



Insight into
Indigenous spirituality

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God giving him
time to finish

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Music to
your ears

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Passing the baton

Church for all generations

*"Honour older people as we do our own aged parents,
and care for other's children as one's own."
(Ancient Chinese proverb)*

"It takes a village to raise a child." (African proverb)

By Phil Smith

THE ANCIENT wisdom of China and Africa can sometimes be seen and heard running up and down the aisles on Sunday or sitting in the comfy chair at home group. At best the church reflects a family of faith from infancy to old age.

At worst we're more like separate tribes. According to Doctoral research student Rev Duncan Macleod, people fall through the cracks between Playgroup, Sunday School, Youth Group, Young Adults, Men's and Women's Fellowship and Seniors.

"Those groups are like little tribes where you connect with people you can relate to," said Mr Macleod.

"That's fine, but the difficulty comes when people feel they don't belong to a tribe anymore.

"So what happens when you get too old for youth group?"

"You find another tribe to join that may be in another denomination or you drop out altogether.

"The same thing happens when you're no longer part of the young-marrieds group.

"One of our greatest vulnerabilities is at transition points where people stop relating to the church.

"We do need to have environments where people can find safe space to connect no matter what their tribe."

Is it possible to build cross generational relationships that bind the church body and still meet the genuine and specific needs of age groups?

Husband and wife team Marie and Len Wilmington serve in North West Queensland with Outback Links.

Now a grandmother, Mrs Wilmington heard the gospel story in Sunday School and was nurtured through Christian Endeavour.

"One of my earliest memories was of Miss Hinton who left her seat just before the sermon every Sunday and Pied Piper style we children all followed her out," said Mrs Wilmington.

Her teen years were highlighted by the trust of a church that gave young people a regular place on the preaching plan.

A shy girl, Marie volunteered for prayers because she thought everyone would have their eyes closed.

"I still treasure a letter I received from a congregational member after our group had led worship. Being encouraged and trusted were huge plusses to our self esteem and faith."

The congregation in Cloncurry provided a home base during years of patrol ministry.

"The little ones were loved by the congregation as they learnt to be themselves in the presence of God," she said.

"During a recent stopover in Mackay I looked with new eyes at the young people who lead worship at Iona West," said Mrs Wilmington. "I was challenged to thank them."

Duncan Macleod said as younger generations learn from their elders, previous generations learn from new ones.

"There's a two way process as people translate the gospel into a new culture.

"They think about that gospel, bring it back and ask, 'Have you thought about this?' So there's a learning process for the whole church.

"When you take the gospel to a new generation there's always a risk that some things are distorted or missed out.

"People may see Jesus a certain way and miss out on the values that have been very important before."

So listening becomes a key part of telling the gospel story.

Howard Carroll leads a team of grandfathers in Toowoomba City Church, offering young people centuries of life experience.

"The Grandad's Ministry is a way to get young people to talk to someone who will listen without causing them to feel guilty," explained Mr Carroll.

He said young people can hear their own side of the situation as they talk and often come to an answer.

"What we do is just listen and, if asked, give advice from our own life experiences.

"We are not counsellors or mentors but men who will give an ear to let one talk through a problem. We may not even have an answer but having someone to talk and pray with is a blessing."

In an era when age no longer defines a generation, when a congregation's pews, lounge chairs, or even computer screens could include Builders, Boomers and generations X, Y and Z a challenge remains from the days of the Old Testament: to recall the great things God has done and look forward to the new things he will do.

According to Duncan Macleod, "There is something to be said for multi-generational, multi-tribe churches.

"But they're the most difficult churches to run because everything is always being renegotiated: what kind of worship are we going to have, what type of music, what stories to tell, what values do we refer to?"

"These communities are most rewarding, but require the highest level of leadership skills."

It's a challenge worth taking on.

Climb our family tree

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Will our children have faith?

SOME OF you may have seen the movie, *Antwone Fisher*.

It tells the true story of a boy who was given up by his mother when he was born.

He was raised in a foster home where he experienced severe and relentless psychological, sexual and physical abuse.

He grew up with a deep-seated anger within him that readily and frequently boiled over into violence.

Antwone Fisher tells his story and the means by which, with care and support, he came to experience healing and wholeness.

There is a wonderful scene at the end of the movie where he finally meets all the members of his extended family.

In our society today there are many different kinds of families.

We can no longer stereotype the idea of what being "family" means.

We have couples, both with and without children.

We have single-parent families.

We have extended families.

We have people living alone, for a variety of reasons, who nonetheless have a strong sense of connectedness to family members living elsewhere.

We have families made up of people who are unrelated but who choose to live together in community.

We have adoptive families, foster families and blended families.

We have happy families and we have unhappy families.

Within the family of the church we need to be careful that in speaking about families and family life we acknowledge this reality and ensure that no one feels excluded.

The story of the boy, Samuel, is a much-loved part of the Old Testament, and it offers us a great deal for personal reflection on the way God speaks and acts.

It is a matter of considerable significance that Samuel was only a child when God called him into a life of ministry and leadership.

This is not the only passage in the Bible that raises the issue of the



place children have in the heart of God and in his purpose for church and world.

Jesus had some very clear and confronting things to say about the centrality of children in the Kingdom of God and the dire consequences in store for those whose behaviour in any way hinders their experience of his love and grace.

God does not speak only to adults.

God speaks to and through children.

That is why we need them in the church family, and that is why we should listen to what they have to say.

We should never underestimate the capacity of a child to enjoy a relationship with God; to love God and to want to serve him.

Children can and do love God.

Children can and do pray.

Children can and do have faith.

The story tells us that it was hard for Samuel to hear the call of God.

This was because the spiritual health of the nation, Israel, was at such a low ebb that Samuel had not grown up in an ethos which encouraged him to believe that God would speak to him.

The nation was spiritually impoverished.

God had not stopped working or speaking, but the people were apathetic and unreceptive. How are children to hear the call of God

if the adults in their lives do not provide a loving, caring, supportive, encouraging environment of faith within which the voice of God can be clearly heard?

This reality is true in regard to both children's biological family and the church family to which they belong.

That is why we want to celebrate all the good, positive, affirming and life-giving experiences of family that we have.

That is why we want to say "thank you" for relationships in which we find love, encouragement, forgiveness and support.

That is why we want to identify and uphold patterns and values for family life that nurture personal wholeness and integrity and strengthen, sustain and enrich relationships.

That is why we want to celebrate the gift of children, share our lives with them, and experience them as a source of life and hope in our midst.

So, let us celebrate and give thanks to God for what it means to be family.

Let us give thanks for all those people (including mothers and fathers) who, in their lives and relationships, reflect the love and care of God.

Let us give thanks for our children, who enrich our lives, give us joy, and point us to God.

Let us give thanks for the family of faith, the church, through whose worship, witness and service the glory of God is revealed.

From the Editorial team

Phil Smith

I'm amazed by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. None of those ancient imperfect heroes would get a Blue Card let alone Father of the Year.

Yet the great 'I Am' identifies himself as their God and ultimately they're the forefathers of the Uniting Church. I'm also amazed that he's the God of my parents, and now my daughters.

Our heritage of faith goes all the way back to a night when God called Abram out of his tent, showed him the stars and made a promise that cannot be broken, ever.

I remember the stars above the school building in Greenvale one evening in 1975. I don't recall exactly what Dad said, but the penny dropped and I became one of those promised people.

When they asked me to put my trust in Jesus, these believers were asking me to trust them, trust their honesty as they shared their own warts-and-all experience of God.

Bruce and Jenny Dobbin, Ron Unwin, Robyn Taylor, Eric Woodrow, David and Sue Fanning, the Wilmos, Kayleen Brown, Barry Allen, John Palmer and so many others, like the grains of sand.

Before a recent speaking appointment I was introduced to a young technician, Ezra Henderson. Later someone asked me if he seemed familiar. "That's John's boy."

'Jungle' John Henderson was a bearded bare-foot bushman who worked as the groundsman and maintenance guy at the Magnetic Island youth camp.

John could repair anything, including the Jesus Bus, listen to anyone and trust God with everything. He lived his faith, shared his own story. John walked hundreds of young people to the door of the Kingdom and suggested we knock.

Mardi Lumsden

I can think of five key people who have been guideposts on my faith journey. Most of these were Uniting Church youth workers.

People with energy and passion for connecting with young people and helping them explore their faith in a deeper way.

Looking at youth and children's ministry in the church, it is hard to see tangible evidence of the importance of such work.

It may not fill our pews, but it may.

Those full pews may not result in more money in the plate, but they may.

The results lie in other ways. Young people who go out in to the world and live a life that involves God - people who are now lawyers, teachers, students, artists, theologians or builders.

Even people who still don't know what or who they are, but they know their faith.

I am a product of the Uniting Church's commitment to youth and children's ministry.

How does the church continue that commitment in new and exciting ways?

Who will run the church in 20 years time?

Who in your congregation is standing, hand outstretched, ready to receive the baton?

Sign of the Times



HERE IS a church that is clear about what it does and doesn't allow, even if not exactly sure how to spell it. This sign was spotted by Pacific Correspondent Bruce Mullan on an Anglican Church property in Honiara, Solomon Islands. Photo by Bruce Mullan.

Email your Signs of the Times church signs to journey@ucaql.com.au.

JOURNEY

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Blue Care sets wage benchmark

BLUE CARE announced in August that it will raise wages for nursing staff by 18 per cent over the next three years.

The increase is part of the latest Blue Care Queensland Nurses Union (QNU) Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) covering Registered Nurses, Enrolled Nurses and Assistant Nurses, and has been welcomed by the QNU.

Blue Care and the QNU together signed the EBA after 10 months of negotiations and 96 per cent of nursing staff voting in favour of it.

Improvements to the former agreement include four pay increases over three years and substantial increases in monetary allowances for uniforms, laundry, qualifications, on-call rates of pay and supervisory allowances.

To improve workplace conditions, the agreement has introduced a practical workload management tool to assist in managing the amount and causes of workload pressures.

The paid long service leave entitlement will increase from 10 weeks to 12 weeks after 10 years of service, sick leave will be paid out on termination of employment, and nurses will be able to cash out a proportion of their annual leave.

There will also be bereavement leave for same sex partners.



Synod General Secretary Rev Douglas Jones. Photo by Osker Lau

Budget pain to be shared across Synod

By Douglas Jones

THE COUNCIL of Synod meeting on 16 August approved a framework for the 2009 Mission and Service Fund Budget in line with the new, lower, level of income available to the Synod.

The challenge of trying to achieve the targeted 20% reduction (approximately \$2 million) in expenditure for that budget proved to be extremely difficult.

Over the past three months, all cost centres within the Synod and all Presbyteries were asked to reduce expenditure, wherever possible, for 2008.

That resulted in projected savings in the order of \$665,000 in the 2008 Mission and Service Fund Budget.

At the same time, the Synod Leadership Team examined a number of scenarios in seeking to achieve a 20% reduction in the 2009 Mission and Service Fund Budget.

That was a difficult exercise given the sheer size of the required reduction.

In the process, the Synod Leadership Team identified the core responsibilities of the Synod that need to be resourced out of the Mission and Service Fund, and sought to honour the various commitments that have been made by the Synod in recent years.

It was also mindful of the Synod's Intentional Missional Strategy, *a Future with Heart and Soul*, and the commitments made in the Vision for Mission.

In the end, it was simply not possible to maintain the current approach to resourcing the Synod's ministry and mission, and the necessity of reducing expenditure across the board was accepted.

As a consequence, the impact on individual roles and jobs within the Synod will be considerable.

