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FAITH AND ANZAC DAY PAGE 11

A reflection

"For many Australians, Anzac Day is arguably the nearest thing to a holy day." **Phil Smith**

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A state under water

"They've been cut off completely and many want to know where God is now." **Rev Garry Hardingham**

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CHARITY: ITS TRUTHS REVEALED

By Charlotte Durut

CHARITY is defined in the Scriptures as the greatest of the three virtues.

Sadly, 21st century charity has been torn to pieces by an array of emotions, many of which are negative.

So what is the true version of charity?

The Greek translation of charity is 'agape' or 'unconditional love'.

When translated into Latin, agape becomes 'caritas', which means 'to esteem highly' or 'a love founded upon esteem'.

In the Authorised King James Version of the Bible, we see 'charity' used nine times in the well-known 'Love/Charity Chapter' of 1 Corinthians 13.

However, modern Bible translations such as the New International Version have changed the use of 'charity' to 'love'.

Phillip Yancey, author of *What's so amazing about grace?*, explains that when translators of the King James Bible contemplated the highest form of love, they settled on the word 'charity' to convey it.

In this way, it would seem the concepts of charity and love are interchangeable.

Regardless of the term used in 1 Corinthians 13, most people would agree that the true meanings of love and charity are not easy to define.

The 21st century hasn't made the definition of charity any simpler to explain or accept.

It can be seen as a shameful thing to not have enough food or money to get by and to have to ask for help, that is, charity.

This is where our pride and need for self-respect can destroy this true and loving concept.

Yet Trinity College New Testament lecturer Rev Dr Malcolm Coombes warns against refusing true charity.

"When we refuse charity, we're rejecting a relationship we're all called to share in," he said. "Giving and receiving love is not just a one-way street, and we run into problems when we try to be too independent."

Yet despite such wise warnings, charity is still laden with negative connotations.

It's largely because of this negativity that Rev Dr Graham Beattie, chaplain with Lifeline Community Care Queensland, said his organisation hardly ever used the term.

However, as Dr Beattie explains Lifeline's value system, it's clear the organisation is based around charity's agape translation of unconditional love.

"Our foundation values are respect, compassion and justice", Dr Beattie said.

"Respect is where it all starts, the centre of the loop is compassionate concern, and the outcome is justice built on right relationships where people are treated with dignity and value."

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What are we really giving?

NO ONE likes to receive charity.

Well, maybe not 'no one'.

I remember a man who wanted charity just after I arrived in Clermont as a new minister.

There was a knock on the front door and before me stood a man who said he wanted some money.

He told me a sorry tale about needing to go to Rockhampton and that he would like some money to buy some sandwiches at Nebo on the way.

While I was new to Central Queensland, I knew enough to realise that one doesn't go through Nebo to get to Rockhampton.

I offered to make him some sandwiches, but he insisted that he didn't want to be a bother.

If I could give him \$5, he would be on his way.

I knew I was being conned and I felt naive and a little embarrassed.

But I knew if I gave him \$5, he would go away, so I handed him the money.

It was easy. It didn't cost me much. And it got rid of this annoying con man.

I went out my back door to sit outside and watched this man go into the pub across the road.

He didn't mind charity, but I had not helped this man in any real way.

We call such detached giving 'charity,' yet it was not always that way.

In the Authorised King James Version of the Bible, we used to read: "Though I speak with the tongues of men or of angels but have not charity, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor 13:1)

Charity was a great word.

It was used to translate that wonderful Greek word 'agape'.

It carried with it the sense of a loving and generous self-giving.

Charity was the basis for creating community, belonging, and transformation.

But somewhere along the way

charity became synonymous with giving a handout with a level of indifference that made the recipient feel insignificant and inferior.

When I was travelling in Europe, there seemed to be a

Charity had become something that made the giver feel good and the recipient feel worthless

'begging etiquette.' This meant beggars would kneel with their heads bowed or even covered and simply hold out their hands, hoping for charity.

In this way, the beggar was a faceless non-person who could hide their shame.

Charity has become something

Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



that made the giver feel good and the recipient feel worthless, much like my action years ago in Clermont.

Charity as conveyed by the word 'agape' is a response of deep compassion where the giver is concerned about the recipient's well-being, rather than relieving their own conscience.

The recent outpouring of generosity towards those impacted by the fires and floods demonstrated that self-giving love still beats in the hearts of Australians.

It would be wonderful if all our expressions of charity were motivated by that desire to lift people up and show our respect and willingness to create a caring,

inclusive community.

Several years into my stay in Clermont, my friend returned with the same story and the same request for \$5 for sandwiches.

I reminded him of his previous visit and the fact that I saw him take my \$5 to the pub across the road.

I told him I didn't mind him having a drink on me, but I didn't appreciate being treated as a fool.

Since we were about to have a barbecue with some friends and family, I invited him to stay for a feed and I might even have something to drink.

But I discovered he didn't want to be treated as a friend — he just wanted charity.

By Rev Bruce Johnson

Bad luck or lesson?

AFTER BEING swamped by a group of beggars (some of them children and many missing a limb) on a beach in Cambodia, a friend of mine realised his wallet had been stolen.

With nowhere to report the crime, he decided to live on the US\$20 he had in his pocket for the following two weeks.

After all, these beggars - the victims of poverty and landmines - had far less than my friend had, even after they had his wallet.

So he spent two weeks in a country that is in the process of grabbing for the tourist dollar.

It was a place where selling the history of war has become a necessity to survive, a country full of beautiful, determined, and tough people who have had entire generations wiped out.

But on his return to Bangkok, my friend realised he did not have enough money for the Thai departure tax.

It was Sunday. The Australian Embassy was closed. He had no way of getting money.

Resembling a typical, unshaven backpacker, he began

approaching people who looked like they might be Australians to assist him.

He had to raise the equivalent of around AUD\$30.

He asked a well-to-do looking couple. The reply was scathing.

"Just ignore it," the gentleman said to his wife.

Most people just said a polite "No".

After six hours of pleading with Thai airport officials and begging fellow travellers for the money, it was another broke backpacker who gave him the \$30 to get home.

I always think this story sounds like a Biblical lesson.

It is so often those who cannot afford to give who give so much.

I'd like to think I would have given a stranger the money, but I'm not sure I would have.

Of course, charity is not just money - it is a gift from the heart.

The children on the beach in Cambodia needed a gift from the heart much more than my friend did.

But how do we decide who receives charity, and how do we best provide it?

My friend didn't give them money because he had been advised the best way to help was to donate to established charities.

How does Jesus call us to enact charity in its original meaning (love)?

I hope this edition of *Journey* provides some answers to these questions.

PS. A year later, while going through his travel documents, my friend found the \$30 he had put aside for the departure tax in Bangkok.

He had hidden it so he wouldn't spend it accidentally.

Perhaps someone was teaching him a valuable lesson.

Mardi Lumsden
Editor



Sign of the times



AN OLDIE but a goldie. Pine Rivers Uniting Church in the northern suburbs of Brisbane displayed this message in April. It just goes to show that sometimes, a good joke is worth telling twice. Photo by Phil Smith

A highly commended prize also goes to Barry Jardine of Emmanuel Uniting Church, Enoggera. He sent in a sign he snapped one day. It read: "Swimming Carnival postponed. Too wet."

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

Focus on maternal wellbeing

MICAH CHALLENGE, the international advocacy group, is once again highlighting their Child and Maternal Health campaign.

Half a million expectant mothers die every year, 99 per cent of them in poor countries.

Micah Challenge Australia's Communications Co-ordinator, Tabitha Horsley, is a strong supporter of the campaign. After being present at the birth of her sister's child last year, she is more concerned than ever about the plight of pregnant women in third world countries.

"Having witnessed the birth of my niece, I feel all the more indignant at this 99 per cent statistic and all the more moved to

act," she said. "I truly believe that with great privilege comes great responsibility, and Australians who celebrate Mothers Day every year in May have a responsibility to speak out."

Ms Horsley said Australians can respond by participating in simple advocacy actions, such as signing a card and encouraging others to join us.

"Basic measures like better education about hygiene and breast feeding, and more training of skilled birth attendants could bring about profound change," she said. "But in order for this to happen, countries like Australia need to prioritise child and maternal health in their aid budgets."



The Adventist Development and Relief Agency Australia participated in the maternal and child health action 'Message in a Bottle' last year. Photo courtesy of www.micahchallenge.org.au

Micah Challenge is calling on supporters to sign a Mothers Day e-card which will be sent to Foreign Affairs Minister Stephen Smith.

The aim of the campaign is to reduce by 75 per cent the number of mothers who die as a result of pregnancy or child

birth and to cut by two thirds the number of child deaths. This is in accordance with targets outlined in the Millennium Development Goals.

"We need to call on our politicians to support child and maternal health in the developing world," Ms Horsley said.

"As people who believe all lives are precious, we need to advocate for mothers and children in poverty."

For more information or to sign the ecard visit www.micahchallenge.org.au/health.

Quaker scholar to lecture Assembly



Dr Daniel Smith-Christopher will be the Cato Lecturer at the 12th Assembly. Photo courtesy of the National Assembly

By Meera Atkinson

THE 12TH Assembly Cato Lecturer has been announced as Los Angeles-based Biblical theologian, author, and Quaker Dr Daniel Smith-Christopher.

The purpose of the Cato lecture is to present an international theologian who will inspire the Uniting Church Assembly body with a new perspective.

President-elect Rev Alistair Macrae is excited about hearing Dr Smith-Christopher again.

