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# EASY AS 1,2,3

## THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN EDUCATION

*What does it mean to be a Christian School (or Church school) and is there a difference? Is it about an educational organisation based on values such as care and respect, or is it something more than that?*

*With more than 12 000 Queensland students and almost 2000 staff going through the gates of just the Uniting Church schools each year, this month Journey examines the ABCs of education.*

By Elaine Rae and Mardi Lumsden

IN MAY over 40 school board members, principals, chaplains and Synod representatives gathered to begin exploring the meaning and implications of being a church school.

Director of Pilgrim Learning Community Rev Dr Robert Bos challenged the group to consider whether there was a difference between producing "good citizens" or "followers of Jesus".

He said that although there was overlap, "Christian values are based upon loyalty to Jesus Christ while social values (while influenced by our Christian heritage) are based on a vaguely defined societal consensus".

According to a Queensland Synod Schools' Commission document, "Each school is part of the Christian witness, mission and outreach of the Church to the community of which school and church are a part".

Jim Haak, Spiritual Director of Calvary Christian College, said he found this statement challenging, but something he could wholeheartedly embrace.

"This statement forces me, as the Spiritual Director of a Uniting Church congregational (parish) based college, to reflectively attempt to answer a number of questions: Are we as a college reaching out to community in mission as genuine

Christian witnesses? Are we fulfilling the great commission Jesus Christ set before his followers before he left this earth? Are we making disciples and teaching them to obey our Lord?"

Mr Haak said that if Christian schools were to make a serious attempt to establish Christian culture, the governing body of the school needed to ensure that the principal and teaching staff were committed Christians and willing and able to disciple students.

"Otherwise schools will evolve over time into secularised educational businesses domesticated by our surrounding capitalistic culture," he said.

Executive Officer of the Queensland Synod Schools' Commission Elaine Rae agreed that the leadership of the college, the governing body, the chaplain and the local and wider Church all played a key role in developing the Christian life of a school.

"While a school must maintain highly qualified practitioners if it is to retain credibility and meet parental expectations there needs to be a 'critical mass' of staff who can sincerely profess a Christian faith and further be capable of communicating that faith to others if a Christian culture is to be created and maintained," she said.

Continued P.7

# Learning faith

WHEN THE financial bottom line becomes the means of determining the value of everything, education is treated as a commodity to be bought and sold.

Its value is seen in its capacity to prepare a person to be a more effective economic unit in the market place.

Those fields of study which are more financially productive become the most respected.

In such a world, theology once the queen of sciences, is regarded as an idle pastime.

According to Matthew and Mark, when Jesus is asked what is the greatest commandment, he answers: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind".

We seem very good at doing the first two, but too many Christians ignore the command to love God with their mind.

When I was a theological student I was asked to lead a Bible study for some young people, most of whom were university students.

They wanted to know something about the Old Testament so I introduced them to the insights I had learnt through my study.

These young people were shocked and said that they were not up for something that "heavy".

I asked them why they were prepared to use their intellect on medicine, law, engineering and education, but were not prepared to put the same effort into knowing about their faith.

Christian education was once a significant part of our life in the Church.

We ran all age Sunday Schools; we expected sermons that stretched our thinking rather than just made us feel good.

We believed that it was important to have a growing understanding of the Bible, since

the Uniting Church enters into the inheritance of literary, historical and scientific enquiry which has characterised recent centuries, and gives thanks for the knowledge of God's ways with humanity which are open to an informed faith."

Education was more important than making us more employable, it was seen as the means of loving God with our minds and learning more about the one in whose image we believed we were created.

This was the reason the Church

## Too many Christians ignore the command to love God with their mind.

that would help us know God and all that God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

With great exuberance the *Basis of Union* says:

"The Uniting Church acknowledges that God has never left the Church without faithful and scholarly interpreters of Scripture, or without those who have reflected deeply upon, and acted trustingly in obedience to, God's living Word. In particular

was so involved in establishing schools and founding university colleges.

The Church believed that an education founded on faith in Jesus Christ and informed by the Scriptures and a sound knowledge of the world would establish its students as mature disciples.

In May our Schools Commission hosted a morning which drew together principals, chaplains and board members of Uniting

## Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



Church associated schools.

It demonstrated a renewed desire for these schools to be seen as an important part of the mission of the Uniting Church.

Such a movement is reflected in other synods across Australia and gives hope that education in our schools will do more than make their students productive economic units, but help them build a life founded on Jesus Christ.

However education must not be restricted to our formal institutions.

Now that people no longer come "to church" to learn about God, it is important for each Christian to be able to speak confidently about their faith and explain the hope that is within them.

Each of us must be willing to explain to those who are seeking what God has done for us in Jesus.

We need to be able to tell others why, in the face of so much negativity towards faith and the church, we hold onto the conviction that God is the centre of our being and why we choose to participate in the life of the church.

This is the time for all of us to find a renewed passion for growing and stretching our faith in Christ.

Christian education needs to live again in all our congregations as much as in our schools.

If your local congregation is not able to provide opportunities for you to engage more fully in a discipleship program, why not contact the Pilgrim Learning Community and see what excites your interest.

Education for life is not about growing the economy, but helping us reach the full stature of Jesus Christ.

By Rev Bruce Johnson

## Redefining the Three Rs

THE THREE Rs principle has always annoyed me.

My first frustration behind this (now apparently dated) educational catchcry is somewhat obvious - only one of the Three Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic) actually begins with an R.

At school I was always terrible at spelling. I loved writing, but often that involved staying back at lunchtime writing out the words I had got wrong on the spelling test.

I may be able to spell the word "necessary" now, but staying back while my friends were playing made me feel, well, stupid.

I know my teacher was doing her best, but the feeling that I wasn't as smart as my friends seeped into other areas of my school work.

At nine years old I felt that I would always struggle through academic schooling. I didn't fail subjects, or even get particularly bad marks, but I was the last one still writing out words at lunchtime, so I felt dumb.

It wasn't until Year 7 and 8 when I had two teachers comment on my talents that I began to think that maybe I wasn't so silly after all.

I remember a moment in Year 8 English when my teacher was handing back a piece of assessment.

He left me waiting until last and then made me stand up in front of the class before he gave me my mark.

I was terrified.

What did I do wrong? Was it that bad? Was this teacher, who I respected so deeply, going to embarrass me in front of my whole class?

Mr Brazier stood in front of the class and announced to everyone that he was proud of how much I had improved.

He told the class that I had done a great job and he told me that I was smart. My grade was a B+ and by no means the best in the class.

When Bruce Brazier passed away, thousands of ex-students turned up to honour a truly great teacher.

My main frustration with the

Three Rs principle is that it aimed at educating only a small part of a person.

It is teachers like Mr Brazier, who not only teach the curriculum, but actually educate and inspire generations of students, who make a difference in the world.

To that extent, I suggest a new Three Rs: Relationships, real life experience, and positive reinforcement.

There you go, I couldn't find three that started with R either.

Mardi Lumsden  
Editor

P.S. Or perhaps we could go along with the new Three Rs from Moreton Bay Boys' College: Research, relationships and reasoning.



## Sign of the times



TOOWONG UNITING Church pastor Simon Gomersall initiated the idea of getting a changeable sign to assist the congregation to communicate with the suburb.

David Weddell took this photo after updating the sign one day.

"It was informing people that our sermons are now podcasted on the internet (through our website [www.toowongunitingchurch.org.au](http://www.toowongunitingchurch.org.au))," he said. "I thought it surely is a 'sign of the times!'"



# Fiji churches show heroic diplomacy

By Bruce Mullan

DESPITE CONSIDERABLE provocation, the elected leadership of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma, the Uniting Church in Australia's partner church, has chosen to take a diplomatic approach with the current Fiji military regime.

Although the Church continues to be deeply troubled by the overturning of basic rights and the dire economic situation facing Fiji, it has sought dialogue with Commodore Bainimarama's government.

This has not been without internal differences and former Methodist President Rev Manassa Lasaro was detained overnight for questioning by the Fiji police on 14 May after he called for a return to the constitutional rule of law, reinstatement of basic human rights, and a return to democracy through early elections.

"We are struggling in a very peaceful way to try and bring about political stability, to bring about democracy, to bring about justice amongst our own people," he said.

The police are yet to charge Mr Lasaro, but have warned Methodist ministers not to speak out and hinted that the Methodist Annual Conference may be prohibited from meeting.

UnitingWorld Director Rev Dr Kerry Enright said because

the interim government was censoring local and international news sources, news from Fiji was often unreliable.

"Much of the news coming from Fiji originates from unofficial blogs and information purporting to be news may be based on rumours and cannot always be authenticated," Dr Enright said.

Uniting Church President Rev Gregor Henderson, Assembly Associate General Secretary Glenda Blakefield and Dr Enright were all in Suva for a Methodist Consultative Council in the Pacific meeting held just two days after the Fiji judiciary was dismissed and media censorship was established.

Speedy action by the President of the Methodist Church



UnitingWorld Associate Director (Pacific) Bruce Mullan. Photo by Osker Lau



UnitingWorld Director Rev Dr Kerry Enright's copy of a censored edition of the *Fiji Times*. Photo courtesy of UnitingWorld

managed to prevent officials from shutting down the meeting but the Australian delegation was aware of the constant presence of an intelligence officer sitting in and monitoring the proceedings.

Dr Enright managed to obtain a copy of the *Fiji Times* issue where slabs of the paper were left blank with simple messages telling readers the stories had been censored by the government.

While the delegation was in Suva, *Radio Australia* broadcasts in Fiji were shut down after the military took control of the transmission facilities.

The Methodist Church in Fiji is proceeding very carefully in a country where police have the right to search, seize, arrest, detain and use force with complete immunity for any of their actions.

Dr Enright said he admired the

restraint Methodist leaders are presently exhibiting.

"I do not envy the tightrope the Methodist leaders have to walk, communicating with restraint, respect and a deep concern for the nation always under the military's watchful eye.

"We pray the military government will reciprocate with similar respect for the Church," Dr Enright said.

Dr Enright encouraged members of the Uniting Church in Australia to uphold the Fiji Methodist Church and its President Rev Ame Tugae, General Secretary Rev Tuikilakila Waqairatu and Deputy General Secretary Rev Tevita Banivanua in prayer.

As one Fijian Methodist minister said, a greater understanding, a deeper sense of forgiveness and

a willingness to search for social justice will be the stepping stones to a peaceful and democratic future for Fiji.

