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Where have all the young men gone... long time passing?



IN THE gospels, Jesus talks to his male companions about fishing, farming and building houses, and they respond as tradesmen, farmers, accountants and public servants would.

In a contemporary Uniting Church Sunday service Jesus speaks through word and sacrament. The congregation responds. Jesus' 21st century male disciples may sing, "I'm desperate for you; I'm lost without you," or perhaps "Jesus I am so in love with you".

Is that the type of relationship with God a young office worker could recommend to his workmates or friends?

There's an argument that the contemporary language of Sunday services can be as foreign as the archaic "Holy as Thou art, Thou the God who made me".

Beyond the language barrier (that applies to both men and women) are the trappings of church culture that mystify many modern men, "Why does the minister wear a smock?"

If there's a perception that church is for old women, it's because fewer than 40% of Australian church members are men and the proportion of younger men is declining.

Author of *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, David Murrow believes the move to emotive, almost romantic religion has alienated many men from worship services. What goes on in church on Sunday is strange.

In their work, life and recreation, men require challenge. That's something largely missing from church life, both in the language of worship and the life of contemporary faith communities. Have we come to present Jesus as a lover, not a leader?

By Phil Smith

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No men... another fallacy

FROM TIME to time, I find myself troubled by various throw-away comments certain people make about the church.

The common element in all these one-liners is cynicism and negativity.

They all express a particular criticism or infer an element of blame for some situation or other in the life of the church.

The statement I hear most frequently is that the church is "dying".

Apart from indicating my strong disagreement with that belief tied as it is to statistics and a very narrow understanding of what "church" means, I don't want to say any more about it here. It's just an example of what I'm talking about.

This issue of *Journey* has a focus on men in the church. A number of recent publications I have seen suggest that many men are either opting out of participation in the life of the church or else never connecting with a congregation in the first place.

I believe that we face two related but different issues here.

Firstly, there is the challenge of effectively sharing the gospel with that majority of men in our society who have no contact with the church at all.

Secondly, it is vital that we develop church cultures in which men feel appropriately affirmed and challenged.

The evangelistic imperative is always with us. For the purpose of this article, I want to concentrate on the second issue.

I accept that those who are writing or commenting on this subject may be reflecting on their own observation and experience, so I'm going to do the same.

Based on my engagement with the life of the Uniting Church in Queensland over the past three years, I can confidently tell you that men are still a significant and active presence in our congregations.

Of course I need to put that assertion into context.

The congregations in which there



Message from the Moderator

Rev Dr David Pitman

is a healthy male presence tend to have certain characteristics.

They are congregations in which there is a clear missional imperative. They are vibrant and energetic.

Their worship is lively and engaging with active lay leadership.

They have established links with the wider community offering real opportunities for meaningful service.

They provide specific activities and programs that are appealing to and satisfying for men.

I have visited a significant number of congregations like that run on the men are there and they are real participants.

Now it is true that not all of our congregations exhibit the

"The idea that we are bereft of men in the life of the church is just not true."

characteristics I have identified as crucial for the involvement of men. There are usually some men in these congregations but not nearly as many.

Such congregations are often small and comprised mostly of older people. Since men generally have a shorter life-span than women, it is inevitable that these congregations will have a majority of female members.

Mind you, I have visited some congregations in which a large majority of the members were older and where the energy and vitality

were palpable! I always come away from such situations refreshed and encouraged.

Those congregations also have a very active male presence and it's no surprise that they have many of the characteristics of the healthy congregations described above.

It seems to me that the message is very simple.

If you are concerned about the number of men in your congregation and would like to see more, then develop an intentional mission strategy, ensure that there is plenty of opportunity for participation in activities that matter and make a difference, and develop programs that provide specifically for men.

Having said all that, we must not lose sight of the fact that growing the presence and participation of women in key leadership roles continues to be a challenge in the life of the Uniting Church.

The participation of men in the life of the church does not and must not mean male domination.

Our theology and our polity commit us to work actively for full partnership for women in leadership and ministry.

Let me conclude by reiterating that the idea that we are bereft of men in the life of the church is just not true.

Where they are absent it is invariably due to the circumstances that prevail in that particular setting. We always have the option of seeking to shape church communities that encourage and support men to grow in faith and discipleship.

From the editorial team

It's Sunday afternoon, you've had lunch and settled on the couch, feet up with *Journey*.

We'll be spending the next three editions together, so allow me to introduce myself.

I'm helping hold the fort while Bruce Mullan takes a break and Mardi Lumsden takes the wheel.

My CV: husband and father, UCA member, journalist and broadcaster, occasional elephant hunter.

Rather than the 'elephant in the room', let's turn our sights on 'pachyderms in the pew', and take aim this month at an endangered species: men.

Read through Uniting Church calendars and web sites. Look at 'what's on'.

Notice special celebrations to mark International Women's Day, ministry to/with seniors and camps for young people.

We have an entire unit to provide Youth and Children's ministry and they do it very well.

If you've still got this week's pew bulletin handy, is there anything specifically intended for men, designed to engage them in congregational life and build their experience of faith?

Don't show me the mowing roster!

Most congregations can confirm what national and global research has found.

With the possible exception of the orthodox churches, men are disappearing at an alarming rate.

In Australia only 39% of congregational members are male and the age is skewed to 55-plus.

Up to 25% of married women who worship regularly do so without their husbands.

Who teaches Sunday School, leads the worship (or the music team), visits the sick, and hosts home groups?

The answer is generally women.

Perhaps stemming from an era when most women didn't have paid daily work commitments, they provide the bulk of energy and volunteerism in our congregations.

That usually includes the musical influence, the worship style, and the décor.

And maybe that's partly why blokes go fishing on Sunday or stay home to wash the car.

There's been a perception that men dominate the church.

It's true of the clergy, although the majority of students studying at Trinity Theological College this year are women.

But in the life of our congregations men are missing in action and that has serious ramifications.

I look forward to your letters.

Phil Smith
Guest writer

The *Journey* team would also like to thank members of the Graceville Uniting Church for their assistance with our front cover.

Sign of the Times



THIS MESSAGE from Pine Rivers Uniting Church congregation reminds us that churches are used by everyone from those attending the Sunday service to those who attend for a baptism or wedding. Email your Signs of the Times to journey@ucaqlld.com.au.

JOURNEY

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Communications Services Unit

Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod

60 Bayliss Street Auchenflower QLD GPO Box 674 Brisbane QLD 4001

Ph: 07 3377 9910

Fax: 07 3377 9796

Email: journey@ucaqlld.com.au

Web: www.journeyonline.com.au

Ministers enriched and challenged in Bali

By Penny Monger

A 'RICH' and 'humbling experience'—these were the two key sentiments of the 63 participants in the inaugural UCA National Ministers' Conference, held in Bali on 1 to 4 July.

The conference was hailed a great success by Uniting Church President Rev Gregor Henderson and all who took part.

Thanks to a partnership with the Protestant Church of Bali and Uniting International Mission, the small island was the perfect setting to provide ministers from all over Australia the opportunity to see how church is 'done' elsewhere in the world.

Nonetheless, many had questioned the location: why should a bunch of ministers go out of the country – and on a junket in Bali no less – to talk and learn about their own uniquely Australian church and ministry?

The answers are many and varied. Our rich partnership with the Protestant Church of Bali;

the Uniting Church's standing as a multicultural and cross-cultural church; the fact that Bali is a shorter (and cheaper) flight for those in Western Australia than it is to travel to the east; the notion that to experience other cultures and indeed other faiths is to enrich our own experience and ministry in Australia.

Keynote speaker at all three ministers' conferences this year, Rev Dr Andrew Dutney, answered the question from a personal perspective.

He spoke on the first day about his experience of 'falling in love' with the *Basis of Union* and the Uniting Church as a whole from the wilds of Scotland many years ago.

His personal story – of being on the outside, looking in – was a wonderful complement to our presence in Indonesia.

After all, if we never experience the 'other', how can we evaluate, reflect on, adapt and improve our own practices?

Regardless of the setting the very fact of having 60 ministers from all over Australia share, talk, compare notes, provide support, advise and spend time together, was very rewarding for all.

Within the serene surrounds of the conference and accommodation centre (called Dhyana Pura, which means 'place of meditation'), ministers from every Synod came together.

They represented a range of ministries: from rural settings to inner city congregations; from school chaplaincy to multicultural and cross-cultural ministry; from decades-long involvement in the church, to the newly-ordained; from those who had ministered in other countries, to those who had never before left their own Synod.

Under the broad heading 'Creative Adventurous Ministry' the conference while looking at the Protestant Church of Bali in its pluralistic context, focused particularly on the *Basis of Union*.

Guided by the charismatic, witty



Traditional Balinese dancers welcome participants at the National Ministers Conference in Bali. Photo by Penny Monger

and deeply thoughtful Dr Dutney, the *Basis of Union* was pulled apart, looked over with a fine tooth comb, and reassembled.

The continuing wonder of union was explored from every angle.

In many ways, it was like reading that founding document for the first time and learning anew the courage it took to unite.

Added to that was a look at contextualisation of the Gospel, interfaith dialogue, rural ministry, community services, current events in Bali impacting the global community, our international relationships, and the experience of being Indonesian in Australia.

The Protestant Christian Church in Bali likens itself to the Mango Tree.

Also speaking at the conference was Rev Dr Wayan Mastra.

Like the Mango tree, Dr Mastra

said the aims of the Balinese Church were 'to provide shade and shelter to those in need; to produce refreshing and abundant fruit; and to become a spiritual centre for Balinese people, even amidst the dominant Hindu faith'.

Many ministers spoke of telling stories of current life experience in order to connect people with the Word.

But this issue has particular resonance for those in multicultural and cross-cultural settings in Australia and some suggested that work needs to be done across the life of The Uniting Church in Australia by way of contextualisation.

This area of ministry is one of our fastest-growing and the question should be asked: how well equipped are we to foster, nurture and grow our multi-ethnic congregations?



Wheller on the Park management team, Jess McGaw, Rob Booth (manager and marketing), Rosie Clifford and Isabel Stopp. Photo by Frans Van Veen

History repeats at Wheller on the Park

MORE THAN 300 guests piled into a new community centre for the official opening of Wesley Mission Brisbane's newest retirement community, Wheller on the Park in Chermiside.

The opening signalled the start of a new life and a new chapter according to manager Rob Booth.

"We couldn't have hoped for a better response to Wheller on the Park," said Ms Booth.

"Our opening was a significant and exciting day for both Wesley Mission, Brisbane and for the incoming residents who have made the choice to embark on this new journey with us."

The scene mirrored the historic 1936 opening of Wheller Gardens as Queensland's first retirement community.

Queensland Synod Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman declared Wheller on the Park officially open.

Wheller Gardens first opened in 1936 with only 25 cottages.

The next 72 years brought the extension of the now abandoned tramline from Lutwyche to Chermiside in 1947, the Chermiside Drive-in Shopping Centre (now Westfield Chermiside) in 1957 and the damaging floods of 1974.

Situated on the land given to Wesley Mission Brisbane by soft-drink manufacturer George Marchant over 70 years ago, the scope of Wheller on the Park differs greatly from the humble yet significant beginnings of Wheller Gardens.

Wheller on the Park features


76 one, two and three bedroom apartments and villas.

A total of 300 independent living units are planned for the growing community.

Wesley Mission Brisbane's Executive Director Geoff Batkin expressed this sentiment during his address to the future residents inspecting the facilities.

