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## BIG STORIES

### 2008 Mission and Service Fund snapshot

"There is a part we each need to play as we navigate our way through the financial crisis." **Rev Bruce Johnson**

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### The real North Korea

Amy Goodhew's moving visit to UnitingWorld projects in North Korea.



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# FLOOD OF TEARS

## Assembly 2009



Rev Gregor Henderson blesses Rev Alistair Macrae as he hands on the presidency of the Uniting Church. Looking on are Mr Macrae's chaplains Rev Ji Zhang and Rev Jenny Tymms and Assembly General Secretary Rev Terence Corkin

THE 12th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, held in Sydney in July, was filled with tears; tears of sorrow, joy, regret, appreciation, grief, and sometimes frustration.

Despite all the emotions flowing through the Assembly meeting much was accomplished by the triennial peak decision-making meeting, including several far-reaching reforms.

New relationships were forged

and old relationships strengthened across the divides of gender, race, geography and belief.

### Coming and going

The Assembly welcomed new President Rev Alistair Macrae. Guests from around Australia, overseas partner churches, and other denominations and faiths were a part of his installation at the opening service.

A rousing chorus sang as Mr Macrae knelt with closed eyes while retiring President Rev Gregor Henderson prayed for him.

In an emotional moment Mr Henderson passed his stole and cross, along with the pride and honour of beginning the role, to the new Assembly President.

In his sermon on the Assembly theme Living Water Thirsty Land Mr Macrae called the church

to leave behind the "demonic preoccupation with survival" and risk everything to share the sacred water of Jesus.

Tears of appreciation were shed during the farewell to outgoing President Rev Gregor Henderson.

Mr Henderson shared his pride at having led the church through a period of renewal and growth.

"Wherever I travelled, there have been church members with

hospitality and receptivity to what I have to share, with shared faith and love," he said.

Mr Henderson honoured those with whom he had served over the past three years.

He choked back tears himself as he thanked those who had supported him through the illness of his wife Alison who died in 2007.

Continued P.7

# Preparing to feed our thirst

AS I WRITE this I am preparing to travel to Sydney to attend the 12th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia.

At the forefront of my mind are the questions, "How will this Assembly impact upon our life in Queensland?" and "How is it relevant to our current financial situation?"

I was heartened to read the article about our new President of the Assembly in the last *Journey*.

His Assembly theme *Living Water, Thirsty Land* and his question "Do we go into shutdown and fear mode, or consider that God wants us to do and be something different" resonated with my own thinking about our life and ministry together.

However the Assembly's vision will not make this a reality unless each congregation seeks to live out its calling with passion and creativity.

*On the Way Together* was a theme that I offered to the

2008 Synod. It turned out to be appropriate in the light of our financial situation.

However it too needs to be embraced as we re-shape our sense of what it means to be the Uniting Church in Queensland.

We struggle against fragmentation. We can all find ourselves swamped by the issues that confront our congregation, our presbytery, our UnitingCare

If we stopped seeing the councils of the Uniting Church as ... controlling authorities, we would find ourselves surrounded by a wealth of resources that could fire up local imagination.

agency or within the Synod and forget that each part is one organ or limb in the body of Christ.

The fear and pessimism created by the GFC and the ageing of our church can cause us to lose our sense of calling.

We see ourselves competing with each other for limited resources; each one fighting

to hold onto the resources we currently hold at our disposal.

We need to remember Paul's words; when one part of the body suffers we suffer together and when one part rejoices we rejoice together.

Without recognising it, we find ourselves operating as if there is a hierarchy of councils in the Church and we look to the Assembly or Synod to provide answers for us.

We expect the President or Moderator to tell us how to solve the Church's problems.

However, within our Uniting Church polity, the answers need to come from congregations and those who serve on the frontlines of our agencies.

I invite you to consider with me some questions that might help us take bold steps together.

How is God calling your congregation to make his kingdom visible where you are?