"We must take seriously the common humanity we share and work for the common good; not just the special interests of particular groups. We must create a nation built on love.

"To do this means that we must face the hard facts of traditional divisions, religious divisions, extreme nationalism, injustice and conflict.

"In dialogue with others we must seek solutions that will bring reconciliation and change."

Bruce Mullan, UnitingWorld Associate Director (Pacific), was also in Suva for the Methodist Consultative Council in the Pacific meeting

# From unchecked greed to prophetic visioning

By Meera Atkinson

UNCHECKED GREED and extreme capitalism are responsible for the global financial crisis said Rev Elenie Poulos, National Director of UnitingJustice Australia.

Ms Poulos made this statement after her visit to Cuba in March, as a member of the Commission of the Churches on International

Affairs (CCIA), an advisory body of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

The CCIA, which advocates on public policy and systemic issues to promote peace, reconciliation, social justice and social transformation, met to discuss the global financial crisis.

Ms Poulos said institutions like the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organisation

and the World Bank have lost the confidence of most countries.

"Basically they've failed and the global financial crisis is a symptom of them failing."

She said the gathering focused on the Council of Churches' response to the effects of the financial crisis, ways of assisting the nations most in need and the creation of a new global system under the United Nations.

"We looked at how the world's financial architecture could be reformed.

"At the core of that is an idea about the democratisation of global financial systems so that they're not run by just a small number of wealthy countries," she said.

Ms Poulos said the Commission had recommended the WCC general secretary write to the G20

leaders to appeal that they embark on a re-working of international frameworks based on a new system of social justice and ethics to ensure financial institutions and their governance are based on an ethical foundation with attention to the social impact of their actions.

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Dave Andrews preaches the Sermon on the Mount in the Swiss Alps.

Photo courtesy of [www.wecan.be](http://www.wecan.be)

## Planning for revolution

By Duncan Macleod

A FRESH exploration of the Beatitudes of Jesus is emerging as a grassroots international movement, starting in Queensland.

*Plan Be* author Dave Andrews worked with the Bible Society Queensland to launch a new collection of resources at Easterfest in Toowoomba.

The *We Can Be* concept is based on a modified version of the serenity prayer: "Lord, grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the one I can, and the wisdom to know it is me!"

The Beatitudes have for many years been relegated to the too hard basket or interpreted through idealist terms.

*Plan Be* rescues them from their obscurity as a poetic introduction to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and reframes them as a set of radical 'Be-Attitudes'.

"To quote these Be-Attitudes is religious, but to act on them is revolutionary," said Mr Andrews.

Mr Andrews was invited to speak at the Greenbelt Festival in the UK in 2007 after having led a study in the Swiss Alps sponsored by Servants.

The response at Greenbelt was phenomenal. Thousands of people were looking to act out the teachings of Jesus in ways that would make the world a better place.

Inspired by the response Mr Andrews published *Plan Be*, a little book with a doable message.

Bible Society Queensland director Steve Davies saw the potential the book had for helping Christians re-engage in Biblical social action.

"There's a move among Christians to recover a focus on social change through personal transformation found throughout history in movements like the abolition of slavery," he said.

The Bible Society collaborated with the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church, TEAR Australia, and Capacity Builders (a Christian PR and consultancy firm) to develop a suite of resources that would help people engage with the Beatitudes in more depth.

The resource package, now

available to churches, schools, and small groups, includes a condensed version of the book, a small group guide for action and reflection, a journal, a DVD with a promotional one minute video and a series of on-the-street interviews, and much more.

*Plan Be*, the book, is available in most Christian bookshops.

The *Plan Be* resources can be purchased from the Bible Society Queensland on (07) 3221 5683.

Duncan Macleod, Synod Vision for Mission Advocate, worked on the small group study guide, trialling it with members of his own congregation

## Meet the new Associate General Secretary

By Priscilla Raepom

REV DR MARIAN Zaunbrecher, the newly-appointed Associate General Secretary of the Queensland Synod has been a minister of the Uniting Church since 1987, serving in urban and regional areas of Victoria and New South Wales.

A teacher by profession, Dr Zaunbrecher has taught as a primary teacher, a multicultural teacher, a teacher for adult women in a technical college and a chaplain.

"I love teaching," she said. "It's about seeing the amazement on people's faces and the excitement when they suddenly learn something new."

Dr Zaunbrecher encourages continuous learning in a congregational setting and hopes to see the growth of well-informed people.

"As a teacher I want to see people grow," she said.

Before taking up her current post, Dr Zaunbrecher was Acting Dean of the Theological Hall of the Victorian Synod, a presbytery mission consultant, and secretary of the Assembly Ministerial Education Commission in Melbourne.

She said her new job is a calling from God.

"I am amazed at how things work out ... in that sense of God's

time, everything falls into place," she said.

With a surname which means 'breaking down zones', Dr Zaunbrecher believes this is where her passion for social justice issues stems from and the need for acceptance of all people regardless of gender, race and creed.

"We need to break down the barriers, whether it's with people with disability, women and violence, children who are abused or migrants," she said.

She said her hope for the Church was one of true love and acceptance of one another in the agape sense.

Apart from her duties, Dr Zaunbrecher is also looking forward to being involved with the Church's education and training programs.



Rev Dr Marian Zaunbrecher.

Photo by Osker Lau

## Joining the journey

By Priscilla Raepom

I HAVE always marvelled at how powerful the media is whenever the phrase, "the pen is mightier than the sword" comes to mind. Although the pen has been somewhat replaced by the keyboard, the concept remains. Writing is a vocation I am passionate about.

As a journalist working in



New Journey journalist Priscilla Raepom. Photo by Osker Lau

Papua New Guinea for 10 years, I believe the media can empower consumers with appropriate knowledge that can make a positive difference in their lives and in society.

Writing with the objective to inform, educate and entertain not only enlightens readers and audiences, but also gives them the opportunity to make well-informed choices, if not create a forum for debate.

I have been writing about women's issues for the past eight years as editor of a woman's

magazine in PNG. I also see the need to highlight issues affecting young people in today's modern world.

I never envisioned an honour like this humbling opportunity to work with the Church.

I am constantly in awe of how the Lord continues to enrich my life with the right amount of blessing, in his own way and at his own time.

It is with great anticipation and some trepidation that I start with *Journey* and hope I can contribute to the life of the Church.

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# New name unites vision

By Amy Goodhew

INDOOROOPILLY UNITING Church played host for two events on 28 April celebrating the Queensland launch of UnitingWorld, formerly Uniting International Mission.

People interested in the church's global partnerships gathered to celebrate the mission of God and hear how to live out the *Basis of Union's* call to be a church which transcends cultural, economic, and racial boundaries.

UnitingWorld National Director Rev Dr Kerry Enright spoke of the mission of the Church being at its very essence worldwide in scope.

"In recent years the Church has rightly emphasised the local nature of mission," he said. "Today God is renewing the global spirit in us."

With an eye on the rich history of international mission in Queensland Dr Enright called those present to join in a new era of international engagement.

"We want to support you in enthusing your friends, congregations, and communities for this engagement.

"We ask you for your support, prayers, interest and contacts," he said.

Joy Balazo associate director, Peacemaking, shared stories of lives changed as a result of the work of Young Ambassadors for Peace (YAP) in Papua New Guinea and Ambon, Indonesia.

Dr Enright and Ms Balazo were joined by Bruce Mullan, associate director, Church Solidarity, Pacific, on a panel that talked about various challenges facing overseas work and the approach of UnitingWorld.

This reinforced the Church's commitment to seek relationships with churches in Asia and the Pacific.

Earlier in the day there was a round table meeting where Church leaders and UnitingWorld staff explored ways to lead congregations into effective and mutually enriching partnerships through UnitingWorld.

Some key dimensions discussed were the need: to provide theological underpinning to the life of the Church in preaching and teaching; to bring a world perspective to input; to keep stretching people's attention towards the breadth of God's interest; and to work to make our global partnerships personal through the stories of the people with whom we engage.

Rob Lutton, community relationship manager, led a session on best practice in short-term mission teams.

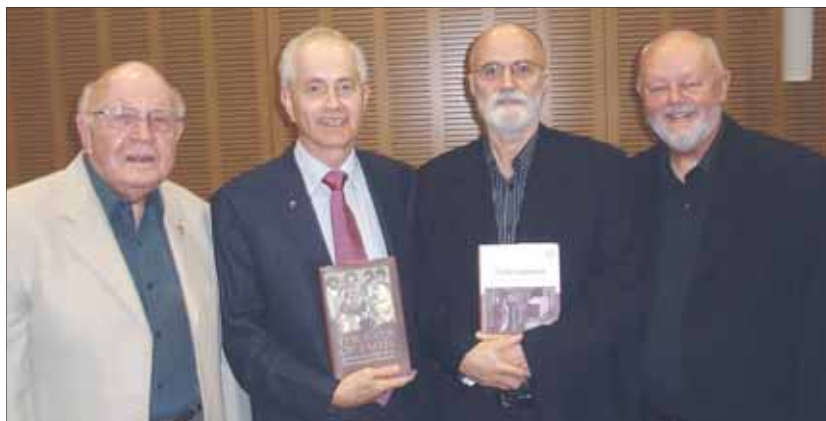
UnitingWorld is eager to facilitate such teams as part of the partnership mix for congregations and presbyteries connecting for life with one of its 30 plus partner churches.

For more information visit [www.unitingworld.org.au](http://www.unitingworld.org.au)



Bruce Mullan, Joy Balazo, Kerry Enright, and Rob Lutton at the UnitingWorld launch at Indooroopilly Uniting Church. Photo by John Harrison

## Shared launch upholds partnership



Rev Dr John Thornhill SM, Rev Dr Orm Rush, Rev Dr David Rankin and Rev Dr David Pitman at the book launch. Photo by Rev Dr Neil Sims

By Mardi Lumsden

ON 29 APRIL Trinity Theological College and St Paul's Theological College co-hosted a joint book launch to celebrate the publication of David Rankin's *Athenagoras: Philosopher and Theologian* (Ashgate) and Orm Rush's *The Eyes of Faith: The Sense of the Faithful and the Church's Reception of Revelation* (Catholic University of America Press).

Dr Rankin is Principal of Trinity Theological College and Dr Orm Rush is Associate Professor of the Catholic Church's St Paul's Theological College.

The joint launch is an example of the two churches' formal

affiliation and commitment to ecumenism and research.