"At the moment, Wheller on the Park is nothing more than an empty block of well designed and built apartments and villas... ultimately, the nature and character of any local community is largely dependent upon those who live there," he said.

For more information visit whelleronthePark.org.au



Growing and serving at Glebe Road Uniting Church


At Glebe Road Uniting Church, the congregation is committed to promoting and raising awareness of social justice.

"I believe that's where the heart of the Gospel is—it's about justice, fairness, and good news for the poor," Reverend Peter Hobson said.

"The church is hoping to become a distribution point for fair trade coffee to stress to the community that we take social justice very seriously and make others aware of justice, poverty and consumerism.

"Every member of the church believes they should be actively involved in contributing their gifts—I'm blessed to be working with people who are so devoted to these issues and promoting the Good News."

Read the full story in the Winter edition of *energy* at www.ucas.com.au.



www.ucas.com.au | 1300 655 653

Kicking goals in chaplaincy



The Brisbane Broncos make the most of their team chaplain Bill Hunter. Photo courtesy of the Brisbane Broncos

By Mardi Lumsden

ONCE EVERY four years the world watches as elite athletes push their bodies to the limits of what is humanly possible and compete for the title of Olympic Champion.

But these athletes are not only putting their bodies to the test, they are also putting their mind to the test.

Elite sportspeople push themselves beyond breaking point, beyond the point of giving up and overcome that voice in their head that says 'I can't do it'.

Behind many of Australia's Olympic athletes, standing somewhere far in the background, is a sports chaplain.

While chaplains are common place in prisons, hospitals and aged care facilities, it has only been in recent years that sports chaplaincy has been recognised by the greater church.

Sports Chaplaincy Australia has been sending chaplains to the Olympic Games since the 1992 Barcelona Games, but chaplains have been working with State and National teams for many years.

Sports Chaplaincy Australia's Queensland coordinator Bill Hunter knows what it feels like to be an elite athlete.

A former police officer, Mr Hunter was involved in the Sydney 2000 Olympic torch relay as a security runner around Queensland.

He was also the Officer in Charge on the field during the 2000 Olympics Soccer games at The Gabba.

A keen sportsperson and Salvation Army member, Mr Hunter was a guide runner for a blind athlete in the Sydney 2000 Paralympics in the 5000m track, 10 000m track and the 42k marathon events and competed in the 2002 World Championships with the same athlete.

"That was a wonderful experience being in the Paralympic Village for that period of time and being able to help him, and being able to help others on the Australian Paralympic team as well.

"I was able to encourage, support, and even run with some of the other blind athletes."

The role of guide runner is an essential part of a blind athlete's preparation and competition.

"When you run together, when you are roped together you have to have such a great understanding of each other, communication has to be spot on and you have to be so much fitter than the blind runner too because you have got to talk most of the time.

"You have got to tell him where he is, how many laps he has got to go, how the race is panning out.

"You wouldn't believe how much trust is involved!

"You just have to have a good friendship and a fair bit of patience with each other.

"It was a very fulfilling experience to be involved in that, to be able to help someone like that and get the best out of them as well.

"It is a bit of a mental game as well... the coach can do everything they can before the race but you are the one during the race to help that process."

While at the Paralympics as a guide runner Mr Hunter worked closely with the chaplains on site, in particular the track and field chaplain.

"It was good to be able to link in with him and do a bit of team work in helping some of the guys.

"Obviously some of them had spiritual concerns and other concerns, so it was good to be able to help those people on that one-to-one basis.

As the chaplain to the Brisbane Broncos, Mr Hunter thinks chaplaincy to elite sportspeople is a

different ball game to other forms of chaplaincy.

"I think it is a different lifestyle," he said.

"Because they appear to have so much fame and fortune everyone thinks they are different.

"They are not different really. They are normal people, just like you and I, they are just living a different lifestyle.

"They still have the same problems a lot of the time, some of the problems are exacerbated by the media.

"The scrutiny the media puts them under now seems to add much more pressure.

"That can be tough particularly if they have got front page headlines.

"It is good to have a chaplain there because they can work things out one-on-one without having the whole world knowing."

Mr Hunter said gaining the trust of the people he works with is key to his role as a chaplain.

"It is great to think that those guys actually trust me because they know they can't trust too many people," he said.

"A lot of people are their friends because they are high profile."

This year the Broncos have asked Mr Hunter to also work with the under 20 side.

The club even made it compulsory for team members to attend a chapel service at the Salvation Army's rehab centre for alcoholics and drug addicts.

"What the Broncos and a lot of clubs are trying to do is get the young guys to get away from this drinking culture and instil it into them when they are 16 or 17.

"It is great that we are able to have that spiritual influence.

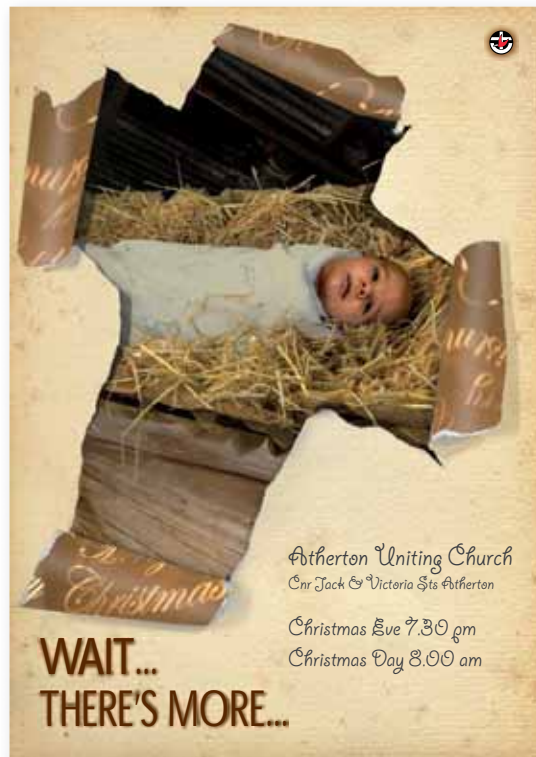
"We might be the only Christian they know so we are Christ to them.

"You would be surprised how many guys ask for prayer requests who you wouldn't think are that way inclined, but it happens all the time."

Sports Chaplaincy Australia currently has at least one Uniting Church Chaplain working with Athletes at the Beijing Olympics.

Nett Knox, a Uniting Church chaplain from New South Wales, is currently in China with the Australian Athletics team.

For more information on sport's chaplaincy visit www.sportschaplaincy.com.au



There is more to Christmas this year

THE SYNOD communications team will be putting together another Christmas postcard campaign this year with the theme: *Wait, there's more.*

Last year the "There's more than one man behind Christmas" campaign saw around 250,000 postcards distributed to homes throughout Queensland and parts of New South Wales.

The theme *Wait, there's more* was chosen to remind people that Christmas didn't end with the story of the stable but was the start of a whole new relationship between humankind and our creator.

Uniting Church Communications Manager Bruce Mullan said the Christmas campaign was inviting communities to consider the implications of the Christmas story.

"Christmas is all about the birth

of a baby," said Mr Mullan.

"It's also a time to remember this was just part of the ongoing story about Jesus, God's gift to the world.

"We are inviting people to link up with others in the community who share the same values and believe the Christmas season is about much more than a baby and presents."

Queensland Synod Moderator Elect Rev Bruce Johnson is keen to promote relationships between the church and local communities.

"Connecting with the community is an important task for the local congregation. The Christmas card campaign is an innovative way of giving congregations a more public profile," said Mr Johnson.

To order a pack, visit www.ucaql.com.au and complete the online registration



Is God calling you to a new place?

Weston Creek Uniting Church in Canberra is seeking a new full-time minister to encourage and enable us as a Christian community.

For more info see the church profile: <http://www.wcuc.org.au/profile.pdf> or contact Neil Johnston: e: margneil@bigpond.net.au h: 02 6288 5553





But wait, there's still more!

There are more stories, more detail and more information about your church at www.journeyonline.com.au.

Log on and make your home church your home page.

Students enjoy a year in the Son

YEAR IN the Son (YITS) is a gap year program for 16-21 year olds that provides young people with the opportunity to spend one year learning more about God and about themselves, and to gain understanding, skills and attitudes that will help them face the challenges ahead with confidence and competence.

Run through the Faith and Life Institute, Year in the Son is a nationally accredited Certificate IV course and involves participation in academic learning, spiritual reflection, mission, worship, ministry, prayer and the community.

An activity of the Lutheran Church, Year in the Son is open to people of all denominations and Uniting Church young adult ministry coordinator Tom Kerr currently leads a course on spiritual growth.

Mr Kerr said the Uniting Church Youth and Children's Ministry Unit was excited to be a part of Year in the Son.

"The Youth and Children's Ministry Unit had been wondering how we might provide a positive gap year experience which would help people in their discipleship. We heard about the Year in the Son course and it had everything

we believed would be important to provide and more," he said.

The YITS team welcomed Uniting Church participation at every level from planning, to teaching subjects, to placements for students.

"I am really impressed with what the YITS course achieves in young adults' lives," said Mr Kerr.

"The fantastic sense of community, the great teachings they receive in everything from life skills to discipleship, their retreat times, the practical placements, all these facets of the course bring great opportunities for personal growth and spiritual development.

"We have got to let our Uniting Church young adult people know about this course."

Bald Hills Uniting Church member Melanie Webber is the youngest YITS participant this year at the age of 16.

Ms Webber sees the program as a way to further her relationship with God as well as a way to discern what God is calling her to do in her life post high school.

Mr Kerr said the course is for those who "want to grow their faith, develop as a person or have a meaningful gap year".

For more information about Year in the Son, visit www.yits.com.au, phone the Faith and Life Institute on 3511 4089 or email flil@qld.lca.org.au.



Year in the Son students Rebecca Weier, Melanie Webber, Michelle Flint and Jessica Davis. Photo courtesy of YITS

Good and faithful servants

UNITINGCARE IS on the lookout for the people who make the big differences in their communities.

Nominations for the 2008 Moderator's Medal close on Monday 8 September.

Described as the "ultimate classic quiet achiever", Judith Hodgkinson of Bundaberg was one of the dedicated volunteers awarded a Moderator's Community Service Medal.

"It was a big surprise when I heard that I had been nominated - I have never expected any recognition for my volunteer work as using my God-given abilities,

especially playing the piano or organ at Crossroads and Blue Care services, is just something I love to do."

"It meant a lot to me to be acknowledged in this way," she said.

As Ms Hodgkinson was unable to get to the presentation at the last Queensland Synod meeting so the Moderator presented the medal during the morning service at her local church.

"I felt like I was a bit of a celebrity as I was on the local television news and in the paper too," said Ms Hodgkinson.

She was awarded her medal for

extensive, faithful and longstanding service to Lifeline, Crossroads and Blue Care in Bundaberg.

This included 20 years of administrative assistance to Lifeline, 10 years of service to Crossroads as organist, helper and organiser of music and five years on the organ roster for worship services at Blue Care.

If you have someone in your community who has contributed in an outstanding way to the Church's mission in community service, please complete the online nomination form found on the UnitingCare Queensland website: www.ucareqld.com.au



Annette and Graham Whybird prepare to train congregations in personal witness. Photo courtesy of Aitkenvale Uniting Church

How to win people and influence eternity

WHAT DO retired Uniting Church minister Rev Graham Whybird and his wife Annette have in common with US millionaire entrepreneur Jack Grobbel?