The first time Mr Macrae heard him speak was at NCYC in Launceston in 1997.

"He gave a set of Bible studies on Jonah which was utterly compelling," Mr Macrae said.

"His particular academic and personal passions include peacemaking, indigenous and cross-cultural theology."

"He knows Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia well, and has been here a number of times."

In addition to the 12th Assembly lecture, Dr Smith-Christopher also has an action-packed State-wide itinerary.

This includes a keynote address at the Justice Convention in Melbourne and a lecture at Wisdom's Feast, both in association with the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

Held at the Centre for Theology and Ministry, Wisdom's Feast is a continuing education event for ministers and lay leaders offering Bible, theology, and ministry resources, and looking at worship and the arts.

Dr Smith-Christopher will contribute to the continuing education program at Perth Theological Hall as well as teach at the School of Discipleship in Canberra and Tasmania.

He is also keen to meet with Indigenous thinkers.

He will spend time at Nungalinga College in Darwin and lead a Bible Study at the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian

Congress National Conference.

The Assembly Cato Lecture is titled *"Overboard with Jonah; Over the Line with Ezra: Biblical Themes for the Church in Exile"*.

Mr Macrae sees this topic as particularly relevant to the Uniting Church.

"The main reason I invited Daniel is because his work on the Hebrew exile draws links between that experience and the current experience of mainline churches," he said.

"We've been thrust, kicking and screaming, from the centre of culture and have landed on the edge."

"Dr Smith-Christopher uses Biblical reflection to assist the contemporary church to be faithful."

"His lecture promises to aid us in thinking about how we might do church in a radically different context."

"It may also help bring about the change in imagination we need."

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Film skills save lives

ANIMATOR AND claymation expert Jason Lynch has spent the last 12 months in Melbourne working alongside Academy Award winning director Adam Elliott on the film *Mary and Max*.

But he has now returned not only to his home town of Brisbane, but also to his regular job as a nurse at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital.

Mr Lynch has worked at St Andrew's hospital for nearly 12 years, but often takes time out to work on films such as *Wallace and Gromit*. However, it's only recently that Mr Lynch has found a way to link his two careers.

He has used his animation skills to create a unique medical training advancement for the hospital's cardiac course – a simulated patient that allows training nurses to experience everything from feeling bleeding under the skin to dealing with a burst artery.

Simulated patients already on the market cost around \$20 000, however Mr Lynch's creation

costs a mere \$120.

He has also created a custom-made version of the simulated patient which deals with experiences unique to nurses dealing with cardiac patients.

"I used an old shop dummy and equipment I had from working on various movies," he explained.

"Having had experience working on some B grade horror movies also helped when it came to making it squirt blood."

Mr Lynch said while he had always loved design, his mother encouraged him to "get a stable job".

"That's why I went into nursing," he said. "I'm glad I listened to Mum because it is difficult to be a full time animator."

"But St Andrew's has been very supportive of my animation, and has allowed me to take time out so I can fulfil both careers."

"It's nice now to be able to give something back."

"The simulated patient allows the hospital to give its nurses a training experience that no other



Nurse and animator Jason Lynch and St Andrew's nurse educator Shauna Northwood look forward to using the simulated patient in training. Photo by Gray Media Services

hospital can."

Mr Lynch's simulated patient has proven to be so successful that St Andrew's is collaborating with Mr Lynch to produce them for the medical market, as well as designing other versions for specific training courses.

Cardiac Services learning co-ordinator Shauna Northwood is excited about incorporating the innovation in training nurses.

"Having the artificial body allows our nurses to practise in a safe environment as many times as they like," she said. "They are

then completely confident when the time comes for them to look after a real patient on the ward."

"What Jason has created is completely brilliant."

"It has added a unique element to our course which sets us apart from other hospitals."

New Wesley House good for environment



Adrian Bateup, Lyn Burden, and Brett Eldred on top of the new Wesley House, Brisbane. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

By Mardi Lumsden and Duncan Macleod

THE NEW Wesley House building in the centre of Brisbane City has been awarded a Five Star Green Star rating for "Australian Excellence" by the Green Building Council of Australia.

The boutique nine-storey building, officially opened in March, was recognised for its leading edge environmental advances implemented by Fulton Trotter Architects, Brisbane and Architectus Sydney, and Matrix Constructions, Brisbane.

The Green Star award was given in recognition of innovation in design and construction, leading to sustainability and energy efficiency.

Innovations include the use of low emission construction material, concrete made from

recycled products, floor to ceiling clear glass windows to maximise natural lighting, bicycle parking spaces to encourage tenants to ride to work, low energy lighting, and a large basement rainwater storage area.

Leading hand on the Matrix building team, Adrian Bateup, is impressed with the way copper and glass are used together in the facade.

"You can have Queensland storms hit it and it won't leak," he said. "The copper is used as a sensor for picking up a storm. If the winds get too strong, it controls the blinds so that they don't get blown off the side of the building."

Matrix services co-ordinator Brett Eldred oversaw the installation of hydraulics, fire, mechanical, and electrical services.

He is especially proud of the building's innovative cooling

system which involves hot air rising and passing over the water-filled "chill beam".

Rev Lynne Burden, Superintendent Minister with Albert Street Uniting and Wesley Mission Brisbane, continues to be amazed at the level of forward thinking in the project.

"Every time I talk to one of the builders, I learn something new about what has been put in place," she said.

Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson spoke at the opening about the building's environmental sustainability reflecting the Queensland Synod's commitment to environmental sustainability in all aspects of its life.

He affirmed both the strong values behind the architectural concept and the dedication and commitment shown by builders.



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Graham Clarke

FLOODS FOLLOW-UP

State under water

By Phil Smith

"I SEE A cloud no bigger than a man's hand." (1 Kings 18:44)

Elijah might have been standing near Bedourie late last year near the end of four years without a wet season.

Drought had crippled both properties and people throughout northwest Queensland.

But by Easter 2009, the area was struggling to recover from floods.

Some rain may have been welcome, but the water that should have brought on the much-needed grass has been sitting for so long the green shoots have rotted.

The huge downpour in February was in fact so extreme that McKay Patrol minister Rev Garry Hardingham said many people in the region are now echoing Jesus' words: "My God, why have you forsaken me?"

"The isolation of the floods has generated God questions among property folk," Mr Hardingham said. "In normal times, there's not much of that. But after years of drought when they expected a break, they've now been cut off completely and many want to know where God is now."

The impact on the church has been similar to the effect on grazing, tourism, education, and other aspects of everyday life in the Gulf Country.

It was Easter when the congregation in Karumba were finally able to gather for their first worship service of 2009.

Normally padded with grey

nomad travellers and tourists, the crowd consisted mostly of locals in the prawn trawling town.

The tiny towns of Julia Creek and McKinlay also treasure their church services each month.

But there was no way into town for Mr Hardingham or any property folk until March this year.

After a record number of flying hours, including 47 food drops as well as medical and school shuttles, Mr Hardingham thought there would probably be two or three people gathered in McKinlay for his church service.

"There were only two of the regulars but there was also an entire family of newcomers who wanted to connect," he said.

For old hands like these regulars, this was initially just another wet season.

But after weeks of isolation, even these veterans were starting to run short of supplies.

With its balloon tyres, short take-off and landing performance, and good payload, the Uniting Church Cessna was a great tool for isolated families in the region.

Mr Hardingham and photographer Lyn Vernon delivered groceries and refreshments to Kajabbi (118 km north east of Mt Isa) at a time when a box of capsicums was looking good to the locals.

In Karumba, where a barge brought dry goods all the way around from Cairns, Mr Hardingham's load of fresh dairy products was also a godsend.



Backpackers navigate the Bruce Highway on the outskirts of Ingham. (left)



Ingham homes isolated by floods. (top)

An Ingham fruit and vegetable merchant delivers potatoes in the rain. (right)

Photos by Troy Rogers and courtesy of *The Townsville Bulletin*

He said there was an opportunity amidst the floods for the rest of the church in Queensland to help in the region, particularly as the huge spike in flying will have a big impact on the availability of his aerial patrol this year.

In the eyes of the government, the Uniting Church aircraft is privately owned and as a result, its flood relief efforts were not funded from state coffers.

In Ingham on the east coast, Rev Ian Boudry's congregation has taken on a new twist to a New Testament idea.

Rather than visiting the sick with olive oil, they're helping the

elderly and unwell with bleach and oil of cloves.

The people of Ingham know about floods. The old hands built high set homes and they have almost as many boats as cars.

They also know what happens in the weeks that follow a big wet: mould. The constant damp and summer temperatures are perfect for mould spores.

So as walls and ceilings grow black, Uniting Church members have been helping residents who are not strong enough for the big task of scrubbing down their houses.

"The government agencies do the big picture work, and they do

it well in a community that fully understands the effects of floods," Rev Boudry said. "But the church picks up individuals who fall through the cracks."

Ingham's church building was thankfully out of reach of flood waters.

It was, however, cut off from the other side of town for some time, with the only access via a rail bridge over Palm Creek.

Mr Boudry estimated there is still about two months of work cleaning up in Ingham.

The economic wash-up won't be fully felt until late 2009 or early 2010 when the damage to the cane crop shows in a poor harvest.



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Festival attracts Easter audience

By Charlotte Durut

IT'S AMAZING music, inspiring speakers, rides, stalls, food, and above all, huge Christian crowds.

Held for the past 11 years in Toowoomba over the Easter weekend, Easterfest has grown from a great concept to a renowned Easter tradition.