Most of our congregations

## Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



were established by people with creativity and passion, which drove them to step out into new places so people might hear the message of Christ.

What are the new ways Christ is calling you to engage in worship, witness and service? Do you share the passion of our forebears to see lives transformed by Christ?

How do you link with other congregations in your region, supporting one another and sharing resources so that we might be more effective?

How can your presbytery be more effective in supporting you and equipping you in your task?

What might the Synod do to enhance your mission?

Are there opportunities to partner with a UnitingCare agency in serving your community in the name of Christ?

Is there a school associated with the Uniting Church that might value your partnership in mission? How might the Moderator assist you?

As you look beyond the Uniting Church to work with other denominations, are there resources of the Assembly Christian Unity Working Group that might help that co-operation? If you were to look overseas, can UnitingWorld provide wisdom

and support in building links with our partner churches?

If we stopped seeing the councils of the Uniting Church as administrative bodies or controlling authorities, we would find ourselves surrounded by a wealth of resources that could fire up local imagination.

When the *Basis of Union* speaks of the congregation being "the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ", it does not intend us to believe that the congregation is the whole church.

We can only participate fully in the mission of God when we recognise our own limitations and look at ways we can make the pilgrim journey together.

The new President of the Assembly has drawn our attention to the deep spiritual thirst that pervades our nation and reminds us that we, who have received of the living water, are commissioned to share that living water in a thirsty land.

God is still seeking to reconcile the world to himself, and he has chosen to invite us to share with Christ in that mission. Let us listen to that call and respond in trust and obedience.

## Assembly: A song and dance

COVERING AN Assembly or Synod meeting is always interesting.

Reporting starts before the first session of each day and ends after the last session when most people are wrapped up in bed.

The 12th Assembly media team included staff from the communications units of the WA Synod, Synod of NSW and the ACT, Synod of VIC and TAS, QLD Synod, the Assembly, UnitingWorld, and UnitingJustice.

The team ranged from people who had covered six Assembly meetings to those who did not

know what it was until this year.

The breadth of knowledge amongst these people is amazing.

They are leading professionals in the field of communications and all have a profound commitment to the Uniting Church.

In this edition of *Journey* we give you an overview of the major decisions made by the 12th Assembly, but the decisions are only half of the story and half of the experience.

There are long journeys on the way to these decisions, friendships formed, tears shed and joys celebrated.

If you want to read about

moving visits to Uniting Churches in Sydney, the powerful (and often life threatening) witness of members of our overseas partner churches, the joy of inclusion felt by ecumenical partners and people of other faiths, and much more, visit [assembly2009.uca.org.au](http://assembly2009.uca.org.au).

And if there is one thing the *Journey* archives of Assembly meetings is not short of it is photos of liturgical dance.

So below is the 12th Assembly media team in one more shot ... this time with feeling!

Mardi Lumsden  
Editor



## Sign of the times



GLASSHOUSE Country Uniting Church minister Rev George Woodward often receives suggestions from passers-by for the wording for their church sign. The congregation use their sign, located on a major road on the Sunshine Coast, to connect with countless people driving by.

Send your Sign of the Times to [journey@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:journey@ucaqld.com.au).

Photo by Chris Bell



# A new wing and a prayer

By Mardi Lumsden

HUNDREDS OF staff, patients and Uniting Church representatives joined Queensland Governor Penelope Wensley AO to officially open the new East Wing of the Wesley Hospital on 9 July.

The nine level \$102 million acute care facility incorporates a day surgery, four acute care wards, two cardio-vascular wards (including a new coronary care unit), floors dedicated to rehabilitation and clinical research and a new auditorium which will house the Wesley Hospital art collection.

Governor Wensley AO said the completion of the East Wing, financed with the assistance of a U.C.I.S loan, was a significant achievement that sets new benchmarks in patient care and research.

"My pride is surely matched by those in the Uniting Church and UnitingCare for this admirable achievement," she said.

"John Wesley might also feel justified pride.