The similarity between sharing the gospel and effective business strategy.

Mr Whybird believes he spent 40 years in ministry struggling with what mission consultants sometimes describe as the biggest challenge facing the church: faith sharing.

Then his wife, Annette, read a business book on communication principles.

"The best lessons on witness I've ever seen came from a business book," said Mr Whybird.

The result is *How to Share Your Faith Without Anxiety or Losing Your Friends*.

From Kurrimine Beach in far north Queensland, the Whybirds now travel extensively, coaching congregations that have struggled to share their experience of Jesus.

The intensive course includes content developed by Jack Grobbel and used by business

executives, the FBI and Willow Creek church. Willow Creek's Bill Hybels also provides some of the material.

As the Whybirds put it, congregations that have worked through Hybels' *Just Walk Across the Room* series are discovering what to say when they reach the other side.

Essentially the Whybirds' program asks Christians to answer four questions as they move from a state of fear about faith sharing, to a state of care: What do we want to do? What have we got going for us? What is stopping us? Where to from here?

"Author and futurist Marilyn Ferguson uncovered a great truth," said Annette Whybird.

"Beyond fear is a great freedom."

The course has proved successful in New South Wales and is currently under way in Aitkenvale Uniting Church.

Highgate Hill and Pine Rivers Uniting Churches will be working through *How to Share Your Faith* during August with other churches set to take the plunge next year.





MODERATOR'S COMMUNITY SERVICE MEDAL

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


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

Nominees must:

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

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

NOMINATIONS CLOSE ON MONDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2008



MORE THAN JUST AN EDUCATION

Sunshine Coast Grammar School
Co-educational day school
Preschool to Year 12
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www.scgq.qld.edu.au

Clayfield College
Girls: Prep to Year 12
Boarding: Girls over 10 years
Boys: Prep to Year 5
07 3262 0262
www.clayfield.qld.edu.au

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Day and boarding school for girls
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www.somerville.qld.edu.au

Brisbane Boys' College
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for boys in Prep to Year 12
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www.bbc.qld.edu.au

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

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

Blue Care's ship comes in

PORT OF Brisbane Corporation has anchored health care work in the Brisbane Bayside area to the tune of \$60 000.

Blue Care will receive \$20 000 per year for three years to fund its local health and wellness program, according to Corporation Chief Executive Officer Jeff Coleman.

He said the program, aimed at helping older people and people with disabilities stay in their homes for longer, fits well with the Corporation's commitment to sustainability.

"We wanted to invest in a program that focused on prevention, long-term goals, and one that would benefit the local community," he said.

As well as funding for the wellness program, Port of Brisbane Corporation has sponsored a Blue

Care vehicle to serve Brisbane's eastside region. The sponsorship covers leasing, fuel and insurance for the vehicle.

Blue Care Brisbane Regional Director Jon Campbell said the support from Port of Brisbane Corporation came at a great time.

"The Corporation has supported Blue Care with car sponsorships in the past, but this extra funding will help us provide another much-needed community service at a time when health and wellbeing are the topic of conversation," he said.

The wellness program is expected to include quarterly expert health advice sessions for community members and wellness checks by nurses at local facilities for the elderly. It will be based on a pilot trialled by another Blue Care centre in the Brisbane region.



Jeff Coleman (CEO, Port of Brisbane Corporation), Wendy Porter (Clinical Nurse Eastside Community Care), and Jo Campbell (Regional Director, Blue Care). Photo courtesy of Blue Care



Médecins Sans Frontières worker Brendan Bannon is shown around a refugee camp in Kenya. Photo courtesy of Médecins Sans Frontières Australia

Refugee camp in Brisbane

FOR FOUR days late this month, Brisbane will become a refugee camp.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Australia is launching the first Australian tour of Refugee Camp in Your City, an outdoor, interactive event that re-creates a refugee camp and its facilities where Australians cannot avoid its impact.

Open to the public and fully interpreted by Australian

returned field workers, the 'camp' will be set up at Conservatorium Green, South Bank from 27 August.

Refugee Camp in Your City has had a 13-year run in 13 countries around the globe, creating a better understanding of the vulnerability of life for displaced people and refugees who have fled their homes.

Visit www.msf.org.au for more information.

Warwick funds school chaplaincy

THE WARWICK congregation's fellowship dinner had plenty of fellowship and food, as 100 diners enjoyed an evening in support of Scripture Union school chaplaincy.

John Morris turned on a feast including stuffed duck.

Guests responded with \$1500 toward chaplain Anita Rail's work in primary schools.

This was the fifth annual dinner hosted by the Uniting Church and well supported by other Warwick denominations.



Hard at work in the kitchen. Photo courtesy of Warwick Uniting Church

Next Month in Journey

In September *Journey* will jump the generation gap.

We will look into the life of the church through baby bright eyes and with 20/20 hindsight.

What's so good about being a church that's young and old and everything in between?

Perhaps nothing reflects generational change better than our taste in worship music. A survey of tens of thousands of Christians came up with this all-time top ten.

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How great Thou art

Dear Lord and Father of mankind

The day Thou gavest

Be Thou my vision

Love divine, all loves excelling

Be still, for the presence of the Lord

Make me a channel

Guide me, O Thou great redeemer

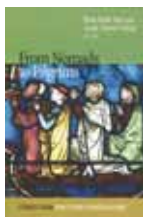
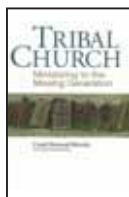
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YOUTH WORKER

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We are seeking an experienced accredited Youth Worker/Pastor who will serve with our young people and seek to develop a creative and expanding model of youth ministry.

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Applications sent to Mrs Meg Herbert, Associate Secretary (Ministry), NSW Synod, PO Box A2178, Sydney South NSW 1235

Under the Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998 it is illegal for prohibited persons to apply and a 'Working with Children Check' will be required.

Active outcomes put men in pews

By Phil Smith

A WOMAN once confided that she wished her husband would come to church with her.

He was a farmer and there was always something to do when you are on the land. She died unexpectedly.

After that her husband attended worship every Sunday. The style of worship hadn't changed. The farm still needed attention.

Central Queensland Presbyterian Minister Rev Kaye Ronalds often wondered about the widower's attendance and why people stay away from church.

"As a church we are concerned about the groups that are under-represented," said Ms Ronalds. "We mourn the missing youth, young adults, young families, Indigenous families, middle-aged women or men."

What triggers people to begin attending worship or to reconnect with a faith community?

What causes people to stop attending? Why are men generally under-represented?

"Over the years I have heard all kinds of reasons proffered... money, too much singing, the wrong kind of music, sermons are an outdated style of communication, haven't got time."

Ms Ronalds suggested a wider view.

"Western Christians are not struggling to put food on the table," she said.

"Our government provides a safety net for vulnerable people and welfare agencies try to address the gaps. For those who are on good incomes the weekends provide a welcome break: time for hobbies, sport and recreation.

For many in our society, Sunday is a day for family and that, for some men, is their first priority and highest calling."

A round of golf, a game of football, a ride on the bike may recharge and refresh body and spirit, providing an opportunity for contemplation and inner renewal.

Mission Consultant Rev Dr Graham Beattie has looked for historic context to the 2006 National Church Life Survey results for the Queensland Uniting Church.

"The average of the 165 congregations surveyed indicated 64% of attendees were female and 36% male," he noted.

"I suggest that there are some strong historical and cultural factors behind this."

Perhaps the modern recreational lifestyle actually flows from an Australian male culture dating back to early white settlement. At times men outnumbered women nine to one.

Dr Beattie said it could be argued that this lack of female companionship resulted in the mythical Aussie male developing a strong sense of mateship with

other blokes.

The demands of hard, often isolated work may have created the first absentee Dads: the father who left the 'women's work' of shaping children's morality and spirituality to his wife – and the church.

"Women made most of the really vital decisions that have shaped the life of families and local communities," he said.

"As late as the 1970s Australian author-psychologist Ronald Conway concluded, 'Relying on information obtained from tests and hundreds of case histories at all levels, I would judge that the Australian urban family is shaped mainly by the emotional pressures generated by the mother in over 75% of cases and this trend has not reached its climax.'" (*The Great Australian Stupor*, Sun Books, 1971, p 91).

Beyond a national male psyche, Ms Ronalds noted that some men

(and women for that matter) are not in worship simply because they are running a family business on Sundays. Others are filling the shift rosters of various industries or caught in the seasonal pressures of agriculture. Other men are volunteering at the SES, training with Rural Fire Brigades or taking a turn at the Coast Guard.

They have not rejected God.

"I have also observed that some men are very pragmatic," she said.

"If church attendance is not actually producing anything, they cannot see the value of it.

"I don't think less feminine language in worship will suddenly enable men to feel a greater sense of belonging.

"If you take direction, from the boss most of the week, a one sided conversation in the shape of a sermon may seem like more of the same."

Both Ms Ronalds and Dr Beattie

wondered about contemporary men's attitudes to worship and new expressions of church.

"If those who conduct worship and make decisions in the church hold to the traditional view of Christianity and are suspicious or nervous of emerging styles of Christianity then some people will leave because they cannot see a fit between their experience of the world and the practices and thinking of the church," said Ms Ronalds.

"Perhaps women will sometimes stay on for the relationships of friendships and loyalty to old friends whereas men are more likely to vote with their feet or say out loud, 'I no longer believe that'."

Dr Beattie said decades of Women's Liberation have created a platform for change in the church.

He pointed to a high percentage of women in the workforce and a

breaking down of stereotypical male and female roles in home, work and community.

"For example, in congregations with a younger age profile, especially congregations that are vital and growing we tend to see a higher proportion of men attending worship, usually somewhere between 40-45% of the congregation," he said.

"While it seems that men are more drawn to active, making a difference, hands on, outcome oriented activities where faith is explored and relationships are developed as a flow on (as contrasted to more discussion centred, relational focused activities) men, and especially men under 45, will attend church services where their contributions and missional passions are affirmed and respected."



Photo courtesy of www.istockphoto.com

Removing discreet brown wrappers

THE CONTEMPORARY church often quotes the experience of Jesus mixing with prostitutes and publicans.

Our denominational forebears directly engaged the personal moral debates of their day, yet churches today rarely discuss the impact of one of the fastest growing industries: pornography.

Uniting Church agencies hand out material on ethical investment at business seminars and on social welfare and justice at government and community conferences.

Imagine a church booth at the next sex industry ‘Sexpo’ in Brisbane?

Understanding Pornography in Australia, was a three year research project that intended to produce factual information about pornography - how and by whom it is used in Australia.

The results indicated that consumption of pornography is widespread throughout the community.

This is not a men only issue. Women are increasing their use of pornography.

The research also indicated between 40 and 50 percent of church members’ households access or purchase pornography.

In July *Journey* the Queensland Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman commented on television’s impact on our values, attitudes and lifestyle.

What is the impact of the internet and the free availability of pornography?

It is almost impossible to ignore material that objectifies people, encourages lust, demeans sexual love and leaves thousands wracked by guilt and loneliness. Yet this subject is taboo in church.

The XXX Porn Church’s work began within the United States’ pornography industry, befriendng many whose dreams of careers in television and the movies ended in an industry that now portrays itself as mainstream media.

Handing out Bibles labelled ‘Jesus Loves Porn Stars’ at the biggest pornography convention in America led to an invitation to attend a national award ceremony.

The XXX Porn Church grew to provide resources for churches prepared to discuss the impact of porn on individuals and relationships in congregations.