With a 40,000-strong crowd

attending the 2008 event, organisers were expecting another huge crowd to inundate Easterfest this year.

And while showers of rain soon turned Queen's Park into a sea of mud, spectators at the 2009 event were not deterred from enjoying the biggest Christian festival in Australia.

Major highlights this year were the reunions of the Paul Colman

Trio and Audio Adrenaline, while 2008 hits, NewWorldSon, swept in from Canada to impress Easterfest crowds once more.

"We had an absolute blast in Australia last year," Joel Parisien, the beat-boxing lead singer of the funky jazz/gospel/soul group said.

"We loved the spirit of the people, the friendliness, the weather, and the food.

"Our Easterfest experience in particular was very special and it was such a pleasure to be part of it all."

Mr Parisien explained that NewWorldSon's distinct style was inspired by soul music, blues, funk, and even reggae.

However, there is an important aim behind its mixed production.

"Our music is an opportunity to deliver an uplifting, spiritual

message to people who might never set foot in a church," he said.

"Our lyrics are very Christ-inspired and never veiled in cryptic metaphor, as we think it's important that people know we aren't sneaking up on them."

Another strong favourite who returned to this year's Easterfest music mix was ultra cool jazz band, Scat, led by Logan Uniting Church's creative arts co-ordinator Craig Burnett.

Well-known for their entertainment at the Fancy Pants Ball held on Easter Sunday night, Mr Burnett said the band loved being part of the festival.

"Easterfest has got such a great vibe," he said.

"It's got to be the biggest, hippest celebration of Jesus in Oz.

"The crowds really show they dig what we're doing, and we love the craziness of the Fancy Pants Ball."

Mr Burnett said he and his fellow band-members also loved meeting with other artists at the festival.

"We usually don't get to see each other's acts or to catch up, so it's a good opportunity to share and enjoy each other's gifts," he said.

Jess and Ted, a pop/rock five-piece band from St Mark's Uniting Church in Mt Gravatt, Brisbane, were also more than happy to come back to Easterfest this year.

The young band have recently played at NCYC in Melbourne and are preparing to launch their first album.

Jess Hutton, the band's lead vocalist who turns 19 this year, said while it was her third year at the event as a band member and her sixth year as an artist, she still hadn't lost her love for Easterfest.

"It's a great place to play wholesome music and for teens to have a good time," she said.

Jess and Ted are now looking forward to an interesting musical future.

"We'll see where God takes us, but wherever that is, we'll keep doing our best," Ms Hutton said.

Scat singer Craig Burnett performs at Easterfest 2008. Photo courtesy of Scat



Easterfest fast facts

- Easterfest began as a joint venture in 1999 between business, community, government, and church groups in Toowoomba.
- Since the move to Queen's Park in 2001, the festival has experienced an average growth rate of 30 per cent each year.
- In 2003, Easterfest was recognised as one of the largest drug and alcohol-free events in Australia. In 2008, over 41,000 people attended the event.
- Formerly known as the Australian Gospel Music Festival, the festival's 10th anniversary in 2008 coincided with a transition to the new name of Easterfest
- A large percentage of the crew who put Easterfest together and make it run smoothly learnt the ropes through YAF gatherings in the 1980s.

Revisiting roll call

By Phil Smith

FOR THE best part of a decade, the first generation of Uniting Church young people in South-East Queensland danced, sang, and clapped at a special, faith-building experience.

The event recreated the spirit of the Department of Christian Education (DCE) camps on the first Saturday of every month.

By the summer of 1988, probably very few of the 5500 strong crowd at the Christian Outreach Centre knew the origins and intentions of what they then called Youth Australia Fellowship.

It didn't exist outside Brisbane and it was just YAF – an initialism once as common as UCA.

The monthly youth event moved busloads of Uniting Church youth groups through Chandler's sports complex, Festival Hall, and the Christian Outreach Centre.

YAF weaved the lectionary into tightly formatted and thoroughly stage managed Saturday night themes with dance, drama, music and special guests foreshadowing what young people might hear in worship the next day.

Many now middle-aged Uniting Church members recall the polished professionalism

of YAF on a platform which launched careers in acting, music, and ordained ministry.

But beyond the gloss, YAF was a significant tool with which the Holy Spirit worked in the faith experience of many thousands of young Christians.

Behind the on-stage performances was a 'band' of technicians.

Making good use of some of Brisbane's then best venues demanded top class sound, lighting, stage management, and set skills.

Teams of young volunteers learned everything from live camera work to mixing sound

for bands, operating lights, and stripping out sets between acts.

Those young people are now in their 30s and 40s.

Some went on to work in the media and theatre. Others are now raising children or running businesses.

Dozens of them also brush up on their skills at Easterfest in Toowoomba each year.

Among the hundreds of volunteers staging Australia's largest Christian festival is a core group of technicians who first worked together behind the scenes at YAF.

For two weeks each year, they rig up everything from toilets and tents to telephones and television cameras.

From the VIP registration desk to the volunteers dining hall, old friends serve a new generation wanting to experience

church beyond their local Sunday service.

"We're now parents," Leanne Hutton said.

"But we're again given the opportunity to create a safe place for young people to meet, share, and create lifelong memories and see what God is doing elsewhere in the church.

"We hope they will learn something new and take it back to their own churches, invigorated and inspired to continue God's work until they meet again - like YAF of old."

With national research indicating the Uniting Church has become the second oldest (in the age of its members) denomination in Australia, many youth leaders are saddened that there is no longer a YAF-style forum in which UCA youth can share regularly together.

Faith, hope, and tax deductions

By Mardi Lumsden

IN THE King James Version of 1 Corinthians 13:13, we are told to uphold faith, hope, and charity.

"But the greatest of these is charity."

The Apostle Paul and the members of the early church strived to live as Jesus had lived.

Paul, particularly in 1 Corinthians, encouraged people to look at the life of Jesus as an example of a perfect life and to practise charity (or love) as Jesus had.

Community worker, speaker, and author of *Plan Be*, Dave Andrews, believes Christ's example and teachings foreshadowed issues that would affect the globe for centuries to come.

"The teachings of Christ, epitomised in the Sermon on the Mount, were a process of education which taught people there would never be enough resources in the world to gratify everyone's greed," Mr Andrews said.

"Members of the early church devoted themselves to relationships, sharing meals with each other, and praying for one another."

Mr Andrews said Christ pushed people outside their comfort zones so they could perform true acts of charity.

"Christ encouraged a movement of people who would take the alternatives he had developed and implement these principles and practices without hesitation or reservation," Mr Andrews said.

"He demonstrated a process of community development which did justice to the poor.

"He prayed for a total transformation of society."

While it may sound like a revolutionary concept, Mr Andrews said the form of charity offered by Jesus and his disciples was fairly basic.

"The charity Christ and his disciples practised was a simple transfer in cash or kind, with no strings attached, to anyone who asked for help," he said.

Deception Bay Uniting Church minister Mark Cornford also has a passion for justice.

He said people were often caught in a cycle of giving to charity only in reaction to advertising campaigns.

"An aid agency screens an ad with images of starving children and we feel guilty as we eat a packet of chips while watching *The Simpsons*", he said.

"The ad then promises us that for x dollars a month they can relieve us of our guilt. We hand over money and go back to eating chips and watching *The Simpsons* in peace, knowing we've done our bit to make the world a better place. We even get a tax refund for our generosity.

"I'm not saying sponsoring children overseas or giving money to aid agencies is a bad thing. There should be more of it."

However, Mr Cornford is concerned that helping others in this way turns charity into a business deal where the giver is the ultimate winner.

"We take this word 'charity' and turn it into a transaction where we buy a clean conscience for the appalling distress and poverty that a billion people live in," he said.

Mr Andrews believes Christ calls us to do more than simple acts of charity.

"In a time of emergency, charity is often the only place we can start," he said.

"But Christ calls us to be ready to help people in any way we can."

Mr Cornford agreed and said that as Christ demonstrated, a true act of charity is a lot more than giving away money.

"Charity is indeed an appropriate response, but it goes way beyond just handing over a few dollars," Mr Cornford said.

"In the older sense of the word, charity towards the poor means a selfless, loving kindness towards the poor."

"It is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need."

"This then is the meaning of charity, of the loving kindness

that is at the heart of God.

"This is the work of real Christian charity for a world where God's will will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

"Followers of Jesus need to ask questions such as: 'Why is it that poor countries pay more in loan repayments than they receive in aid?'"

"Why are overseas coffee farmers paid almost nothing

"Overcoming poverty is not an act of charity; it is an act of justice."

Nelson Mandela

for their crops when the coffee companies make massive profits?"

"Why are Australian companies allowed to abuse workers' rights when they employ them in a developing country?"

"Why is it that in a world of such wealth where we suffer from diseases of affluence, so many suffer from poverty?"

"These are not questions that

can be answered by giving a few dollars here and there."

Mr Cornford believes true charity will only exist when Christians take seriously the call to love and have charity towards those who are in poverty, and are not satisfied with the platitudes of politicians and business leaders.

"We need to work for justice, peace and God's kingdom where there is enough for all," he said.



Dave Andrews said Christ calls us to do more than acts of charity. Photo courtesy of Dave Andrews

CHARITY: ITS TRUTHS REVEALED

From P.1

Respect, compassion and justice all lie behind true charity.

These values also reveal that there is much more to this concept than simply giving a monetary handout to disadvantaged people.

Perhaps it's time we gave someone a loving act of charity and happily received one in return without our pride refusing it.