Dr Rankin's book was launched by former Moderator Rev Dr David Pitman who commented on Dr Rankin's scholarship and spoke of the significant achievement his book represented.

"I want to thank David, my friend and colleague, for the opportunity to launch this latest product of his highly disciplined and sustained engagement with this amazing story, as revealed particularly in the history of the Christian Church in the first centuries of the Common Era, and especially with the work of the Church Fathers during that time," Dr Pitman said.

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# Presidential nominees

## Robert Bos

*Nominated by the  
Synod of Queensland*

### Resume

- Congregational ministry in Weipa, Aurukun and Ipswich
- Chaired two Presbyteries
- Worked in Aboriginal Christian leadership development for 22 years in the Northern and Queensland Synods
- Founding Director of Coolamon College
- National Consultant, Theology and Discipleship, National Assembly
- Co-editor with Norman Habel of Rainbow Spirit Theology. Co-editor with Geoff Thompson of Theology for Pilgrims. Published a number of articles in Uniting Church Studies
- Bible Study leader in five Synods (Northern, Tas, WA, VicTas, Qld)
- Interfaith dialogue and leadership training in India

### Passions

Rob is passionate about encouraging and empowering lay persons by deepening their spiritual lives and equipping them for ministry, supporting people from other countries as they find their rightful place in the church and having the unique place of Indigenous people in Australian society recognised.



## Andrew Dutney

*Nominated by the  
Synod of South Australia*

### Resume

- Lecturer in Systematic Theology, Parkin-Wesley College
- Minister, Wesley College Chapel Parish
- Chaplain, Wesley College and the University of Sydney
- Assistant Minister, St Andrews Parish Church, Leven, Scotland
- Chairperson of the South Australian Council on Reproductive Technology
- Foundation Director of the Centre for Theology, Science and Culture, a joint activity of Flinders University and the Adelaide College of Divinity
- Author of theological titles including *Manifesto for Renewal* and *God was in Christ*

### Passions

Andrew's passions are sharing the vision of the Basis of Union in a way that people can identify with and that energises people to action - contributing an explicitly Christian point of view to the public discussion of the issues of the day - and mentoring and supporting members of the church as they try to discern and respond to God's call to ministry.



## Rosemary Hudson Miller

*Nominated by the  
Synod of Western Australia*

### Resume

- Social Justice Consultant, Uniting Church Synod of Western Australia
- Executive Officer, Chaplaincy, Uniting Church Synod of Western Australia
- Acting National Director, Social Responsibility and Justice, National Assembly
- Nursing roles including Clinical Nurse Manager and Remote Area Nurse in the Northern Territory

### Passions

Rosemary has a passion for the Gospel of Jesus and the Gospel imperative as good news for the

poor, the captive, the blind and oppressed and for engaging children and young people in that good news. She is also passionate about social justice, particularly the full social inclusion of Aboriginal and Islander people in Australia.



## Jason Isileli Kioa

*Nominated by the  
Multicultural and Cross-cultural Reference Committee  
of the National Assembly*

### Resume

- President of the Tongan National Conference of the UCA
- Member of Assembly Standing Committee for three consecutive trienniums (2000-2009)
- Chairperson and Pastoral Relations for both the Bourke and Yarra Valley Presbyteries
- Chairperson of VicTas Synod Commission for Mission 2001-2006
- Minister at Leighmoor Parish 1991-1996

### Passions

Jason's passions are caring for human relationships in love, respect and dignity across cultures, race and creed, being good stewards of God's creation and the environment, the Christian faith and its ability to transform, reconciliation, and bringing meaning to life's situations and circumstances.



election of the President-Elect is based on character, ability to lead, experience in the church and faithfulness of discipleship.

He said the role of President exists to help the diverse church speak with one voice and connects the church with external parties including the government, international partners and others.

"The President witnesses and expresses the wholeness of the church for the sake of those we advocate for ... so that we have a unified message."

Nominee Rosemary Hudson Miller is Associate General Secretary of Mission Support at the Synod of Western Australia.

Ms Miller said: "My vision is for the church working together as people who seek to live out an authentic Christian faith in a multicultural and multi-faith Australian context."

Rev Dr Rob Bos is Director of the Pilgrim Learning Community within the Queensland Synod. He is the former National Consultant for the Assembly's Theology and Discipleship agency.

Dr Bos has worked extensively with Aboriginal communities and in distance education and believes the challenge for the church lies in remaining faithful to the witness of the Bible and taking seriously the rich spiritual and theological tradition.

Associate Professor Andrew Dutney, Principal of the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology in South Australia and Principal of Parkin-Wesley College has a long history in theological education and publishing believes that reconciliation is at the heart of the church and that the "vitality" of the church stems from the health and range of its congregations.

"We must be a church that transgresses and transcends whatever fractures and divides our world," he said.

Rev Jason Isileli Kioa is President of the Victorian Council of Churches and a member of Victorian Premier John Brumby's Advisory Committee on Multi-faith and Multiculturalism and Moderator of Victoria and Tasmania Synod.

"The church has rich and diverse traditions and we are being enriched by these diversities," he said.

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3 - 15 September 2009

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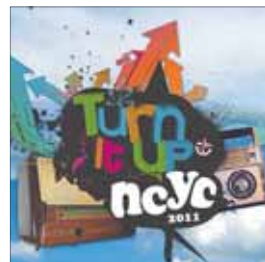
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# Testing issues for schools

By Elaine Rae

WHETHER YOU agree with the increased regime of testing or not, one of the key issues on the education agenda is the standard of literacy and numeracy.

Queensland Premier Anna Bligh saw the relatively low levels in last year's national testing as a trigger for the recently released *Masters Report*.

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Education Minister Julia Gillard have been unequivocal in their push for improved transparency and reporting of results and the need for a national curriculum.

CEO of Educang (the educational partnership between the Uniting and Anglican Churches) and Principal of Forest Lake College Suzanne Bain said the push for a national curriculum is changing the way teachers have to teach.

"Schools are dynamic people centred working environments charged with the responsibility of producing the very best educational outcomes for the young people in our care.

"In Australia, the pressure to meet and exceed national benchmarks in core subject areas is changing the nature of teachers' work by rightly drawing greater attention to the basics in literacy and numeracy," she said.

Ms Bain said the unrelenting pace of technological advances takes many teachers outside their basic university training and into the world of on-line and 24/7 teaching and learning, wikis, blogs and podcasts.

"In this new world teaching is being drawn away from content learning alone to processing volumes of content, making sense of information and solving problems and using that new knowledge wisely.

"Thus the work of the school leadership team is challenging and inspirational in nature, particularly in the light of erroneous perceptions created by the media's artificial league tables," said Ms Bain.

She said another responsibility of the leadership of the school was to create a teaching and learning environment which allowed teachers the space to develop their craft for the new era, taking on new teaching strategies and growing professionally as a result.

"When all is said and done, teachers and school leaders are still spurred on by the reward of the magic 'ahah' moment when the face of a young learner lights up with new knowledge gained.

"Many such moments of joy, though brief, provide the motivation to see the changes in which we are immersed in a positive way while continuing to make our schools challenging and inspiring places of learning."

While educators debate the benefits of national testing, there is one stark reality that testing exposes: the gap between the achievements of our Indigenous community and others.

This cannot continue and successful educators in this area,



A group discusses what it means to be a Uniting Church school at the Synod Schools' Commission seminar in May. Photo by Osker Lau

like Executive Director of the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute Dr Chris Sarra, are working to find answers.

Dr Sarra, like many others, believes the power teachers have to inspire their students should never be underestimated.

Within Uniting Church schools, Shalom College in Townsville specifically seeks to support Indigenous students and their families.

The recruitment, training and continuing development of teachers will also remain a critical issue in the future.

In May this year we witnessed a full-scale strike by Queensland State School teachers in search

of greater pay parity with their southern counterparts.

We demand a high level of academic expertise from our teachers but expect them to be generalists in a whole range of social areas as well.

When there are so many options available the question is how do we recruit and retain good staff?

If we wish them to also incorporate a Christian worldview into their teaching we are recruiting from an even smaller pool.

In December last year the new *National Goals for Educating Young Australians* was launched.

Two of the main goals were that Australian schooling should promote equity and excellence, and that all young Australians become successful learners, confident, creative individuals, and active, informed citizens.

What is most significant is actually the title which marked a change in emphasis from the Adelaide Declaration: *National Goals for Schooling*.

The emphasis has shifted from schooling to education with the recognition that education involves partnerships.

At the 2009 Independent Schools Queensland annual meeting, acting Director David Robertson cited the Review of Schools' Funding for the next four years and financial viability (and governance) as two significant issues facing independent schools in the future.

The demand for better teaching conditions, other increased costs and the pressure to keep fees from rising significantly in the current financial climate all impact on a school's ability to provide resources and service debt.

Moving to the future, the challenge for school boards is not new.

It is to ensure schools meet all their regulatory obligations and remain financially viable while providing an environment where teachers will want to teach and students will want to learn.

## EASY AS 1,2,3

From P.1

Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association (PMSA) chair Mr Des Robinson also agreed.

"The PMSA regards itself as an activity that is an extension of the mission of the Church," he said.

"Its objective is to expose our students to the Christian message and to demonstrate its relevance to life today.

"We do this by conducting educational programs and by practical examples presented in the daily life in our schools.

"The latter requires staff to understand Christian values, to uphold them and to demonstrate these in the daily relationships that are established with students, other staff and parents. This is required of all staff even though they may not be confirmed Christians," said Mr Robinson.

While many government run schools provide an excellent learning environment and commit to 'values' education, the autonomy afforded to Church owned or run schools enables that environment to be unashamedly Christian.

Executive Director of Catholic Education David Hutton said, "As Christian educators we have a challenging task in the current cultural milieu, but it is our vocation and ministry to bring the message of Jesus to our school communities.

"We need to recruit committed Christian educators and school board members and provide ongoing formation if we are to promote the reign of God in our schools."

What all these issues mean for Uniting Church schools is being explored by the Synod Schools Commission this year.

So what is the challenge for us as a Church?

Ms Rae urged Church members to take seriously our ministry with young people.

"So many hours between early childhood and adulthood are spent in a school environment ... let us as a Church acknowledge the worth of this ministry area," she said.



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For further information contact Rob Floyd, Associate Director, Relief and Development at Ph: (02) 8267 4221 Email: [rob.f@nat.uca.org.au](mailto:rob.f@nat.uca.org.au)

Applications close Friday June 19, 2009.