The end result will be that, over the coming sixteen months, a number of positions will cease to exist, particularly in Synod Support Services (YACMU, Mission Consultants and the Justice and International Mission Advocate).

There will also be a reduction in funds available to remaining Synod cost centres and Presbyteries.

With a significant diminution of resource people available in Synod Support Services, the challenge for the whole Church will be to find ways to pursue its ministry and mission outcomes in fresh and creative ways.

As a pilgrim people always on the way towards a promised goal, I am confident that we will continue to be a hopeful people, seeking the city that is to come.

I am also confident that Christ will, in his own strange way, continue to constitute, rule and renew us as his Church.

I would encourage every member of the Church to earnestly pray for the Synod staff and for the whole Church that, together, we might continue to be faithful disciples of a crucified Lord who calls us into the fellowship of his sufferings.

Distance education beyond Coolamon

By Meera Atkinson

THE NATIONAL Assembly and the Synod of South Australia are poised to merge the distance theological education resources of Coolamon College with those of Parkin-Wesley Theological College.

The move comes in response to the recognition that for some years the Assembly has not been able to fund Coolamon College to the level required to achieve the demands placed upon it.

Rev Dr Andrew Dutney, Principal of Parkin-Wesley Theological College in Adelaide, saw it as a positive change in the life of the church.

"The materials Coolamon have been providing will continue to be provided," he said.

"Parkin-Wesley College is committed to ensuring that that takes place.

"We already have a distance program like many colleges so from our point of view it's expanding an activity we've already been involved in for a very long time.

"Because Parkin-Wesley has a larger administrative and academic base we anticipate being able to develop the distance materials in

ways Coolamon wanted to develop but didn't have the resources to.

"We should also be in a better place to access some of the support that Flinders University offers."

Acting Principal of Coolamon College Jo-anne Fulton said the transition will not cause disruption to current students.

"It means more efficient and better service to students. Hopefully the students win."

She also offered reassurance that though students will benefit from access to newer technologies Coolamon's commitment to equity will be adopted by Parkin-Wesley.

"Distance education needs to be available to everyone and where people don't have technology we have print-based text because of the justice issue involved," she said.

In a statement on the Assembly website Rev Terence Corkin, Assembly General Secretary, expressed gratitude to the staff, councils, committees, and volunteers who have served Coolamon College's ministry over the years, ensuring its contribution to lay leadership education around the country.

He also announced the



Rev Dr Andrew Dutney. Photo courtesy of the National Assembly

Assembly's commitment to fund a new three-year position that will provide a link between Parkin-Wesley and a range of providers of distance theological education as well as liaise with synod lay education bodies and promote resources from across the church.

"In some senses this is a recovery of the original Coolamon vision for a national network for distance theological education," said Dr Dutney.

"It presents opportunities for greater levels of cooperation between synods in meeting needs so, organisationally for the church, I think it's a good move forward.

"We're determined to make this work for the wider church."

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NCYC live launch

AROUND 300 young people packed into Glen Waverley Uniting Church in Victoria in June for what was one of the most exciting live music events ever held in the Uniting Church.

The event was the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC09) live CD and DVD recording. What was on show gave everyone a taste of what to expect musically at NCYC in Melbourne in January 2009.

This was the first time since the inception of NCYC that the CD has been recorded in front of a live audience.

NCYC09 music team leader Jason Mann said he was excited

about how the CD will enhance the convention experience come January.

"The best thing about a live recording, other than the excitement of the recording event, is that every NCYC delegate has the opportunity to learn the songs before NCYC, making the atmosphere electric in the crowd from the very beginning of the conference."

The music ranged from pop and dance tunes through to blues and jazz.

The 14-piece NCYC band had everyone up and dancing right from the first song, called 'Converge', the title of the convention in 2009.



The music team for NCYC09 at the live recording. Photo by Mike Emmett

Many revellers commented on the quality of the songs and musicians and paid particular attention to the strong theological content of the lyrics.

It wasn't just the young crowd that came along. People of all ages attended to support the youth on the NCYC journey.

The most notable adults in the crowd were an elderly couple who adorned themselves with fluorescent glow-stick headbands.

Many churches and individuals pre-ordered their CD, DVD and songbook on the night, keen to learn the songs straight away.

Youth Ministry Coordinator at St Leonard's Uniting Church in Brighton Beach Kaylea Fearn said she was looking forward to her church receiving the resource.

"I was so pumped up after the concert that I had to order copies of everything straight away.

"Our church is just going to love

the music and can't wait to get their hands on this new material so that they can start playing it."

Order your copy now!

To pre-order a copy of the NCYC09 Music CD/DVD and songbook visit www.ncyc.org.au or call 1300 00 NCYC.

The CD/DVD and songbook cost \$35 each or \$60 for both

Church welcomes Pacific Islands labour scheme

THE UNITING Church in Australia's national agency for international relationships, Uniting International Mission, has welcomed the Federal Government's announcement of a pilot seasonal labour mobility scheme for the Pacific Islands.

Uniting International Mission spokesperson Frances Voon said its Pacific partners have long been calling for such a scheme, amid growing levels of unemployment in the region.

"The scheme has the potential to bring greatly needed income and skills-building opportunities to Pacific Island communities, provided adequate safeguards are put in place to ensure decent working and living conditions for Pacific Island workers," said Ms Voon.

"Given the chronic labour shortages in the Australian horticulture sector, a seasonal labour mobility scheme has the potential to benefit both Pacific Island and regional Australian communities.

"Uniting International Mission urges the Federal Government to explore ways in which a seasonal labour mobility scheme can work in conjunction with Australia's aid and development program in the Pacific, in order to enhance the potential positive impacts of such a scheme for community development.

"Similarly, efforts must be made to ensure that Pacific Island communities are not robbed of skilled workers, thereby exacerbating 'brain drain' from the Pacific," Ms Voon said.

Churches can play a role in building community links, offering hospitality and providing pastoral support for workers.

With its strong links to partner churches throughout the Pacific, and its presence across regional Australia, the Uniting Church is in a position to facilitate the building of people-to-people links between Australian host communities and Pacific Island sending communities.



Celebrations at Yirrkala for a visit from Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and his Cabinet in July. Photo by Chris Meneilly

Arnhem Land honour for ministers

By Eseta Meneilly

A GROUP of eleven Uniting Church clergy and lay members spent four days with the Yirrkala Indigenous community, at the northeast tip of Arnhem Land, after the Darwin Ministers' conference.

Many participated in the Sunday worship service and shared in a beach picnic afterwards.

During the trip the group was treated to a tour of an Indigenous Healing Centre where traditional herbs and medicines are used.

One morning elders from around 13 Indigenous tribes met in Yirrkala to prepare for a visit by Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and his Cabinet the following day.

Uniting Church ministers were

invited in to the gathering to pray for the elders and their meeting with the Government.

The elders all spoke different languages and were keen to present their own particular concerns about Indigenous health, education, employment opportunities and housing.

The town was a-buzz with the impending visit of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

It was a special experience to see the school children's welcome dance and to hear the singing and speeches by the Indigenous elders.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd spoke carefully and honestly and answered questions from the Indigenous people present.

The Government group then walked around and spoke with the people.

The Uniting Church ministers group met Mr Rudd and one group member spoke to him at length about the Uniting Church's covenanting partnership with Indigenous people.

There were photos and smiles everywhere.

The Prime Minister was then given a petition by the people.

It was a privilege to watch traditional dancing and the Indigenous people's enthusiasm in greeting their Prime Minister with much excitement and joy.

Rev Eseta Meneilly is a Uniting Church minister in Victoria



Centre for Theology & Ministry



Executive Director, Centre for Theology and Ministry

JULY 2009 COMMENCEMENT

The UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania (the Synod) is seeking to fill the position of Executive Director of the Centre for Theology and Ministry.

The person appointed to this position will play a significant part in the oversight of the ministry and mission of the Synod, particularly within the life of the Centre for Theology and Ministry.

The Centre for Theology and Ministry comprises the Synod's Theological College and Discipleship Education Unit and resources lifelong education and spiritual formation for Christians in contemporary Australia. The Centre brings together teachers, trainers, students and the world class Dalton McCaughey Library in a profoundly ecumenical setting for face-to-face learning as well as on-line learning and regionally developed programs. It serves as a strategic hub for a 'web of learning' which seeks to link the resources of the Centre with award and non-award educational programs across Victoria and Tasmania.

The appointee will be lay or ordained and a member of the Uniting Church. S/he will have significant experience within the areas of ministry that are the focus for the Centre for Theology and Ministry. Appropriate theological qualifications are essential along with excellent interpersonal, management and organisational skills.

Expressions of interest are being called for immediately. An application package with full details of the position will be available after 20 August 2008.

Expressions of interest should be directed to:

Ms Robyn Hansen, Executive Assistant to the General Secretary
Phone: (03) 9251 5215; email: robyn.hansen@victas.uca.org.au

Applications will close on Wednesday, October 15, 2008

Insight into Indigenous spirituality

By Jill Freer

PARTICIPANTS AT the second National Ministers Conference in Darwin were given some insight into the complexities of Indigenous spirituality by Rev Dr Tim Bose and Rev Mawunydjil Garawirrtja, the chairperson of the Northern Regional Council of Congress (NRCC).

Dr Bose said exploring Indigenous spirituality was like walking through a door of unending learning.

He said learning an Indigenous language was a good entry point.

"It's a common western belief that spirituality is just one section of life and it's separate from other areas such as family, politics, law etc," he said.

"But in Indigenous culture, religion or spirituality relates to the whole of life."

He said some Indigenous people find it difficult to reconcile their own spiritual beliefs with Christianity.

Mr Mawunydjil gave some insights into the connection that Indigenous people have with their land and the whole of creation.

For Aboriginal people the land is a living, breathing thing that is to be nurtured, not exploited.

Indigenous people are connected to creation spiritually, emotionally, culturally and physically.

"As a Christian people we believe our soul can go to God and that our spirit can move across the land with the spirit of our ancestors to ensure the land is protected," Mr Mawunydjil said.

Dr Bose said Indigenous people believe that if they take care of creation, it will take care of them.

"This idea of stewardship and of mutual caring takes me back to Chapter 1 of Genesis," he said.

Mr Mawunydjil also explained some of the intricate nature of Indigenous society and clan relationships.

Amongst the Yolngu people of north-east Arnhem Land there



Rev Dr Tim Bose and Rev Mawunydjil Garawirrtja at the second National Ministers Conference in Darwin. Photo courtesy of Jill Freer

are 62 clan groups and each has its own language.

Many of the people are multilingual, some speaking up to 15 different languages.

Each language has its own

totems, web of connections to related clans, areas of land and sacred sites as well as songs, paintings and ceremonies.

Everyone fits into two social network systems – the family

network and the subsection system under which everyone has a skin name.

Relationships in the family network dictate the ways that people relate to each other.

Discovering beauty from within

By Kerry Brinknell

RISING CHRISTIAN pop artist, Ana Laura is an incredibly beautiful and fresh 22-year-old woman who is passionate about the road she is travelling.

Despite her youthfulness, Ana Laura's story is one that has shaped her life to a place of great maturity and deep understanding of her Christian faith and focus.

During her formative years in Texas, Ana Laura was incredibly active so her parents worked hard to keep her occupied with extra-curricular activities.

Growing up in an active and high achieving environment placed a great deal of pressure on Ana Laura. She wanted to be perfect in all ways.

At an early age Ana Laura developed an eating disorder.

"When I turned 13, someone who I was close to and respected came over to me during brunch and said 'maybe you should sit this one out. You are getting kind of chubby'.

"From that point I felt like nothing I did was good enough.

"I decided to take control over my eating and weight and ended up going through a two year eating disorder."