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; (charity) envieth not; (charity) vaunteth not itself, and is not puffed up.

(Charity) doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, and thinketh no evil.

(Charity) rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.

(Charity) beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things.

(Charity) never faileth.
(1 Corinthians 13: 4-8 Authorised King James Version, 1611)



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The ethics of giving

By Mardi Lumsden

IN HIS book *Beyond the Boundary*, Christian ethicist Dr Noel Preston AM explains that the essence of love, and therefore charity, is deeper than we may realise.

"Perhaps the core of loving ... is to understand the needs of another being and to be actively willing to meet those needs," Dr Preston said.

Director of UnitingCare's Centre for Social Justice Greg Mackay added that people who receive charity are often depicted in the media as victims or sufferers.

This inadvertently damages their dignity and status.

"We are influenced into seeing them the same way and then expect them to be that way," he said.

"Out of our expectations, we interpret their behaviours as being consistent with our preconceived ideas.

"This then finally convinces us that our view is correct and this becomes a very destructive, persistent cycle of devaluation."

Mr Mackay believes we interpret an act of charity differently,

depending on the recipient.

"We extend a 'helping hand' to our friends but 'charity' is what we extend or give to people who are poor, oppressed, or otherwise marginalised," he said.

"We use 'charity' to describe something we never wish to need ourselves."

According to Mr Mackay, the negative meanings of charity need to be broken.

"These practices teach us to think that people who are poor and marginalised cannot help themselves," he said.

"Such a view can lead us into a cycle of thinking, perceiving, and acting which is based on unhelpful and inaccurate stereotypes and assumptions."

Mr Mackay said the best way to get out of such a cycle was to challenge our own perceptions of disadvantaged people.

"We can challenge ourselves about how accurate our ideas and perceptions are," he said.

"We might make the effort to meet people we would otherwise avoid.

"Get to know them and

recognise their humanity which is just like yours and mine."

Mr Mackay added that resources such as time, contacts, ideas, influences, and money could be valuable in assisting people in ways which do not reinforce negative views.

Dr Preston said the church has the opportunity to give charity with the right intentions.

However, this is not always a simple exchange.

"The commitment of the Uniting Church and other agencies, as well as prophetic individuals, to act in this way will always be costly because charity is grounded in self-giving love," he said.

"Keeping our action for social justice alive to the spirit of self-giving love is not easy."

Dr Preston said charity is embedded in social justice.

American Christian ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr agreed and said that justice that is not grounded in love "degenerates into something less than justice".

Dr Preston said that as Christians, the passage from Micah 6:8 (To act justly, love tenderly, and



Charity (1878) by French realist painter William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905). Possibly best known for his 1879 work, *The Birth of Venus*, this version of *Charity* is one of two paintings Bouguereau gave the same name. Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

walk humbly with God) needed to be embedded in the heart of all charity.

"We experience this challenge in our quest for social justice (for justice is the social expression of

love)," he said.

"The call to love God and show this through loving our neighbour (and our enemies) is the central ethical injunction of the Gospel."

Charity starts with cross-stitch



Vera Otto, Barb Peel, and Tom Stanton are just some of the team of drivers from LINC. Photo by Sue Allen

By Phil Smith

MORE THAN 16 years after World Vision introduced the LINC program to Australia, a handful of faithful volunteers still offers Love In the Name of Christ.

Vera Otto of Petrie is one of the original LINC members and said the movement was about knowing what you could do to help and what works for you.

LINC sees six local churches link up to provide transport for people who would be otherwise disconnected from their community.

Most of the work involves taking people to medical appointments - and this is where the cross-stitch comes in.

"While most are quite familiar with Moreton Bay Region, very few of our drivers like to drive in the city," Mrs Otto said.

"The traffic around Royal Brisbane Hospital is bad and it can

be frustrating having to wait around not knowing how long the appointment might take."

"So I would drop the patient off, park near the Centenary Pool in Gregory Terrace, and do my cross-stitch while I waited for them."

It seems patients can definitely be a virtue.

Another virtue is having the right people bring their talents to the organisation.

"On our board is a man who understands how to apply for and win government funding grants," Mrs Otto said.

"That means LINC is not always going to local churches for more donations."

World Vision no longer promotes the LINC program worldwide, but it remains a powerful ministry in an area where churches identify a need which matches their skills and resources.

Non-profits face the global crisis

Fast facts on charity

- At the end of June 2007, there were 8,743 not-for-profit religious organisations in Australia which employed 41,369 people and received \$3.7b in income
- (information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics)
- According to *Business Review Weekly's* Top 200 list in 2005, Christian not-for-profit organisations generated almost \$23 billion in 2004
- The Catholic Church dominated the Top 20 with a gross revenue of \$15 billion in 2004
- Second was the Uniting Church with \$3.1 billion
- Australian Red Cross was 17th and World Vision was 28th

By Lea Kingdon and Dot King

WITH THE non-profit sector already stretched to the limits, what impact is the global financial crisis having on these organisations?

How will they remain viable in the present economic climate?

Journey spoke to UnitingCare CEO Anne Cross and received a message on "staying focussed on the mission to weather the storm".

"The deepening effects of the global financial crisis will impact most harshly on those people who are the least able to weather the gathering storm on their own," Ms Cross said.

"UnitingCare has experienced increased demands for financial counselling services, general counselling services, and emergency relief. This demand continues to escalate with rising unemployment.

"We have seen increased sales in the Lifeline shops as more and more members of the community look for bargains to try to manage on shrinking incomes."

Ms Cross said the challenge for non-profit organisations like UnitingCare was to be flexible and manage costs and overheads.

"At the same time, we need to maintain and grow services to ensure those who are already disadvantaged do not fall even further through the gaps," she said.

"All our agencies, including Lifeline Community Care, Blue Care, UnitingCare Health, and Wesley Mission Brisbane, have been putting in the hard yards to grow their services to meet community need, despite the pressure of rising costs.

"This is now even tougher, given we are experiencing a big reduction in income due to lower interest rates.

Ms Cross said UnitingCare's services relied on income from the interest gained on investments. This was particularly true in the poorly-funded aged care sector.

Interest from accommodation bonds has allowed Blue Care to cross-subsidise unviable services in various parts of Queensland, fund grief and bereavement counselling, and support struggling local councils and indigenous providers.

"Historically, we have been able to use this interest to develop health and community programs which are not funded or are under funded by government," she said.

"This is our missional imperative. It is filling this gap that will be more and more difficult in the future."

However Ms Cross is hopeful for the future.

"Politicians and governments are more aware of the impact of the recession on people and communities," she said.

Ms Cross explained that the Government had responded positively to recommendations made from a summit organised by UnitingCare Australia, Salvation Army, Anglicare, and Catholic Social Services at Parliament House in Canberra.

"I am very pleased the government has committed to increase the level of social housing, and is developing a much better framework for the delivery of emergency relief and financial counselling," she said.

"They have also committed

to reducing red tape, which will increase our capacity to deliver services.

"Lifeline is leading the way with the Queensland State Government's decision to commit \$3 million over two years to fund generalist financial counselling services.

"As a consequence, 24 new financial counselling staff have been employed across the state."

Ms Cross said during tough times such as these, the thousands of volunteers within UnitingCare were even more important.

However, more volunteers were always needed.

"It is a recognised fact that our nation's volunteer force is ageing and we know our long-term volunteers are going to be hard to replace," Ms Cross said.

"It won't be an easy ride but with the continued support of government, along with donations and bequests from the public and the support we enjoy from our volunteers, we will do our best to continue to provide the services which help people have a better life."



Lifeline Community Care continues to support people impacted by the economic crisis. Photo courtesy of UnitingCare

God's love in Australia

By Duncan Macleod

I FIRST watched Baz Luhrmann's film *Australia* with a group of Aboriginal children and teenagers in Napranum, Cape York.

Local youth worker James Hughes used the movie as a stepping stone to a discussion on God-inspired love.

Nullah and his mother resist the government policy of

separating half-caste children from their Aboriginal families. Lady Sarah Ashley's plea to the Darwin officials resonates with the question in Isaiah 49:15, "Would a mother ever forget her own child?"

Sarah Ashley and Drover struggle to learn to love and trust in the wake of loss, moving beyond romance to life inspired by charity. Ashley is challenged by Drover to learn to love as an adoptive mother,

despite her misgivings about her way with children.

In turn, Drover is spurred on to challenge segregation on the basis of race and affiliation.

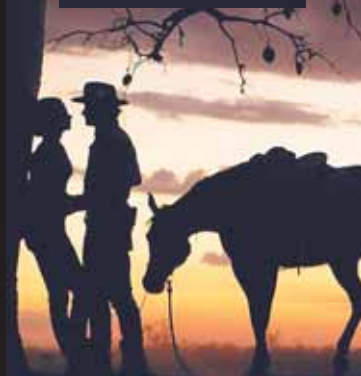
Father Benedict and Brother Frank show care and concern for the Aboriginal boys being taken to Mission Island, but are caught up in policies which were anything but loving.