"Thank you to the Uniting Church and to UnitingCare and those who support them for their ongoing concern and commitment to the community.

"You are making a great



The unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the opening of the Wesley Hospital East Wing. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

investment in the future of Queensland."

Wesley Hospital General Manager Gerard Wyvill said the development was part of the 2007 Synod commitment to the staged growth of the hospital and commended Rev Ray Crompton's lead in fundraising campaigns.

CEO of UnitingCare Health Richard Royle said the new wing was completed under budget and

early and reminded listeners that it is the people behind the Wesley that makes it what it is today.

"It's the staff that makes the hospital ... they moved 178 patients in four days without a hitch," he said.

"Today is as much a celebration for the Uniting Church as it is for the Wesley Hospital."

CEO of UnitingCare Queensland Anne Cross said

it was an imperative of the church that faith needs to be expressed in action.

"The East Wing is a practical expression of UnitingCare's commitment to the community," she said.

Ms Cross said the new wing was more than just a state-of-the-art facility; it represented care based on the compassion of Christ and is a

milestone for UnitingCare and the Church.

Official proceedings were finished with moderator Bruce Johnson blessing the new wing and the work of the Wesley Hospital staff.

Mr Johnson and Governor Wensley AO unveiled a commemorative plaque while members of the Australian Girls Choir performed.

## Backflip on gaming policy

By Mardi Lumsden

AFTER A shock response from community groups and churches, including a letter from Queensland Synod Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson, Premier Anna Bligh has retracted the decision to allow the use of \$50 and \$100 notes in electronic gaming machines.

As reported in *The Courier Mail*, the Premier has also

declared that any proposed future changes to gaming arrangements must be approved by the Cabinet, not simply by the Minister.

Rev Johnson said the Uniting Church in Queensland has had a long expressed concern about the social impact of gambling, especially gaming machines.

He told Premier Bligh that he was disappointed in the lack of consultation with the Responsible

Gambling Advisory Committee (RGAC).

"It is with serious consternation that I read in the *Courier Mail* that the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading, Mr Peter Lawlor MP, decided to reverse the commitment made in the Queensland Responsible Gambling Strategy that note acceptors would not be able to accept \$50 and \$100 notes into

electronic gaming machines," he said.

Rev Dr Noel Preston, who represents the Heads of Churches on this Responsible Gambling Advisory Committee, said Mr Lawlor did not consult the RGAC until after the event and at the insistence of the Premier.

Dr Preston also said he was impressed by the Premier's response.

"She has indicated not only her strong stance on gambling but her strong faith in the views of community and church on this question."

Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland Community Care General Manager Derek Tuffield, who was quoted in the original *Courier Mail* article, said he was also happy with the outcome.

"I understand the Premier has taken a strong stance on this issue and that the Premium Play areas in casinos will remain at \$20 limits of acceptance," he said.

"This is a great outcome and shows the Premier's commitment to the Responsible Gambling Strategy in Queensland."

## Fiji needs prayer

THE UNITING Church in Australia has offered its prayerful support for the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma, after four Methodist Church leaders were

detained at the Army Camp on 22 July.

The Methodist Church recently made a decision to continue with its annual Conference in August,

despite a ban imposed by the current military regime.

President of the Uniting Church in Australia Rev Alistair Macrae has written to the leaders of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma, offering prayers of support and solidarity.

In his communication, Mr Macrae said, "You will be aware

that the Uniting Church Assembly, in its triennial meeting, has been receiving reports about developments with deep concern; and during our meeting prayed for you all on a number of occasions.

"Please be assured of our solidarity with you in prayer and in any other ways that our sisters

and brothers in the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma may consider helpful."

Mr Macrae said it was an extremely anxious time for all involved and the Uniting Church would continue to communicate in whatever ways possible to maintain contact with their partner church.