It was when her younger sister discovered Ana Laura in a weak and vulnerable state that she reached her lowest point.

"Ultimately, Christ got me through it.

"I needed Jesus to pull me out of there and tell me, 'you're beautiful no matter what you are like on the outside because I am on the inside of you. I live with you'."

Ana Laura has gone on to share this as her message to young girls and women through her song lyrics and music and her real life testimony.

"I wish I hadn't gone through that, but I know that I am closer to God because I went through such a low point. God never disappoints," she said.

Through music, Ana Laura connects with her audiences in a powerful and positive way with messages of hope and love.

To celebrate the release of Ana Laura's self-titled album *Journey* has a copy to give away.

Email your name and address to journey@ucaql.com.au with the subject "Ana Laura give away". The first entry will win.



Christian musician Ana Laura. Photo courtesy of Kerry Brinknell. Ana Laura's CD is out now through Reunion Records and is available from Koorong. www.AnaLauraMusic.com





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.ucareql.com.au>

NOMINATIONS CLOSE ON MONDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2008

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A is for Aspley

MEMBERS OF the Aspley congregation, local families, Federal Member for Petrie, Ms Yvette D'Ath MP, and State Member for Aspley, Ms Bonny Barry MP, have celebrated the official opening of the Aspley Early Childhood Education Centre.

Growing this mission to young families was a response to the strong need for a local childhood education centre that provided opportunities to talk to others about the love of Jesus Christ.

Aspley Early Childhood Education Centre Director Ms Glenda Donaldson emphasised outreach and community connection.

"It's a service for parents but we want our centre to be so much more than that," Ms Donaldson said.



Heather Palmer was one of the Aspley congregation making sure everything was ready for the children. After face painting it was off to the slippery dip.
Photo by Penny Appleby

"We want it to feel like a second home; a safe, secure and loving place."

"The centre includes a tea and coffee room specifically for parents to interact with each other and the Chaplain."

"Most importantly though it's about developing not only the physical and mental side of the children but the spiritual side as well."

"We want the children to know we care; it's a special, safe and happy place with God as the centre."

Chair of the centre's Management Committee Mr Peter Waltisbuhl said the project wouldn't have been completed without the efforts of the entire Aspley congregation.

"It was such a blessing to have people around us who caught our vision and supported the project; even those with no church association have come along and offered help," Mr Waltisbuhl said.

"God truly touched our people and they played a huge part in completing the centre by committing their savings, volunteering their time and making equipment such as tables and shelves."

Federal Member for Petrie Ms D'Ath MP commented on the active role the congregation is playing by being a part of the life of the growing number of young families in the Aspley area.

"It is more than just the physical wellbeing of the children, it is the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of the child that's important, and that's the holistic approach that Aspley is taking," Ms D'Ath said.



Dawn Missen, Warren Greenwood and Carol Bath prepare for the live link-up. Photo by Judith Greenwood

Online link-up from city to country

By Ruth Snelleman

IN WHAT is a first for a major Australian church, a virtual worship service has linked a major city church with a small rural church.

Using Telstra's Next G service, Beac Uniting Church participated in its first virtual worship service with Glen Waverley Uniting Church at the end of August.

Director of Communications at the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Rev Kim Cain said, "We are adopting a modern communications approach to worship by using an internet telecast to broadcast worship services from a city church to a smaller, rural church."

Glen Waverley Uniting Church member, Warren Greenwood said, "This exciting project is a first for any Uniting Church in Victoria."

"This initiative could set a precedent for large city churches to assist regional churches."

Mr Greenwood said, "For small congregations that cannot afford or justify full-time clergy, this new technology provides a wonderful opportunity to help maintain a worshipping Christian presence in their community."

Using a laptop, data projector and Next G telephone service, the worship was projected on a screen at Beac Uniting Church.

To enable this process Glen Waverley Uniting Church run Vara Software called 'Wirecast'.

A compressed QuickTime file is sent to a high speed internet cable facility at a minimum upload speed of 512kps.

Beac Uniting Church use a Telstra high speed wireless internet connection on an Apple Mac

laptop and run QuickTime.

Sending the signal to a Data Projector, they see, hear and participate in the worship from Glen Waverley Uniting Church.

The initiative has been supported by Telstra Country Wide South West Victoria.

Area General Manager, Mr Bill Mundy said, "We are delighted to be a part of the webstreaming of a church service from Glen Waverley, to the Beac Uniting Church."

"This has been possible by using Telstra's Next G network and we are excited about the concept."

In addition to this, Telstra Country Wide is also sponsoring Beac Uniting Church by providing them with of 12 months free internet access.

WALL•E give away

WHAT IF mankind had to leave Earth and somebody forgot to turn the last robot off?

Academy Award winning writer-director Andrew Stanton (*Finding Nemo*) and the inventive

storytellers and technical geniuses at Pixar Animation Studios (*The Incredibles*, *Ratatouille*) transport movie-goers to a galaxy not so far away for a new computer-animated cosmic comedy about a deter-

mined robot named WALL•E.

After hundreds of years WALL•E (Waste Allocation Load Lifter Earth-Class) discovers a new purpose in life when he meets a sleek search robot named EVE.

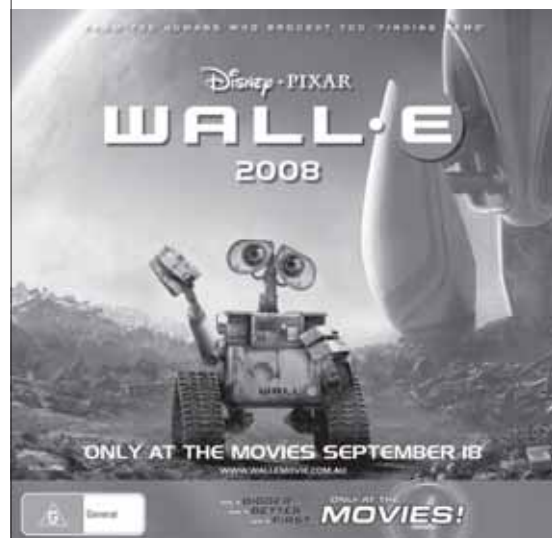
EVE realises WALL•E has inadvertently stumbled upon the key to the planet's future and races back to space to report her findings to the humans (who have been eagerly awaiting word that it is safe to return home).

Meanwhile, WALL•E chases EVE across the galaxy and sets into motion one of the most exciting and imaginative comedy adventures ever brought to the big screen.

To celebrate the release *Journey* has five double passes to give away.

Email journey@ucaqlid.com.au with the subject "Wall-E give away" and be sure to include your postal address.

One entry per person. The first five entries will receive a free double pass.



Garry "Walkman" Hause visits Glasshouse Country Uniting Church.
www.walkingman.org. Photo courtesy of Chris Bell

From Sunshine coast to Bolivia

THE CHURCH sign along Glasshouse Mountains Road brought an unusual visitor to Glasshouse Country Uniting Church's Bible Society Bolivia Day service in July.

Garry "the Walkman" took a break from his walking around the world to share in the service, morning tea and the special Bolivian luncheon where \$611 was raised for Bibles for Bolivia.

Garry is from Buffalo, New York. He works six months of the

year in National Parks and spends the other six months walking around the world pushing his 'home on wheels' which contains a tent and stove and can carry up to 14 litres of water for desert crossings.

The Glasshouse Country congregation are also taking part in the "Discovering and Using God's Gifts" workshops with Rev Dr Graham Beattie and are looking forward to the final workshop in October.

Finding the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

By Douglas Jones

THE STORIES of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob occupy a large part of the book of Genesis.

They are important figures in the biblical tradition, but does that importance derive from their ability to hand on their faith to the next generation? Scholars readily concede the conflicted nature of the families of the patriarchs or ancestors – sibling rivalry, jealousy, scheming, deceit and trickery are all present in the narrative.

And yet these ancient stories, set against a cultural backdrop vastly different from our own, are a valuable part of the biblical narrative.

Does that value derive from the lessons that might be learned from passing on faith to the next generation?

The first thing that needs to be noted is that the stories of the ancestors are important because they reveal a God who takes initiative and gives promises to people in difficult circumstances.

The wider context for God's speaking to Abram is the story that has unfolded in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. God's purpose for humanity seems to have gone terribly wrong.

It has been suggested that there is something like a series of fresh starts that God makes with humanity following the start made at creation.

Just as God brought about the first creation out of primordial chaos, so God brings about a re-creation following the flood, and then, following the story of the Tower of Babel, God brings about a fresh start for humanity, this time through addressing a single individual: Abram.



Photo by Lisa F. Young

God's purpose will not be thwarted by human disobedience and sin. Rather, God chooses an individual through whom God will bring blessing to all the families of the earth.

Herein lies the importance of the stories of the patriarchs or ancestors.

God's promise moves towards fulfilment in spite of the conflicts in the families of the patriarchs to whom the promise is given, in spite of seemingly impossible circumstances such as the barrenness of the women in the stories, in spite of the character flaws of the key players, in spite of the action taken by patriarchs as they try to force the fulfilment of God's promise (Abram's taking of Hagar as his wife and the resulting

birth of Ishmael), the request made to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, the anger of both Esau and Laban towards Jacob, and Jacob's wrestle with the stranger at the brook Jabbok.

Do the ancestors hand on 'the faith' to their children?

Even though the sketchy nature of the biblical narrative makes it difficult to identify customs and practices that may have influenced succeeding generations to believe the promise in the way that Abraham did in Genesis 15:6, there are some pointers to the way in which 'faith' was handed on.

For example, Abraham circumcised Isaac.

That is, Isaac received the sign of the covenant promise that God had given to Abraham. When

Abraham took Isaac to the land of Moriah to offer him as God had commanded, Isaac asked the very pertinent question: "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Abraham's response suggests a conviction that God will provide the lamb.

How the story of the offering of Isaac is meant to be interpreted in the context of the whole has been the subject of ongoing debate.

The matter is complicated by other things.

What did Isaac think when Abraham sent Hagar and Isaac's playmate Ishmael away?

How might that action have impacted on an impressionable young mind?

The difficulty in answering the question 'do the ancestors hand

on 'the faith' to their children, lies in the fact that the narrative is so sketchy.

Indeed, the only conversation between Abraham and Isaac in the narrative occurs in the story of the "sacrifice" of Isaac.

Isaac's only subsequent involvement with his father is when he and Ishmael bury Abraham.

In the end the ancestral narratives do several things.

Firstly, they reveal a God who makes a promise to each new generation – to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob/Israel.

Secondly, they reveal that God's promise is fulfilled in God's own way and in God's own time, in spite of attempts to force the promise and threats to the promise.

Thirdly, God fulfils the promise in spite of the flawed characters of the ancestors.

So what might these ancient stories in our biblical tradition say to us?

For the apostle Paul, they spoke of the promise that God had made to Abraham and Abraham's response of believing the promise. For Paul, Abraham, because of his faith, his belief in the promise of God and his trust in the God of the promise, becomes the "father of us all" (Romans 4:16)

God's purpose continues to be fulfilled because God comes and addresses each generation anew with the promise of the gospel.

Yes, we do stand in a long line of people who have been so addressed.

And yes, we can acknowledge Abraham as our father because he too was addressed by God and in spite of his foibles and weaknesses, lived his life in the light of the promise that God gave to him.



Considering this month's theme, do you have a great picture from your good old days?

Church picnics when we wore potato sacks, family camps with straw hats, youth rallies with tie-dyed T-shirts?

We pulled this one from the *Journey* archives. If you are in this photo (taken on 12 October 1985) email us and tell us which one you are and what you are doing know. We will put the story on www.journeyonline.com.au.