Mission Island is based on Bathurst Island, where a

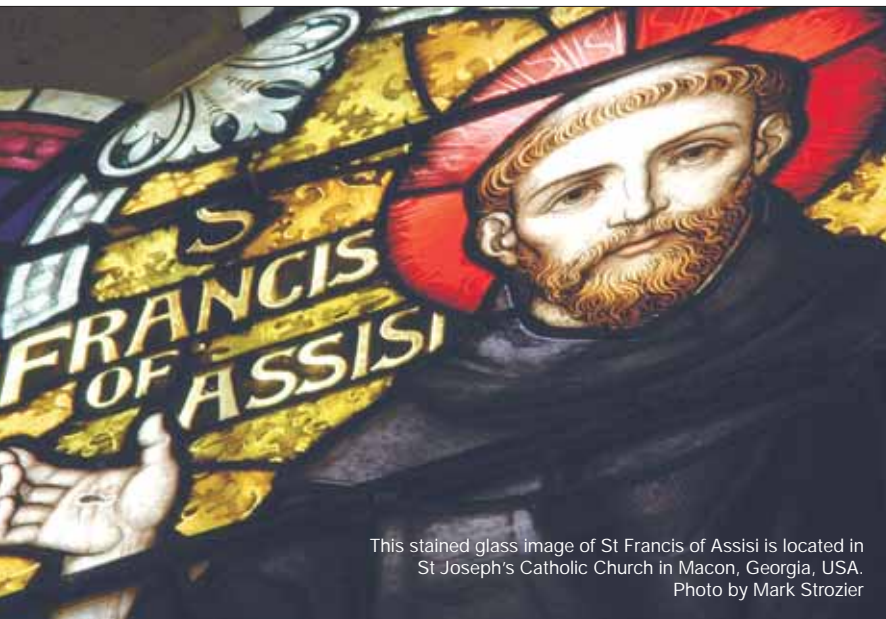
Catholic mission looked after and trained young women, many of whom had left home after refusing to marry older men.

Magarri, Drover's workmate and relative, shows us a love that lays down his life that others may live, as he distracts Japanese soldiers from escaping children.

With a little reflection, *Australia* proves to be a great conversation starter.



The Barnabas Community: following in the footsteps of St Francis of Assisi



This stained glass image of St Francis of Assisi is located in St Joseph's Catholic Church in Macon, Georgia, USA. Photo by Mark Strozier

By Scott Stephens

FRANCESCO BERNADONE from the Italian village of Assisi, known today as St Francis of Assisi, is honoured throughout the world as the man who turned his back on a life as the lecherous and lazy son of a wealthy cloth merchant.

His life of service, devotion, transparency, and voluntary poverty continues to inspire us today.

Yet Francis struggled with a conundrum: his sense of God-given identity.

At what point did Francesco turn his back on a life of privilege and become 'Saint Francis'?

The young Francis, still despairing after his dreams of chivalry evaporated, knelt before a crucifix amid the ruins of the Church of St Damian. Here, a

voice said to him, 'Francesco, do you not see that my house is in ruins? Go and rebuild it for me!'

Francis obviously took these words very seriously - and very literally. He went and sold most of his father's stock of fine fabrics and used the proceeds to rebuild the ageing shrine.

More significant however was Francis' move from familiar human society to a leper commune.

We tend to forget the place lepers occupied in the early Middle Ages. In the 12th century, those with leprosy, a designation which covered a range of deformities and communicable diseases, were restricted to decrepit communes outside city walls.

By decree of the Church, they had to cover themselves entirely to prevent contact with others. They had to use clappers whenever people came near, they were banned from speaking to children, and they were consigned to their own churches and cemeteries.

This puts the command Francis heard in St Damian's in a whole new light.

The church which had fallen into ruins was not the dilapidated, crumbling shrine itself, as Francis believed. It was rather the very church which had forsaken its Lord by segregating and abandoning the leprosy.

Thus, Francis' act of rebuilding the church wasn't his repair of St Damian's, but rather his establishment of a community with the lepers themselves.

Continuing his work

There are communities today who, like St Francis, have set about rebuilding the church. Such communities are nothing less than gifts of grace.

The Barnabas Community in Durack, Queensland, was founded in 1995 as an act of obedience to Jesus, and in solidarity with L'Arche, a network of communal homes established by Jean Vanier in 1964. The community established a home in which the able and disabled live side by side, eating together and celebrating the beauty and holiness of one another.

As Vanier often said, this setting constitutes our truest reminder of what the Kingdom of God looks like.

And so our Lord addresses us with the same summons which haunted Francis: 'Do you not see that my house is in ruins? Go and rebuild it for me!'

Scott Stephens is the minister at Forest Lake Uniting Church and lecturer in Theological Ethics at Trinity Theological College

Making disciples of 15 nations

By Mardi Lumsden

ON ONE SUNDAY in April, 65 people from 15 different nationalities made a public affirmation of faith at Logan Central Multicultural Uniting Church.

The confirmation service, attended by around 400 people, was led by young people in the congregation, and included hymns sung in six different languages simultaneously. Minister Rev Dr Apichart Branjerdporn said the church overflowed with people and joy at the celebrations.

"There were more people outside the church than in the church because the building was not big enough," Dr Branjerdporn laughed.

He explained the congregation had around 100 members from the Burmese community, most of whom were aged under 30 years.

"There's a real sense of joy and blessing that comes from being in a special relationship with groups of refugees settling in the area," he said.

Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson assisted in the confirmation service and was also impressed by the commitment of the Logan Central Multicultural congregation to creating a global community under one roof.

"It's exciting to see a community attempting to be truly multicultural," said Mr Johnson. "It's about respecting each other, worshipping with each other, and living with each other."



Judy Hunter Robinson, Apichart Branjerdporn, Vera Daitau, Iuma Apelu, and Bruce Johnson lay hands on Tupouniua Taelangi during the confirmation service. Photos by Gwenda Brandjepon



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A Young Families Pastor, permanent part time (20 hrs/wk), is required by Glebe Road Ipswich Uniting Church:

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The profile is available from barbara.bennewith@wa.uca.org.au and applications can be forwarded to

Rev Dr Ian Tozer, Joint Associate General Secretary (Pastoral) WA Uniting Church
GPO Box M952, Perth WA 6843 or ian.tozer@wa.uca.org.au

Closing date for expressions of interest: **31 May 2009.**



Girls Brigade members march in the Brisbane City Anzac Day Parade. Photo by David Close

Last post for God and country

While some argue about public holidays and pay rates, 'high' days and holy days are sensitive topics in the Christian church for entirely different reasons. The Uniting Church is no exception.

By Phil Smith

WHILE CHRISTIANS often bemoan the secularisation and commercialisation of 'our' special days such as Easter and Christmas, we struggle to identify with some of the milestones on our community's shared calendar.

Perhaps struggling with religious and political correctness, we are unsure about expressing emotions surrounding patriotism, belonging, and national history.

For many Australians, Anzac Day is arguably the nearest thing to a holy day. *The One Day of the Year* is almost a sacred moment, set apart, which somehow touches Aussie spirits in a way we wish that Easter would.

However, there is a religious connection to Anzac Day buried just outside Herberton in North Queensland in a small bush cemetery.

The words, 'A Priest', are embossed on a white cross, and a plaque stands nearby engraved with the following details:

"Adjacent to, and on the right of this marker, lies the grave of

Reverend Arthur Ernest White, a Church of England clergyman and padre, 44th Battalion, First Australian Imperial Force. On 25 April 1923, at Albany in Western Australia, the Rev White led a party of friends in what was the first ever observance of a dawn parade on Anzac Day, thus establishing a tradition which has endured Australia-wide ever since."

And ever since, in that minute of silence at the cenotaph, big questions are asked: What is a life worth? What is a right way of living? Do the fallen live on? Is there an honourable purpose in war, or only a terrible scarring loss?

And do the Anzac values of sacrifice, commitment, and suffering have any parallel in the Christian world view, or are they simply a gloss to hide an absolute contrast with Christ's way of life?

Since he joined the school cadets in 1963, Anzac Day has always been a 'working day' for Major Ross Eastgate.

The long-time ABC telecast commentator and historian

always went to the dawn parade, and then the mid-morning community service in Bundaberg with his dad.

"It's not a public holiday thing, it's a duty," he said.

"It's an obligation to give some time for those who gave their everything so that my kids and grandkids can enjoy the life too many Australians take for granted."

Mr Eastgate then goes on to talk of the city of Adelaide, which was once noteworthy for the lack of permanent tenure on most graves in the city.

However after WWI, the Adelaide Cemetery Trust established an Australian Imperial Force cemetery near the community cemetery on West Terrace. It was opened in perpetuity to veterans of the First Australian Imperial Force.

"All faiths see death as the ultimate milestone in our physical lives," Mr Eastgate said.

"They all hold some belief in an

afterlife - a reward for the virtuous, a penance for the others.

"By creating a space for the reverence of the mortal remains of those who served, Adelaide was saying, 'Here is your community's reward for what you gave for us.'"

"There is a seriously religious overtone to a state's official reverence towards the remains of its war dead and veterans."

Yet times have changed and so has the geography and level of debate about war.

Thousands of conscripts no longer die in trenches for 'King and Country'.

However, the Anzac legend is being rewritten in the current global conflict.

Australian service personnel pay with their lives to maintain a way of life we enjoy in Australia.

Our church seems unlikely to reinvent the Roll of Honour on the walls. At a time when the Uniting Church in

Australia debates even the use of Australia's flag in church services, how do we link something Australia holds dear with the way we understand and express our faith?

Thousands of us will continue to march or watch on Anzac Day, even if we can't quite say why.

Phil Smith is a broadcaster, speaker, writer, and former RAAF Squadron Leader

What is a life worth ... is there honourable purpose in war, or only terrible scarring loss?

identification with a generation of 19 and 20-year-olds who were the original Anzacs.

"Many of these young Australians uncompromisingly follow Jesus and their number is steadily increasing with young people eager to remember this significant turning point in our history," he said.

