dovenetq.net.au.

June 15, 6-9.30pm. Wellers Hill and Tarragindi Uniting Church's 30th Birthday Concert at Wellers Hill State School Hall. Featuring bands Ripple Effect, Jess Hutton and Easily Distracted, and Lolly Jar. Food on sale from 6pm. Gold coin entry. Visit www.whatuc.ucaqld.com.au or contact Melissa McMullen on 0404 005 443 or email missy_mcmullen@hotmail.com.

June 15-16, 9am-5pm. Forge Missional Community Seminar at Goodlife Community Centre, Sunshine Coast. Seminars on spirituality, discipleship and sustainability. Speakers include Dave Andrews, Ken Baker and Julia Verdouw. Details and registration online at www.seedsofhope.unitingchurch.org.au. Contact Duncan MacLeod on 0439 828 718 or email duncan.macleod@ucaqld.com.au.

June 18-24. Blue Care Awareness Week. Contact Hugo Muianga on 3377 3372 or email hm.muianga@bluecare.org.au.

June 24, 10am-3pm. Celebrating Together - UCA 30th Anniversary at Toowong Uniting. Korean and Australian Congregations, including TEA Party, celebrate with worship, feasting and good fun. Guest preacher Rev Colville Crowe. If you have been involved with Toowong, Bardon or Rainworth congregations, before or since union, please contact the church office 3870 9684. More information contact Carol Bennett on 3217 8476 or email toowong@intemode.on.net.

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

June 30, 6.30-10pm. Charles Nalder Celebration of Ministry at Broadwater Road Uniting Church, Mansfield. Charles Nalder is retiring after 45 years of serving the Church. Broadwater Road invites all those who have valued Charles' ministry through books to celebrate with us. Light meal provided. RSVP by 22 June to Susan Paton on 3849 8548 or email mguca@ozemail.com.au.

July 13-14, 9am-5pm. Forge Missional Training Seminar at Bracken Ridge Baptist Church. Second of two weekends on spirituality, discipleship and sustainability. Speakers include Stephen Said, Duncan Macleod and David Chatelier. Contact Duncan Macleod on 0439 828 718 or email duncan.macleod@ucaqld.com.au.

July 15. Children's Ministry Workshop at Broadwater Rd UC, Mansfield. Discover how the community of faith can assist children to enter into God's hospitality. 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'

Indigenous fellowship feeds mind and

DEVELOPED OVER the past few years by volunteer fellowship members, the Eternal Life Fellowship's after school drop-in centre is quickly developing into an after school homework program.

Eternal Life Fellowship's vision is to respond to the material, social and spiritual needs of the people in the Gordonvale community by providing a place of hospitality for Indigenous families and whoever drops in.

Local children come for afternoon tea, Bible story telling and a talk with the volunteers while they wait for their parents to finish work.

Fellowship member Mike Adam tells of his conversation with Shelly when he asked whether she had much homework to do that night.

Mr Adam said she smiled shyly and said, "Yup, I got an assignment, a project, and some reading. Teacher wants it in tomorrow."

A few more questions from Mr Adam revealed that Shelly was in grade eight and was finding the work quite hard.

He said the young girl was incredulous when he offered for her to do the work on a computer in the church hall with some help from a volunteer teacher who was a member of the team, but loved the idea.

"I'm not dumb you know," she said, "I just need a break."

Mr Adam said the team prays that the children who come to the after-school drop might know that Christ's love is for everyone.

Eternal Life Fellowship is a small congregation of the Calvary Presbytery and expressed its gratitude for a UC Foundation grant for assistance to buy equipment for the ministry.



Happy participants from the Eternal Life Fellowship after-school program. Photo courtesy of Calvary Presbytery

PFA REUNION

A REUNION of former members and friends of the Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia will be held on 11 August at Creek Road Presbyterian Church, Carina.

Beginning at 4.30pm with a meet and greet, an evening meal will be shared in the style of the assembly teas of olden days so bring a plate of food to share. Tea, coffee and cold drinks provided.

Worship at 7.30pm will be led by the PYC Choristers (formerly Presbyterian Youth Choir).

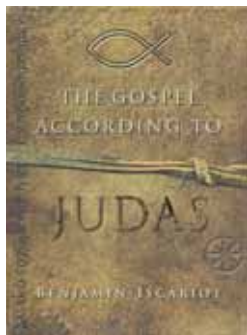
This event is the brain child of

Everaldd Compton, who will be the Master of Ceremonies for the evening.