Founder Pastor Craig Gross describes addiction to pornography in the Church as our dirty little secret.

Speaking during a recent visit to Australia, Mr Gross told *Journey*, “A lot of people within this industry have become friends of ours. We don’t have to live or act like them but they’ve come to respect what we do.”

XXX Church has had its fair share of criticism mostly, according to one of its Pastors, JR Mahon, from denominational churches that either suspect its workers’ motives or prefer to rail against the porn industry from a distance.

“The adverse reactions came quick and came heavy, and to this day my inbox is filled with people that can’t stand us, that hate us, that wish us to go to hell,” Mr Mahon told *ABC News* last year.

“Our biggest critics are Christians.”

Mr Gross continues to get the XXX Church’s message to the church community.

“I get frustrated with groups in the United States that lobby and



Photo by Osker Lau

picket and send out letters saying, ‘Don’t visit these hotels because they sell pornography’.”

Mr Gross said some hotel chains make more money selling porn than they do by selling alcohol and food. “Why not just tell our people not to buy it? If the church just stopped buying this stuff we’d put a huge dent in the business without pickets or protests.”

Mr Gross described the big-name magazines such as *Penthouse* and *Playboy* as ‘trainer-wheels porn’. Recent coverage of child pornography rings illustrate how widespread hard-core pornography has become.

“It’s always going to be available,” he said. “It’s going to be more available as years go by, but we have to decide that this isn’t what we want to put into our lives and stop consuming.”

“It’s a problem that you can keep hidden for a long time. If you’re getting drunk or doing drugs, or you have a gambling problem and all the money’s gone there are visible signs.”

“Porn addiction you can hide behind the pulpit, as an elder or a Sunday School teacher and think that nobody knows.”

“But when this comes to the surface you’ve reached the end of

Porn Boulevard and that can take years,” said Mr Gross.

“Take Ted Haggard, president of the Christian Evangelical Network in the United States. His problem came out last year. That’s the end, but it has stemmed from years of secrecy and addiction. Pastors and leaders are not immune to this.”

“We’ve seen great things happen when you simply say that your church is a safe place to talk about this. The easy part is actually mentioning porn in a service.”

“The hard part comes Monday when the phone calls come and you never thought that person was struggling with this.”

“Even if you’re clueless about the Internet, we all ‘get’ this. We’ve all typed in a wrong address, checked our email and found porn. People understand what’s going on today.”

More information about the XXX Porn Church’s work is available at www.journeyonline.com.au.

Since being uploaded to *JourneyOnline* in July 2006, the story ‘Christian XXX Web site targeting porn industry stirs controversy’ has had almost 7700 hits. The next most

popular story on *JourneyOnline* has had 4600 hits.

Authors of *The Porn Report*, Professor Alan McKee of QUT and UNSW’s Katherine Albury and Catharine Lumby interviewed more than 1000 consumers of pornography.

Since 1996 research shows the proportion of women pornography users has risen to 17%.

16 of the 50 top selling X-Rated DVDs were marketed to women or couples.

Only 17% of consumers of pornography felt it had a negative effect.

Queensland and Western Australia consume more pornography per head than any other state or territory.

The profile of a typical user is: Male, heterosexual, under 35, bringing home \$40 000, suburban, religious – probably Christian and in a monogamous relationship.

Check up or check out

By Phil Smith

MANY STEREOTYPES have a basis in fact. According to health authorities, the traditional wisdom that Australian men don’t like to open up about their personal problems is accurate.

The growing awareness of men’s health issues has served to break some of that silence, as blokes find support when they can talk with others who have ‘been there and done that’.

Yet the big killers are still hiding in the quiet.

Cancer Research UK has found that only 52% of men who found blood in their stool would immediately go to a doctor to have this symptom of bowel cancer investigated. Reasons for the delay vary from embarrassment in younger males to fear of the outcome of investigations in older males.

Gary Whittaker, a Brisbane General Practitioner, agrees with the research.

“There is no doubt that the prevailing view amongst men in general is that we should be as self-sufficient as possible, and only if there is an unavoidable reason to seek the help of others, do we then present our problems to others. This is fine if you are trying to put a car engine back together,” he said.

“That little irregular black mole on your leg may give you no pain or discomfort, but it will surely be life threatening if it is indeed a melanoma, and you do nothing about it till too late.”

Central Queensland Cancer Support Coordinator Caroline Humphreys confirmed the need for a change of habit.

“There are certainly challenges in engaging men in help-seeking behaviours,” she said.

Prostate cancer incidence is almost as high as colorectal, lung cancers and melanomas (in men) combined. Support groups surrounding prostate cancer have proven valuable in breaking down some of the taboos, according to Ms Humphreys.

“Men describe their comfort in discussing issues such as sexual dysfunction, incontinence and the effects of hormone treatments with others who have had the experience already and have developed coping mechanisms.”

“A group environment provides the opportunity for a greater amount of information to be shared and for men to find something valuable amongst the experience of others.”

Being in a group can be reassuring as individuals hear how similar others’ experience may be to their own. This adds to the sense of not being alone.

“I think also that men are getting more acquainted with the benefit of having a best mate as a sounding board,” said Dr Whittaker.

“For many men, they often have fantastic wives who are as supportive as they can be but there is no doubt that psychologically men differ from women in how they cognitively and emotionally process things.”

Local churches sponsoring such

groups often develop a powerful ministry.

“They are marvellously placed to be supportive at multiple levels for a man who is seriously ill,” said Dr Whittaker.

“Other men can help out with the practical physical jobs around the sufferer’s house if need be, his fellow worshippers certainly can be an ear for anything he wishes to share and provide the bucking up of his spirits if getting low.

“Then there is the whole faith underpinning which the church offers - sensitive handling of the ‘why me?’ question will be invaluable in the ill man’s capacity to eventually accept and move on knowing that he will now view life through a changed perspective; and for one who has faith in the life to come, all is not bleak - a tremendously fortuitous position to be in compared to the atheist.

“So the holistic approach from the church has enormous potential to enrich and uplift those who find themselves in serious ill health.”



Flowers are nice, but décor by Ducati adds Italian flare. Greg Trost, Barry Wilson, Andrew Krosch and Malcolm James helped prepare and present ‘Adventure Faith’, a Sunday service prepared by the Pine Rivers Uniting Church men that packed the church in July. Photo by Phil Smith

Tall tales tell a truth

By Phil Smith

ERIC IS a tradie. He’s an intelligent 35-year-old bloke with a successful business in a complex and dynamic industry.

In the fourth pew from the back, Eric is reminded of the apprenticeship lectures at TAFE college and he’s falling asleep twenty minutes into the Sunday sermon at River Gum Ridge View Estate Uniting Church.

According to Redcliffe Uniting Church’s Rev Peter Armstrong, Eric isn’t like most of the members of the Uniting Church, but he is like most of the Generation X males in Australia.

According to the National Christian Life Survey the average Australian church member is a married woman in her fifties, someone of a generation who would listen to the message from the pulpit, and either take it or leave it. Eric wants to think his way through that message, ask some questions and see how it works in his daily life.

Mr Armstrong thinks Eric’s question is more often “who is telling me this” and “will this work for me?” than it is “what is truth?”

“This generation, especially the blokes, want to know who you are before they accept what you believe,” said Mr Armstrong.

After more than a year of study, and a year’s worth of weekly sermons, Mr Armstrong has concluded that Australian men want to hear a good story from the pulpit, not a lecture; action possibilities, not concepts or precepts.

“Preaching has always been central to spreading the Good News,” he said. “But while the news has always been good, the sermons haven’t. A good yarn has a beginning, a middle and an end - a point listeners can work through and take away - but how rare are the ‘Ah ha’ moments for our congregations?”

Mr Armstrong recounted how young Tom, who had come to faith and joined the congregation about four years ago, approached him after a service to say, “That’s been two great sermons you’ve done so far!”

That encounter prompted Peter Armstrong’s research into what makes a sermon “great”.

The same young man told him, “Great sermons connect the story of faith to my story, give me practical things to think about and act on, and inspire me to something more, something different to where I am now.”

Mr Armstrong’s research involved mapping the personality types of Australian men aged twenty-five to forty-five.

There appears to have been no previous studies on personality types and temperament within the Australian church.

Mr Armstrong found the largest group of men he spoke to were what is known as Sensing-Judging and Thinking-Judging men. They are concrete in their thinking, drawing heavily on what can be seen, heard, touched and experienced.

The bottom line may be that a message with a story of concrete experience, that fires the imagination, and calls hearers to action appeals to the largest group of male listeners.

That would qualify many of the great sermons of the New Testament.

“This isn’t only about keeping them awake on Sundays,” said Mr Armstrong.

“If there are lessons to be learned about reconnecting with a group that are turning away from church we might be able to apply those preaching lessons to the whole worship service, discipling young men and equipping them for evangelism among their mates.”

Sermons talk the talk, but do they encourage listeners to walk the walk?



Cliff and John build friendships and other stuff in the Berry Uniting Church men’s shed in New South Wales. Around the country, sheds are connecting congregations to their communities. Visit www.berrymensshed.com.au for more information. Photo by Tom Darby

Sometimes shed happens

By Phil Smith

EVERY CONGREGATION knows there are thousands of people in their neighbourhoods who will never darken the door of a church.

On the other hand, they feel welcome in a shed.

Consequently, the Uniting Church has become a national driving force in the Men’s Shed movement.

As the song says, “Every Aussie boy needs a shed”, and it seems girls enjoy them too.

Allied with community groups from RSL to local government and service clubs, churches have been helping create safe places where people can learn skills, meet friends and discuss the questions of life.

Sunnybank Uniting Church’s Robert Lippiatt volunteers in a local Men’s Shed.

“This is an opportunity for us to go beyond ‘doing’ church and actually ‘be’ church, opening ourselves to meet our neighbours beyond our building’s walls,” he said.

The Brisbane City Council has contributed \$400 000 toward shed programs and a number of Queensland church congregations are in discussions with local councils.

Men’s Sheds range from highly structured programs with well equipped facilities for wood and metal working, through to regular get-togethers around a barbecue with no aim other than having a yarn and perhaps rediscovering mateship.

The shed movement has blossomed in New South Wales where one of the most successful examples is the Berry Uniting Church Men’s Shed.

Established six years ago, it opens two days each week.

Fully equipped with quality tools and machinery, it exists to “contribute to a better community ethos through community service while promoting the Christian values of tolerance, acceptance and inclusion.”

Organisers welcome individuals of all ages and gender to meet in a friendly environment to take part in personal and community projects.

Mr Lippiatt said highlights in Sunnybank this year included the interdenominational women’s group Aglow making use of the local shed to run morning teas and welcome African women migrants who face social and language obstacles.

“Conversational English classes seem much more accessible in a community shed than in a church building.”

Is Sunday worship a manly experience for you?

The short answer is yes. Setting aside the question of what constitutes being “manly”, my attendance at Saturday evening worship is a chance to commune with God in the fellowship of other believers. My suggestion to my gender is to give it a try. You might enjoy the experience.

Henry Scheuber of Rockhampton

Is Sunday worship a manly experience for you?

More the fellowship after the service.

David Close of Kallangur

Is Sunday worship a manly experience for you?

I have never thought of my Sunday worship as a “manly experience”, possibly because of the way I have lived my life. What is a manly experience? Is it going to the pub with your workmates, or is it focussing on family life? I worshipped with my wife and children, and ensured that my children were nurtured in the faith. Now as a widower, my church family means everything to me, and the frailer and older I become, the more I rely on Jesus.