Or send us a different old paragraph and a

caption and we'll publish the editor's choice.

Use *Journey's* postal or email address (page 2) and let us know if you need the photo returned.

The best picture will win Kamahl's CD *Faith of our Fathers*.

Runner-up will receive the stories and activities anthology for young teens *Grow under the Southern Cross*.

Entries close 12 September 2008.

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Closing the gap: generation "why"

By Phil Smith

FIFTEEN TO Twenty-five-year-olds seem to have a standard response to every question: "Yeah, whatever."

Generation Y seems to have reinvented the 'Generation Gap', a term first used as a headline in *Time Magazine* in 1967.

"No western metropolis today lacks a discotheque or espresso joint, a Mod boutique or a Carnaby shop. No transistor is immune from rock'n'roll, no highway spared the stutter of Hondas." (*Time Magazine* 6 January 1967)

There were two generations in a world without iPhones and Facebook friends.

Today there are five identifiable generations and the Rolling Stones' biggest fans are in retirement villages.

Our community includes post-war builders, boomers and generations X, Y and Z.

Baby Boomers took us from Kombi vans to Winnebago motor homes, Gen Y brought us blogging, texting, twittering and MySpace.

Wikipedia (another Gen Y concept) defines Generation Y as the cohort of individuals born between 1980 and 1994.

They are shaped by the events and developments of their time.

The Internet becoming a mainstream communications network, September 11 and the most recent Iraq War are among their defining moments.

Instant global personal communication is a hallmark.

What is the comparison with the generations that founded the Uniting Church and their response to events and developments of that time?

In the early 1970s environmental issues, military conflict, economic downturn, and political change featured at the end of a conservative era.

Hippies, surfers, Jesus Freaks and other tribes developed.

Education and travel were portrayed as being about personal discovery.

Land rights, the Vietnam war, apartheid

and the Franklin River were issues worth marching and bleeding for.

Within the church the charismatic movement blossomed. New forms of music joined fresh styles of worship. House churches and new communities of faith began to grow.

At first glance there appears to be little equivalent passion from Generation Y in response to global migration, the war on terror, homelessness and the Murray River crisis.

Large numbers of young Christians are drawn to doctrines of prosperity and visible signs of wealth and 'blessing'.

Many secular commentators portray a generation for whom tertiary education is about career, travel is about status, and play about prestige. The trappings of life appear to outweigh its meaning.

Rev Dr Philip Hughes does not see them that way.

The author of *Putting Life Together: Findings from youth spirituality research*, warns against taking an overly rosy view of the Baby Boomers' era.

"I think the early 70s were an age of rebellion that arose as a generation realised that the traditions that had been handed on to them were not necessarily right.

"There was a huge amount of experimentation to identify what might work for life.

"Part of this rebellion was the anti-Vietnam protests and, for large numbers, the rejection of religion.

"There was a lot of experimentation with drugs - and with living in communes. Some of it had a spiritual dimension - and some of it was anti-spiritual."

Dr Hughes identified an intensity that was not passed on from the Baby Boomers.

"When I compare Gen Y with their parents I find that Gen Y do not have the same intensity of feeling about a lot of these things."

He said the militant anti-faith movements



Photo courtesy by www.nelshael.com

of the 60s and 70s have faded, but so too have the alternative spirituality 'movements' that excited many flower power children.

While spirituality isn't a high priority, research indicates 80 per cent of current 15 to 25-year-olds are attracted to a spiritual dimension in life.

"Many young people do try meditation and yoga, but very few become Buddhists or Hindus," reported Dr Hughes.

"There is a widespread feeling that being extremely religious is a bad thing. It is the passionately religious people who are causing the problems in the world."

His findings indicate that almost all young people agree that the most central thing in life is enjoying it.

"About 10% are attracted to the certainty offered by one of the conservative religious

groups, whether Pentecostal, Catholic, or whatever.

"Very few see the Uniting Church as offering much. It is too dominated by the elderly. It does not have the attraction of the certainty offered by some other groups.

"It is too cognitively oriented rather than oriented to the experiential aspects of faith.

"Very few young people (apart from young immigrants) go to church out a sense of duty or identifying with 'their' community.

"They will go if they see that it offers something to them that they consider helpful in life."

Don't worry about blogging, twittering, texting and Wikipedia.

Generation Z will have new gadgets! And a generation's faith journey isn't defined by technology.

Every family has a story



Kenmore Uniting Church members Mavis Pearse and Fran Kohler look in to their family trees.
Photo by Andrew Langford

THIS MONTH the Kenmore Uniting Church is celebrating its historic connections with the community and the links that go back through generations.

The congregation offers significant resources in both property and people as gifts to the local community.

Church Councillor Fran Kohler said, "For the last three years in September, we have run an Arts and Craft Day of displays and workshops, presented mainly by groups who rent our Community Centre, and a local history display in conjunction with the local history group.

"This year we are focusing on the importance of family connections and encouraging people to share their stories."

400 people came through the doors at previous events.

This September the congregation will celebrate the family.

Father's Day will be a special day with people bringing photos of their families, especially Dads, over different generations.

The service will also include a hymn written

by two members of the congregation called *Tell the Next Generation*.

On Saturday 13 September the church will work together with the Genealogical Society of Queensland to present a Family History Day.

With the catchcry 'Every family has a story', the event will be a practical day about helping preserve family history using everything from computer software to scrapbooks.

The major presentations will be from congregation member Mavis Pearse who will guide people on how to use Australian and migration records and Les McFadden, ex-President of the Genealogical Society of Queensland, giving specialty sessions on researching Scottish and military records.

There will be a small charge and the traditional sausage sizzle will feed the crowds.

For more details visit www.kenmore.ucaweb.com.au or phone Mavis on 3378 0354 or Fran on 3378 1570

NCYC Pioneers

IN THE early 1950's, as the Billy Graham era dawned, a new means of evangelism was developing around the world - radio and television combined with large scale conferences.

In Australia Rev Alan Walker was appointed to lead a "Mission to the Nation" and a National Christian Youth Convention was planned for Sydney in 1955.

In January 2009 the tradition continues as thousands of young people and a few of their pioneering forebears converge on Melbourne for yet another NCYC.

The first NCYC was held in the Sydney Showground.

There were no souvenir T-shirts but the memorabilia included '78 records.

As NCYC09 gears up in Melbourne *Journey* has tracked down Uniting Church members who were at the original event, some of whom will be back in January 2009.

Bill Chandler was a lad from Ballarat who caught trams and trains to go via Melbourne for what he described as a great adventure.

"I was billeted with a family in Bankstown

from where I travelled every day to the Sydney Showground," he said.

"There was a great buzz of excitement and a great sense of anticipation. The main meetings were led by Rev Alan Walker and a visiting American scholar Roy Smith, a learned, wise and skilled communicator.

"Other memories include a bus trip to the Jenolan Caves and a street march through central Sydney with 2000 young people led by the ministers involved in the convention.

"The final night was a climax of music and drama.

"It was all a memorable experience and one that challenged me to live and contribute to life within the framework of the Church.

"Through Rev Walker's approach to Christianity, particularly as caring for the unloved and the outcast had a profound impression on me, I resolved to 'live justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God'.

"I am returning to NCYC again having been an adult volunteer in Ballarat, Canberra and now Melbourne and this time our son Paul and his wife Carolyne will be part of the

organising team and our two young grandsons are registered for the Children's Program. The cycle continues."

Val Baxter was 19 at that first NCYC. Mrs Baxter now worships at The Pines congregation on the Gold Coast.

"I can remember the excitement of being with Christian young people from other parts of Australia. That was quite overwhelming, really terrific. It was certainly a growth experience in my faith," she said.

"I had made a real dedication of my life a few years before that and it was a real encouragement.

"The four of us who travelled together have maintained those friendships over the years.

"The other girl with us was my bridesmaid when I got married later that year."

Frank Rose is a self-confessed hoarder. Mr Rose kept his copy of the original program.

His congregation of Camperdown has a fifty year tradition of fund raising to sponsor young people to the Convention.

"I think it probably made me think afresh about my faith, because I was 24 and already

heavily involved with Christian Endeavour, Sunday School, youth work and so forth," he said.

"You could call it a milestone. It was a significant event.

"For today's young people, go by all means. It's a great experience to meet with so many other people of similar age and involvement in the church.

"I think they need some significant event like that to help cement their faith."

Frank Rose and Val Baxter at The Pines Uniting Church on the Gold Coast in August. Many friendships from NCYC 1955 have stood the test of time. Photo courtesy of Val Baxter



Faith in the face of the finale

By Mardi Lumsden

FROM ANGER to acceptance, there is no right way to react when you have been told you or a loved one has a terminal illness.

In the face of that reality, faith is one of the aspects of life that often comes to the surface.

Linda McWilliam is a palliative care chaplain at the Wesley Hospital in Brisbane.

She said while people deal with the realisation of terminal illness very differently, not all people confront issues of death.

"They still hold on to the hope that there is going to be some miracle or something is going to change.

"I think the people who deal with it in that way don't examine their faith as much as those who are stunned and shocked by the diagnosis, who haven't really paid much attention to their spiritual journey.

"When they actually get to know somebody who offers to support them in that way, who isn't intrusive, they begin to ask some questions or even begin to accept the nature of spiritual care.

"Sometimes the religious barriers get broken down and people begin to form a relationship and then begin to explore things like prayer or blessing."

Rosalyn Smaill is the Uniting Church ministry agent in Toogoolawah, Esk and Moore as well as a Blue Care chaplain for the Alkira Aged Care facility in the Brisbane Valley.

Ms Smaill said some of the aged care residents are very aware of the time they have left.

"They are all very conscious of the fact that their days are limited," she said.

Being the chaplain in such a place gives her contact with many people who may otherwise avoid spiritual care.

Ms Smaill visited one resident in hospital after a bad turn. The patient had said she did not want to be visited by a minister of her denomination.

"As I'm a pastor and I had spent quite a bit of time with her I didn't feel that exclusion included me," she said.

"She said to me... she was afraid of dying because she knew she was going to hell.



Wesley Hospital palliative care chaplain Linda McWilliam with patient Margaret Chapman. Photo by Osker Lau

"I prayed the Lord's Prayer with her and when we had finished she said, 'God doesn't want anything to do with me'. And I said 'But you just asked him for forgiveness didn't you?' She said 'yes', and I said, 'you meant it?' And she said 'yes'.

"So I said God had forgiven her and the change in that lady was absolutely remarkable.

"She lived for another three to four months and she turned in to a real evangelist.

"If any of the staff were grumbling she would tell them they should be thanking God that they had another day on this earth, that it

was a wonderful gift he had given them.

"She was thanking God for every day that he gave her from that point on."

Ms Smaill does not see the aged care residents differently from the members of her congregations.

She listens and supports them all.

"I have as much likelihood, I guess, of losing someone in the congregation as losing someone from Alkira because we don't know what tomorrow is going to bring.

"Each time I am with a person I endeavour to encourage them."

Ms McWilliam said the spiritual searching

of a dying person often inspires or encourages family members to look at their own lives when faced with the reality of death.

"For people who haven't had a faith background or haven't thought much about God... having somebody who forms a relationship with them that is comfortable, they begin to explore their understanding of God and what that might mean for them," said Ms McWilliam.

"At times it flows on to the family as well. They begin to see the work that the dying person is doing and they begin to feel the peace."

God giving him time to finish

By Bruce Mullan

IN OCTOBER 2000 Senior Solomon Islands Minister Rev Aaron Bea underwent nine hours of major surgery for bowel cancer and was given only two years to live.

Eight years later he is still alive and completing his life work of translating the Old Testament into his native Roviana language.