To cover the cost of staging the event, there is an entry fee of \$5 per person. Those wishing to attend should register their intention by 31 July to Robert Caitens at 110 Rue Montaigne Petrie 4502 or email robcaitens@bigpond.com.

"This event promises to be a great inspirational evening, giving opportunity not only to reminisce about the special years of PFA, but also to look forward to our various roles in the growth of the church," Mr Caitens said.





The Gospel According to Judas

By Jeffrey Archer and Francis J Maloney
Pan Macmillan 2007
RRP: \$24.95

Although attributed to Benjamin Escarlot, the alleged son of Judas Iscariot, in reality *The Gospel According to Judas* is a 21st century work of fiction written by Jeffrey Archer and Francis Maloney.

Now I'm a Jeffrey Archer fan however, he sure struck out this time.

Fascinated by the character of Judas, Archer set out to write a fictional account of the ministry of Jesus told through the eyes of the disciple whom history charges with Jesus' betrayal.

Archer engaged eminent Australian Catholic theologian and New Testament scholar, Francis J Maloney to collaborate with him on the project. Archer's role was to tell the story and Maloney's to handle issues of scholarship.

Their goal was to produce a piece of writing that looked like a gospel, not a novel, and made sense to a first century Christian or Jew.

Now I can understand why Archer, an internationally famous story teller would choose such a project. But why Maloney? The Catholic scholar says he wanted to use Judas to show us how to handle failure and disappointment.

In my view *The Gospel According to Judas* fails dismally at all points.

It is dreary and lacks the pace, suspense, characterisation and atmosphere that Archer is renowned for.

The style is ponderous and pedestrian, with Judas inevitably coming across as the wise one who counsels Peter and the other

REVIEWS

disciples on prophecies from the Hebrew Scriptures.

Yet it is this supposedly insightful Judas who is duped by a scribe into betraying Jesus while all the time believing he is helping Jesus to be taken to safety in Galilee.

Archer and Maloney play fast and loose with Scripture.

Overall, a very disappointing work. I found it implausible, unimaginative and dull. I very much doubt that many seekers will be drawn to discover the authentic Jesus of the Gospels as a result of their reading 'Benjamin Escarlot's' version.

Graham Beattie is a Queensland Synod Mission Consultant

Purple Spot Sickness

By the De Villiers Family
WaterBrook Press
RRP: \$18.95

Written and illustrated by the De Villiers family, *Purple Spot Sickness* is another book in the "Sprout" series designed to help children grow with God.

It is a delightful story which teaches children aged 4 to 7 the value of treating others as they themselves want to be treated. (Matthew 7:12)

The illustrations give the characters an alien fascination with their larger than life heads and amusing eyes.

Strong colours and clever graphics enhance the story.

The story of Sprout, Twig and Petal is so believable you could shut your eyes and imagine it being played out at any school. Wondering why Petal is so late in meeting them on their walk to school, Sprout and Twig eventually see her so they join her and soon move into their class.

Petal however is quite unwell and suddenly her skin begins to erupt with purple spots which her teacher Mr Nectar calls Purple Spot Sickness.

Classmates ridicule Petal with unhelpful name calling till Mr Nectar chastises them for inappropriate behaviour. Sprout and Twig however take her home and help care for her.

Meanwhile the rest of the class succumbs to the illness and begin to understand the pain associated with it. Finally as they regained their health, Sprout and Twig also become ill. Now however, their mates are kind and understanding.

This is a gentle, poignant but powerful story for any young child to embrace. For worship leaders, Sunday school teachers, parents and religious educators in schools, *Purple Spot Sickness* is a gem.

Barb Bailey is a retired minister living in Caloundra



Ministry in Disaster Settings: Lessons from the Edge

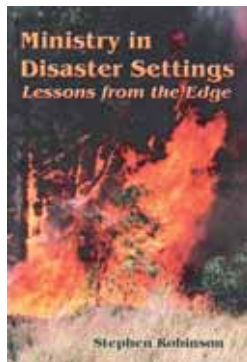
By Stephen Robinson
Self-published
(emergencyministry@tpuc.org.au)
RRP: \$25

A year ago Australia was stirred by the news of an accident at the Beaconsfield goldmine.