Ron Stewart of Rockhampton

Real men eat quiche

By Mardi Lumsden

TO FOOTBALL fans all around Australia the name Jason Stevens will ring more than a bell.

But there is more than football to this former international rugby league player (231 1st grade games, 14 tests for Australia, and 8 State of Origins for New South Wales) and 2005 runner up *Cleo* Bachelor of the Year.

These days Mr Stevens is somewhat of a role model for young men.

He is a motivational speaker, TV personality, author of two books and has just released a documentary.

A committed Christian, Mr Stevens said there are a lot of issues that face young men today and he aims to help them deal with some of life's challenges.

He cited fatherlessness as one of the hardest things to deal with as a young man, and he would know.

His new book *Stand Tall* features a chapter called 'The Destiny Decider' that focuses on the relationship between Mr Stevens and his own father.

"I hadn't seen him for a long time; he left under some pretty tough circumstances when I was young, and so that is a good chapter on reconciliation and forgiveness," he said. "I think that is the most powerful chapter in the book."

"I think a lot of young men are yearning for affirmation and confirmation from a male figure in their life and I guess God ordained the Dad and the family to be that," he said.

"Sometimes the father can be at home but he is not at home, he doesn't know how to encourage, he doesn't meet the needs of young



Author, motivational speaker and Ex-footballer Jason Stevens.
Photo courtesy of Jason Stevens

men. That is a real challenge for young men.

"The other issue would be sex, to be honest, and proving your manhood in that way.

"For young guys it is a real battle to stay pure and it is not for the faint hearted. I think anyone can go and have sex, but it is a real man

that makes a decision to commit to one partner for life."

His first book *Worth the Wait* explores this topic.

For Mr Stevens being a Christian is a very manly thing.

"To be a Christian is not for the faint hearted. It is a real life decision of focus," he said.

"I look at some of the great men of the Bible, like King David.

"He was a warrior, a leader, a worshipper, a king. He was also very compassionate and had a great understanding of his God.

"God is not asking men to conform to a wimpy image but a strong image.

Mr Stevens suggested looking in a local congregation for inspirational male role models.

"I think there is enough in the Bible and enough men in church who really encourage men to become who they are meant to be and not a wimpy image of what a Christian is."

He also suggested looking at the National Rugby League members.

"There is a whole host of NRL Christian footballers now.

"Blokes like Brad Thorne from the Broncos and PJ Marsh.

"They are physically very strong men, but then when they speak about the love of Christ, wow, there is a side to them where you say, 'that is a man! Someone who does as the occasion demands and is a strong male role model."

"Sometimes as a footballer you do the hard yards on the field, but if you do the hard yards with God it is very worthwhile and you become who you are destined to be."

And as far as being a role model for young men is concerned, Mr Stevens said there are a few key ingredients.

"I think accountability is the key, and openness and honesty.

"If you are going to succeed in any area of life... you need to be accountable, so too with your spiritual life."

For more information visit www.jasonstevens.info

Do you think church worship appeals to men?



I had a male Christian colleague who would say to me, "Lyn, I just love Sunday. Going to church is the highlight of my week". These men are the exceptions. Congregating at sporting events is more appealing to a large majority of men.

Lyn Steadman of Rockhampton

Do you think going to church appeals to men?



"The traditional style of worship does not.

"When I think about worship it's associated with emotion, and that's not considered manly.

"Australian males can't relate to, and associate church with our daily social activities.

"Services don't have the male bonding material. Blokes don't normally sit around and sing hymns."

Andrew Domanti of Burdekin

Do you think church worship appeals to men?

No, because men have tough exteriors and don't want to be emotionally attached.

Amy Myers of Kallangur

Do you think going to church appeals to men?

"Not in its present form."

Bill Lucas of Burdekin



Is Sunday worship a manly experience for you?

"It should be. I wonder why church men don't get more involved in things like sport or rotary clubs. Perhaps we should."

Steve Crowther of Burdekin



From Page 1

IN HIS last face to face conversation with the disciples, Jesus entrusted those men with the future of the Church. He did not command them to join a committee. He challenged them to go on the adventure of their lives, into the world, to make disciples.

Mr Murrow insists there's a similar challenge in the language Jesus uses in John chapter 15 when he says, "Every branch that does not bear fruit will be cut off".

"Our churches are full of fruitless branches. We have so many ministries that are not producing fruit, not producing disciples. That was my crisis of faith a few years ago," said Mr Murrow.

"As an elder, I realised that everything I was doing was keeping me from having the adventure God wanted me to have. All the committees I was on, all the meetings I attended were not making disciples, not moving the Kingdom forward."

How might the men of the Uniting Church bring their six-day-a-week passions, indeed their God-given testosterone, to the life of their congregations?

The sad fact is that we are not the same people Monday to Friday as we are at the Sunday service. Our friends from outside church (if we have any) would not recognise our behaviour and that has nothing to do with moral or ethical integrity.

Why is this writer so concerned

about engaging men in the life of the church, and particularly in weekly worship?

Mr Murrow quotes research that appears to ring true.

"A survey of young people who grew up in the church found that when Dad was heavily involved and perceived as being the spiritual driver in the family, the children – both boys and girls – were much more likely to remain faithful as adults.

"When either the husband didn't go to church or the mother was really the one driving and the husband passively went along to services, she was much less likely to see her children stay faithful as adults, particularly the boys."

Is one of the keys to growing

the church's next generation lie in focusing on men at least as much as we have focused on youth?

Men's ministry appears to be in decline around the western world. Global organisations such as Promise Keepers report smaller attendances at events and conferences.

Even at a congregational level only a small proportion of male members attend Friday or Saturday night activity-based Men's Groups. Recreating the Youth Group for blokes does not necessarily lead to discipleship.

The challenge is to engage men at the very heart of church life, the core business where regular members, visitors and newcomers are: worship.

In the majority of congregations "worship" translates as Sunday service, and the 200-year-old struggle to attract people to 'come to church' in this country.

Perhaps more men (and women for that matter) will seek an experience of God in churches that are trying to reverse that process, building congregations that worship in 'the real world' – the Monday to Saturday, shift working, mortgage paying, sales driven world.

When that gap is bridged, more energy might go into making disciples.

When Christian men are free to be themselves in both the church and the workplace, they may be better able to invite their mates to experience faith.

Travelling light: letting go of emotional baggage

By Mardi Lumsden

JUST THE mention of the term 'emotional baggage' has the ability to make friends shudder and send potential suitors (yes, suitors) running for the nearest exit, but what does it mean and how can we deal with it?

Counselling psychologist Naomi Matheson (a Christian) said dealing with emotional baggage usually involves letting go of past hurts.

"Letting go isn't an easy thing, like a click of the fingers, but it might be something that needs to be worked through even just in yourself," she said.

Ms Matheson defined emotional baggage as any kind of unresolved conflict or problem from the past such as a trauma or being burnt by someone.

"It could be something in yourself or in your relationship with someone else that has been left unresolved," she said.

By holding on to emotional baggage it is possible to hinder the growth of healthy relationships.

"If you have been burnt, particularly if you have been burnt a few times, you might develop an over protectiveness of yourself.

"You might end up restricting your experience and being wary of people, so your anxiety about being hurt gets generalised across a lot of people instead of being specific just to those people who had hurt you in the past.

Ms Matheson suggested some steps for working through emotional baggage are:

1. Identifying what the problem is – who is it that has hurt you, how have they hurt you, what are you holding on to and what are you hoping for?

2. Deciding what is useful to you.

3. Working through the issues. Through the process of looking through past hurts there are often important lessons to learn.

Ms Matheson said that there are parts of emotional baggage that are worth holding on to and that it is possible to reconcile ourselves to a life that includes some emotional baggage.

"Keep what is useful to you and get rid of what's not," she said.

"If there are any barriers holding you back from moving... then they need to be worked through and resolved.

"If it is a relationship with someone where they aren't interested in saying sorry or they may have passed away so you never got the chance to sort it out, there might be a process that you work through for yourself to acknowledge what the hurt is, to accept it."

She said some of the counselling exercises she may use include imagining you are having a conversation with the person who hurt you, saying all the things you have not been able to say.

"Some people use exercises like writing a letter to the person but never sending it or even burning it.

"One lady I worked with had lost a baby... she wrote a poem about the child, folded up the paper into a paper boat and set the boat off on a lake. That was very meaningful for her."

As a Christian, Ms Matheson said just the knowledge of the love of a higher power can help.

"Jesus was a perfect example of reconciliation.

"You know your worth because God defines your worth and he has decided that you are of great worth because he created you and desires a relationship with you.

"I wonder if sometimes people misunderstand what being a Christian is.

"They think that it means letting people walk all over you.

"You are worth the same as other people.

"Love your neighbour as you love yourself.

"So when you are working to reconcile an issue, you approach it with the knowledge that that other person is loved by God and you are loved by God, so it is an even playing field."

This article was first published in *The Transit Lounge*, the Uniting Church National Assembly online publication.

For more interesting and thought provoking articles visit www.thetransitlounge.com.au.



Christian and counselling psychologist Naomi Matheson. Photo by Osker Lau

Albert Street unites world youth

By Rev Anne Hulbert

WHAT DID World Youth Day and Albert Street Uniting Church have in common?

The answer is energy, enthusiasm, excitement, expressions of joy, ecumenism.

The electric atmosphere was contagious as approximately one thousand (mostly Catholic) young

adults crammed into the Albert Street Uniting Church on Saturday 12 July for the Brisbane Days in the Diocese Prayer Time.

It was one of five ecumenical church venues in the World Youth

Day 'Heart of the City' festivities that culminated at Roma Street Parklands.

National flags waved and songs were sung spontaneously in different languages as the congregation waited for a coordinated signal to start the worship service.

In what must have been a first for many who came to Australia to participate in World Youth Day and who visited Brisbane prior to travelling to Sydney, these Catholic young people had their eyes opened.

They worshipped in a Protestant church, in an Australian church (The Uniting Church in Australia), and in a service led by two women 'priests', Rev Lyn Burden and Rev Anne Hulbert, the Ministers at the Albert Street Uniting Church.

Elders took part by processing with the Holy Bible, candles, and bowls of water.

Two young adults from the congregation read the Scripture lessons.

The Guy Sebastian and Gary Pinto song *Receive the Power* and Michael Mangan's song *Holy Spirit Land* reverberated around the church and shouts of joy were raised as countries were recognised in the verses.


As the service finished, all proceeded out to be sprinkled by the water from the baptismal bowls and then waited in the new plaza area in front of the church to join the five thousand other people marching up to the festival in the Roma Street Parklands.



World Youth Day pilgrims march to Roma Street Parklands to enjoy the 'Heart of the City' celebrations in Brisbane.

Photo courtesy of the Brisbane WYD Secretariat.

www.wydbrisbane.org.au



SOMERVILLE HOUSE

Associate Chaplain (Middle School)

This is a permanent full-time position, commencing 19 January 2009.

Somerville House is seeking an energetic and committed Christian teacher to fill the role of Associate Chaplain. The role teaches Christian Education, predominantly in the Middle School, and has Chaplaincy responsibilities in the Middle School and with Boarders.

The Associate Chaplain will be fully committed to team ministry and have a willingness to develop and share resources and ideas. The role requires a person with genuine interest in ministry to young women.

The position description, together with application requirements, may be found on the School's website.