# Pushing the boundaries of service

By Mardi Lumsden

WITH AMNESTY International groups, Lifeline door knocks, Youngcare support groups and countless other activities in schools, it seems as though young people are passionate and active in supporting those less fortunate than themselves.

Many schools make an effort to support their local community, but some schools are able to take that passion one step further.

After a trip to Tonga with a group of students last year Unity College in Caloundra established a cultural exchange program with a school of the Free Wesley Church of Tonga.

Carmel O'Brien, Assistant to the Principal, Religious Education at Unity College said the experience was about building relationships.

"Amazing relationships were established as the children and families shared their island and culture with the Unity students.

"It was a delight to see our students responding to the different values that confronted them."

Calvary Christian College on Brisbane's south side also has a unique relationship with Tonga.

The College has conducted mission trips to Tonga for students since 2005 and from last year students as young as Year 6 were invited to attend.

Trip coordinator Karen Kolope said the experience gives a lot to the students who attend and the communities they visit.

"These trips provide opportunity for us who are so blessed materially to give to those who don't have the same facilities or equipment that we do," she said.

"In doing this we are able to share the love of God. The trips also provide opportunity for our students to share their faith in Jesus with others."

Each year the whole school community fundraises for the trip and people donate stationery and other school supplies for the school visited that year.

Organisations such as Antipodeans Abroad specialise in "educational and volunteer travel programs with a purpose".

Many Uniting Church and PMSA schools participate in the Antipodeans programs.

Michael Ellis is a teacher who has led Antipodeans tours to India, Vietnam and Peru.

The program includes two weeks abroad with one week spent working on a community project like painting a school.

"The opportunity provides young people with a unique experience," he said.

"They are not simply tourists, but actively contributing to

sustainable initiatives that make a real, tangible and long lasting difference."

Mr Ellis said living in local communities provides a life changing experience for some young people.

"As a teacher, this is such a wonderful experience to be a part of.

"Young people come home from such trips feeling very humble, having witnessed firsthand just how lucky we are to live in Australia, and they are basking with the glow that comes from having made a difference in another's life, regardless of how big or small that difference is."

# Having faith in teachers



SU Chaplain and Uniting Church member Stephanie Kennedy at work at Wellers Hill State School.  
Photo by Robert Scott

By Mardi Lumsden

PEOPLE GO into teaching professions for many reasons.

Perhaps they were inspired by a great teacher or determined that they could do better than a teacher they didn't like.

But coming in contact with so many young people every day

creates a special duty for teachers.

It is more than a duty of care. For many, it is the challenge of moulding students into the best citizens they can be.

For teachers who have a faith; be it Christian or other, expressing that faith in a delicate way can be quite a challenge.

Stephanie Kennedy is a Uniting

Church member and Scripture Union Chaplain at Wellers Hill State Primary School in Brisbane.

She sees over 750 students each week and said it was important to respect the secular environment of her role as pastoral carer for students, families and staff.

"There are clear demarcation zones within which I must operate.

Observing those limitations is for me, a matter of integrity," she said.

Ms Kennedy said she was amazed to see how well God had prepared her for her role as chaplain.

"My past experience as a missionary in Africa, and subsequent ability to speak Swahili has proven to be very helpful in communicating with some of the non-English-speaking refugee families," she said.

Ms Kennedy said her nursing background has also been useful, especially on school camps, and even losing her father when she was of school age has given her an understanding of and passion for helping children who are experiencing grief and loss.

"Modelling Christ in a secular workplace will often be judged by the authenticity of personal relationships," she said.

Kirwan Uniting Church member and associate professor in Human Geography at James Cook University in Townsville, Dr David King said his faith played an integral part in his career choice.

Dr King, who is also director of the Centre for Tropical Urban and Regional Planning and director of the Centre for Disaster Studies, said he has always had a passion for helping people and communities.

"When I was eight I got to reading missionary stories and I wanted to go exploring. I wanted to be a missionary teacher," he said.

He later began his career as a volunteer teacher in a Methodist High School in Africa.

Dr King said his research and teaching in social geography and development, specifically looking at Africa and Papua New Guinea, and his later work in disaster studies stemmed from his belief system.

"I've always had a strong interest in wanting to do things that might make the world a better place and wanting to help people who were less able, capable or fortunate," he said.

He said teachers need to respect the secular world in which they teach.

"I don't think it would be right to use lectures that students are paying for to preach to them.

"Caring, supporting and building is the core of the way I teach, but I don't express my faith directly in that format," he said.

"I am there to help and support all students regardless of their background."

Despite a number of years outside the institution of the church, Dr King said his ethos behind teaching did not change.

Dr King expresses his faith by volunteering on boards and councils, including that of the James Cook University Uniting Church College, John Flynn College.

"I do a lot of course advising, student advising and helping people sort out their academic problems," he said.

Dr King said he aspires to find ways to make things happen, rather than putting barriers in students' way.

Living a life that reflects the values of Christianity is something Vicky Jones strives to do.

As head of middle schooling at Clayfield College, Ms Jones said doing that required the development of a deep sense of self.

"In order to achieve this I work hard at being courageous, resourceful and open to others and their ideas," she said.

Ms Jones said she aims to make the theories and doctrines of Christian life, a tangible, liveable reality.

"I strongly believe that a spiritual community will provide both believers and nonbelievers with an experience of love," she said.

Ms Jones said the Gospels provided a fundamental basis for the development of a child's moral education and spiritual formation.

"Schools need to provide learning experiences that enable students to acquire useful information, skills and means to handle our changing world with confidence," she said.





Shalom College dancers embrace the rich culture of the school and community. Photo courtesy of Shalom College

## EDUCATION FACTS

### *Some interesting facts about Uniting Church schools in Queensland*

Moreton Bay College past student Donna Duggan works in Tanzania amongst some of the Maasai primary schools. Her work includes providing resources, increased teacher/student ratios and improved conditions so that students, through education, have increased choices for the future. [www.maasaiwanderings.com](http://www.maasaiwanderings.com)

The Uniting Church is involved in three ecumenical schools with Catholic Education office – Jubilee Primary School in Caven, Emmaus College in Jimboomba and Unity College in Caloundra.

Moreton Bay Boys' College will have its first Year Twelve graduates in 2010.

The Lakes College has a sister relationship with I-Shou International School in Kaoshiung, Taiwan and supports an orphanage in India.

Brisbane Boys' College, Clayfield College and Somerville House each have a program of Indigenous scholarships.

SCOTS PGC College caters for boarders from throughout Queensland, Northern Territory, New South Wales and Western Australia.

Forest Lake College has a cross with water flowing over it as the centrepiece in their courtyard.

In the few short years since it was taken over by the PMSA, Sunshine Coast Grammar School has moved from a totally independent school to one which now has chaplains, a purpose built chapel and a strong Christian emphasis.

12 000 students and 2000 staff attend or work at Uniting Church owned schools in Queensland - even more when you include the PMSA and cross-denominational schools.

More stories relating to issues of education and faith can be found at [www.schoolscommission.ucaweb.com.au](http://www.schoolscommission.ucaweb.com.au)

# Shalom looking forward

By John Harrison

THE CRYSTAL Creek campus of Shalom College is getting a makeover.

The campus, used for Indigenous young people disengaged from mainstream education, is an outdoor education centre half way between Townsville and Ingham.

The main campus of Shalom College, a K-12 boarding and day school supported by the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, is located in the western suburbs of Townsville. It is also getting new student accommodation facilities.

Since its foundation in 1994, Shalom College has racked up an impressive series of achievements.

The College has an enrolment of 400 day and boarding students across both primary and secondary schools.

Literacy and numeracy skills are emphasised at all levels of the College program. Students also have the opportunity to complete VET (vocational education and training) courses.

Over half the 2007 graduating Year 12 class completed both the senior certificate and a VET qualification.

However all of this doesn't

stop the College from having a culturally sensitive Christian Perspectives course at every year level, an elite sports program, and from encouraging students to participate in traditional dance.

We "actively encourage our students to embrace their cultural heritage providing opportunities for students to practise and learn traditional dances," said the College, and "the opportunity for students to perform in the local community".

Every year in July the College holds a NAIDOC festival.

An annual event from 5-12 July, NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee) Week is a national celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and an opportunity to recognise the contributions of Indigenous Australians in various fields.

For Shalom students it is "an exciting opportunity for students to share their culture with their peers and wider community. Students spend most of the year preparing themselves for this event with after school and lunch time practices, with students often learning and performing dances from a multitude of different cultures," the College website said.

The school theme this year is "Honouring our elders, nurturing our youth".

In 2007, the Shalom Academy of Sport was established to foster

elite athletes in the College. Four sports were chosen: netball, AFL, basketball and touch rugby.

Over 150 students (of a total College population of 400) participated in trials.

A number have already made representative teams. Local sports administrators in sports such as rowing and AFL have assisted the College develop the program.

The leadership of Shalom College is uncompromising in its commitment to helping Indigenous young people take control of their futures.

Chairman of the Board Rev Shayne Blackman said, "Our mission is the achievement of a better quality life for Indigenous Australians, equality of living standards across all strata of community life, and equality of cultural appreciation and acceptance at all levels. Education is the key to achieving this mission."

"The Board has committed the College to graduating students who will take with them leadership, management and business skills that can contribute to the general area of community development in a way that will enable our community to achieve the twin goals of self-determination and self-management so that we may better control our future."

## How did school influence your faith?

IN MY PRIMARY school in Bundaberg the entire school was separated into denominations for RE lessons.

Once a week, about 80 children were sent to a room where one poor lady tried to teach bible stories amongst misbehaving kids.

I didn't listen that much, however I did pay attention when the forms for attending Day Camp were handed out.

At high school, we started each year and concluded each term with services in the main Anglican Church.

While they did not seem to have much point to me, I thought, "If some people think this is important, I should respect it".

I did enjoy the occasional

church service I was musically involved in.

In Year 11, the RE teacher took a different approach. Instead of being lectured on God, we talked about contemporary ethical issues and the biblical approach.

I appreciated the discussions and debate that resulted.

I also lived at Grace College at the University of Queensland for three years.

While I wasn't involved in church related activities, many of the long-term friendships I formed there were instrumental in shaping my faith.

So my school and university life has incrementally impacted on the forming of my faith, even though I couldn't see it at the time.



More stories from Zac, Peter and Emma on page 16

# Film sets singer's career alight

By Kerry Brinknell

FOR US singer songwriter John Waller the film *Fireproof* launched his career to an international platform but his story has been in the making for 17 years.