"Anzac Day engenders a deep spirituality within the community



A rolling mist at sunrise!

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Paradise Point Uniting Church



You can pick up anything including the kitchen sink at the annual Paradise Point Giant Garage Sale! 126 Paradise Parade. Enormous stock and variety of clothing, books, craft, kitchenware, furniture, hardware, electrical goods, and plants. Great prices plus a sausage sizzle and children's activities. For more information, contact Peter Alfredson on 5529 3669 or office@ppuca.org.au.

May 2-3, 10am-5pm. Round-About Arts and Craft show at Bulimba Uniting Church. Contact Storme Vunderink on 0411 339 772 or vunderink@optusnet.com.au.

May 8-10. 'STREAMS retreat at the Presentation Spirituality Centre, 26 Kooralgin Street, Manly, Brisbane. A weekend retreat with guided reflections, space, time alone and together, and a prayer room. Organised by The Stillpoint Centre, Toowong. Cost \$210 for full weekend. Concession \$170. For more information, contact Bruce Warwick on 3217 8992, email stillpointcentre@bigpond.com or visit www.stillpoint.org.au.

May 9, 9am-3pm. Quilt and Craft Show and Market at Samford Valley Community Church, 44 Mt. Glorious Rd, Samford. All proceeds to the work of school chaplaincy. Contact Jan Shannon on 3289 4192.

May 9, 9.30am-3pm. Healing Ourselves: Healing the Planet day presented by the Australian Christian Meditation Community Qld. Holy Spirit School Hall, 36 Villiers St, New Farm. Guest presenter is economist and meditator Janet O'Sullivan. All are invited to attend this event which will include a period of meditation. Entry by donation. Please bring something to share for lunch. For more information, contact Gabby Nelson on 3371 4227 or toga@bigpond.net.au.

May 9, 12-2.30pm. East Timor Lunch at Kenmore Uniting Church, 982 Moggill Road, Kenmore. Speaker Rev Alan O'Hara. The lunch will raise funds for scholarships for secondary, tertiary, and vocational training for Timorese students through the Timor Children's Foundation. \$20. For tickets, contact Helen Findlay on 3378 2647 or jfi71567@bigpond.net.au or the Church Office on 3378 4505. Extra donations tax deductible.

May 13-27, 7.30-9pm. The Freeing of God discussion series at The Stillpoint Centre, 16 Grove Street, Toowong. Three Wednesday evenings devoted to examining key moments in the life of Jesus, and viewing them from the rich perspective of soul work and spiritual direction. Led by Patrick Oliver. Cost \$70 / \$60 concession. Please register by May 6 by calling Stillpoint Monday-Thursday 9am-4pm or email Patrick Oliver on stillpointcentre@bigpond.com.

May 21-23, 8.30am-3pm. Rummage Sale at Uhl Hall, Wheller Gardens, 930 Gympie Rd, Cherside. Clothes, books, and knick-knacks. Half price on Saturday 8am-12pm. Contact M Herbert on 3857 4668 or billmerr@bigpond.com.

May 23, 2pm. Cherside Kedron Community Uniting Church, cnr Gympie and Rode Roads, is hosting a concert by the Brisbane Apollo Male Choir and guest artists from the church. Admission \$12 and school children \$2, including refreshments after the concert. Proceeds from the concert will support church and choir with their outreach to the community. For further information, contact Margaret 3359 3185 or the Church Office 3350 4302.

May 23, 2pm. Special Flower Demonstration to Celebrate Queensland's 150th Birthday at Sandgate Uniting Church, 116 Board St. Deagon. Come and be inspired by special flower demonstrations, accompanied by choir and guests. Entry \$10. Afternoon tea supplied. Arrangements for sale. Contact Jean Kirkegaard on 3269 3386 or sandgateuc@pfcs.com.au.

May 31, 9am. 100th Anniversary celebrations at Mt Sylvia Uniting Church. Service will be followed by display of photos and archives in the Church. Bring a plate for morning tea. Coffee and tea provided. Contact 5462 6168 or email pgbleakley@active8.net.au.

Upload your 'What's On' entries at www.journeyonline.com.au. Items may be shortened due to space limitations.

Insightful giving

WHAT'S WORSE than poverty? Disability and people were in need of urgent food assistance.

UNICEF stated the government of Ethiopia estimates there are 75,000 children with severe acute malnutrition.

The Ethiopia Food Crisis appeal begins in May and is dedicated to securing futures, providing

urgent water and crop production assistance, and fighting poverty over the long-term with food, water, and healthcare.

CBM Australia National Director John Jeffries said he was personally moved by the story of a young woman named Martane and her children who were suffering the effects of malnutrition in Ethiopia.

"Martane came from a rural village in Ethiopia called Damot," he said. "She walked one day to the health care centre with her two children.

"Martane's crops had failed because of drought and she was eating leaves and grass to try to survive. Her children were not growing and she didn't know what to do.

"Each day some babies are being born with disabilities due to their mothers suffering from malnutrition.

"Help is needed to break this cycle of poverty and disability."

For more information, visit www.cbm.org.au



Ethiopian mother Martane and her child.
Photo courtesy of CBM

Help needed in Living Room

VOLUNTEERS ARE needed for the Living Room, a ministry to all people with a particular focus on people with disabilities and their carers.

The Living Room is held at Ashgrove Avenue Uniting Church from 10am each Tuesday with a worship service and lunch.

Trinity Wilston Minister Sue Pickering is looking for people who have gifts to share.

"We need people who can play an organ, piano, or guitar," she said. "We also need people to help organise and facilitate activities, people willing to help clean up, and people who would just like to be present.

"If you can volunteer for any part of this, please prayerfully consider it."

For more information, contact Sue Pickering on 3352 6082 or 0427 712 108, or email aussiepick@bigpond.com.

Awakening Easter

AWAKENING EVENTS occurred across the country and throughout the world again this Easter.

Celebrations included Easter marches in every Australian capital city.

The Aussie Awakening, which began in 1988, is an ecumenical mission to reach out to those who have had a Christian upbringing but are no longer regular church attendees.

Awakening's Queensland co-coordinator Wells O'Neil said the Easter message connects with people on many levels and the Easter marches are a way to bring people together.

"In the face of global and personal uncertainty, we're discovering we need each other and these events are one of the most effective ways we've discovered of bringing communities together," he said.



People of Compassion

By Dave Andrews, TEAR Australia Inc, 2008, RRP \$20

Reviewed by Naomi Waldron, member of Toowong Uniting Church

People of Compassion is a collection of 40 stories about ordinary people who have embodied Christ's extraordinary spirit of compassion.

The book is intended as a starting point for group discussion or individual reflection on what it means to follow Christ's commandment to love our neighbour.

Each story is short (only two to three pages in length), easy to read, and has a few questions for discussion or reflection at the end.

This book is no ordinary collection about saints.

Rather than focussing on

gruesome martyrdoms and bleeding statues, Mr Andrews presents these people as genuine individuals who listened to God's word and acted accordingly.

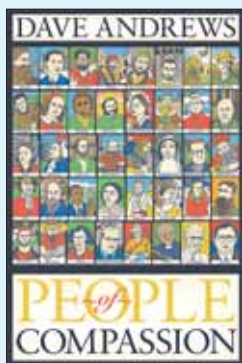
Mr Andrews has also presented a wide selection of men and women from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds.

I related to many people in the stories and found *People of Compassion* to be a source of personal inspiration to act with greater compassion.

As a mother, my heart was torn by the story of Sojourner Truth, who was sold into slavery at the age of 11.

She was then beaten and forced to give birth to five children, who were all taken from her and also sold into slavery. While Sojourner suffered unimaginably, her strength in Christ shone through and made a significant change in the world.

People of Compassion is a little book of hope which inspires us to make this world a better place. It would be a wonderful book for a minister, a study group, or for individual reflection.



Stepping Stones:

Interviews with Seamus Heaney

By Dennis O'Driscoll, 2008, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, RRP \$35

Reviewed by James McEvoy, teacher of theology at the Catholic Theological College, Adelaide

Nobel Prize-winning Irish poet Seamus Heaney attends closely to life.

Having spent more than 50 years finding words, Mr Heaney's writing covers a great deal of territory that is well traversed in *Stepping Stones*.

One theme that caught my eye in these interviews was the meaning and practice of faith.

Mr Heaney's reflections on his journey of faith bring to light important aspects of a more general cultural shift in the West.

Mr Heaney's spiritual journey could easily be seen as a loss of religious faith, followed by the emergence of a more syncretistic spirituality.

But such a judgement misses the major transition.

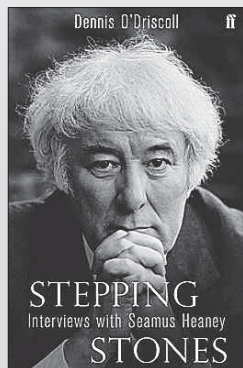
This intensely personal understanding of faith has great risks, particularly the subjectivist temptation to think that I determine what

reality or even the divine is.

It also presents churches with the immense challenge of personally connecting with every believer and potential believer.

I think the turn to the personal must be judged a step forward.

The full length review was first published in www.eurekastreet.com.au



Reviews available from ...

Many of the titles reviewed in *Journey* are available from C.M.S Bookstore, St Paul's Bookstore, or Christian Supplies in Brisbane city. Books can usually be ordered from Vision Books at Broadwater Road Uniting Church, Mansfield, or may be available from www.mosaicresources.com.au

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas

Directed by Mark Herman, Rated M

Reviewed by Matt Gees, Vision Radio drive time presenter

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas is a challenging look at the humanity of the holocaust.