In the weeks that followed, stories began to filter through the media of the significant role local churches in Beaconsfield (especially the Uniting Church) were playing as they responded to the needs of a community struggling to deal with a prolonged tragedy.

Have you ever wondered about other iconic disasters in recent Australian history and the role played by local churches, ministers and chaplains on their very doorstep?

What role, for example, did Christ's people play during and after the Port Arthur massacre, the Granville train disaster, the



Kempsey bus crash, the Thredbo Ski Resort landslide? Furthermore, what toll did ministering in a disaster setting take on these people?

Robinson, a (NSW) Uniting Church minister, wrote *Ministry in Disaster Settings* based on his doctoral studies.

In so doing, he has addressed an issue about which very little has been written – despite the fact that we are living in a world more and more rocked by natural and man-made disasters.

Robinson begins with extracts from personal interviews he conducted with chaplains and ministers involved with the Port Arthur, Thredbo, Granville and Kempsey disasters.

These stories are both enlightening and deeply disturbing as Robinson sensitively exposes the multiple costs they and their families suffered because of ministering on the edge.

Some costs were direct results of dealing with the trauma itself, however, another (more toxic?) layer of pain for these ministers resulted from how their local congregations and/or denominational leaders failed to recognise their subsequent distress and needs.

Robinson moves beyond these modern case studies to a theological reflection on ministry in times of crisis, using three scriptural case studies – Elijah, Jesus and Paul.

Combining story, practical research findings and theological reflection, Robinson equips and challenges us to be ready to minister, and authentically support those who minister, on the frontline.

Merryem Brown is a psychologist and a member of Redcliffe Uniting Church

Singing a New Song

By George Stuart
The Centre for Progressive Religious Thought (Sydney)
RRP: Lyrics Edition \$20

Newcastle resident George Stuart offers a hymnbook providing 103 sets of lyrics "written to well-loved traditional hymn tunes".

The hymnbook provides full piano score, though without guitar chords. Accompanying the collection are four CDs, with organ accompaniment.

In assessing this collection, I found myself torn, as I am passionate about encouraging our own Australian creative worship talent.

There is much to commend about Stuart's hymn writing. The detailed indexes provided and the diversity of themed sections, avoid the narrow "praise only" orientation of much contemporary worship music.

Maybe the wording on the cover of both the hymnbook and CDs summarises my perplexity – "Traditional Hymn Tunes for New Century Lyrics".

I found the emphasis problematic – there seems too much "traditional" and not enough "New Century". I would have liked to have sensed more of the "new century" in Stuart's writing. Perhaps immersed amid a congregation being formed with the aid of these lyrics, my impressions may well be quite different!

That said, this nobly and no doubt lovingly crafted collection will find its place within congregations which will major on the traditional.

Relying on the riches of traditional hymnody, Stuart's lyrics offer scope for these communities to sing fresh words, alongside the fresh words sung globally from the likes of Shirley Murray, Brian Wren and John Bell.

For information about CDs, PowerPoints and Harmony edition or to order, contact George Stuart at george.stuart@exemail.com.au, phone (02) 4959 6028 or write to 148 Brighton Ave Toronto NSW 2283.

David MacGregor is a musician and minister at Indooroopilly Uniting Church and a member of the National Working Group on Worship

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

G.K.Chesterton, Thinking Backward, Looking Forward

By Stephen R.L.Clark



While written through the lens of Stephen Clark's own philosophy, this is worth a read to learn of the wisdom and humour of someone who, 100 years ago, envisaged much of what we experience today.

Thinking Backward, Looking Forward brought out the essence of the man, G.K.Chesterton.

Joan Cook

God's Top 10: Blowing the Lid off the Commandments

By Anne Robertson



An easy-to-read guide that covers over 40 issues we find on our personal agenda.

God's Top 10 not only blows the lid off the Commandments, it offers a fresh way for them to speak to us today.

The author reminds us that God gave commandments about how to live together in society... there is a wider picture.

Bob Warrick

Through the Dark Woods – A young woman's journey out of depression

By Joanna Swinney



Jo Swinney shares her experiences as a sufferer of depression and offers insights from a Christian perspective.

Swinney's style is colourful, humorous and thoughtful, if somewhat naïve.

She is generally sensitive in handling her topic, however she mentions depression 'resulting directly from sin'.

Renee England

Heaven in your Handbag

By Mazzi Binaisa



Peppered with Biblical quotes from the NIV this book gives a real insight into an upfront and personal relationship with God.