Describing the operation and his continuing good health as "God's miracle in my life", Mr Bea praises God for the extra years he has been given.

"Even though I have this plastic bag on my body I will do the service to translate the Word of God in my mother tongue," he said.

Now 66 years of age, Mr Bea was born at Munda in the Solomon Islands the son of a major chief who was a Christian.

Christianity had only come to the area in 1902 thanks to the Rev Francis Goldie from Australia.

Mr Bea started his working life as a clerical assistant and news reporter in the Solomon Islands Public Service until 1971 when he experienced the call of God on his life and entered training for the ministry at Raronga Theological College in Papua New Guinea.

He described his appearance at the Theological College as "a great surprise for the principal" because he only had a Grade Four education.

It may also have been because of what Mr Bea describes as his "criminal days".

"I had been convicted five times, for fighting and for drunk and disorderly," he said.

"The Lord Jesus said, 'My son, it is enough for you to enjoy this life, I want you now to pack up and follow me'."



Translator Rev Aaron Bea with his beloved Bible. Photo by Bruce Mullan

Mr Bea's service as a minister in many parts of the Solomon Islands was complemented by a short period with the Wangaratta Parish of the Uniting Church in Victoria in 1978.

He is something of a linguist, speaking eight languages fluently plus a bit of Japanese, a factor which has obviously been helpful in his translation work.

Working four days every week translating by hand or on a primitive typewriter, Mr Bea labours steadily on the task between other interests.

He serves as Chaplain to the local Scouts and Chairperson of the Kokeqolo Kindergarten.

A former Youth Director of the Solomon Islands, he still teaches a weekly Bible Class for almost fifty high school students, preparing them for confirmation.

Mr Bea works from various English Old Testament translations and then translation supervisors go back to the Hebrew to check the accuracy of his work.

The New Testament has been translated and revised since the early 1900s and the last publication in the Roviana language sold out very quickly – there weren't enough printed.

Mr Bea is currently working

on 1 and 2 Chronicles but found Job and Deuteronomy the most difficult to translate in to the Roviana language.

His favourite part of the Old Testament is Ezekiel.

"There are many, many things that Ezekiel was talking about that are similar to our culture today," he said.

Wycliffe Bible Translation field workers Jim and Carolyn Mudge from the United States have been providing oversight for the Roviana translation project.

"We are about 97 per cent complete," Mr Mudge said.

"We expect to be ready to print what the Bible Society calls the shorter Old Testament by about December this year."

"We're keen that the people get the scriptures back in their hands and keep it in use."

Each week the team sits with a volunteer group of local speakers and goes through the next part of the translation verse by verse until they are sure that the grammatical forms are accurate and it reads well in the local language.

"We do a meaning check and an exegetical check."

"Roviana grammar is quite different to English and if you don't get the translation correct it can be

PA PINODALAENA SIPU
TAVETIA TAMASA SA
MANAURU, MEKE NA
PEPESO. (ZENESISI 1:1)

In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.

a bit confusing," Mr Mudge said.

Mr Bea is a little sad that people are now using English and Pidjin rather than local languages but feels that the Roviana Bible translation will help keep his first language alive.

Moderator of the United Church in Solomon Islands Rev David Barakana Havea agreed.

"When the Bible is translated into Roviana it will help all the new generations understand the traditional words," he said.

Mr Havea also sees the translation work as a service by the United Church to other Roviana speaking Christian groups in the Western Province.

"If Roviana people have access to the whole Bible they can see how the prophecies and the stories relate to the New Testament."

Mr Bea knows he is close to finishing his task.

"I believe that God will continue to help me to continue the work in this project Roviana Bible translation work before God takes me to his glory."

The Christian athlete

Musings on faith and the Olympics from Rev Perry Smith

THE OLYMPIC Games were first recorded in BC776 in Greece with a "religious" origin, being dedicated to Zeus, with high standards of clean and fair conduct.

However, they so deteriorated that Emperor Theodosius abolished them in AD 393.

In 1896 they were revived at Athens and, except for the war years, have been held every four years.

The flame is carried from Greece to the chosen Games location.

It reminds me of the "Gospel Flame" mentioned in some hymns and in the Church history book

The Spreading Flame about the missionary expansion around the world.

The flag is so familiar with its five interlocking coloured rings.

Christians have their flag/symbol too and we sing "Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim".

The fellowship of athletes from many nations is special, drawn by their love of sport and being pledged to their rules to compete in peace and friendship, stimulating each other to achieve their best.

True Christians know a rich unity in faith and fellowship, being



Photo by Christophe Libert

"all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28) and this is also celebrated in many fine hymns and songs.

The fitness and physique is vital, involving long preparation and training; a challenge for Christians too.

"Honour God with your body" has many implications for us in personal habits, what we take into our bodies and what we do with our bodies.

Let us look at each Olympic motto, significant for athletes and for Christians too.

'Ever faster' - being set to break records.

Sometimes we are too casual and fail our Lord in "running the race".

'Ever higher' is a high jumper's aim as the bar is gradually raised.

Christians also have to aim high spiritually, an upward call in Christ to maturity, rising above sin.

Initially by nature we have "all sinned and fall short of the glory

of God" (Romans 3:23) but we are constantly called to rise above it, pressing onwards and upwards.

'Ever stronger' challenges the human muscles.

Samson is remembered as the strong man of the Old Testament but he was morally and spiritually weak. The Bible often urges Christians to draw on the divine strength available in Christ.

The Greek word for the Olympic Games is "agon" (note our word "agonise") which is also found 14 times in the New Testament, variously translated as: strive, athlete, fight and race.

It is also challenging to see it used in Luke as the earnest prayer of Jesus, and in Colossians as a Christian's prayer.

Another Greek word "athleo" comes in II Timothy as "athlete" and in Hebrews as "hard struggle" or "great contest".

The lifestyle of a Christian athlete includes regular worship,

fellowship, prayer, and Bible study, resulting in witness and service to our community.

Rev Perry Smith is a retired minister in Belmont, NSW

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Research on attitudes to Indigenous Australians and reconciliation

VIKI ASHFORD is undertaking her Psychology (Honours) dissertation research on Uniting Church members' attitudes towards indigenous Australians and reconciliation in Australia.

If you wish to participate by completing an online questionnaire contact wiki_ashford@hotmail.com.

More information available at http://www01.csumain.csu.edu.au/psysurveys/va_survey/default.html

Music to your ears

By Phil Smith

DO YOUR eyes still light up when you recall the thunder of a Wesley hymn raising the rafters at Albert Street church in the 1950s?

This writer remembers adults shaking their heads when we began using choruses from *Scripture in Song* at Aitkenvale Methodist church in 1974.

They muttered about "Jesus songs" and "ditties" from the brown book.

Lately my children are amazed that my congregation uses Hillsong material that "must be at least two years old!"

In the Church, as in the wider culture, music is a great reflector of generational change.

The formation of the Uniting Church coincided with guitars coming home from youth camp and appearing in Sunday worship.

Psalms and other scriptures were being sung in Good News English.

We didst not speak like King James thus our praises were no longer sung forth in such manner!

Now a broadcaster, author and university lecturer, Rev Dr Andrew Dutney was a touring singer/songwriter and Karana Downs minister Rev Ian Smallbone's band *Family* was making it big.

Kirwan's pastor Peter Ireland was one of the coolest guitarists in North Queensland.

It was a time of a few 'Christian' LP records and many dodgy cassette copies.

The late great Larry Norman asked, "Why should the devil have all the good music?"

Rock and Roll caught up with religion along with hippy haircuts and sandals.

Another more gravelly voice joined the chorus. From a background that included the Mamas and Papas, Broadway's *Hair* and folk music legend status, Barry McGuire encountered Jesus in the early Seventies.

Eve of Destruction

By Barry McGuire

20 Inspirational Classics

Digital Audio Technologies Australia

Ian Smallbone reviewed a compilation of Barry McGuire's music for Journey, recalling that time of generational change.



I FIRST met Barry McGuire in I'm guessing 1974 when we found ourselves sharing the stage on a low key national tour with the man himself and his good friend and mentor, Bible teacher Winkie Pratney.

We couldn't help but be impressed by Barry's humility, joy and love for life.

He certainly would not have been earning anything like what he would have been capable of on the secular circuit.

Not precocious or demanding in the slightest degree, he went with the flow and was a great servant and encourager.

He was quite adamant in those days that he would only sing 'Jesus' songs... "Why would a Christian want to sing any other sort?"

It seems like since then he's been popping up all over the place in the local and national media, most recently on ABC Television's *Spicks and Specks*, still larger than life.

Barry McGuire achieved international recognition for his recording *Eve of Destruction*, described on the cover notes of the compilation album bearing the same name as a "pessimistic, apocalyptic commentary on the fearful world of possible nuclear annihilation... probably the most pessimistic song

to ever top the charts on both sides of the Atlantic".

'Destruction' is reprised briefly and somewhat more gently than I remember on this latest compilation which brings together the songs of *Seeds* and *Lighten Up*, two albums that marked McGuire's conversion to Christ in the early 70s.

The sense of apocalypse of another kind is never far away in most of the songs that follow.

The bluesy 'Last Dayz Waltz' features the lyric "If you want to read about tomorrow today - it's all there in God's Word"; in 'Pay the Piper', "some are going to go with Jesus and some will go alone".

'Callin' Me Home', a bluesy piano ballad showcases the full McGuire range - vocally - a low and sweet F - and more characteristically, dynamically.

'Don't blame God' adopts a different prophetic genre with a challenge about "million dollar churches but no one's on their knees."

If you're a Barry McGuire fan and all your recordings are on vinyl, this CD is probably for you.

It is a very listenable collection of songs that established Barry McGuire as one of the most effective and popular singers of the Jesus movement.



Barry McGuire will be 'Trippin' the Sixties' with the Byrds' John York in Australia in November.

Photo courtesy of 'Trippin' the Sixties'. www.trippinthesixties.com

The music that flowed from that conversion is considered among the most influential in contemporary Christian music.

In November Australian youngsters of the seventies will flock to hear the now 71-year-old, whose world number one hit has just been re-released.

In the protest anthem 'Eve of Destruction' Barry McGuire asked the big questions of the war, poverty, nuclear arms and pollution.

The song found its way into

Christian music in a way that connected faith with the realities of life.

Barry McGuire and John York (of The Byrds) will tour Australia with their show 'Trippin' the Sixties'.

Mr McGuire insists it's no mere nostalgia trip.

The music and lyrics that caused a generation to stop and think, also helped forge faith for some.

"It's just taking a trip through the 60s.

"Actually, it's not nostalgic," he said.

"It's taking the songs and the truth that was in those songs from the 60s and bringing them into the present moment.

"Living the truth now. It's not going back to the 60s, it's pulling the 60s into the present moment.

"I still sing 'Eve of Destruction', not to go back, but because the song is more valid today than it was in 1965 when I first recorded it."



Brian Whitlock, Bob Heathwood, Lewis Born and Ron Elvery (front right) served as Methodist probationers in Blackall. Ron Wallace (front centre) was a Presbyterian probationary minister. Ron Smith (front left) was the Superintendent based in Longreach. Photo by Fred Jones

Blackall welcomes back their 'young' men

MORE THAN half a century ago the Central West Mission was a place where the Methodist and Presbyterian churches sent probationary ministers to be tried and tested. And they were.

Six of those, now not so young, men returned in August with a busload of well wishers to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Uniting Church building in Blackall.

In the 1950s the congregation spent three years making bricks for the current building, to replace a corrugated iron hall built in 1913.

Theirs was the first brick building erected on the infamous black soil of the town.