Mr Waller's song *While I'm Waiting* is the *Fireproof* anthem.

From the age of 18 Mr Waller had a dream to become an international Christian artist, but he had to wait to see that dream fulfilled.

"To release my second album with the title song being *While I'm Waiting* it is just so my story," he explained.

"I understand waiting because I have waited on the Lord for many years to see a desire fulfilled."

Throughout Mr Waller's career, opportunities came and went and so did his dreams leaving him broken and at a point where he surrendered everything to God.

One of his greatest challenges has been his battle to overcome depression.

"Then God opened the door for me to move from Georgia to Colorado to help start a church and become the worship pastor," he said.

Mr Waller was inspired to write the song *While I'm Waiting* to express how he felt about his

journey of waiting on God for his dreams to be fulfilled.

"I wrote that song in about 10 minutes a couple of years ago," he said.

"God gave me that song to encourage me in that moment, but it was also for a greater purpose."

*Fireproof* writers Alex and Stephen Kendrick received hundreds of song submissions for the film's anthem, but it was when they heard Mr Waller's song that they were stirred to write the film's pivotal scene around it.

Despite the international success of *Fireproof* Mr Waller's desire for his music remains the same.

"I want people to take away from my music hope and encouragement in their journey."

For more information visit [www.johnwallermusic.com](http://www.johnwallermusic.com)

Thanks to Crossroad Distributors *Journey* has three copies of John Waller's latest album *While I'm Waiting* to give away.

Email your name and address to [journey@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:journey@ucaqld.com.au) (subject 'John Waller') or post to Journey, GPO Box 674 Brisbane QLD 4001

Singer John Waller said his success was worth waiting for. Photo courtesy of Crossroad Distributors

## Service – the real best job in the world

By Mardi Lumsden

AS THE world's media focused on a tiny island in the Whitsundays to watch Englishman Ben Southall be crowned with the 'best job in the world', hundreds of cleaners, cooks, hotel staff, grounds people, and administrators were nowhere to be seen.

They were, as Whitsunday Tourism Chaplain Terry Ayling puts it, already working in the best job in the world – service.

"80 percent of Australians are in the serving sector," said Mr Ayling.

"It doesn't matter whether you are working in finance or IT, at some stage in our life we are actually working in serving."

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics' 2008 Year Book Australia almost half a million Australians (or 5% of the workforce) work in the tourism and hospitality industry and almost one million people are employed in retail.

The Uniting Church has three tourism chaplains that

Mr Ayling is aware of; one based in the New South Wales Ski fields, a Frontier Services minister who also works as a chaplain to the resorts near Uluru, and Mr Ayling in the Whitsunday Islands.

After working as a congregational minister and assisting with church planting in New South Wales it struck Mr Ayling that getting people to go to church was perhaps not the best way to share the Gospel.

"What was more important

We need to value the people that we serve and the people who serve us.

was not getting people into the church, but getting the church into the community."

Mr Ayling strives to find the interface between the community service sector and the corporate sector and sees his work around the Whitsunday Islands as a stepping stone in that process.

"I think the Queensland Synod has been pretty brave and has given me a good run over the years in trying to bridge the gap

between the community sector (the Church) and the corporate sector."

Based on Hamilton Island, Mr Ayling said he works with three groups of people; guests at the resort, the staff of the resort, and the local residents on the island.

Possibly the biggest business on Hamilton Island is the wedding market.

Around 600 weddings take place on Hamilton Island every year, but Mr Ayling performs only about twenty of these.

"The perception of the Church and what a religious celebrant would bring to a wedding means the default for most people is to go for a civil celebrant."

Hamilton Island resort has around 1200 staff.

Mr Ayling said the average stay for staff in the housekeeping and food and beverage services is around three months.

He sees this ministry as a great opportunity for the Church to connect with people not only visiting the resorts, but also those working in what he calls the best job in the world.

"If we can create that sense of community then it is more likely that people will stay."

"We need to value the people that we serve and the people who serve us."

### SENIOR PASTOR

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Adelaide, South Australia



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A rare opportunity has arisen for a person with strong preaching, spiritual and personal gifts to be appointed to the role of Senior Pastor with the Aberfoyle Uniting Church. The role requires a person of evangelical theology who is blessed with spiritual and inspirational leadership qualities, and has the ability to minister to and grow a church of over a thousand worshippers.

We seek a leader of leaders, a person who is innovative and creative with the passion and ability to 'grow the Kingdom' working collaboratively with and through others. This special person will be required to identify with and make possible the ongoing public expression and achievement of the established Mission Statement and Faith Goals of the Aberfoyle Uniting Church. In essence these are to continue to develop the spiritual and numerical strength of the congregation across multiple campuses. It will involve developing and implementing strategies and programs that will bring people to Jesus - transforming them into his passionate disciples.

Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced people regardless of Christian denomination. The successful applicant must be able to work within the ethos and structures of the Uniting Church in Australia. The position is available from January 2010.

For more information and a copy of the 'Application Package' including Person and Position Description and Congregation Profile please email [Phil.Sutherland](mailto:Phil.Sutherland@AberfoyleUnitingChurch.com.au), Chairperson - Human Resources Team, Aberfoyle Uniting Church at [phil@sutherlandpeople.com.au](mailto:phil@sutherlandpeople.com.au).



# Manna from Kevin

By Jonathan Cornford, MANNA GUM

DURING APRIL many of us will have been showered with unlooked-for manna from Kevin, \$900 if you are lucky enough to be on an annual income below \$80 000. What then should we do with it?

The message from the Government is that we should use this money to consume our way out of recession.

The cash handout is part of a much larger overall economic stimulus package which has the ultimate aim of keeping money circulating through the economy.

This is undoubtedly necessary – while the amount that should be spent (and debt that is incurred) is debatable, it would be irresponsible just to let things collapse.

The more important question is how the money is spent.

In one sense this is a golden opportunity.

The much bigger issues of climate change, resource depletion and waste all require

a massive effort of spending and human energy to begin to shift our economy onto a less self-destructive footing.

Some of this is being done under the current package, things such as insulation rebates, although in a less than visionary manner.

However the purpose of the \$900 cash handout is simply to shop 'til you drop.

It is yet another development of the disturbing idea that a citizen's duty is to consume.

It says that even though the current crisis is a manifestation of our collective greed, and even though this greed is killing the planet and creating poverty, we are determined to do more of the same.

It is in such a context that Jesus calls us to do something different: "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it." (Matthew 7:13)



Image by Jonathan Cornford

The only responsible thing to do with such a massive splurge of public money is to put it towards healing.

There are many different ways in which this could be done and it is appropriate that we take time to actually think and talk about it.

Whether you use the money materially or symbolically is not important.

What is important is that it makes a statement: we need to change.

So here are five things you could do with your \$900 from Kevin:

1. Give it all to an overseas development project in a country hit hard by the food crisis – see [www.letsgiveitaway.org](http://www.letsgiveitaway.org).
2. Buy a 2000 litre rainwater tank (around \$600). If you own your

own home, plumb it into your toilet and/or washing machine. If you rent, buy a pump and make it your sole source of water for the garden.

3. Hold on to it for a year (see #5 below); when the Government's new Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme starts next year, buy \$900 worth of carbon credits (around 36 tonnes of carbon dioxide) and then rip them up so no-one else can use them. This is manifestly stupid, but so is the current design of the Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme.
4. Send it to your State Premier and ask them to put it towards a decent public transport system.
5. Withdraw it in cash from the bank and stick it under your mattress (don't do this if you

have a water bed). This will achieve precisely nothing, but it would be an interesting spiritual test of our attitude to money. You could also read the Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19:11-27) and ask yourself who is really the hero in this story.

Jonathan Cornford works for Manna Gum, an independent ministry committed to the fostering, understanding and practice of the social, economic and political implications of the Christian gospel.

Jonathan and his wife Kim will be conducting talks in Brisbane in the week of June 22 and in Townsville in late July and early August.

For more information contact [manna-gum@optusnet.com.au](mailto:manna-gum@optusnet.com.au)

## Faith Stories - Lu Senituli tells his story

LU SENITULI grew up in Brisbane, part of a family involved in what was then a Tongan Methodist congregation. When he left school at the end of Year 12 he also left home and the church.

With a diploma in business he started a life of wandering, but experimentation with alcohol and recreational drugs made it difficult to stick with anything.

He headed around Australia picking up seasonal work welding

and truck driving, but by the time he got back to Brisbane, his addictions were affecting his capacity to face every day responsibilities.

Like many addicts, he used alcohol and drugs to escape the scary world associated with mundane reality. At times he lost hope in life, feeling that there was no point in continuing.

His turning point was a conversation with a cab driver.

Mr Senituli had just finished work as a bouncer in a Fortitude Valley night club and was heading off to a drinking hole in Springwood.

The taxi driver was playing gospel music and opened up a conversation about faith. At first Mr Senituli was not interested and told him to "just drive".

However as the driver prayed for him, Mr Senituli found his body warmed from head to toe.

Stepping out of the cab he saw his surroundings with a new sense of hope and meaning.

The next morning Mr Senituli found himself in an Anglican church listening to a sermon on the parable of the prodigal son.

With help from the priest he was able to talk and pray through his newly found relationship with God, focusing on his Spirit-given desire to share hope with his friends.

Mr Senituli devoured the Scriptures as he rebuilt his life in God. He found a Uniting Church congregation who provided love and acceptance.

Over time Mr Senituli realised that the people in the church were human like anyone else, doing their best to serve God and their world. He enrolled at Trinity Theological College to study, supporting his family as a welder by day.

He has since served as a minister in Coopers Plains and Park Tongan Uniting Churches.

With his friends he also goes back to nightclubs and pubs to share a message of hope for people who are in danger of giving up on life.

*Faith Stories* is an eight week course on sharing faith.

This new resource developed by Graham Beattie, Duncan Macleod, Peter Armstrong and Jason Bray provides an opportunity to develop a 'cringe-free' approach to talking about faith with friends.

The DVD includes a photocopyable participant's manual and is available for \$100 from [duncan.macleod@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:duncan.macleod@ucaqld.com.au)



Lu Senituli in *Faith Stories*.  
Image courtesy of Red Earth Films

## June 6-9 Lifeline Bookfest

Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Brisbane



Photo courtesy of Lifeline

Over two million books across four kilometres of tables.