Applications close 4 August 2008 and should be sent to dporteous@somerville.qld.edu.au or to Mrs D Porteous, Human Resources Administrative Officer, PO Box 3357, South Brisbane, Qld 4101

Somerville House was established in 1899, a P-12 boarding & day school for girls and is a member of the Presbyterian & Methodist Schools' Association.

WHAT'S ON

August 1-3. Faith Inkubators Conference at Redeemer College, Rochdale. An event for parents and leaders interested in ministry with upper primary children. Discover how to effectively respond to the challenges of working with children today. Mobilise your church community to incubating faith every night at home. Contact Paul Yarrow on 0418 765 712 or Paul.Yarrow@yacmu.ucaql.com.au.

August 2, 9.30am-3pm. Old-Fashioned Village Fair at Chermide Kedron Community Church. Come and experience pony rides, the animal farm, and traditional stalls. Entertainment includes magician, Mango Jam Jazz band, floral demonstration by Robert Manton, quilting displays, children's activities. For more information contact the church on 3350 4302 or Kendall Yates on yateskj@gmail.com.

August 2, 5pm. Induction of Rev Mark Dewar at Aitkenvale Uniting Church, Ross River Rd Townsville. Come and celebrate this joyous occasion with Mark and enjoy fellowship later over supper. Contact Rev Bruce Cornish on 47795818 or presbnc@bigpond.net.au.

August 15-17. A La Card Craft Retreat at Tamborine Lodge, Mount Tamborine. Meet new friends and enjoy a great weekend of craft. Various demonstrations and great prizes. Hosted by Beenleigh Uniting Church. For more information or a registration form contact Vicki Stewart on 3807 3324.

August 17-22. YASKI 2008. YASKI is for young adults, families and adults at Perisher Blue. Detailed information can be downloaded from www.cleveland.ucaweb.com.au or email YASKI coordinator Beth Nicholls on betbn@dovenetq.net.au.

August 19, 9.30am. UCA International Mission Support Group meeting at St Andrew's Church hall, Ann Street, Brisbane. Dr Suranjan Bhattacharji, Director of the Christian Medical College Vellore, India, will speak. Contact Judith Finau on 3711 4622 or ljfinau@dovenetq.net.au.

August 21-23 Rummage Sale at Uhl Hall, Wheller Gardens, 930 Gypmie Rd. Chermide, featuring pre-loved clothes, knick-knacks, books. Half price sale Saturday - except Craft. Contact M. Herbert on 38574668 or billmer@bigpond.com

August 22, 7.30pm. Jubilee Australia seminar on the Millenium Goals at Kenmore Uniting Church. Adele Webb and Joffe Balce, a former economics advisor to the Philippines government, will speak about debt reduction. Contact Dawn Langford on langfords@askandrew.net.

August 23, 6pm. Create youth service at Wesley Kangaroo Point Uniting Church, 46-48 Linton St Kangaroo Point. Everyone welcome. Contact John Bednarski on 32618775 or jsdesign@aapt.net.au.

August 24. A Celebration of more than 50 years of Bardon Uniting Church, formerly Bardon Methodist Church, closing at the end of August. This celebration will reflect the positive effect of significant life and faith experiences at Bardon for many people. For more information contact Desley Garnett on 3254 1449 or drngarn@bigpond.net.au.

August 29-30. Prepare and Enrich Administrator training at Mackay Baptist Church. Contact Bob Warrick on 3857 7101 or nolabob@optusnet.com.au.

August 30, 9.30am. If Jesus is a mate, why don't blokes go to church seminar at Redcliffe Uniting Church, 1 Richens Street, Redcliffe. What do we know about Aussie blokes, faith, and the church and what don't we know. The hat will be passed around to cover costs. An optional lunch at 'the local' will follow. Contact Rev Peter Armstrong on 0407119498 or pfarmstrong@bigpond.com.

September 4-5. Prepare and Enrich Administrator training at Chermide Kedron Community Church, Rode Road and Gypmie Road. Run by Bob Warrick. Contact Bob Warrick on 3857 7101 or nolabob@optusnet.com.au.

September 11 - 13, Laidley Uniting Church Quilt and Craft Expo. 45 Patrick Street Laidley. Demonstrations and stalls of pottery, cards, patchwork and quilting, beading, porcelain dolls, woodturning, machine embroidery and more. Displays of restored cars, tractors and trucks. Morning and Afternoon teas and lunches available. Thurs and Fri 9am-5.30pm and Sat 9am-3pm. Contact Robyn Muller A/H on 5466 5436 or rob.mul@bigpond.com.au.

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

Doulos' final Aussie tour

THE WORLD'S largest and oldest floating bookshop will be docking in Brisbane once more this August before resting her sea legs for good.

The MV Doulos is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the "World's Oldest Ocean-Going Passenger Ship" still active.

Run by OM Australia, Doulos carries more than 6000 different books and has a staff of 330 Christian volunteers from around 50 countries, including Australia.

Last in Brisbane nine years ago, Doulos travels the world as a floating book shop and offers an onboard education program and



Doulos volunteers display national dress. Photo courtesy of Jiamin Choo

guided tours of the historic vessel while docked.

Doulos Project Manager Jiamin Choo said the ship was a celebration of unity in diversity.

"The ship bears a testimony of

faith in God and a commitment to bring knowledge, help and hope to the nations," she said.

"Doulos, her ministry and crew carry a wealth of stories and experiences."

MV Doulos will be berthed at Portside Wharf, Hamilton Brisbane from 31 July to 18 August.

For more information visit www.doulosdownunder.org.au or email doulos.brisbane@gbships.org

Christian Book of the Year

THE SHORT list for the Australian Christian Book of the Year awards was announced in July.

Judges appointed by the Australian Christian Literature Society identified ten books for the short list including many that have been reviewed in *Journey*.

The winner will be announced at an event in Sydney during August when winners of the Young Christian Writers Award and the Australian Theological Writers Award will also be announced.

The finalists are:

666 And All That by John Dickson and Greg Clarke (Aquila Press)

God Next Door by Simon Carey Holt (Acorn Press)

Heart of Stone by Hoa Van Stone (Heart of Stone)

Men Firing Through all of Life by Al Stewart (Blue Bottle Books)

My Seventh Monsoon by Naomi Reed (Ark House Press)

Please! No More Boring Sermons by Keith Weller (Acorn Press)

Psalmscapes by Mal Austin and Matthew Jacoby (HSM Publishing)

Shocked by Blessing by Rod Thompson and Carolyn Kelshaw (National Institute for Christian Education)

Spectator's Guide to World Views edited by Simon Smart (Blue Bottle Books)

Courtesy of By Christian Knowledge-Australia

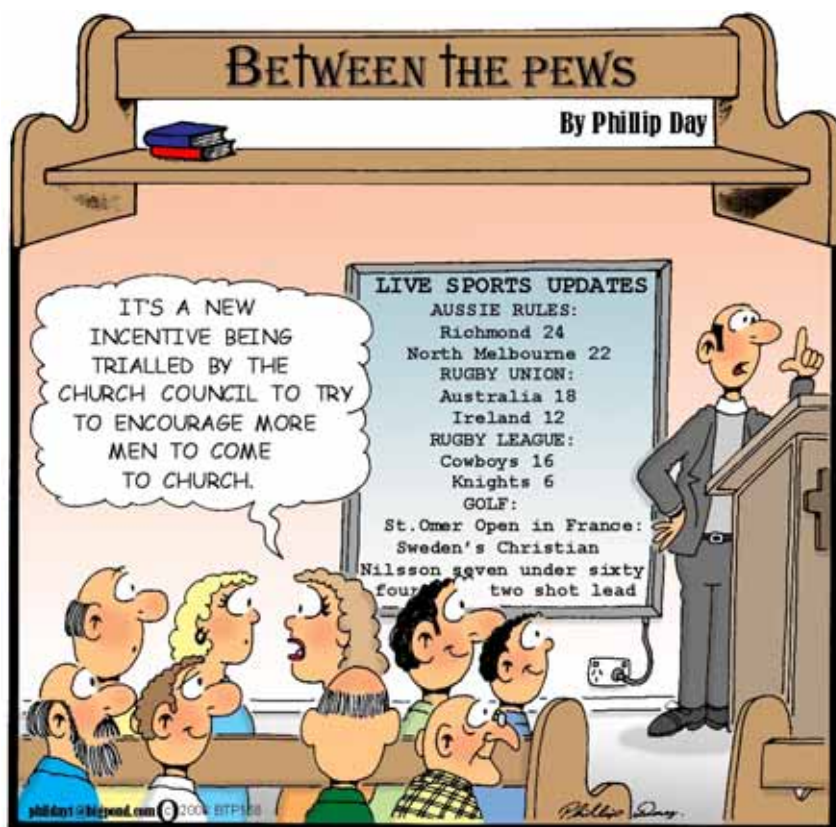
For more information on the awards visit www.spcka.org.au

Supporting founders

THE QUEENSLAND Community Care Network is looking for caring people who wish to give back to an integral part of our community: elderly Australians.

Often older Australians living in aged care facilities can become disconnected from the community and QCCN seeks volunteers who can visit them as a friend for one hour a fortnight to reconnect them.

For more information contact Jill or Kieran on 3804 3829 or kieran@qccn.org.au or visit www.qccn.org.au



MEN: Firing through all of Life

By Al Stewart
Blue Bottle Books
RRP \$19.95

This is an easy-to-read book for men asking questions.

What is life all about? How did I get here? What do I do with the rest of my life? Where exactly did my 30s or 40s go? How come every day seems the same?

Questions about marriage and family, jobs, success and failure, and God are sometimes unexpected.

Al Stewart suggests that sometimes the wrong reactions to life's questions can have disastrous results for our lives, and for the lives of others.

Men looking for answers or who want to fix something will find this book useful. Sections on midlife, the Good News and the search for answers are based on Old Testament teaching from the Book of Ecclesiastes.

They could well be used as small group study notes.

MEN: Firing through all of Life asks the big question about men's midlife - is it half full or half empty. Stewart writes about God's plan for our eternity and radical solutions that men need to apply in their life's walk.



Bishop Stewart taps a number of exciting prospects in learning to live by trust in God: joy and gratitude, not life crushing rules, freedom from looking sideways all the time and freedom from worry about the future.

Author Al Stewart is the Bishop of Wollongong, an active sportsman who loves the outdoors and has used his life experiences in the writing of this book.

A book for Aussie men, written by an Aussie who is not afraid to open up about changes as men age, and who knows mid-life is the "half full glass" for your eternity

Reviewed by John D. Hoens, a worship leader at Pine Rivers Uniting Church

Head and Heart - American Christianities

By Garry Wills
The Penguin Press
RRP \$56.95 through Vision Books at Broadwater Road Uniting Church.

The separation of church and state is highly topical. Pulitzer-Prize winning history professor and journalist Garry Wills attributes the high religiosity of the US to its separation of church and state.

He describes early Methodists' fervour in detail, quoting a source who said that "During a particularly ferocious storm it used to be said, 'There's nobody out tonight but crows and Methodist preachers.'"

He then unites "head and heart" in the religion of Lincoln and black anti-slavery campaigner Frederick Douglass.

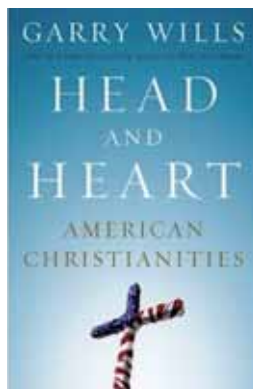
The Transcendentalist-Evangelical and the Evangelical-Transcendentalist, white and black, can know and love each other, the two poles of head and heart complementing and confirming each other even in the apocalyptic fanaticism of the US Civil War.