Set mainly in an unnamed country area, the family of a German SS soldier is relocated when their father is promoted and appointed to a new job in the countryside.

The central character, an eight-year-old boy named Bruno, is intrigued to discover a farm nearby where all the people wear striped pyjamas.

As the story unfolds, it is revealed that the neighbouring farm is actually a Jewish work camp of which Bruno's father is the commandant.

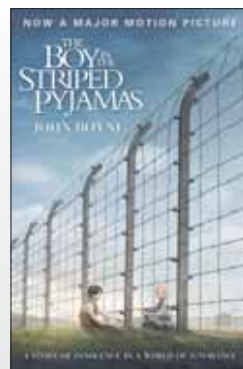
Unhappy at only seeing his front yard and with a thirst for adventure, Bruno disobeys his mother and explores the

woods behind the house. In doing so, he discovers the truth about "the farm".

On the other side of a high, electrified fence is a young boy the same age as Bruno. The two boys strike up a friendship and form a bond which becomes the main plot of the movie. However, there are underlying sub plots.

Some of these include the change in Bruno's 12-year-old sister from an innocent young girl to a product of the Nazi propaganda; the real work of the commandant at "the farm"; the human side of the Jews on the other side of the fence; and the reactions of the commandant's wife and parents to his work at "the farm".

Although based on a novel aimed at teenagers and not



containing coarse language or overwhelming violence, parents should be cautious about sending their children to this film unsupervised.

In-depth discussion about some of the themes in the film should occur beforehand.

The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas was released in cinemas nationally in April.

The Judas Brief: Who Really Killed Jesus?

By Gary Greenberg, Continuum International Publishing Group Inc, New York, 2007, RRP \$49.95

Reviewed by Alan Cook, retired psychologist and member of Wavell Heights Uniting Church

The Judas Brief is written by New York criminal defence attorney and president of the Biblical Archaeology Society of New York, Gary Greenberg.

It seeks to refute the Gospel charges that the Jewish authorities pressured Pilate to have Jesus crucified, thereby contributing to 2000 years of anti-Semitism.

Mr Greenberg's 200-plus page careful analysis of the Biblical accounts and other evidence led him to the conclusion that the real villain of the crucifixion story is Herod Antipas, ruler of Galilee, not Pilate.

Mr Greenberg also traces the politically advantageous attempts to shift the blame from Pilate to the Jews in general and Judas in particular.

He sees Judas as a trusted

emissary who sought to arrange for Jesus to be kept under wraps during Passover, thereby avoiding any civil disturbance resulting in Roman vengeance.

We are accustomed to the words "on the night on which He was betrayed". However, Mr Greenberg questions this unusual translation of the original Aramaic word as the more typical translation would have been "handed over".

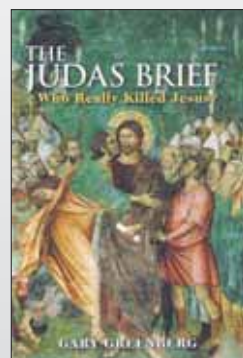
Also, the common belief that Judas committed suicide from grief is contradicted by the account of his later death as a result of "his bowels bursting open" (Acts 1:18).

Some credence is given to Paul's apparent belief that Judas remained in good standing as a member of the Twelve, at least for some time after the crucifixion.

The Judas Brief is essentially

an historical analysis and a theological symbolism, and implications are not canvassed.

But it is a fascinating read posing deep questions about some of the basic concepts of Jesus and his mission.

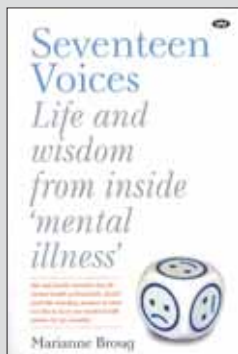


More reviews online at www.journeyonline.com.au including:

Seventeen Voices:

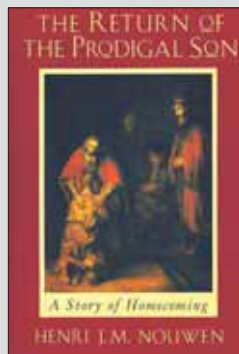
Life and wisdom from inside 'mental illness'

By Marianne Broug
Wakefield Press
RRP \$34.95



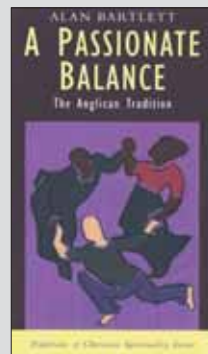
The Return of the Prodigal Son - Lent course

By Henri J.M. Nouwen
(CD version)
RRP \$31.95



A Passionate Balance: The Anglican Tradition

By Alan Bartlett
Darton, Longman & Todd, 2007
RRP \$31.95





Golfers enjoy the fundraiser. Photo by Gray Media Services

Golf drives hospital funds

THE 13TH annual St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital Charity Golf Day held at Indooroopilly Golf Club on Friday March 20 raised over \$50 000.

These funds will now be used to upgrade the hospital's theatre equipment.

Thirty-six teams made up of sponsors, doctors, and hospital staff gathered to tee off on the day.

A Scottish piper piped

the players onto the field in what has become an age old tradition.

Refreshments were stationed at different holes to keep players' energy levels up throughout the day.

A gala dinner and charity auction topped off the event.

St Andrew's is world renowned for its cardiac and neurological services.

With the funds raised, the

hospital plans to purchase a state-of-the-art surgical table specifically designed for use in head, neck, and shoulder surgery.

In the 13 years it has been running, the charity golf day has raised in excess of \$700 000.

The winning team for the day was from Dell, followed by Simon George and Sons.

Medtronic came in third place.

Valuable message for students

By Michael Doolan

STUDENTS AT Raymont Lodge Residential College's April formal dinner in Auchenflower were treated to a visit from Olympic swimmer and gold medallist Susie O'Neill.

Ms O'Neill's husband Cliff Fairley, an eye surgeon who volunteers for the Fred Hollows Foundation, also attended the event.

Ms O'Neill spoke to students about her Olympic career, her retirement, and the work she

and Mr Fairley accomplish with the Fred Hollows Foundation in Aboriginal communities in Australia.

She made many worthwhile comments relevant to the life of a college student.

"It's important to set goals for yourself and to be determined," she told the students.

"But at the same time, you have to make sure your goals don't consume you and become all you focus on. It's important to have a balance between the two."

Speaking about the early years

of her career, Ms O'Neill said she had "always thought of elite sportspeople as freaks of nature"

"But when I met them, I realised they were normal people just like me," she said.

"This meant I could achieve what they had."

It was a particularly uplifting message for students, letting them know that ordinary people are capable of extraordinary achievements. Both students and staff walked away from the dinner feeling it had been a worthwhile and enjoyable event.



Raymont Lodge Residents Association president Daniel Gees presents Susie O'Neill with a cheque. Photo by Eddie Carleton

Sunday 10 May: UnitingWorld

UNITINGWORLD IS the national agency connecting the Uniting Church with overseas partner churches and their communities. UnitingWorld believes that through partnerships and friendship, communities are transformed both in Australia and overseas.

UnitingWorld works in four program areas.

In Church Solidarity programs, the Uniting Church acts together with its partner churches. Some of these relationships are over 100 years old and UnitingWorld advocates on issues which affect our partners and through supporting them, transform both their communities and ourselves.

The Relief and Development Unit supports community development and capacity building for communities in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific.

Projects include water supply, health care, food security, vocational training, education, economic empowerment, and emergency relief.

UnitingWorld Peacemaking is run through Young Ambassadors for Peace (YAP), established by Joy Balazo. These programs strive to build a culture of peace and justice in communities in need of conflict resolution.

The Experience programs are a learning opportunity which provide the chance to spend time working with a partner church in ministry or development. Placements can range from just a few weeks to commitments spanning years, and can be undertaken by individuals or as part of a team.

Please pray for our partner churches in the Pacific, particularly those who are facing the loss of their homeland as a result of climate change and rising sea levels. Pray also for the Pacific nations as they are pressured to enter into extended free trade arrangement which may have serious economic consequences

for their local economies. Pray for Church Solidarity staff workers Bruce Mullan (Pacific) and John Barr (Asia).

Please also pray for the Relief and Development work as UnitingWorld seeks to assist overseas communities challenged by disaster, disease, violence, famine, drought, injustice, and poverty. Pray for Relief and Development staff workers Rob Floyd, Bryan Cussen, and Laurie Fitzgerald.

Please pray for Joy Balazo and her extensive team of peacemakers as they empower people to create peace, resolve conflicts, and build friendships across barriers of conflict and violence.

Please pray for those who are serving as volunteers in mission with partner churches or are preparing to do so. Pray specifically for Gary and Lyn Wallis from Brisbane who are serving in Chennai India. Please pray for Kathy Pereira as she prepares volunteers and supports them in their overseas placement.

Sunday 24 May: Caboolture region

THE CABOOLTURE Region consists of Beachmere Uniting Church (cnr Moreton Terrace and Second Avenue, Beachmere) with services at 8am on Sunday mornings and a fellowship tea at 5.30pm every fourth Sunday of the month. Caboolture Uniting Church (cnr King Street and Smiths Road, Caboolture) has a 9.30am and a 6.30pm service every Sunday.

Elimbah Uniting Church (Coronation Drive, Elimbah) has a morning service at 8am every Sunday.