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For more information visit [www.lifelinebookfest.com](http://www.lifelinebookfest.com) or contact Anna Masci on 3250 1848 or [anna-maria.masci@lccq.org.au](mailto:anna-maria.masci@lccq.org.au).

**June 9-10, 9.30am-4.30pm. Social isolation of older people workshop** at Chermide Uniting Church. Host is Ted Smeaton of Inspiring Communities in Asset Based Community Development. \$200 for agency staff, \$25 for congregational members. Contact Sarah Lockwood on 9251 5249 or [training@ucco.org.au](mailto:training@ucco.org.au).

**June 16, 9.30am-12.30pm. UnitingWorld Support Group (Qld) meeting** at St Andrew's Hall, Ann St, Brisbane. Speaker is Bruce Mullan, UnitingWorld Associate Director Church Solidarity (Pacific). Contact Judith Finau on 3711 4622 or [ljfinau@dovenetq.net.au](mailto:ljfinau@dovenetq.net.au).

**June 17, 10.30am-12.30pm. Bald Hills Uniting Church concert and luncheon.** Featuring the Brothers James men's choir. Cost \$10. Contact Adele on 3261 7891 or Lesley on 3261 1997 or [lesleyfenney@gmail.com](mailto:lesleyfenney@gmail.com).

**June 18-19, 9.30am-4.30pm. Social isolation of older people workshop** at Amity Place, Woody Point. Host Ted Smeaton. \$200 for agency staff, \$25 for congregational members. Contact Sarah Lockwood on (03) 9251 5249 or [training@ucco.org.au](mailto:training@ucco.org.au).

**June 19-21, Partners in Ministry Retreat** at Alexandra Park Conference Centre. Open to all partners in ministry, studying to join ministry or previously in ministry. Contact Lyndelle Gunton on 3851 3844 or [agunton@westnet.com.au](mailto:agunton@westnet.com.au).

**June 19, 10am-2pm. Card and Games Day** at Kenmore Uniting Church Community Centre, 982 Moggill Rd. Whether you're a blast at bridge, mighty at mah-jong or you just sizzle at scrabble, you'll be sure to have a great time. Cost \$15. Contact Vi Hall on 3378 173 or Fran Kohler on 3278 1171 or [kohlara-f@people.net.au](mailto:kohlara-f@people.net.au).

**June 20-21. Assembly of Confessing Congregations event** at Iona West Uniting Church, West Mackay. Guest speaker Rev Dr Max Champion. Men's breakfast, seminars, worship and anniversary dinner. Contact Euan McDonald on 4951 3869, 0407 623 014 or [eandymcd@bigpond.net.au](mailto:eandymcd@bigpond.net.au).

**June 20, 7am-3pm. Monster Garage Sale** at Edmonton Uniting Church, Ravizza Drive, Edmonton. Contact Anita Brown on 4036 4199 or [anitarbrown@bigpond.com](mailto:anitarbrown@bigpond.com).

**June 20, 8am-3pm. Church Monster Book Fair** at Beachmere Uniting Church, Cnr Moreton Tce and Second Ave. Thousands of quality used books. Books, CDs, DVDs and records still wanted. Contact Isabel Cooper on 5496 8661 or [isabelc@bigpond.com](mailto:isabelc@bigpond.com).

**June 25, 10.30am-1.30pm. Annual Mission Thanksgiving Service** at St Andrew's Uniting Church, Ann St, Brisbane. Speaker Kathy Pereira. Frontier Services also involved. Contact Judith Finau on 3711 4622 or [ljfinau@dovenetq.net.au](mailto:ljfinau@dovenetq.net.au).

**June 26-July 20. Global Walking Exposure Trip** to North West Coast Sumatra, Jakarta and Bali, Indonesia. Contact Tanya Richards on 0430 403 783 or [rosotiger77@hotmail.com](mailto:rosotiger77@hotmail.com).

**June 27, 10am-8pm. PFA Reunion Camp** in Tinaroo. Contact Jim Clark (07) 4095 8224 or Marelle Brown on 3203 3081 or [dmbrown@bigpond.net.au](mailto:dmbrown@bigpond.net.au).

**July 6-11. South Pacific Regional Golden Jubilee Camp**, Grace College, University of Queensland, Brisbane. Contact Jan Maxwell on 3848 6833 or [janmax1@optusnet.com.au](mailto:janmax1@optusnet.com.au).

Upload your 'What's On' entries at [www.journeyonline.com.au](http://www.journeyonline.com.au). Items may be shortened due to space limitations.

## Diana Butler Bass book giveaway

AWARD WINNING author and independent scholar Dr Diana Butler Bass is presenting a number of conferences in Melbourne and Hobart between 30 June and 5 July.

In a collaboration with the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania's Mission Partnership Resource Unit, Dr Butler Bass will explore the emerging church and how to turn congregations into "spirited communities" as well as other issues that are vital for the future of the church.

Visit <http://mpru.victas.uca.org.au> and follow the links to

"From Congregations to Spirited Communities".

To celebrate the release of Dr Butler Bass' new book *A People's History of Christianity*, Journey has one copy of her award winning book *Christianity for the Rest of Us* to give away.

According to the review on [www.journeyonline.com.au](http://www.journeyonline.com.au), what makes *Christianity for the Rest of Us* different from many other "self-help books for churches"?

Send your answer, along with your name and address to [journey@ucaql.com.au](mailto:journey@ucaql.com.au) for your chance to win.



Diana Butler Bass.

Photo courtesy of [www.dianabutlerbass.com](http://www.dianabutlerbass.com)

## PYC to mark Golden Jubilee

THE PRESBYTERIAN Youth Choir (PYC) will be commemorating its 50th Anniversary with a weekend of celebration in August.

To take part contact David or Dianne on 4661 3527 or Christine on 3273 2159.

## Mandolins to sound in July

A CONCERT featuring 70 mandolins, mandolas, guitars and double bass with didgeridoo will be held at the St John's Cathedral on 373 Ann Street in Brisbane at 7.30pm on 11 July.

Admission is \$28 adult and \$25 concession/4MBS subscriber. Bookings made on 3847 1717 or at [www.4mbs.com.au](http://www.4mbs.com.au).

## Dr Chris Wright to visit

REV DR Chris Wright, International Director for Langham Partnership, will visit Brisbane on 20-21 June.

One of the world's eminent voices on Global Mission, his book *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's grand narrative* was voted *Christianity Today's* 2007 Mission / Global Affairs book of the year.

Langham Partnership, has been helping resource the developing, or "majority", world church for over 35 years through

its literature, scholarships and grassroots preaching programs.

As author, scholar and chair of Lausanne's Theology Working Group Dr Wright has a unique role and perspective on the exciting things God is doing in the world.

For more information visit [www.langhampartnership.org.au](http://www.langhampartnership.org.au) or call Wendy Toulmin, Executive Officer Langham Australia on (02) 4751 9036

## Keeping the peace in Robina

NEWLIFE UNITING Church Robina member and elder Heather Clark has a passion for keeping the peace.

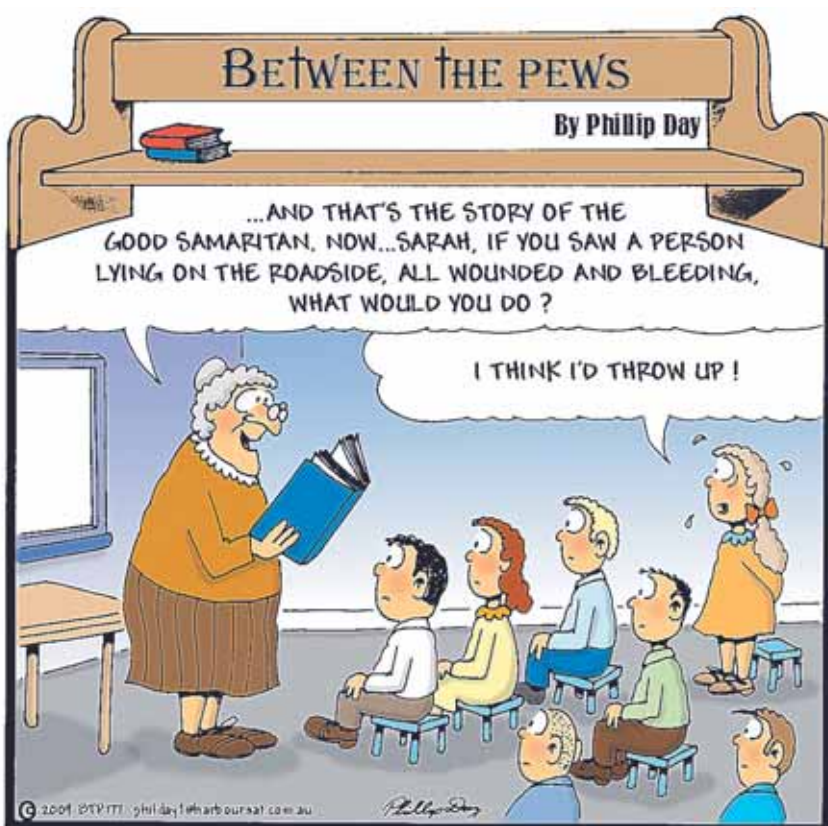
So much so that Ms Clark was recently appointed to the Queensland Working Party for Peacewise, a national, cross-denominational peacemaking organisation modelled after the Peacemakers Ministries in the USA and the work of Ken Sande.

On 29 July, Certified Christian Conciliator Judy Dabler will lead training sessions at the University of Queensland's Brisbane campus.

A Peacewise Refresher and Information evening will be held at Newlife Uniting Church at Robina on 17 June.

RSVP to Heather at [mhrclark@tpg.com.au](mailto:mhrclark@tpg.com.au) or 5592 2248.

For more information visit [www.peacewise.org.au](http://www.peacewise.org.au)





## Samson & Delilah

Written and directed by Warwick Thornton, Starring Rowan McNamara, Marissa Gibson, Rated MA

Reviewed by Meera Atkinson, staff writer for The Transit Lounge and the National Assembly.

This review first appeared on [www.thetransitlounge.com.au](http://www.thetransitlounge.com.au)

Critics have hailed *Samson & Delilah* "the best Australian film yet made".

Writer/director Warwick Thornton comes from the Katej people of Central Australia and *Samson & Delilah* begins in a small community in the central desert where two teenagers, played by Rowan McNamara and Marissa Gibson, fall in love.

But this is a love story, not a romance. The trajectory of this relationship is unpredictable, visceral and full of humour and paths.