Mr Wills weaves into a coherent whole a bewildering array of modern religious actors, Dwight Moody, John Nelson Darby, the Scopes lawyers debating creationism in schools, fundamentalist theologians, as well as relating the Social Gospel and Prohibitionist origins of feminism in the late 19th century.

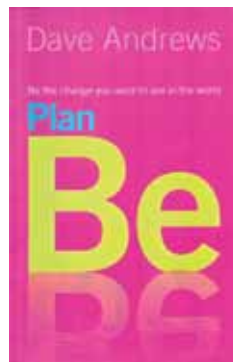
He also articulates the US civil rights battles of the 1960s and the modern recognition of rights, before closing in Chapter 20 with "The Karl Rove era", referring to the former advisor to George W. Bush. "Ecumenical Karl" united extreme evangelicals and radical Catholics through drawing out and magnifying controversial matters like abortion and stem-cell research.

Head and Heart provides a detailed history and conceptual unity before plunging into modern controversy. Given Wills' depth of both history and journalistic experience, it would be hard to find a better guide to the separation of church and state and hence US Christianity, which is founded upon it, and incorporated in the Australian Constitution.

Reviewed by Tom Spencer, a member of The Gap Uniting Church and a lawyer interested in church/state relations



REVIEWS



Plan Be: Be the change you want to see in the world
By Dave Andrews
Authentic Media
RRP \$13.95

It is always good to read a book that demands we 'walk the talk'. The hard part is what follows; the application bit.

Dave Andrews' authority comes from years of walking the talk both locally and internationally.

It's why his new book *Plan Be* on the Beatitudes (Matthew 5) rings so true.

It's why his thoughts feel so fresh and why the illustrations hit home. By the close of my reading, the clarion call of each Beatitude had shaken my bland assumptions, lazy middle class values and fairly shallow ways of relating to others.

As I followed Mr Andrews' thoughts, I was recaptured by the radical nature of the Beatitudes.

He allows Jesus' teaching to speak for itself.

The Beatitudes remind us that faith in Jesus cannot remain private. For faith to exist, it must have a public aspect. It demands a public response.

In *Plan Be*, Mr Andrews reminds us that the Beatitudes are much more than 'good ideas' to be occasionally referred to. They are core practical principles, the model, the framework by which we are set on our way to 'follow' Christ.

Keen to facilitate action (and inspire the reader), Mr Andrews lays out practical tips to begin the journey, and to allow Jesus' teaching to infuse our daily lives.

At the close he also includes an excellent glossary of projects and groups to engage with and begin.

Plan Be is not a long book. It doesn't need to be.

Mr Andrews does us all a favour by reminding us concisely of the centrality of the Beatitudes to Jesus' teaching, their core principles, and how they can help us engage, serve and participate in the world we dwell in.

This is an ideal book for small groups that are looking to be motivated to 'Be the Change'.

www.wecan.be

Plan Be is available at Koorong Books and Word bookstores.

Reviewed by Mr Ian Loom, an RE teacher in Brisbane

Top Gear - The Challenges

Executive Producer: Andy Wilman
BBC
Rated PG

This DVD is the ultimate show for car enthusiasts, with seven challenges for the BBC's *Top Gear* team - Jeremy Clarkson, Richard Hammond and James May.

The challenges provide three hours of action. It is competitive, hilarious, sometimes dangerous and sometimes humiliating for those involved.

Space Shuttle Episode: Richard and James try to create the first car space shuttle from a Robin Reliant. This foolhardy venture into flight, wind tunnels and remote control requires further development of landing techniques.

Amphibian Episode: The team is challenged to turn three normal cars into amphibians. Help comes from amateurs and the world's best boat makers.

To win, the driver must pilot his car-boat from one side of a two mile wide reservoir to the other.

Limo Episode: Jeremy, Richard and James transform three cars into limousines. The action gets competitive as the limos are forced to turn tight circles, dodge paintballs and navigate obstacles including a water jet and stingers.

This is only the start of the challenges as the limos are later used to transport three celebrities to the Brit Awards. Will the stars make it to the red carpet on time, if at all?

Parkour Episode: A Peugeot 207 races two exponents of Parkour, the sport of leaping across rooftops, across Liverpool. James attempts to prove that cars are faster than men in silly trousers.

Race from Alba Episode: James and Richard team up to beat Jeremy in a race to take a truffle from southern Italy to a restaurant in London. James and Richard take the option of flying a Cessna 182 while Jeremy drives the worlds fastest, most lavish supercar the Bugatti Veyron.

In *The Challenges* the *Top Gear* team attack everything thrown their way with enthusiasm and a never say never attitude. Great fun!

Reviewed by Daniel Krause, a student and revhead



Our area was once confined to the suburban enclave bordered partly by the meandering Brisbane River.

Rich in early Brisbane history, today we serve a much wider community.

Prominent at the roundabout on a major intersection, our church regularly attracts visitors, and the occasional "church shopper".

We have a small band of senior members. Incredibly dedicated, generous, and faithful, they are an inspiration.

We ask for prayers for elderly folk – no matter where they worship – for the wonderful examples they provide, and the worthwhile contribution they make to any faith community.

Our congregation consists mostly of families with growing children and young teenagers.

We seek prayers for constant wisdom and guidance in the task of parenting.

Our successful ongoing Friday night P1 program for children leaving primary school (sometimes 15 to 20 children) has prompted us to begin a follow-on program.

'Jonah's' is for Year 8 and 9 students.

Our long-standing teenage youth group 'BUGS', catering mostly for unchurched youth, now meets every second Friday.

Please pray for all church and unchurched children and youth and their dedicated leaders, seeking to know Christ.

Current outreach includes an ecumenical undertaking with the local Baptist church conducting an adapted Alpha course, "Alpha Lite", for residents at the nearby Clem Jones Home, and our strong involvement with local school chaplains.

We have recently resumed our "Foodbank" project, providing groceries for those in need.

Let us all pray for the needs of others; those we already know about, and those we are yet to discover. May each one of us be alert and discreet in responding in the ways of Christ.

17 August: Callide Valley Uniting Church

The Callide Valley Uniting Church has worship centres in Biloela and Wowan. Occasional worship services are held at Lawgi. We are part of the Presbytery of Central Queensland.

PRAYER DIARY

The Callide Valley is in the Banana Shire, west of Gladstone.

Coal mining, beef production, power generation, dryland and irrigated cropping are the Shire's major industries.

All our services are traditional in style and presentation, with music, prayers, bible readings and a message.

We often rely on willing lay preachers.

In Biloela, Sunday services are held at 8.30am with morning tea afterwards. Holy Communion is usually celebrated on the 4th Sunday.

In Wowan, Sunday services are celebrated at 10.45am on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month.

Occasional services of Holy Communion are held in the Lawgi Community Hall at 7.30pm followed by a light supper.

Ecumenically, we share a weekly 9am devotional service with the folk at the Lutheran Church Retirement Village, offering Holy Communion to the residents once a month.

'Encounter' is our ministry activity to older folk in our Biloela centre. A dedicated group of volunteers plan and provide a monthly program of variety and enjoyment.

Rev Peter Taubner, who lives in Moura, is our minister, allocating his time between the Callide and Dawson Valley Churches.

Please pray for his ministry of leadership amongst us and for spiritual direction.

We recently welcomed Pastor Karyl Davison into our midst, as the Rural Ministry Coordinator for the Central Queensland and Mary-Burnett Presbyteries (a joint Synod and Presbytery placement).

Karyl is based in Biloela, helps out with services in the Callide Valley and supports other rural areas.

She organises training courses, and is involved in developing lay ministry teams throughout the two Presbyteries.

We support two School Chaplains, linked to Scripture Union, and administered by a local Chaplaincy Committee.

The Biloela High School Chaplain is wholly community funded, while the other chaplain receives federal government funding to serve six primary schools.

Please also pray for those in our region and elsewhere still dealing with the effects of drought and who need plentiful rain.

www.callidevalley.ucaweb.com.au



The school bell tolls for Mike Millard and Cathy Hockey.
Photo courtesy of Calvary Christian College

To the Principal's office

IT WAS AN emotional time for students, parents and staff at Calvary Christian College as they bade farewell to their Principal, Mike Millard, after more than ten years.

The school is a ministry of Logan Uniting Church.

"Over the past ten or so years I

have had the privilege of serving a wonderful community and now it's time for me to move on," he said.

Cathy Hockey took up the principal's duties at the end of July.

Ms Hockey has a background in teaching special education, primary, secondary and remedial education.



Toowoomba candidates for confirmation. Photo by Derek Curnow

Confirmation shows life works

TOOWOOMBA'S LIFEWORKS Uniting Church recently celebrated a huge confirmation service.

Twelve new members were received into membership, with one mature lady and eleven more youthful members making their vows.

The Easter morning service was the culmination of six months of preparation.

Minister at Lifeworks, Rev David Ellis, praised the persistence and commitment of the class and their mentors and teachers.

Each of the new members was given the right hand of fellowship and a gift by the mentor who had supported them through their preparation.

This support was thought to be a key to the success of the process. Following the service, a celebration cake was shared in the church hall.

The classes used adapted studies originally prepared by Rev Paul Jensen, of Middle Ridge UC in Toowoomba. Classes were led by Lifeworks Elders.

The chaplain who wears two hats

CHAPLAIN NEVILLE Wilson, in his line of duty as a Royal Flying Doctor Service pilot, was tasked to transport a seriously ill prisoner from a northern jail to Brisbane for hospitalisation recently.

He was able to make himself known to the prisoner and escorting officer as a chaplain at the Capricorn Correctional Centre before the flight commenced.

He was encouraged by the respectful attitude of the escorting officer towards the prisoner.

Being an aviation enthusiast himself, the officer took the trouble to talk the inmate through each phase of the flight from takeoff to landing, and assisting with unloading the patient and stretcher off the aircraft into the waiting ambulance.

This man was obviously in God's care with a medical team, an escorting officer and a Chaplain accompanying him all the way to Brisbane for medical care.

Mr Wilson is one of many Uniting Church chaplains available to use their pastoral skills in very different circumstances in their daily work.



Pilot Neville Wilson, this is your chaplain speaking

The very big cosmic picture

FOR THE first time ever, on Sunday 31 August Queensland Churches Together (QCT) will join with the Greek Orthodox Church to commemorate the Orthodox Day of Prayer for the Protection of the Environment.

The public service will be held at 6pm in the Greek Orthodox Church of St George, Edmonstone Street, South Brisbane.

The homily will take the theme of "The Cosmic Dimensions of What We do".

QCT General Secretary Glenine Hamlyn explained.

"The Orthodox understanding of creation and human responsibility is holistic and inseparable from the theology of salvation."

The special environmental prayer service marks the beginning of the liturgical day and the Orthodox ecclesial year.



Organists develop skills in the sun

A GROUP of six enthusiastic organists from the Sunshine Coast met at Nambour Uniting Church between April and June for a course on the art of organ playing conducted by members of the Organ Society of Queensland.

The tutorials focused on the special skills required for playing at services of worship including topics such as adapting keyboard skills from piano to organ, playing the pedals, understanding registration, selecting stops, playing hymns, how to practise, and selecting music for organ volunteers.