Today Rev Peter Aay is based in Barcaldine, driving hundreds of kilometres to also serve in Alpha, Jericho and Blackall.

"There is no adventure left," Mr Aay marvelled at his predecessors.

"Straight from training in the city, it seemed like sink or swim, and each one commented on how the local church members cared for them."

One of the organisers, Meryl Gibson, commented on how much fun was had during the anniversary dinner.

"Those ministers told such wonderful stories and as each one finished another would say, 'Now I'll tell you what really happened!' It was a very happy night," she said.

Mr Aay said worship recalled much of God's faithfulness in the work of his people.

"Telling the story was almost a kind of communion," he said. "Do this, and remember."

The Rule of St. Benedict: ora et labora. How does this 1500-year-old monastic Rule speak to us today? Trish Pantton, International Coordinator of the WCCM Benedictine Oblate Community, will be the guest speaker at our Community Day for the Australian Christian Meditation Community. Trish will explore the essence of the Rule as it applies to our everyday life. All are welcome.

Saturday 13th September at the hall of St Peter Chanel Church, 41 Chaprow Rd, The Gap.

9:30 - 2:30. Morning tea served at 9:30am. Please bring a plate for a shared lunch.

Donation at the door.

Enquiries:
Gabby Nelson
(07) 3711 4227
toga@bigpond.net.au



WHAT'S ON

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 1, 10.15am. Synod Fellowship Annual Service at Beenleigh Uniting Church. Guest Speaker Phil Smith, well-known ABC radio presenter. Subject 'God's powerful communications with us, and our response'. Morning tea from 9.30am, BYO lunch. All are invited to share in this inspirational worship and fellowship. Offering to assist with fuel costs for Frontier Services Patrol Padres. Contact Keith Lawson on 3203 1788 or kclawson@gotalk.net.au.

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

September 4-12, 7pm. The Call, a new musical by Tony Pitman with music by Naomi Matheson, Eric Woodrow, Scott McClement and David MacGregor. Premieres at Indooroopilly Uniting Church. The key theme is raised in James 1:19-23: Listening is better than speaking, but listening without action is ignoring the message. For more information visit www.thecallmusical.com. For bookings call 3878 9535 or 0409 628 102, or email tony@thecallmusical.com. Adult \$19, Child/Conc \$10, Family \$40. Suitable for all ages. All profits will be donated to Lifeline Brisbane.

September 7. Walk to Church Sunday. Walk, cycle, catch the bus or car pool to church for the sake of the planet and its people. For more information visit www.socialissues.ucaweb.com.au or contact Synod Justice and International Mission Advocate Andrew Johnson on 3377 9911 or andrew.johnson@ucaqld.com.au.

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

September 13, 7.30pm. Bacon Sandwiches and Salvation with Adrian and Bridget Plass. Meet the UK's funniest evangelists at Hume Ridge Church of Christ, Hume Road Toowoomba. Contact jeff@couttsjr.com.au or book at any Koorong store.

September 21, 12.30pm. Camp Constable 40th Anniversary at Mount Glorious. A Camp Constable open day and you are invited to come and inspect the facilities or renew old camping memories. A BBQ lunch provided at a small cost or bring your own picnic lunch. For more information or to book for lunch contact Bev Adams on 33002285 or bevadams@dovenetq.net.au.

September 28. Social Justice Sunday. Every congregation has received the Social Justice Sunday Resources. For more information visit www.socialissues.ucaweb.com.au or contact Synod Justice and International Mission Advocate Andrew Johnson on 3377 9911 or andrew.johnson@ucaqld.com.au.

September 30, 10am. Meeting of all Retired Ministers, Spouses and Widowed Members at the Gap Uniting Church 1050 Waterworks Rd, The Gap, for Brisbane and surrounding areas group. Morning tea available from 10am and Lunch from noon. \$13.50 pp. Guest Speaker is Rev Robert Bos, Director, Pilgrim Learning Community. Contact Jim and Jill Tame on 3891 6462 or jnjtame@bigpond.net.au.

October 9, 6pm. Contemporary Art and Worship Lecture. Rev Dr Tom Elich will offer a free illustrated lecture at the Francis Rush Centre next to the Cathedral of St Stephen in Elizabeth Street Brisbane. For more information contact Molly Moore on mollyjon@tpg.com.au.

October 25, 5.30pm. 1000 Men Barbecue at Northside Christian College, Flockton St Everton Park. A BBQ and a night of fun for 1000 blokes. Book your men's group in now to hook up with men's fellowships from other churches. Special guest David Murrow, author of *Why Men hate Going to Church*. \$10, includes gourmet BBQ. Send numbers to Phil Smith 3882 3490 or phil.smith@ucaqld.com.au

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

Christian meditation community news

THERE ARE over 130 Christian Meditation groups in Queensland that meet weekly in churches and associated buildings, spirituality centres and private homes.

John Main established an ecumenical Christian Meditation Community in 1975.

In 1977 he and Dom Laurence Freeman laid the foundation of a global community.

The World Community for Christian Meditation (WCCM) was formed in London in 1991 and is now led by Dom Laurence and a Guiding Board of international members.

The community exists to communicate and nurture meditation as taught by John Main for the unity of all.

The practice of Christian meditation is based on our Christian faith that 'the kingdom of God is within us' and that 'the Spirit of Jesus lives within us pleading on our behalf to the Father.'

Benedictine monk John Main revived the ancient Christian tradition of meditating on a single sacred phrase or mantra.

He believed that 'prayer is the life of the Spirit of Jesus within one's heart'.

In meditation we enter more deeply into the space within and experience the love of God already present in our hearts.

For more information visit www.wccm.org or www.christianmeditationaustralia.org or contact Gabby Nelson on 3711 4227 or toga@bigpond.net.au



Farewell for Kallangur

A FAITHFUL few marked the end of an era that saw thousands worship in the community church building at the Marsden Youth Centre in Kallangur, north of Brisbane.

Built in the 1930s by Frederick Marsden and given to the community, the Congregational and then Uniting Church building served as a place of worship until the mid 1990s.

Rev Evan Stenlake led a short decommissioning service in mid August.

Photo by Phil Smith

Calling fans of musical theatre

THE CALL is a new musical written and directed by Tony Pitman.

Journey readers may have last seen Mr Pitman's work performed at the 2006 Assembly meeting, when Chris and Sue Chapman performed *DA in VINCIBLE CODE*.

Music is directed by Rev David MacGregor, whose music will already be familiar to many.

Mr MacGregor has also written five of the songs for the musical, sharing the responsibility with songwriters Naomi Matheson, Scott McClement and Eric Woodrow.

The style of the music is eclectic, seamlessly joining styles such as ragtime, rock, adult contemporary, techno and country.

The musical's story leaps between two troubled communities: Third Monkey Inc, a phone helpline (which embraces Polonius' philosophy to the extreme), and their clients, who daily unload their fears to the anonymous, completely silent operators.

The Call runs from 4-13 September at Indooroopilly Uniting Church.

For more information visit www.thecallmusical.com



The Spare Room

By Helen Garner
Text Publishing (2008)
RRP \$29.95

The Spare Room is quite unforgettable.

Described as Helen Garner's 'first work of fiction in 15 years', *The Spare Room* is part memoir, part psychological thriller.

It describes three weeks in Helen's life in suburban Melbourne, during which she takes in her Sydney friend Nicola who is dying from cancer.

Nicola seems to be a recognisable figure of someone from a privileged background who is charmed by alternative healers, new age philosophies and the magnetic field of her own theatrical personality.

Of course solitude is her greatest enemy - even greater than her disease - as Nicola tries on a Northern Beaches-meets-Nimbin mask of almost aggressive optimism.

This performance of denial and distraction pushes all of Helen's buttons, as she tries to find hard evidence in the chaos of (very) alternative health interventions, physical decay, and the sleepless routine of laundry, cooking, negotiating and care-giving. Helen needs to know that there is meaning in this suffering and in the unexpected devotion she finds within herself to care for such an infuriating friend.

The struggle for meaning climaxes in an angry - and

surprisingly funny - confrontation with Nicola and those professions which are prone to exploit a patient's despair and confusion about terminal illness.

At one point Helen describes anger as her 'default position' and the glance of an intervening doctor as being 'fiercely intelligent'.

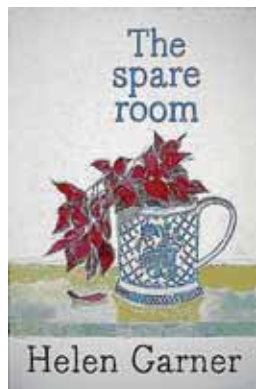
This is an amazing book in which the 'spare room' comes to represent the unconscious part of ourselves which we dare to open to others in times of crisis.

Ms Garner has invited us into her interesting world and left us a wonderful gift to take with us when we leave.

Though difficult and painful *The Spare Room* is satisfying and beautiful.

One of the best works of fiction or reflection I've read this year.

Reviewed by Mark Young, a long time reviewer for *Journey*



Where Underpants Come From

By Joe Bennett
Simon & Schuster (2008)
RRP \$29.95

If the title gets you in, you won't be disappointed.

Joe Bennett is a travel writer from New Zealand and a very clever bloke.

His previous books include *Love, Death, Washing-Up, etc* and *Fun Run and Other Oxymorons*.

Mr Bennett always chooses interesting destinations, in this case China, but the hook is how he gets you started on the journey.

Unlike Gavin Young or Michael Palin, Mr Bennett is more concerned with the motivation for travel rather than the mode of transport.

Mr Bennett was driving home from a two-dollar-shop in Auckland with a multi-pack of undies when he began wondering how anyone, from the cotton farm to the cash register, could have made a profit from his new jocks.

So began his journey to China.

If, like Mr Bennett, you really knew next to nothing about China before the Olympics (and the coverage didn't really correct that), *Where Underpants Come From* is a brilliant introduction.

The writer takes a whimsical idea, starting with the bar code on his pack of smalls, and follows the trail all the way through suburban Shanghai factories to a cotton field on the border with Afghanistan.

Along the way he shows readers the next world super power and introduces much of what shapes China.

Mr Bennett points out that aside from the past 200 years China has in fact shaped the world for 2000 years.

The rest of us just didn't realise.

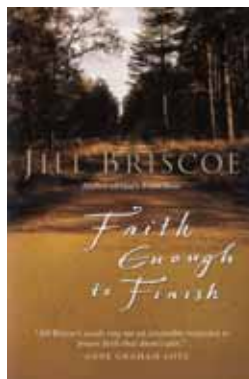
The civilisation that gave Italy pasta and brought us gun powder now makes everything from your DT's to your PC.

This is a sharp writer with a great premise and a travel yarn well spun.

Reviewed by Phil Smith, *Journey* guest writer



REVIEWS



Faith Enough to Finish

By Jill Briscoe
Monarch Books USA (2008)
RRP \$21.95

This well-known author gives us another glimpse into her own spiritual journey, this time through the books of Lamentations and Jeremiah the prophet.

Sometimes called "the weeping prophet", Ms Briscoe relates for us how Jeremiah's words of faith help us to face tough times such as bereavement, retirement, redundancy or any other tragedy which strikes us in life.

She brings his words to us in a way that touches us right where we are in our walk, stressing that God is enough for any situation.

She lays bare her own doubts, discomforts and challenges through the 180 pages.

In 10 chapters with headings such as 'Faith in God's plan', 'Faith in God's word', and 'Faith in God's refreshment', Ms Briscoe teaches us to appreciate the faith walk of Jeremiah's indomitable scribe Baruch as well as the prophet himself.

She asks the question, "What gave them faith enough to finish against all odds?"