Full of passion for God *Heaven in your Handbag* is primarily a devotional to help young women understand how God can and should be the firm centre of their lives, no matter what!

Pamela Weymouth

3 June: Ingham

The Ingham district congregation of about 85 people is located in far north Queensland about 110km north of Townsville. Sunday services are held in Ingham and Halifax about 20km away and also weekly at Aged Care facilities.

Typical of many rural congregations we have a sizable elderly demographic and financial constraints within which to manage. However we are blessed with a Sunday School of around 35-40 children and people with gifts in many areas together with a spirit of cooperation and tolerance.

Please pray for:

- Our children's ministry comprising the Sunday School, a Kid's Fun Club that meets on a Saturday afternoon and weekly ecumenical RE in twelve primary and one high school. We particularly struggle to maintain sufficient teachers and leaders for these activities.

- Our ministry to the elderly as we take church to those in Aged Care and as we visit those who are no longer able to leave their homes. Maintaining the relationship with those who are no longer able to attend church is a vital ministry.

- Pray for those involved in Blue Care support groups.

- Our annual outreach at the Ingham show in early July. The ladies of the congregation become very busy preparing for this event when we run two stalls providing meals. We are the only church still active at the show and continue providing a Christian witness to the community at this venue.

- The various activities held in the church premises; Ladies Guild, Craft Group, KYB study groups, social activities and ALANON.

- Those who take an active role in leadership and for new leaders to be raised up within our congregation.

- That the people in the Ingham district may come to know the Lord as their Saviour.

Praise God as he continues to bless and sustain us.

10 June: Murgon and Goomeri

Murgon and Goomeri are rural communities that are part of the South Burnett Region.

There is a Uniting Church Congregation in each place functioning as one Congregation with approx 80 members, mostly in the 50 plus age group.

Families are encouraged to come once a month to a more relaxed "family" service.

For the past two years we have embraced Resourced Ministry – Lay Ministry Teams being

resourced by one Minister of the Word across a wider area.

Murgon / Goomeri shares ministry with Central Burnett Churches but, as our Minister has moved into another placement, we are now seeking someone who will continue with us on our journey.

It has been exciting to see how God is equipping us in so many new ways to BE the church in our Community.

Younger members have taken on the challenge of some Executive positions; at least three people are undertaking the Coolamon Lay Preachers Studies; members are taking more ownership of the mission of the Church; and attitudes of "No way!" are becoming, "With God's help we can do this".

We work in schools with other denominations. One of our leaders is Chaplain at the Primary School which has applied for Government funding to continue this work.

Many of our members are involved in a variety of community groups giving witness to Jesus as they serve.

With the ongoing drought, water allocations cut off from farms and major businesses at risk of closure there is great hardship in the community and the church needs to be more aware of the stresses placed on families.

We trust a faithful God and give him praise in all things.

Please pray that:

- We will know God's leading as we call a new Resource Minister.

- Lay leaders will continue to grow in faith and in the knowledge of God's Word.

- The church will be the arms of Jesus within the community.

17 June: The Gap

The Gap is an active, growing congregation gathering in morning and evening worship each Sunday.

Our vision is to connect people to the love of God through worship, witness and through our groups and activities we seek to live out this vision.

We meet each Wednesday to pray for our congregation and its mission. A Bible reading program is made available to each person in the congregation.

Please pray for:

- Our community life to be enriched as we celebrate together, for our worship leaders and musicians and others who participate in worship, for us as we explore possibilities for developing our worship life in new ways and

for all the churches in The Gap as we gather for ecumenical worship on Pentecost Sunday night.

- Our combined worship service and Brunch on Sunday 24 June to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Uniting Church.

- Our Church Council, Elders, our office administrator, and Leadership Teams as they serve and witness in our congregation.

- The large number of faithful volunteers who work tirelessly to serve Christ and our congregation.

- Our home groups and bible study groups and for us to continue to nurture our spiritual growth as we read the scriptures daily.

- Volunteers who host a lunch one Sunday a month in our "Lunches for those who eat alone" program and also provide transport, entertainment and a chance to eat with friends.

- Our Senior Friendship Group which meets once a month, also providing transport, morning tea and an interesting program.

- Our craft group as they welcome many people and provide baby sitting to allow parents to participate.

- The Chaplaincy committee at The Gap High School, the teachers, students and Chaplain.