When life in their remote community takes a turn for the worse, Samson and Delilah take off for Alice Springs.

Their world darkens and tragedy besets them but there isn't a whiff of self-pity in this saga.

Though little is said, much is evoked and the troubled tenderness that develops between Samson and Delilah as they struggle to find their way in the world is complex and rich with nuance.



*Samson & Delilah* is deeply intimate and its telling is refreshingly unburdened by the vapid and cliché-driven romantic conventions we're accustomed to.

Mr Thornton creates a tough, raw vision of young love and there is poetry in even the most brutal frames.

He gives us much in this film that lingers.

The performances by newcomers Rowan and Marissa are flawless and Mitjili Napanangka Gibson (Marissa's real-life grandmother), plays Delilah's artist grandmother, giving the film some of its most delightful moments.

For many Australians, the most uncomfortable segment will likely be the one in which Delilah — filthy, bloodied and strung out on petrol — tries to sell a painting on the streets of Alice.

This film reminds us that, despite our democratic and egalitarian foundations, Australians are not yet unified and reconciled and its first peoples remain outrageously disadvantaged and traumatised with inadequate resources to address either reality.

Mr Thornton avoids politicising this film and instead lets the power of a simple narrative carry the weight of the history that informs it.

*Samson & Delilah* was awarded the Camera d'Or at the Cannes film festival.

It stands as a reminder that Australian stories really do matter.

## Honoring Motherhood: Prayers, Ceremonies & Blessings

Edited and with introductions by Lynn L. Caruso, Skylight Paths Publishing, 2008, RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Nicole Hams, congregation secretary at St Paul's Uniting Church in Mackay and coordinator of St Paul's MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers) group.

*Honoring Motherhood* explores the seasons of motherhood via a collection of writings from various faith traditions and cultures, interspersed with anecdotes, prose and prayers.

Quotations are taken from Biblical scriptures, as well as Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu and Jewish writings, among others.

The prayers and blessings are mostly Christian, with others which could be used by those of other religions or no religion.

*Honoring Motherhood* shows that mothering is considered important and that mothers are respected in many cultures and faith traditions around the globe.

However it is impossible to ignore the American origins of the book, with chapter

introductions reflecting on aspects of nature and locations which would be unfamiliar to many Australians.

In addition a significant proportion of material comes from the writings and traditions of Native Americans which while interesting may have less relevance to Australian readers.

The writings are organised into chapters focusing on various seasons of mothering.

The first three chapters focus on maternal ancestors, expectant mothers and birth, and the mother/child relationship.

The fourth section contains ceremonies and blessings to cover many situations.

Together with other chapters, there are prayers and blessings for the expectant mother and child, adoptive parents and birth parents, single parents, grand-



parents, welcoming children at birth or adoption, miscarriage, and the death of a child.

The fifth chapter deals with loss, while the sixth section focuses on the 'divine mother' and is dominated by references to Mother Earth.

The last section however is my favourite.

It explores how being a mother equips us and affects how we relate to the rest of the world, "loving the world with the love cultivated in motherhood".

That insight alone made *Honoring Motherhood* worthwhile for me.

## A Lodging Along the Way: Life after death for everyone

By Ron J Ramsay, Self published, 2009

Reviewed by Mardi Lumsden, editor of *Journey*.

*A Lodging Along the Way* is an insightful look at the concepts of the spirit, life after death and the possibility of communication with the dead, all from a Christian perspective.

Respected author and retired Uniting Church minister Ron Ramsay treads carefully along a topic which is so often cast aside by many in church circles.

Personal accounts of para-normal experiences are mixed with scholarly and thorough research to make this book very accessible for people with an interest in such areas as life after death.

Biblical and faith reflections interspersed throughout the book continually remind the reader of the Christian perspective from which this book is written.

However, *A Lodging Along the Way* is not for everyone.

Although it is written in an easy to read format, this is a book for those who are interested in para-normal experience and how that relates to faith.

The book is for these readers not through any fault of its own, but because people will read it with their own prejudice.

As Mr Ramsay states, many Christians struggle to reconcile the conflict surrounding issues of the spirit world.

We are told from a young age that near death experiences, 'ghosts' and out-of-body experiences are things seen only in the movies.

We are warned that communicating with spirits is dealing with evil forces.

Mr Ramsay does not necessarily dispute this, but discusses the issues in an educated and



thoughtful way, opening the possibilities as he goes.

This is the story of Mr Ramsay's personal journey towards discovering and attempting to understand new knowledge of how the universe works.

*A Lodging Along the Way* is a very interesting read.

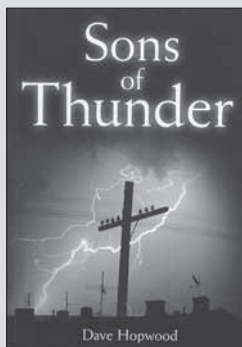
*A Lodging Along the Way* is available from the author.

Post to RJ Ramsay, PO Box 2717 Mansfield QLD 4122 or call 3420 3218

### 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](http://www.mosaicresources.com.au)

More reviews online at [www.journeyonline.com.au](http://www.journeyonline.com.au) including:



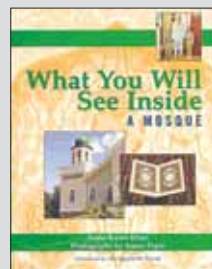
### Sons of Thunder

A novel by Dave Hopwood  
Authentic Media,  
2008  
RRP \$29.95



### Creative Ideas for Pastoral Liturgy: Marriage Services, Wedding Blessings and Anniversary Thanksgivings

By Jan Brind & Tessa Wilkinson  
Canterbury Press, 2009  
RRP \$64.95



### What You Will See Inside a Mosque

By Aisha Karen Khan  
(Photographs by Aaron Pepis)  
Skylight Paths  
Publishing, Woodstock,  
Vermont, USA  
RRP \$16.95



Councillor Nicole Johnston presents the winner's prize to Sarah McCauley at the grand opening. Photo by Barry Golding

# Graceville still makes a racquet

THE REFURBISHED Graceville Uniting Church tennis courts were reopened in April.

Opened in 1930, Graceville Uniting Church and hall were designed by Walter Taylor and are heritage listed and have a history of providing community access to the tennis courts and hall.

The Queensland Government's Gambling Community Benefit Fund recognised this commitment through the award of a \$25 790 grant to refurbish the courts.

## Sunday 7 June: Noosa Coastal

NOOSA COASTAL has two congregations: Tewantin and Noosa.

Noosa area is well known as a tourist hotspot so we play host to many visitors from around Australia and the world.

Please pray for the end of the economic crisis that is deeply affecting the people of our communities.

Even though Noosa is seen as an affluent community, over 50 per cent of the people live below the poverty line with a high percentage being single-parent families.

Give thanks for our faithful people, who are deeply committed to our Lord Jesus, and who work diligently to share the Good News.

Pray for the teams who serve the community through activities including community roast lunches, café church and community sausage sizzles, to name a few.

Praise God for the rich relationship we have with visitors who attend our services and their return visits when they are on holidays again.

Give thanks for the dedicated leaders who give their time and energy to hospital visitation, nursing home services and studies like *Living the Questions 2*.

Pray for our minister Scott, the elders, leaders and the spiritual life of our church.

## Sunday 14 June: Trinity Wellington Point and Thorneside

TRINITY WELLINGTON Point touches members of our community with the love of God through youth and children's ministry, Funfaris and Day Camp in school holidays and by supporting three school chaplains.

We support the local community centre with food and goods, deliver bread to needy families and are currently responding to Christian needs in Bali.

We run Alpha combined with three denominations, Carols by the Bay at Christmas and support the Redlands Easterfest.

We reach out to women through Café LiLaC, valuing them and providing relaxation and laughter.

Our new café church, led by our young people, provides

a monthly informal breakfast with creative worship.

Please pray for our outreaches and their staff.

Thorneside Uniting Church is a caring, mature age congregation celebrating its 60th anniversary this year.

We are centrally located and the only church in the suburb.

Our congregation has always been generous supporters of church mission and school chaplaincy.

Currently we have no ministry to local children and their parents, but our Church Council is looking at ways to reach them.

Amongst other outreach, contacts are being made through free monthly sausage sizzles and our annual garage sale.

Please pray these efforts will be God's will for those we are trying to reach. Also pray that God will raise up more leaders for his work at Thorneside.



Alyson Madson hands over Presidency of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship to Alistair Christie at the UCAF National Consultation in Brisbane in May as Uniting Church President Gregor Henderson and Assembly Associate General Secretary Glenda Blakefield look on. For three years the Queensland UCAF has been the National Committee. Their knitting project produced over 2400 rugs which have been distributed to disadvantaged people in Australia and throughout the world. The new committee, from NSW, will focus on reconnecting with Generation Y. Photo by Mardi Lumsden



A Fairtrade creation. Photo by Hudson Read

## Fairtrade fashion on show

BRISBANE'S ONLY World Fairtrade Day event was held on 9 May at the Bleeding Heart Gallery in Brisbane City.

Organised by Angie Andrews and a team of volunteers, the event began with a march from the Blackstar Roastery in West End to the Gallery.

Fashion designed and sewed by the West End Women's Sewing Group was modelled by young people whose mothers are a part of the group.

Band Peter B and the Homeless Souls performed as guests shopped in the Fairtrade fashion stalls.

A series of documentaries on the plight of women in third world countries reminded all of the heart-breaking circumstances in which some people live and our responsibility to raise awareness of and support for refugees in Australia.

## Sunday 21 June: Indooroopilly

INDOOROOPILLY UNITING Church is situated across the street from one of Queensland's largest shopping centres and a major Translink interchange - strategic for mission.

Each Sunday three diverse worship services cater for the traditional, contemporary and everything in-between.

The evening service is enhanced by three music teams, a kids' program (yes, in the evening) and young adult youth groups seeking to connect with worship, discipleship and service.

The ministry team consists of Rev Henry Swindon, Rev David MacGregor and youth minister Josie Nottle.

The worship, witness and service of the congregation are enhanced by: Circles of Care pastoral care program which encompasses almost 4800 people in our community, with Christ-based neighbour-to-neighbour care at its core,

seven vision and action groups, and two young adult Bible study groups.

At the forefront of our church's life is the impending major redevelopment with the outcome in late 2010 of a site which has a greatly improved and open street frontage, appropriate access for those dealing with age, disability or young children and enhanced office and tech facilities.