Ms Briscoe suggests we must begin by having faith enough to start, to realise our calling whatever our age or circumstances, but she also shows us how we can finish well.

Most of all, *Faith Enough to Finish* directs us to the hope that God gives us despite the challenges this twenty-first century throws at us.

Faith Enough to Finish is ideal for an individual but equally useful as a study guide for home groups and a competent discipling tool for churches.

At the end of each chapter are many suggestions for scripture reading, questions and prayer tools.

Written in an easy style, it has great depth and possibility for the reader to frequently "touch the hem of his garment".

Reviewed by Barb Bailey, a retired minister living in Caloundra

Revelation

By Third Day (CD)
Sony BMG / Essential Records (2008)
RRP \$21.95

Third Day is one of seemingly few American Christian bands trying to explore the eddies and edges of mainstream Christian faith expression.

Musically *Revelation* is largely what you'd expect from Third Day: thought provoking lyrics and punchy rock and roll typified in 'Slow Down'.

This reviewer thought he heard the band follow Jars of Clay's recent flirtation with a little swampy, down home blues. Was that a washboard in the background behind the banjo in 'Give Love'?

The music CD is only part of the *Revelation* project.

The band was inspired by Leonard Knight's Salvation Mountain a Californian public art site and mecca for seekers trying to express their experience of God's love.

It's a strange place on the fringe of the desert and 'normal' church.

If you launch the CD in a computer it will give an option to go straight to Third Day's videos and other content on the web.

Through the CD using their music as inspiration, Third Day is inviting seekers and believers to create their own artwork in response to God.

Stories, paintings, cartoons, music and videos will all be considered for posting online.

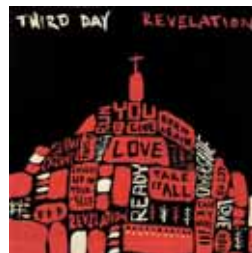
The idea is engaging and so is the music from a band that doesn't present formulaic religion.

"Take the first, take the last. Take the good and take the rest. Here I am, all I have. Take it all."

Revelation may be better suited to the car stereo and the iPod than the home stereo, but it's a good introduction to the music of a significant band.

Revelation is out now in all good record stores. If not in stock it can be ordered in.

Reviewed by Phil Smith, *Journey* guest writer



Organic Prayer: A Spiritual Gardening Companion

By Nancy Roth
Seabury books (2007)
RRP \$24.95



Organic prayer is defined by the author as "a metaphor both for my contemplation of God and for my attempt to live in harmony with God's creation".

Living in harmony with God's creation proved to be the author's attempt to listen, feel, touch, see the rhythm of an aspect of creation, learn from it, and, through that meditation, springboard her thoughts to Creator God, rather than a leaving of lighter footprints in the world.

In her first meditation on soil, Ms Roth says, "When I think about placing one foot in front of the other across the various terrains that have formed my life's geography, I cannot help but be filled with wonder simply that there is a world through which to move and I am alive in it."

Ms Roth draws on insights at times from Hildegard of Bingen, St. Francis and Teresa of Avila.

There are meditations on elements such as rocks, trees, seeds, pests and weed control, and she uses drawing and all our senses to approach her meditations.

I liked the illustration of listening by programming silence.

Ms Roth cites composer John Cage's orchestral work titled *4 minutes 33 seconds*, where the orchestra files on stage with their instruments and instead of playing becomes attuned to silence and to the softer sounds of the world usually missed while making music.

After 4 minutes and 33 seconds the orchestra then moves off stage without playing a note.

I enjoyed the section on meditating on the way of nature to use and reuse everything.

Organic Prayer also talks about using one's own garden as a series of prayer stations: the step outside the back door as a launch pad for thanking Creator God for the beauty beheld; marvelling at the diversity of Creator God through a flowerbed; yielding one's grievances and sorrows to God at the compost heap; delighting in the reality of resurrection at a newly sprouted seed and, seated, simply resting in God's presence.

Organic Prayer may appeal to people who are longing to pause and simply to be at one with God in creation.

Reviewed by Lesley May Holt, a rural minister in Crows Nest

PRAYER DIARY

14 September:
Kenmore
Uniting Church

We give thanks for the wonderful opportunities God has provided us for being an active church in the world.

Like many suburban congregations, Kenmore Uniting Church has excellent facilities but is facing the challenges of an ageing congregation.

During a period where no minister was in full-time placement we prayed for God to raise up leaders, that we might see the direction we were to be led and that we would learn to love each other.

We prayed for hope and opportunities to show others the love of Christ and to connect with our community.

Our prayers were also prayers of action as we continued with

our pastoral care of older frailer members and maintained a core of strong supporters and the pastoral care of those in need.

We re-committed ourselves to support projects for people in Timor and the sub-continent as well as building connections with the local community.

Last year we were trying to call a Minister of the Word, but were surprised to find that what matched our goals most closely was a Deacon with a passion for community and social justice.

This year we have found refreshment in the lay ministry of Pastor Heather den Houting and are delighted that she has accepted a call as our full-time minister next year.

Please pray for:

- the frail and aged people of the congregation
- our ministry to Iona

Retirement Village, hostel and nursing home

- the Khammam Old People's Home in India
- the Dhaka Ahsania Mission to prevent the trafficking of women and children in Bangladesh
- the Timor Children's Foundation
- Micah Challenge
- Jubilee Australia.

Pray we build connections with our local community through:

- support of local High School Chaplaincy
- the annual Trash and Treasure Sale which raises funds for overseas missions
- the Kids' Hope program at Kenmore South School, where we mentor children who need extra attention
- the annual Spring Event
- those community groups which lease out the Community Centre
- our card and games day which provides a time for community friendships and relationships
- the Music Lovers and

Mahjong programs which attract wide community interest and participation

- the people who will attend our Christmas Day lunch in 2008.

21 September:
Bribie Island
Uniting Church

We welcome you to our family Church.

We call ourselves a family church because we believe we are a loving, caring, supportive church that encourages its own members and others around us to grow in faith, strength and the Spirit of God.

We seek to offer the gifts of hope; kindness to those in grief or hurting; acceptance of those who are lost or lonely; and a relationship with Jesus that is everlasting.

Yes, we also have our trying times like any family, but we believe that if we live in the same grace of God then we can work it out together.

Together with God we

seek to bring wholeness to our congregation, our community and our world.

We invite you to pray for us, and our ministry on Bribie Island and the Sandstone Point/Ningi area that we might fulfil these objectives.

Please pray for our various activities:

- our Family Fun Night, a monthly event for families to come together and share in food, fun and fellowship
 - the Ladies Fellowship, a morning event for ladies to come together and share in food, information and fellowship
 - the Men's Working Group, a monthly get-together to share food, work and fellowship
 - the Lamington Drive, bi-monthly get-together to make food; work and fellowship
 - the Choir, a Friday morning for singing and fellowship.
- Also please pray for the activities we support:
- the School Chaplaincy at Bribie High, Bribie and Banksia Beach Primary Schools
 - prison ministry.

OPINION

By Geoff Thompson

THERE ARE two contemporary worship songs which I believe should not be sung.

Frequently topping the charts of Christian worship songs, they are emblematic of the contemporary church and its theology.

The songs are 'Shout to the Lord' and 'In Christ Alone'.

The problems – also found in traditional hymns – are theological.

'Shout to the Lord' begins with, 'My Jesus, my saviour'.

Isn't there something quite perverse about a crowd of Christians gathering together and all shouting 'My Jesus'?

Isn't it almost idolatrous to imply that Jesus is mine?

That the phrase 'my Jesus' sits so comfortably in today's church indicates a great gulf between the culture of contemporary worship and the New Testament understandings of Jesus.

Not once in the New Testament is Jesus ever referred to as either 'my Jesus' or 'my saviour', and only twice as 'my Lord'.

In comparison, 'Our Lord', 'Our Saviour' and 'Our Lord and Saviour' are used over 80 times.

Good biblical interpretation doesn't rest on statistics, but something is going on here.

And it is this: the early Christians' experience of Jesus was so profoundly communal that they instinctively spoke of him in corporate terms.

The great biblical scholar C.F.D. Moule once noted that the New Testament's emphasis on the corporate experience of Jesus was something genuinely new in the world of ancient religion.

It was part of Christianity's distinctiveness. So, those who blithely sing of 'my Jesus' might not have understood Christianity.

Of course personal confession of faith matters.

But it doesn't consist of giving a personal spin on the faith.

Baptismal candidates, for instance, are certainly asked to confess their personal faith.

They do so by joining in the congregations' confession of the Apostles' Creed – a recognition that we enter into a corporate wisdom and a collective experience of God that makes 'my faith' and 'my Jesus' look puny.

'In Christ Alone' invokes a crass satisfaction theory of Jesus' death: 'Till on that cross as Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied'.

Really? Was God full of pent-up wrath just waiting till Jesus was on that cross?

Asking such questions is not denying the centrality of Jesus' death to the gospel.



Rev Dr Geoff Thompson. Photo by Osker Lau

Nor is my objection driven by those (vastly overstated) modern sensibilities uncomfortable with any talk of sacrifice, redemption and salvation.

No, my objection is that the song misconstrues the New Testament itself.

Not once in the New Testament is it ever said that Jesus bore the wrath of God.

Yes, it said that Jesus died for us, and that he died as a sacrifice, and that he died for our sins.

Put together carelessly these references could well produce a satisfaction theory of Jesus' death – but only by ignoring the plot holding them together.

The New Testament consistently presents Jesus' death as restorative and life-giving rather than punitive and wrathful.

Theories of Jesus' death which are driven by ideas of divine punishment ignore Paul's pivotal claim: "God

was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2Cor5:19).

If Paul believed God's wrath was appeased by Jesus' death he would have said God was being reconciled to the world. But he didn't.

He said the opposite: the world was being reconciled to God.

The ancient world was familiar with 'gods' being appeased by this or that sacrifice.

Christianity turns that language on its head.

God doesn't need to be reconciled. He is the reconciler.

So, in singing of God's wrath being satisfied we might have reverted to pre-Christian ideas. We might be singing our praise to some other 'god'.

What we sing in worship deeply shapes our theology.

Can we, then, go on singing songs like these?

Their theological inadequacies are not trivial. They strike at core beliefs about Jesus Christ, the cross, and the nature of God.

Such songs risk doing terrible damage to the faith and theology of individuals and congregations.

These songs might be popular.

That doesn't mean that they should be sung.

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson is
Director of Studies in
Systematic Theology at
Trinity Theological College

28 September:
Maryborough
Uniting Church

Maryborough and the surrounding townships of Tiaro and Bauple are located in the Fraser Coast region and are a gateway to the coastal areas of Hervey Bay and Fraser Island.

Maryborough is one of Queensland's oldest provincial cities.

The area has a rich history and has a strong industrial and rural base and is popular with tourists.

There are two worship centres in Maryborough and one each at Tiaro and Bauple.

Uniting Care has a presence through Blue Care, a hospital, and provides part time Chaplaincy at the hospital and the Maryborough Correctional Centre.

The two city congregations are currently working towards worshipping in one centre and are earnestly seeking God's guidance on how this will unfold.

Whilst this will more than likely involve some rationalisation of current properties, we are seeking God's wisdom in becoming more missionally focussed in a whole range of areas of ministry.

Please pray for us as we listen to God in this difficult but exciting time of our journey together.

Please pray for Blue Care and the hospital and the ministry of the Chaplain to the hospital and the correctional centre.

Pray for the ministry team which includes all members of the congregations, and for our growing ministry to children and youth through Girls Brigade, Youth Group, and a new initiative for children in church in one of the congregations.