- Our RE classes, our primary school teachers and students.

Pray that the application for a chaplaincy grant to employ chaplains in our three primary schools will be successful.

Through our playgroup ministry and the parenting courses, we seek to support families in our community. Our Milestone Ministry holds family lunches for baptismal families and other young families, providing opportunities for fellowship and growth.

We praise God for the increasing number of families and children who are part of our worship and congregational life.

Please pray for our ministry to families, our growing Sunday School and teachers, our young adults and those who lead Friday Night Youth group.

Please pray that we will find a suitable Families Ministry coordinator.

Through a number of Ladies and Men's groups, our Walking group and our "Fit after Fifty" classes, people from the congregation have opportunity to witness to the love of Christ.

Please pray for our application for funding for a ministry person to assist us linking these groups to our community.

PRAYER DIARY

During December, three of our young adults participated in the Global Walking Trip to the Philippines and have been sharing their experiences and their vision for mission emerging out of this trip.

Please pray for our congregation as we explore opportunities for us to respond to the challenges of new mission in the Philippines.

24 June: Maranoa

Maranoa comprises six congregations - Arcadia Valley (about 160 kms north of Roma), Injune about 90 kms north of Roma) and Mitchell (90kms west of Roma); Roma itself (about six hours drive from Brisbane), Wallumbilla (40kms east of Roma) and Yuleba (about 60 kms east of Roma).

Arcadia Valley is an ecumenical congregation that meets in different homes. It is a close-knit community. Injune is a small congregation that has combined with the Anglicans and will, in the future, be joined by the Roman Catholic congregation. In the future this town could cease to exist if the State Government closes the State forest to logging.

The Roma congregation recently completed a new mission building known as "The Shed". It is creating new opportunities to reach out to the local community. Mitchell

and Yuleba are small, elderly congregations. Wallumbilla is a smaller congregation than Roma but has a growing vitality with plans to develop new ministries to the community. The whole region is badly affected by drought and this is impacting on the town communities as well as the graziers and farmers. Angus Buchan, author of *Faith Like Potatoes*, will visit the region in August and is a catalyst for co-operation between eight Christian traditions to reach the people on every property in the South-West.

Please pray:

- For soaking rain that will break the drought.

- That the Angus Buchan visit will be well attended by graziers and the public and that the Heal the Land program will bring Jesus Christ into the lives of many.

- Giving thanks for 'The Shed' and the part it will play in people's lives.

- For the Holy Spirit to touch lives.

- Giving thanks and praise for young people attending church.

- That the repairs and maintenance of the church building will proceed without any hindrance

- For future church plans for ministry should there be no minister.

Youth ministry has a touch of Madness

IN A UNIQUE partnership on a new scale, 30 Uniting Church youth workers across Queensland have teamed up with the Synod's Youth and Children's Ministry Unit (YACMU) to host a faith forming summer camp in January 2007.

Member of the organising executive and Synod Young Adult Ministry Coordinator Tom Kerr said the vision of Summer Madness Momentum is to grow disciples by inspiring teenagers to follow Jesus, participate in church, serve local communities and share faith with their friends.

"That's a whole lot of spiritual challenge to be putting before teenagers, but they are up for it!" Mr Kerr said.

"We've wasted too much time playing games with our teenagers, when we could have been more intentional about building them up in their faith and sending them out to be the light of the world."

Mr Kerr referred to the historic Bellevue Camp days, Youth Congresses and Presbytery Easter Camps.

He said former Director of the Uniting Church Department for



Tom Kerr. Photo by Osker Lau

Christian Education Rev Dr Lew Born estimated 10,000 teenagers made commitments to Christ through the Bellevue Camps and connected ministries.

"It's time we challenged our teens to become true disciples and to share in the call to go and make others disciples as well."

Summer Madness Momentum will be held at Alex Park Conference Centre 11-14 January 2008 for young people in grades 8 to 12 and their leaders. Enquiries to Tom Kerr at 07 3377 9935 or www.yacmu.com.au.