Please pray for:

- Our redevelopment management committee
- Our vision and action groups as they discern God's leading into future mission
- The congregation as they relocate into temporary facilities onsite
- Our children, young people and families as they deal with the demands of daily living; and for our parents seeking to nurture young people in the way of Christ
- Our high percentage of retired members and the challenges of offering appropriate care and service
- Our ministry team as they work among the congregation.





# Homeless heroes

In response to May *Journey* I'd like to share an attitude-changing experience I had this year. I was invited to go on a 'street retreat' where we would live as homeless people for a few days.

As I thought through what this would mean I realised I would have to encounter issues such as how to maintain basic hygiene, how to get food, what I would do if I needed to go to the toilet during the night, and would I be able to sleep?

These concerns tapped into issues of pride and self-respect. Things I take for granted would actually be hurdles to overcome. It was a daunting prospect to say the least.

The more I thought it through, the more I came to realise what amazingly courageous and resourceful people the homeless (and many other marginalised people) are; just to be able to survive and to have the will to keep living, especially as many of them also have histories of abuse and trauma.

Sadly the proposed retreat was put on hold, but I now see my ability to render assistance to a homeless person not as an act of graciousness and generosity on my part, but as an opportunity to honour one of our nation's unsung heroes.

Helen Prior  
Upper Mt Gravatt



## Why tamper with tradition?

We seem to have had a lot of letters and articles about 'Progressive Christianity' for months.

How about having a more balanced paper and have some articles written by well known Christians who certainly would not support 'Progressive Christianity'?

I noticed that the letter from the Lay Forum thinks the more progressive course, *Living the Questions* should be considered over the *Alpha Course*.

The *Alpha Course* has brought hundreds, perhaps thousands, into a relationship

with Jesus and people's lives have been transformed.

I noticed too that Basil Gillespie said our church is in the doldrums today because of old time graduates from Sunday School.

I had some wonderful teachers when I was growing up who showed me what Christianity is all about and I have tried to emulate them.

I believe that the church is in the doldrums because of a lack of prayer.

Marjorie Butler  
Atherton



## Who is Jesus?

If we are to believe that Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life", then that is what, or who, he is.

I believe that many churches have the wrong idea about what Jesus was saying when he said, "Ye must be born again, and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit."

I believe that he was saying

that children of men are flesh and children of God are spirit.

The miracles were done spiritually, not physically.

Miracles are simply things that we do not understand as humans, but will understand as spiritual beings.

Peter Knipe  
Redland Bay



## CLASSIFIEDS

### Accommodation

**Holiday unit**, modern, pool. 100m from Kings Beach Caloundra from \$360/wk. Ph Ray 0427990161.

**London B & B**. Easy city access; lge double room, ensuite, self-catering. Reas rates. *rachel@brockleybandb.fsnet.co.uk* Ph/Fax: 001144.2086946538.

Email your classified advertisements to [mardi.lumsden@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:mardi.lumsden@ucaqld.com.au) or fax 3377 9717

## Charity truths almost revealed

I appreciated the opportunity to be interviewed for the lead article, *Charity: Its Truths Revealed*, in the May edition of *Journey*.

It was good to be able to explain the five Shared Values of Lifeline Community Care Qld – the same values being shared across the whole of UnitingCare Qld.

The article mentions however just three of those shared values: respect (we accept and honour diversity, uniqueness and contribution), compassion (through our understanding and empathy for others we bring holistic

care, hope and inspiration) and justice (we commit to focus on the needs of the people we serve, and to work for a fair, just and sustainable society).

Unfortunately the article failed to include the other two Shared Values; working together and leading through learning.

As one of the chaplains who teaches the values within Lifeline I refer to the first three – respect, compassion and justice – as 'foundational values' because they address identity and 'being'.

The other two – working together and leading through

learning - I call 'strategic values' because they express how we seek to live out our mission.

Working together affirms that we value and appreciate the richness of individual contributions, partnerships and teamwork.

Leading through learning is about having a culture that encourages innovation and supports learning.

Graham Beattie  
Chaplain Lifeline  
Community Care  
Queensland



## Feed the hungry

Many years ago I was a member of the Methodist Youth Choir which rehearsed in Wesley House.

One night a man 'down on his luck' came in and asked Bruce Dingle, son of Rev Dingle for money.

He didn't give him money, but took him to the Canberra Hotel corner of Edward and Ann Streets and bought him a meal.

I have never forgotten that and thought what a sensible idea.

Cash can be spent on anything!

Val Ogilvie  
Indooroopilly



## Human Rights left to politics

The conference to which Penny Monger (letters May *Journey*) refers seems to have been called off as a result of the appointment by the Commonwealth Government of a National Human Rights Consultation and the subsequent amendment of a 'Charter of Human Rights'.

Father Frank Bernnan S.J as chair of the National Human Rights Consultation believes in the process, as does Ms Monger.

In the Easter *Focus* Archbishop Aspinall queried the possible negative side of a charter of rights and the possibility of the charters of rights unintentionally shifting the balance of powers between parliaments, bureaucracies and the courts.

Australia and the USA have written Constitutions and if the Australian one is to be amended or modified, it should be amended in accordance with section 128 of our Constitution.

If the Commonwealth Government and others wish

to engage the Australian people in discussion about Human Rights it should be done as part of our political process.

No authoritative source has been shown by the Government and its appointees as to the legal effect of what could be about to be proposed.

Two of the four members of the Government appointed committee are on the public record as having a definitive view (George Brandis *Spectator Australia* February 2009).

In these circumstances I agree with the action of the silent majority who ignored the Sydney meeting referred to by Ms Monger.

I suggest that with nine Parliaments elected by universal suffrage, law reform is not beyond our capacity to deal with any legal or reform problem.

J.O Gierke  
Sherwood



## Message in a breast

I'm surprised that the article on the Micah Challenge (May *Journey*) used the infant formula bottle in its slogan and visual.

I understand that one of the greatest threats to child health worldwide is the promotion of bottle feeding in developing countries by infant formula manufacturers.

Maintaining hygiene is far more difficult when bottles are used and formula doesn't have mothers' natural antibodies in it.

The Bougeureau painting on Page 8 of the May *Journey* would have provided a much more appropriate vehicle for promoting the cause of infant health.

And "Message in a breast" might be a better slogan.

Anne Hobson  
Theodore



## Diverse strength

One of the strengths of the Uniting Church has been its diversity.

Within that framework of diversity, there will be differences and tensions.

What concerns me is the tenor of some letters to the editor where differences turn to name calling and personal criticism.

For example, to label someone whose opinion differs from yours "non-thinking, safety zone of old time Sunday School graduates" is unhelpful.

By all means let's discuss our differences, but let's stick to issues, not personalities.

Russ Clark  
Mareeba



Send your letters to [journey@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:journey@ucaqld.com.au)  
or  
Journey GPO Box 674, Brisbane QLD 4001.  
Letters may be edited  
due to space limitations.

# How did school influence your faith?

## Zac Halliday

SCHOOL AND faith; they interlock like a puzzle for me.

My faith was born at school and without my faith I don't know where I would be at school.

My Christian beliefs give me an identity at school, at home and even in the wider community.

Without such beliefs my whole life would be leading a different course probably, for the worse.

Through my lower years at school I was confronted and challenged by many differing sets of beliefs and faiths.

I was, in my eyes, a piece of clay ready to be moulded into a masterpiece.

This period of my life continued until I attended the Inter School Christian Fellowship (ISCF) where I was told of a God who loved and cared for me no matter what I had done and what I was going to do.

This idea seemed great - forgiveness for whatever action I committed and a grace that I couldn't experience anywhere else.

As I began this journey it became clear to me that there was more to life than just being born, living and finally dying.

This purpose was addressed in a core meeting of ISCF and this was when I finally decided that I would legitimately give my life to Christ.

This step was the greatest moment in my life and I began to live life with a new found love and aspiration.

All this was given to me through God's grace and I discovered his love and grace for me at school.

Without school I wouldn't have found a solid Christian friendship group, a church home and finally, and definitely best, a God who has an undeniable love for me.



## Peter Morris

SCHOOL, FOR me, reinforced and complemented the faith that existed within my family.

I attended a Methodist boys' school in Adelaide where I later returned as a teacher.

I viewed some of the teachers there as mentors, but school chaplain Kyle Waters made a lasting impression on me and confirmed my faith and involvement in the church.

Kyle's combination of personality and faith was infectious. He was an outgoing, exuberant character and he had the most wonderful raucous laugh that lit up the building, not just the room.

Teaching has helped me focus on faith in action.

My wife Antoinette and I have travelled to Fiji and Tonga as missionaries where I was a teacher and we shared our faith.

The Methodist tradition of service is something that has always struck a chord with me - to serve with selflessness. It has been incredibly rewarding.

I've always tried to follow what one of my former principals said: "You can be the best pastor only by being the best teacher."

Volunteering through the Frontier Services Outback Links program is an extension of this.

Since retiring from teaching we've done five placements in remote Queensland.

I've been teaching children mainly of primary school age, some of whom have never been to a school or sat in a real classroom before.

It's a very different teaching experience but it continues to give me a platform to live my faith.

I strive to be the best I can be and hope the kids will take on the positive from that.

For more information visit [www.frontierservices.org/outbacklinks](http://www.frontierservices.org/outbacklinks)

## Emma Sievwright

MY FAITH really began when I started going to JOLT (Jesus Over Lunch Time), our school's Christian lunchtime group run by Pastor Taylor.

Initially my family chose Grammar as it was a non-denominational school.

Even though I had always believed in

God and Jesus I wouldn't have considered myself to be religious.

From going to JOLT I gained an awesome relationship with God which, as I learned more through reading the Bible, has only improved and become stronger.

Christian Studies had always interested me because it is such an amazingly cool concept and because the more I learned

the more I wanted to know.

The way that Christian Studies is taught was appealing because I never felt pressured to be interested.

Jesus appeals to me because he is not fickle like some teenagers can be, but displays constant love and is always there for me.

I talk to him a lot during sport, like

on the weekend I played my first tennis tournament and asked him to help me be calm and relaxed and I was.

A Bible verse which encourages me is Philippians 4:13.

"I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me."

This verse is very true for me and helps with my faith.

## Commemorating 100 years of our family's funeral care...

In 1909, Alexander Gow made a commitment to Queenslanders.

In 2009 that commitment continues, and we're celebrating by doing something special.

Whenever our family company conducts a funeral service for your family, and everything is settled - we'll honour our 100 years of tradition by donating \$100 to your favourite charity.

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