Upper Caboolture Uniting Church (Caboolture River Road, Upper Caboolture) meets at 9.30am on the second and fourth Sundays of the month.

A Tongan service meets every Sunday at Caboolture at 1.30pm.

A monthly prayer breakfast takes place at 7.30am on the last Saturday of the month in rotation amongst the four

church centres.

There are many other activities, but these cannot all be listed here.

Rev Stephen Henderson, a minister from the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa, has served this region since the beginning of September 2007. He is supported by his wife Cathy, who also helps lead the evening service music team.

Some of our current prayer needs include wisdom, discernment, and guidance for the way forward.

For example, our number of active Lay Preachers is dwindling, while our membership is predominantly at the senior end of the chronological scale.

How do we reach the next generations? How do we reach the local community without alienating any of the current faithful?

We also ask for prayers for patience and discernment for concerned members seeking a way forward. And as always, we thank God for what He has already done.



Important conference cancelled

What does it say about our society and about the Uniting Church in Australia when a conference about what it means to be fully human, a conference that explores our rights and protections, a conference that articulates the link between Christianity and human rights, attracts just 10 people?

Ten people. That's how many registrations the UnitingJustice Australia Conference, Seeking the Common Good: Why human rights matter, received.

To be held in Sydney, it was apparently widely advertised within the church; human rights organisations and their networks; the UnitingCare networks; and through Charles Sturt University.

The speakers included the UCA President; Chair of the National Consultation on Human Rights; the Human Rights Commissioner; Chair of the Australian Human Rights Group; and the list goes on.

What does it take to motivate people to engage in debate and discussion?

What hope have we that people will take action on either this or other pressing issues of our time, if they don't take the opportunity to participate in the discussion?

How are we to carry out God's mission in the world if we do not take the time to speak and to listen on issues that matter?

We need to be asking ourselves these questions as we head to church this Sunday.

Is it enough to put our money into the collection plate?

We know that working in our immediate community, praying with and praying for our neighbours, can be enough.

But we know that many of us have the capacity to do more.

This conference came at a time when the Federal Government is holding a consultation into human rights in Australia.

We cannot expect the government to take this issue seriously when we can't garner more than 10 interested people to the debate.

Jesus was an advocate for human rights.

It is not for us to shy away from issues that are difficult, rather we must be engaged and prepared to go against the grain. Jesus requires that of us.

UnitingJustice Australia and other agencies around the country will continue to advocate in this area. But as citizens and as Christians, surely we have an imperative to do more.

Penny Monger
Sydney



Identifying the "progressive"

In the Letters section in your April 2009 issue, we note the concern that some writers express at your opening up of the question of "Who was Jesus?"

Such a concern is understandable. But it probably represents only a very conservative and minority view in understanding the Jesus story.

Many readers will be aware of the more realistic and more accepted non-literal

perspectives of the Jesus story developed over the centuries and more so in recent years by the writings of many scholars and clergy.

These are part of the rapidly growing movement generally described as the "progressives" in the churches, aiming at acceptance and understanding of different paths to Christianity and to the love of Christ.

Many of us are fortunate enough to participate in congregations and home study groups where the different approaches are recognised and we agree to differ.

The Lay Forum sees it as important for the different paths to be acknowledged and encouraged

and thanks *Journey* for its efforts.

An example is provided by courses of study being used in Uniting Church congregations these days.

There is a world of difference between the more conservative "Alpha Course" and the more progressive "Living the Questions" course.

If made aware of this, Uniting Church members will realise this difference and establish which better suits their own faith journey.

Reg Collard and
Rodney Eivers
Members of the
Lay Forum



Much meaning in special name

My daughter recently gave me a copy of your February publication, and I was so surprised to see a four-year-old with the same name as mine.

I turned 70 in February and have often looked to see if any other mothers chose

the beautiful name of Cherith for their daughter.

I have found a few actors etc in England and Christian camps in North America, as well as a vineyard in Western Australia.

I have seen a number of Kerriths as it is a name spelled in modern day Bibles ie NIV, Life Application, etc. A street in Yeppoon has also been called Kerrith Way.

Of course, most of us recognise

the name Cherith as being the name of the brook where Elijah was sent by God to be fed by the ravens.

We must never forget that there is one name more beautiful than any other - Jesus!

Cherith Wei
Gracemere



Still building

In a letter in February *Journey*, Ben de Nys said the government isn't building any more rentable places, or words to that effect.

I telephoned the Department of Housing and they said they are still building places.

Jenny Smith
Toowoong



Word review is welcomed

Just a comment on the book review by Karyl Davison.

She states that the author's "harping" and "patronising" criticism of Bishop Spong and Richard Dawkins detracts from an otherwise helpful and easy-to-read book.

Surely all the churches

should descend on the likes of Dawkins and co like a ton of bricks?

Just think how many easily-led people have been conditioned by the media to believe there is no God, and instead follow the deceptively convincing words of the atheists and evolutionists who are given so much publicity.

Sue Cottam
Barcardine



Inspired printing of strong views

Full praise for the editors of *Journey* for printing controversial opinions of God-inspired Christians.

It is because of the non-thinking, safety zone, old time Sunday School graduates that the church is in the doldrums today.

Basil Gillespie
Beachmere



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Email your classified advertisements to mandi.lumsden@ucaqld.com.au or fax 3377 9717

Journey wishes you a happy Mother's Day



ASSOCIATE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Frontier Services seeks to appoint a Minister of the Word or Deacon to its executive staff team.

If you are:

- committed to partnership across the Uniting Church
- experienced in ministry in remote areas
- happiest working in a close knit team
- a good manager and an even better pastor
- excited by the opportunity to provide support and direction to a variety of models of 'patrol' ministry and
- able to reflect on the challenges facing Outback Australia and the Uniting Church's role in meeting them.....

Then, an information package can be obtained by contacting Jenna Cohn on 02 8270 1321.

Applications close on 19 June 2009.



Frontier Services
serving Outback Australia

www.frontierservices.org

How do you react when someone on the street asks you for a gift of money?

John Barr

WHEN SOMEONE on the street asks me for money, I sadly become edgy!

Money seduces. Money corrupts. Money doesn't address the real issues.

Even the Bible has harsh words to say about this: "The love of money is the root of all evil".

Recently, I was in North India. On leaving the confines of the airport terminal, six ragged little boys raced up and started

prodding me.

Apart from trespassing into my personal space, the boys' pleas for money were relentless and I found myself feeling quite hassled.

"What's the point of giving these poor kids money?" I asked myself.

"It's just a hand out ... a drop in the ocean. How can a few dollars save India's poor?"

But if someone asks me for help, that's different.

Being able to actually do something for someone begs the question, "Can I make a difference?"

I have always believed true charity is not about giving handouts. Rather, it is about doing something which subsequently makes a difference in the lives of others.

Mr and Mrs Hong are Uniting Church mission workers in North Korea.

No amount of cash handouts will ever change the situation in that secretive country.

But Mr and Mrs Hong are making a real difference.

Through their quiet expressions of love and concern, the lives of destitute North Korean children are being transformed.

It's not a case of demanding money.

Rather, it is the generous act of doing something, of making a difference, that really counts.

Rev John Barr is the associate director of Church Solidarity - Asia UnitingWorld

Abbie Pickering

AFTER TALKS with my family and through life experiences, I won't give out money.

Whilst volunteering in India in mid-2007, this question was constantly on my mind.

Saying no was hard. When a small child who was malnourished, upset, possibly homeless or even trafficked grabbed my hand, looked me in the eye, and begged for money, it broke my heart.

But instead of giving them money, I bought them something to eat and drink.

In India, begging is most likely an adult's or child's job. They will either get a small percentage of what they collect or a wage.

In Vancouver, there were also lots of

homeless people.

One experience that will stick with me is when my family bought a homeless lady a McDonald's meal. This did not only feed her, it gave her somewhere warm to sit and eat, because it was the middle of winter and freezing cold outside.

In Australia, I am happy to support people from charities or buy the *Big Issue*, though you generally know whoever asks for the money will keep it.

Offering a decent meal not only helps hunger pains, but you also know the money isn't going into the wrong hands or supporting habits such as drugs. That way, especially in places like India, you know you are not supporting trafficking and other human rights problems.



Abbie Pickering is a well-travelled high school student and a member of Trinity Wilston Uniting Church

Theresa Whiteing

LIVING IN a town with a population of approximately 9100 people from 64 different cultures gives us a unique but pleasant blend within our community.

As manager of a Lifeline store, I'm very fortunate to come in contact with many people in our community, from the homeless and people just out of prison as well as the general community, who are all happy to shop for a bargain in our store.

When we opened our store, it was a regular event for someone to stop me in the street or in the store to ask for money.

On occasions I'd be happy to give, but many times I felt greatly disheartened to see some head back to the 'local' for a drink or to have a play on the pokies.

I've always felt it was not my place to judge, but with my conscience playing on my mind, I had to come up with a new plan!

So now when I'm asked for money, I simply reply with a smile, "No, but I'm happy to buy you a meal or go to the supermarket to buy some groceries for you."

Fortunately or unfortunately, I don't get asked as much anymore.

I'm so grateful to work within my community with our local churches and other community service organisations.

Hopefully, I can encourage more people in our area to utilise Lifeline's wonderful services, such as 24-hour telephone and face-to-face counselling, financial and



gambling help, anger management, and much more.

So as many of my customers say every day as they leave the store, "God bless you" and "Thank God for Lifeline".

Theresa Whiteing is manager of the Lifeline store in Mareeba

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