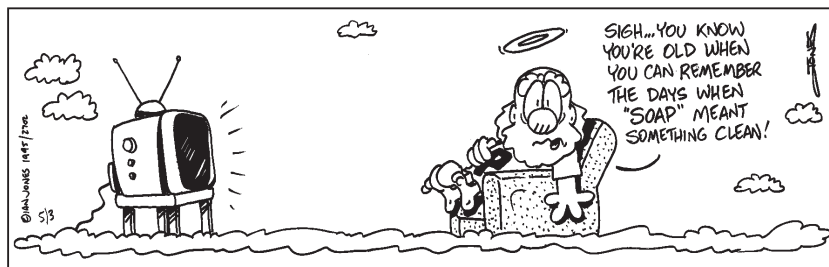
SCHOOL CHAPLAINS NEEDED!



An exciting opportunity has emerged as a result of the federal government's initiative to seed-fund new school chaplaincy services.

Scripture Union (SU) Qld, the State's major school chaplaincy employing authority, will need to recruit many new chaplains over the next nine months.

SU Qld invites applications for these positions at the website www.apply.su-chaplain.com



Pioneering women

I was interested to read the articles on women in ministry (May Journey) but would like to add some background information that most readers may not be aware of.

The Congregational Church in Australia ordained several women for the ministry years before union in 1977.

The first of these was Rev Winifred Kiek in 1926 in Adelaide.

She was the wife of Dr E.S. Kiek the Principal of Parkin Theological College. I knew her during my year of study at the college in 1954 and held her in highest regard.

She was an outstanding scholar, teacher, pastor and preacher ministering to pastorates in Adelaide for 15 years as well as raising a family of three.

She was highly regarded by the laity of the church. Her interests and influence extended to matters relating to the enrichment of family life and to the advancement of the gifts of women in society.

With other women she pioneered work on alcohol abuse, gambling, sex education, pacifism, women in public life, and women voters across Australia and the world.

In 1964 The Australian Council for Church Women through The World Council of Churches established the "Winifred Kiek Scholarship" in her honour to give an opportunity for a Christian girl from a Third World country to further her studies at a western university especially Australia. This continues today as far as I know.

Following Winifred's example, ten more Congregational women were ordained across Australia between 1931 and 1959, two of these being Queenslanders, Rev Dorothy Wacker and Rev Thelma Murray.

Dorothy, trained as a teacher of the deaf, felt the call to the ordained ministry and entered the University of Queensland and Cromwell College. I had the privilege of sharing her training for four of those years.

Ordained in 1959 she ministered to churches in Brisbane, then as Director of Christian Education. She also was well received by the laity. In 1970 she was called to the Applecross Church in Perth for an outstanding eight years ministry, then to the Pilgrim City Church in Adelaide and into Church Union.

If Union had been further delayed she had already been accepted as the incoming President of the Congregational Union of Australia.

In 1981 she resigned from Pilgrim and from the Uniting Church. Her spiritual journey brought her to the point of seriously questioning the validity of religious systems on a person's spiritual quest with all their hierarchical structures, authority, tradition and patriarchal emphasis. and the general place of women in church and society.

She then went back to study other religious systems and feminine theology, travelling the world and learning from well-known thinkers and writers in other countries. She has since established throughout Australia a whole network of women's groups including Brisbane and the Gold Coast teaching self-esteem and empowerment for women to take their place more readily in society and in spiritual systems including Christianity.

Now living in Canberra she uses Federal Government Grants to promote these causes.

Because Dorothy left the church deeply hurt and changed her name, some people turned their backs on her. But to my wife and myself, she is still our beloved Dorothy.

In conclusion, I believe what makes a successful minister, male or female, is a deep sense of call, openness to new truth, the ability to relate to all kinds of people and humility.

Both these women certainly had these qualities.

Rev Ian Russell
Gold Coast

Hallelujah: not finished
God help us if the opinions expressed in the Easter edition of *Journey* are widespread in the Uniting Church.

It is not "It is finished ... Not!"

Rather, it is "It is finished ... Hallelujah!" Good Friday was not Bad Friday.

The resurrection is not some vague mystical happening that inspires us all to keep going. As Leslie Newbigen puts it "The resurrection was a manifestation of a victory – not a reversal of a defeat".

When Jesus cried out "telestai" (done), he was announcing to the dark powers of the universe that the work of redeeming a fallen creation, planned in eternity, had now been made actual in time.

This was not a cry from a weak defeated man, but the Son of God majestically announcing that the Old Testament prophecies concerning the life and death of Jesus were fulfilled and the old sacrificial system was finished.

This mighty cry of victory heralded forth the amazing news that salvation was assured to all who would believe, for it was completed – finished.