The final session of the course included a mini-concert performed by the participants and the session tutor for an audience of local church members.

One of the tutors was Dr Steven Nisbet who is the organist at St Andrew's Uniting Church in Brisbane and President of the Organ Society of Queensland.

The course was funded by a grant from the Maroochy Shire Council and instigated by Nambour Uniting Church pastor Gregory Ross.

Participants were eager to line up for more sessions next year.



Jim Bartle encouraged Weipa youngsters to fly high in faith.
Photo courtesy Daria Kearon

On your bike, son

IF YOU HEARD revving motorbikes and loud music coming from the touch football oval on Wednesday afternoon you weren't dreaming; it was JC Epidemic.

This Christian group from Mt Tambourine near the Gold Coast have been on a regional tour and Weipa was their last stop.

The riders, Jim Bartle and Pete Anderson, dazzled the 300 strong crowd with amazing freestyle motocross tricks as they soared over the football field. The crowd were also entertained by a 19 year old singer, Davey Baker, who performed some original songs as well as covers.

MC Andy whipped the crowd into a frenzy as Pete Anderson performed a 'Rock Solid' where he actually let go of the bike in mid-air. The two riders also followed each other over the jump in a train formation.

Other tricks performed included "Dead Body", where the rider is horizontal to the ground, "Ruler" where the rider and the bike make a straight vertical line and many variations of handstands. Jim Bartle, recovering from two broken shoulders, was more subdued in his riding, but not so in his speaking. He passionately told the crowd about the courage it took for him to commit to Jesus Christ and invited people who wanted to make the same commitment to come forward at the end of the show.

Around 60 children went forward and will be receiving a

bible from the JC Epidemic crew through local churches in the near future.

The event was organised and supported by Presbyterian Fellowship, St Luke's Church and Western Cape AOG. See church notices for information about service times.

Frontier Rally

IN A UNIQUE new venture for the organisation, Frontier Services has been invited to be charity sponsor of the Red Centre to Gold Coast car rally in September.

Frontier Services will stage a number of community events in towns and cities along the route to raise awareness.

The Red Centre to Gold Coast rally is made up of competitive rally sections on closed public roads or private farm tracks. More than 100 vehicles from all over Australia will compete, starting in Alice Springs on September 8 and finishing on the Gold Coast on September 20.

The original Dodge "buckboard" car used by John Flynn will lead off the rally cars at many of their stopovers.

"The rally is an ideal 'fit' for Frontier Services," says National Development Manager David Sullivan.

The route, via Townsville, covers a lot of territory where Flynn worked and Frontier Services is still at work.

LETTERS

TV sparks interest

I have just finished reading your last issue.

The reason it has taken me so long to read is that I didn't skip anything, and several articles were worth going over several times.

I don't think that I have changed very much, so I must be right in thinking that Journey has been improving steadily for some time.

Even some items I have disagreed with overall were well

thought out and presented. And this last issue is special.

I was particularly impressed by the back page. This area is one where so many people need practical inspiration, and your choice of writers was inspired.

Well that shouldn't surprise us, should it? I'm sure the Lord is intimately concerned in what goes in!

In fact, I am going to file it, for re-reading and reference. Thank you.

Iris Williams
Buderim

Tuning in to TV

With reference to the article 'Switching off the Television' (July Journey), what amazes me is that people believe every word the television has to say on religion, politics and other subjects.

Commercial television stations appear to be notoriously one-sided on these topics.

I have written to at least one television station asking if it was them or the government running the country.

I've had experience at not having television at all, as mine, being old, won't work in very cold weather.

I do miss my favourite shows but I've proved I can live without television.

Lynda Pearee
Gladstone

I congratulate you on the courage to speak out against television and devoting a complete issue in Journey.

It has been said that television is the devil's head inside our homes and his tail on the roof.

Whilst we cannot easily get him out, there is Christian Satellite Television available at a very low cost.

Rolf Vaessen
Kilcoy

Let's talk about God

Regarding Dr Val Webb's looking for ways to talk about God, I perceive two distinct notions in our Journey paper.

(1) Dr Val Webb's, let us carefully and slowly move forward when she talks of Jesus and his mission evolving.

(2) She observes, in my opinion correctly, that Mr Cameron sees no need for change, no need in other words for evolution.

The church as a whole has almost always resisted change because it has always loved its authority.

It's somewhat surprising because Jesus himself was an evolutionist and was not scared to move forward.

We can still hear him roaring in the New Testament; "You have been told, 'hate your enemies' but I tell you 'love them and by loving them heap coals of fire on their heads'."

In other words embarrass them and teach them a psychological new truth, a truth that tells us that we will achieve progress with forgiveness faster than with revenge.

Let's do away with the cane and try genuine affection.

How slow we were to learn this lesson we can glean from church - school history.

But in our land we have finally and fortunately come to the point where physical punishment is no longer tolerated.

An insight in evolution will tell us that God is constantly shedding more light and truth for our time and place, especially psychological truth.

Let's see if we can help God a little rather than resist him.

Len Notenboom
Elanora

Jesus was no pacifist

Jim Dowling made some assertions in "Don't mention the War" (May Journey) that I find somewhat dubious.

I am surprised that no-one has refuted them.

He stated: "We should not compromise the most basic Christian message of non-violence."

In fact the most basic Christian message is love. Refer to Mark 12:29-31, where Jesus set out the two commandments.

Mr Dowling said: "Not a Christian himself, Gandhi declared that it seemed Christians were the only ones who read the Gospels and missed the obvious fact that Jesus was a pacifist."

Yet in Matthew 10:34-36, Jesus specifically stated he had not come to bring peace to the earth, but the sword.

It seems really that Gandhi misread the Gospels.

While allegedly a "famous practitioner of non-violence",

Gandhi was not above leading large marches and demonstrations intended to frighten the authorities into changing the law.

Mr Dowling said: "Dietrich Bonhoeffer himself never renounced his pacifism, despite being a part of a plot to kill Hitler."

If true, Bonhoeffer stands convicted of hypocrisy.

Murder is totally incompatible with 'pacifism' or 'non-violence'.

"He [Bonhoeffer] never denied the Gospel message of non-violence..."

True - because it does not exist.

Mr Dowling said: "The most famous war criminal/terrorist of our times George Bush."

The President of the USA is neither war criminal nor terrorist.

Mr Dowling said: "Jesus gives us the final answer, the last message to his followers on being captured, 'Put away your guns'."

With respect, not so.

All four Gospels differ, but the context is clear.

Jesus and the disciples were confronted.

Resistance would clearly have been futile.

Would Jesus, having trained his disciples... have wished them to be wiped out in an armed struggle they could not win?

John has Jesus saying, "Sheathe your sword. This is the cup the Father has given me; shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11).

As Christians, when confronted with evil we must take up arms if appropriate and necessary, and if by so doing evil can be overcome.

Dudley Horscroft
Banora Point



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JOURNEY asks...

How can my church engage my husband?

Liz Taylor

I grew up within the Anglican Church and made a public commitment at 14 during a Sydney Billy Graham crusade.

Greg was raised a Catholic and came to faith two years ago. Ours is a journey of transformation during 35 years of marriage.

At 16 I lost my brother to suicide. My parents closed in on themselves.

In my loneliness I cried out to God to send my partner for life and that whoever he sent would not be a goody two shoes. Greg was no goody two shoes but he had a heart full of love, tenderness and compassion.

We were married when I was 18 and Greg was 23. When our first child was born I did not know Greg was a cocaine addict.

With help from the Wayside Chapel and family, Greg beat his addiction.

We had two more children while I was on my own journey discovering the power of the Holy Spirit. When we came to Brisbane I joined Logan Uniting. It seemed the more I grew in God the more my marriage drifted apart.

Greg was working up to 70 hours per week in the hotel industry and drinking.

While the church talked about reaching out, they had no understanding of how to build relationships outside the congregation.

I had people actually turn their backs on me when they knew that Greg worked in the hotel industry. On rare occasions when he came to church, no one spoke to him.

The number of times people quoted the Corinthians passage about not being unequally yoked was beyond a joke. I felt alienated and isolated.

Not knowing whether my marriage would survive, or if I even wanted it to, I cried out in desperation to God.

I could give up on my marriage and let the devil win or I could stand and fight. I chose the latter. I wrote my husband a love letter declaring my love for him but also releasing him from our marriage if he felt he could no longer live with me as I pursued my walk with Jesus.

Within a month, God had taken Greg out of the hotel industry and released him from his need for alcohol. Greg did not touch alcohol for seven years following this.

My husband has a natural love for people no matter what their background or circumstance. From him, I have learned to look past the baggage to the heart and this has been transforming.

Had I not journeyed with my husband on this pathway I would have become so

enmeshed in church life that I too would have become a religious snob through ignorance and isolation.

Over the next few years, Greg began to worship on the odd occasion, gradually forming some friendships within the church as the congregation in turn became more relationally aware and actively built friendships.

This led to a defining moment early in 2005 when Greg noticed a 'Married for Life' course being led by a couple of good friends of ours. Greg said he wouldn't mind doing a course such as this with Alex and Dorothy.

We joined up for the 14 weeks and the homework had a section in it for those who may not have made a faith commitment.

My husband responded to Jesus through the homework we shared and he willingly made his first ever commitment to Jesus.

Greg is now actively involved in the life of our church with greeting and stewarding ministries where he excels with his natural love for people.

He also participates in two 'life groups' – Hackers Golf Club and Good Food Good Times, where fun, friendship and faith are shared.

We must see the God-given opportunities

that come our way and not box God into a program.

I have begun a life group for those women who worship without their partners.

Since Greg's conversion, two other husbands have come to faith and two more are often with their wives in church.



Liz Taylor is the Pastoral Care Coordinator at Logan Uniting Church.

Celma McMenamin and Heather den Houting

Celma McMenamin and Heather den Houting (We decided to write this piece as a conversation together because we have previously discussed this several times over morning tea in the office.)

Heather: Getting men to talk about what they want from church is really hard. I talk



to Jim about church almost all the time, but that's because I'm so involved. I'm not sure how involved he would be if he didn't have a role in supporting me, and he loves seeing Lucy (our daughter) in church because she enjoys it so much.

Celma: Tony came from a Catholic background. His memories of "church" are of people he does not have much respect for. He doesn't trust them because of what he saw happening in his childhood.

Heather: It is the same with Jim. He grew up as a Catholic, but didn't have much ongoing contact with church until he met me. While his parents were strongly religious, his own experience was not a positive one. He pursued his own spiritual path really.

Celma: While Tony supports me in my faith, he sees this as separate from his own life. When we discussed this article he was rather disinterested but he said that he believes all people should be able to follow their faith no matter what their religion. He considers the church attracts people searching for something or people desiring

comfort and readily acknowledges that some people do receive from church what they are looking for. However, he remains adamant that the church has nothing to offer him because it has no relevance to his life.

Heather: I just get the feeling that there is no action that a congregation can take to "engage" people in church, unless that person comes and says I want to be involved.

Jim definitely says that he was interested in what church had to offer, because he was looking for a community, and he really likes the people he has met in the congregations we have been in.

For me, just being a church with integrity and leaving the rest to God might be the best answer.

Celma: Yes, if you did something to "engage" Tony, he would definitely say "no thanks". Frankly I don't think there is much the church could do.

Both sigh and conclude: Maybe the church could just concentrate on its own being, and if people are ready to come to church, they will come.



Celma McMenamin (left) and Heather den Houting (above) are friends from Kenmore Uniting Church.

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