Give thanks for a wonderful God who not only loves us, but calls and equips us for sharing in the ministry of Jesus to our community and beyond.



Non violence leads the way for the church

Dudley Horscroft (August *Journey*) said Gandhi's large marches were intended to frighten the authorities.

Remember 'Shock and Awe' by the USA on Iraq where the Baghdad skies were lit up with gun fire and bomb blasts while thousands of innocent people including babies, women and pregnant mothers were being instantly killed by US bombing; hospitals, power stations, schools, houses and apartments flattened to the ground in quick succession and entire cities destroyed?

That my friend is called violence, not Gandhi's marches!

Mr Horscroft said Christians must take up arms if appropriate and if, in so doing, evil can be defeated. This theory is wrong on two accounts.

Firstly, there are only a very few military wars fought in history that have been won whilst all non-violent resistance movements in history without exception have been concluded with great success.

Gandhi's non-violence finally led to the end of British colonialism in India.

Mandala's resistance to apartheid finally ended white domination in South Africa.

Martin Luther King's passive resistance against black segregation finally led to black emancipation.

Bonhoeffer, one of the greatest ever, resisted Hitler fearlessly and above all Jesus' fight against evil led to the establishment of

the Christian church which has become one of the most powerful organisations for peace today.

None of these great men asked their followers to use violence against their enemies and yet they accomplished their missions with the greatest success without a drop of blood being shed by their followers.

To the contrary, great military dictators and war leaders in history have killed and maimed millions, destroyed entire cities but have not achieved any peace compared to their non violent counterparts.

Examples are Hitler's Germany, Bush's war in Iraq and the US's humiliating defeat in Vietnam, Pol Pot's violent campaigns and Mao's cultural purge.

These men killed and maimed millions and completely destroyed the enemy countries and races and yet achieved nothing.

They were comprehensively defeated; but at what cost?

Secondly, Mr Horscroft's theory is wrong on the ground that asking fallible men to judge a race, country and a people as being evil is completely inhuman and immoral.

A majority of good intentioned Germans believed that Hitler was right and the Jews were evil; Howard won massive support for saying that the refugees in leaking boats were a terrorist threat to society; Bush said Korea, Iran and so on are evil countries and war against them is justified; apartheid leaders said blacks are undesirable

LETTERS

to live with whites and in some countries the aborigines are considered a sub-human race not worthy of existence.

Had these men been given the power to judge and 'eliminate' these races, cultures, men and countries on the basis of their own judgement of what and who constitutes an evil, Afro-Americans would still be slaves, black Africans would still be dying in poverty and refugees would still be living and dying in refugee camps.

Thank God we have a gospel whose message of love and hope has repeatedly and overwhelmingly proved to be more powerful than all the military might put together and that history has clearly and unequivocally demonstrated the truth of this reality.

Derrick Fernando
Bracken Ridge

Sign of what time?

I notice that you regularly have a spot on page two featuring church signs.

Signs can be great at communicating a simple practical message but I have been musing lately on how comical they are when used to preach at passing motorists.

My favourite is the permanent sign: "Because there is Wrath Beware."

Perhaps this small nameless church worships a god of domestic violence!

Another church frequently changes their sign with punchy messages that are often meaningless to the uninitiated and display a depth of theological meaning befitting 6 words.

Though perhaps I shouldn't criticise too much as the sign writer may be divine.

The last message read, "I will return-Jesus".

I was guessing somebody took him or the person doing the signs has some grandiosity issues.

Another church had a sign "Jesus is your answer".

A variation is "Jesus is the answer to every question".

Though the message is heart warming to zealots I find it best to listen to someone's actual question and be their friend rather than bombarding them with banality.

Owen Ronalds
North Rockhampton

My favourite sign I have seen said: "Sign writer on holidays".
Ed

Men's Business

Are Mr Murrow and Phil Smith (August *Journey*) trying to say the obvious?

Yes, we are a patriarchal society and we have got it wrong, hopelessly wrong!

However, there is a growing awareness, thanks to psychological insights, that women can do it better.

Let's leave it at that before we make total fools of ourselves.

Len Notenboom
Elanora

History will decide

With reference to the article in *Journey* August 2008 regarding the opening of Wheller on the Park.

The article refers to the original opening of the precinct in 1936 as "Wheller gardens".

If the historians checked they would find it was opened as "The Garden Settlement" and was known as that and still fondly by that name for many years.

Mavis Rye
Fitzgibbon

Motor cross

How can Christian groups support the JC Epidemic with its glorification of motocross tricks? (August *Journey*).

A whole healthy body is a gift from God, and yet these people glorify dangerous airborne feats on bikes as something wonderful.

The performers are clever and skilled yet one of them, Jim Bartle, was recovering from two broken shoulders, according to the *Journey* article.

How many young fellows are going to seriously maim or even kill themselves learning to do the same tricks?

Country kids are particularly vulnerable, having bikes at hand and plenty of space to practise, but a long way from an ambulance and a doctor usually.

I have protested to the authorities at the Ekka about motocross demonstrations - without result.

People say, "Oh they love doing it" but families and medical people have to look after them if they have an accident.

Again, part of the Christian message is that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and we are not free to damage them or risk damage just for "fun".

Yet good people join in the applause and enjoy a vicarious thrill as these young guys fly through the air, but at no cost to themselves.

"Jim Bartle encouraged Weipa youngsters to fly high in faith".

I hope he did not say he succeeded (what about the broken shoulders?) because he prayed and had faith he would not fail.

Let's give the youth challenges to faith that are not foolhardy and unnecessary, such as working voluntarily in third world countries, or helping on coffee vans for the homeless.

Gwenda Spencer
The Gap

Leaders watch your words

The need to closely monitor the words and actions of our church leaders, local and national, is demonstrated by the excesses of Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli.

Luther advocated drowning of handicapped children, Zwingli drowning for advocates of believer's baptism.

This should not detract from our appreciation of their major contributions to the Reformation.

Today, apparent success of leader dominated churches abound.

Closer scrutiny will often reveal that the devotees are highly vulnerable and lack theological maturity.

The 'Moses Model' rather than an understanding of the 'priesthood of all believers' appears to prevail.

A flourishing church will have leadership which recognises and fully utilises the giftedness of its people.

The consensus approach to church administration should not be lightly dismissed.

Ken Wakeling
Scarborough



Christmas Bowl supports the training program of the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) for home-based care givers and helps AIDS orphans. These are just two of the children assisted. Photo by Claude Ho

Celebrating 60 years of the Christmas Bowl

FOR SIXTY years churchgoers in Australia have been faithfully giving to the Christmas Bowl.

To celebrate this monumental occasion and continue to raise money for this year's Christmas Bowl, Queensland Churches Together are hosting a dinner on 4 October.

There will be live music, a quiz, and guest speaker Professor Kevin Clements, Director of the Australian Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Queensland.

The Christmas Bowl tradition began in Melbourne in 1948 when Rev Frank Byatt placed a bowl on the dinner table and asked his guests to give the cost of their meal to people who were in need, refugees and the sick.

The Christmas Bowl now helps bring hope through 44 programs in 22 countries including work in Australia with refugees and displaced people, and with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The principle is simple. Churches work together in Australia to gain support for projects run around the world.

The dinner costs \$70 or \$50 concession.

For bookings please contact Jela Virzi at Queensland Churches Together on 3369 6792 or admin@qct.org.au by 19 September



Have your say

Letters to the editor may be edited due to space limitations.

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JOURNEY asks...

How did a friendship become a faith milestone?

Don Whebell

Doug Kuskie was one of those people I can't ever forget.

He was obviously keen on what he was teaching us kids at Sandgate Sunday School.



He would engage us personally with interest in what we wanted to do with our lives.

I can't remember very much of his lesson material, but I can remember him - that person who was always there for us, always ready with a smile and joke.

He was always there when some things that troubled a young person needed some Christian wisdom that didn't just come out of a lesson book, but came from the heart of a guy in touch with God and people.

Sunday afternoons under his house were a blast.

He was a model railways fanatic, still is, and had a great little lathe.

Doug's patience, interest and chattiness gave me a person whose Christianity didn't just talk the talk, Doug walked the walk.

There was a generation gap, but no communication gap.

From that encouragement I sensed God's call on my life.

Fast-forward about 40 years. It was the service in St Stephen's Maryborough and I'm being inducted as Presbytery Minister of Mary Burnett Presbytery.

At that part of the service where people are invited forward to give a greeting to the newly-inducted, a tall, elderly guy appeared out of the congregation with "Hi! Remember me?"

The years rolled back in an instant. Then Doug said: "Mary and I have followed your ministry with our prayers". To say the least: a Wow Moment!

He's now 92 and living in a nursing home.

Since the Sandgate days, I've been in lots of places with lots of interesting people. A few from those years stand out, beginning with Doug, who got me going towards God.

And Mary and her scones gave some nourishing encouragement.

Within them both I sensed the presence of God. They were and are unforgettable companions on the journey.

Don Whebell is a retired minister and part-time lecturer at Trinity Theological College

Andrew Fox

I can still remember the day that I introduced Marge to a friend of mine as one of the most significant people in my Christian life.

For the first time I could remember since meeting Marge as my RE teacher back in primary school she was genuinely lost for words.

I don't think she had ever realised the enormous impact that she had on my coming to faith or, I'm sure, the faith of many others for that matter.

To say that I was deeply touched by her RE lessons would be to overstate the reality somewhat.

To be honest she probably had to spend more time asking me to stop talking and behave than actually getting to the meat of the lessons.

What really touched and spoke to me though was that whenever I saw her at the shops she always remembered my name (perhaps not such a difficult thing given how often I seem to recall her having to say it in class!) and always seemed happy to stop and talk.

When she and a faithful team of volunteers from the local Uniting Church would come and take care of the catering for our school music camps it always seemed that Marge and her team were never short of time or encouraging words.

Marge wasn't there in person when I came to faith as a teenager but as far as I was concerned she was there in spirit and when (in my twenties) I took the step of

confirmation, she was the first person I asked to pray with me during the service.

Recently I had the opportunity to return to my old church as a visiting preacher.

There, in the middle of the Sunday evening congregation (which she didn't usually attend) sat Marge with a grin from ear to ear that even after 35 years still makes me feel like God has time for me.



Andrew Fox is a member of the Kawana Waters Uniting Church ministry team, an aged care chaplain and a quiz show champion



Sarah Rothery is a member of Glebe Road Uniting Church and works in the Synod office

Sarah Rothery

Wow! I'm not sure if I could say that there was only one friendship over the past few years that has been a significant milestone in my walk with Christ.

I have been extremely blessed with a church community who have an amazing grasp on the idea of fellowship, support and encouragement.

I have come to realise that I have been blessed with some truly fantastic people in my life who find it difficult not to support you in times when you feel you are losing sight of the prize, God.

In saying that there are some absolutely special people without whom I certainly don't think I would be where I am today.

My husband for starters! Mark Rothery is not only my husband but also my best friend.

My faith journey started when I met Mark.

At the time I didn't have an understanding of what it meant to follow Christ. Mark has

continually encouraged and supported me throughout our relationship to believe in a God who loves me, to always seek God's love and to always pray for goodness for ourselves and others.

Mark has always been an example of how to share God's love. He has an amazing perspective and outlook toward others which is so admiring.

There is another friendship that is truly special to me. I don't want to embarrass her by putting her name in this, but she certainly knows who she is. We will refer to her as 'L'.

L has really contributed to my faith journey and a girl needs a great girlfriend in her life. If I ever need support or prayer, she is always there and I value our friendship greatly.

I thank both of these people in my life for always being there for me and always holding me accountable to my actions.

I love them both dearly and couldn't imagine walking this amazing journey without them.



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