Subsequently, Paul can remind his readers that when he entered the Greek city-state of Corinth, he "resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified".

Don McKay
Samford

Stem of the problem

Please allow me to offer a few comments regarding the current topic of the cloning of human embryos.

Legislation to clone human embryos will shortly come before the Queensland State Parliament. I strongly opposed the federal cloning legislation last year that passed the Senate by only one vote.

Respect for human life from its very beginnings is central to the Christian faith. In addition, there is no scientific evidence on the table that cloning is necessary in order to make medical breakthroughs to alleviate suffering.

Adult stem cell technology, using the patient's own cells, is

LETTERS

increasingly recognised worldwide as the way of the future. I secured federal government funding of \$21 million for the world's first ever Adult Stem Cell Centre at Griffith University in Brisbane.

This will help encourage their wonderful work in showing how adult stem cells can be grown into muscle, nerve, kidney, heart cells and so on.

Our very own Queensland researchers have shown that embryonic stem cells and cloning are not needed to find cures – in fact they have many drawbacks such as their capacity to form tumours.

I encourage all to express any concerns with legislating to allow cloning in Queensland with your local State Member.

If they are made aware of your concerns, they will think carefully before they vote. The Senate vote was very close and your voice can make a difference in this very important debate.

Senator Ron Boswell
Senator for Queensland
Leader of The Nationals
in the Senate

Dawkins delusion

I agree with 'Harrison the younger' that Dawkins gets it wrong in many ways in *The God Delusion*.

This is disappointing to me as some aspects of his argument do need to be taken seriously. Sam Harris in *The End of Faith* makes some similar mistakes though the direction he takes in *Letter to a Christian Nation* is a bit more on the mark.

They are both mostly preaching to the converted but I guess that's what preachers have always done. Living in the church means that it is easy to spot the annoying style of a fundamentalist and Dawkins is certainly one of those.

The trouble is, unlike Sam Harris, he does not realise that atheism is not what defines him. It has always seemed to me to be a rather stupid way to define anybody.

One is defined much more by what one believes. Even so God is not much of an indicator. I doubt the God of Bonhoeffer, Spong or Jerry Falwell share much in common.

Like all fundamentalists, Dawkins' way of seeing the world is so strong and valued that he cannot properly appreciate other viewpoints.

He also very much reminds me of Star Trek's Mr Spock: total incomprehension at the irrational and emotional Captain Kirk. Dawkins and Harris both think that reason can convince people that their ancient mythologies, superstitions and prejudices are stupid.

Religious people are mostly wiser in this regard at least. We also know that there is an ever present danger that in trying to oppose the Pharisees you can actually become one.

Nevertheless, I think that there is a good Christian principle here somewhere and if we'd let God die we might actually find something better will be resurrected.

I wait in hope.

Owen Ronalds
North Rockhampton

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Letters to the editor may be edited due to space limitations.
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Electronic Organ Baldwin Interlude model 155. vgc. \$500. Contact Norman Park UC, Peter Smale or Rev Yvonne McCrostie on 3398 8923.

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Anyone with lead lighting skills to repair windows in Dalby UC. Contact Rev A Smith 4662 2306.

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Holy Land Special. Israel's Diamond Jubilee 1948-2008. Join Rev Dr Geoff & Mrs Lorraine Pankhurst for a Holy Land Special Pilgrimage celebrating Israel's 60th Anniversary. See Biblical prophecy come alive before your eyes. (Is.35:1 "The desert will rejoice, and flowers will bloom in the wilderness.") Experience the Bible come alive as you walk where Jesus walked. Details: 4698 7824.

Oberammergau Passion Play 2010. Plan ahead as the world awaits the 2010 presentation of this amazing retelling of the last week of the earthly life of Christ. This tradition dates from 1633. Don't miss this once in a decade opportunity, beginning with a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Expressions of interest to Rev Dr Geoff Pankhurst 4698 7824.

Historically Speaking



The oldest funeral business in Queensland

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

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

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

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

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

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

Alex Gow Funerals

A Brisbane-owned family business, established in 1840.

Phone 3852 1501

JOURNEY asks...

What have you appreciated about the Uniting Church?

Duncan Harrison

Singing songs of praise in the streets of Sydney... that's what we did as we converged on the Town Hall on 22 June 1977 for the service of worship, thanksgiving and commitment that inaugurated the Uniting Church in Australia.

This was a never to be forgotten moment, a once in a lifetime event.

Joined by representatives of other communions and people from overseas churches, we celebrated not the "sticking together" of three ecclesiastical institutions, but what we believed God had been doing and would continue to do among this people.

To participate in some small way in the preparation for and ongoing life of this faith journey has been over more than 50 years an experience for which I am profoundly grateful.

As Andrew Dutney has put it, "It was like they'd had a vision" - not unlike that of the early Christians, that in the risen crucified Christ, God was bringing about nothing short of the reconciliation of the whole universe to himself; and we were called to be a small sign of that at the end of the 20th century and beyond.

Much prayer, listening, thought, discussion, and planning (and not a little controversy) occurred on the long and sometimes tortuous road, but the founding fathers and mothers forced us to grapple with the basic issues of the faith.

For no spiritual strategies that we work out will ever produce resurrection. Following Jesus doesn't get us where we want to go; it gets us to where Jesus goes.

I value that we are still a pilgrim people trying never to lose sight of Jesus, his compassion and his obedience.

I rejoice that every member is seen to have gifts and graces from the Holy Spirit as we are nourished by word and Sacrament day-by-day, and that we try to express this through "waiting on God's word" and listening to each other.



Waiting and listening are not easy in our world but the fellowship of other stumbling and sometimes confused sisters and brothers helps as we try to hear his "Follow Me".

We are still together and still singing!

Duncan Harrison was the Moderator of the Queensland Synod in 1980 and 1981 and served as the second General Secretary from 1983 until 1989.

Henry Swindon

I migrated to Australia from South Africa and took up a placement as Minister of the Word at Indooroopilly in January 2003.

Now in my fifth year, I have come to appreciate many things about the Uniting Church in Australia.

I appreciate the hospitality that welcomes the stranger - we were warmly accepted and embraced as a new family to the country and church.

I appreciate the Uniting Church declaring itself to be a multi-cultural church, where all cultures are given equal recognition and dignity.

This is an important step in moving beyond our Anglo-Celtic roots to becoming a truly indigenous church in a modern multi-cultural Australia.

I appreciate the willingness to accommodate a broad spectrum of theologies and opinions.

We don't all have to be of the same mind to be one in Christ!

I like the Uniting Church's openness to



ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue and co-operation.

I appreciate the "jigsaw puzzle" model of governance which is not hierarchical and controlling, but horizontal and collaborative.

I like our connexional structure which is a healthy safeguard against becoming inward-looking and insular.

I like our commitment to the wider community through our health and community service organisations.

I like the fact that "every member ministry" is taken seriously.

I like the intentional way in which the specified ministries on our church councils are balanced by equal numbers of lay representatives.

I like the way the role of women in leadership is recognised and affirmed.

I appreciate the way the *Basis of Union* speaks of the centrality of Jesus Christ as the Word of God and of the Church as a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal.

This anchors us in a personal faith that is dynamic and future-oriented.

Lastly, I like the fact there is a lot to appreciate about the Uniting Church in Australia!

Henry Swindon is minister at the Indooroopilly Uniting Church congregation in Brisbane.

Josie Nottle

I was baptised into the Uniting Church as an infant and as I grew up I was blissfully unaware of its history.

I grew up naive to the distinctions between denominations.

I had a strong sense of all Christians being united through Christ. This was never the explicit teaching but was the vibe I received and because of this I never really understood why denominations existed.

Although this is probably connected to my specific experience it has become, over time, what I have appreciated most about the Uniting Church.

To me, the Uniting Church, or at least the parts I have been exposed to, have focused more on what we have in common than what we differ on.

This sits nicely with me and has enabled me the freedom to explore my faith.

Around the time I completed year twelve I began a search; I searched for God and a reason to have faith.

A part of this journey of questioning prompted me to visit many different churches; a range of denominations both in Australia and the U.S.A.

In this time, I was exposed to many different styles and ways of expressing faith and understanding God.

When I returned from America with a fresh understanding of who I was and who God was, I returned to my local Uniting Church, the one I had been a member of for my entire life.

It was an odd feeling; I felt as though I returned home.

The vibe of acceptance, inclusion and unity were evident once again.

These things are three of the many things I appreciate about the Uniting Church.

And these three things have enabled me to carry on exploring my faith in God as I have continued to grow.

Josie Nottle is candidate for the Specified Ministry of Youth Worker and a member of the Aspley Uniting Church congregation.