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# Making athletes of the Spirit

By Priscilla Raepom

MAKING ATHLETES of the Spirit was the order of the day at the South Pacific region's Camp Farthest Out (CFO) 50th Anniversary celebrations held in Brisbane in July.

Coordinator Cheryl Monroe said the week-long event attended by 110 participants from various denominations in Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Tonga, New Zealand and Australia was an inter-generational camp, aimed at achieving a holistic balance of the body, mind and spirit.

Camp Farthest Out president-elect Dr Sue Fairley said the concept was founded by American Glenn Clark (1882-1956) a professor of English and athletics coach who believed that in order for people to live the kingdom of God lifestyle, they had to do spiritual training like an athlete does.

Ms Monroe said the program is designed to develop the wholeness of the spiritual life so participants can learn how to practise or

experience the presence of God in every area of their lives.

Activities included 'devotion with motion', using the body to worship God; 'creatives', using the mind's creative potential to worship God; and prayer and meditation.

Dr Fairley said the idea was to challenge people to go beyond in their relationship with God.

"As Christians, how much time do we put in training ... being athletes of the Spirit?" she asked.

Dr Fairley said with the event's closing theme, *Forward to God's future*, the participants went home stimulated, encouraged and inspired to continue being athletes of the Spirit.

"And with a renewed awareness that they were not an athlete alone, but part of a team," Ms Monroe added.

Dr Fairley will commence as CFO president next year, the first woman ever to hold the post and the second from the region.

CFO is represented in 30 countries around the world and



Participants taking part in a devotion in motion activity during the camp. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

has initiated the 9 o'clock Prayer, a belt of prayer around the world which begins with a phrase from the Lord's Prayer ... "thy

kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me."

For more information contact Dr Fairley on 3842 4001, [sfairley@uq.edu.au](mailto:sfairley@uq.edu.au) or visit [www.cfo.international.org](http://www.cfo.international.org)

## Wii a winner in aged and community care

By Krista Janson

A BLUE Care evaluation report has revealed widespread enthusiasm among staff about the

physical and psychosocial benefits of Nintendo Wii use in aged and community care services.

Data collected from 53 Blue Care services throughout

Queensland and northern New South Wales has shown young disabled clients and able-bodied elderly clients benefit most from the use of the technology.

Blue Care Business Improvement Officer (Best Practice) Dr Helen Higgins said the organisation decided to evaluate the use of Nintendo Wiis by clients in its nursing homes, respite centres and community care centres after the technology was introduced in mid 2008.

"One of the most interesting outcomes of the evaluation was the agreement and enthusiasm among staff about the physical and psychosocial benefits of using Wii," Dr Higgins said.

"The benefits of such technology have been noted in research literature before, but mostly in young disabled populations within educational settings, not so much in aged and community care."

The literature suggests that the therapeutic use of Wii technology can have a positive effect on self-esteem, memory, concentration and social interaction.

"Wii games can be used in a graded fashion to enhance physical functioning such as range of motion, stability, balance,

weight bearing, movement and coordination and visual tracking," Dr Higgins said.

"The technology also allows elderly people the opportunity to perform virtual activities they can no longer manage in reality which helps them identify with their former self. The activities can also provide an opportunity for social interaction and a sense of community."

"Blue Care services are using Nintendo Wiis in structured programs and for group and individual activities, with the most popular game being ten-pin bowling."

Dr Higgins said Blue Care recognised the importance of assessing each client's condition and abilities before their involvement in any Wii program and understand that staff supervision and training is important.

Blue Care will present the findings of its Wii evaluation report at the International Health in Transition Conference in Adelaide this month.



A student teaches a Blue Care resident of Yurana Aged Care Facility, Springwood, how to play Nintendo Wii ten pin bowling. Photo courtesy of Blue Care



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# on the way together

## Mission and Service Fund 2008 snapshot



The United Church  
in Australia  
Queensland Synod

As the Body of Christ looking to the future together, there is a part that we each need to play as we navigate our way through the financial crisis.



The Mission and Service Fund is the primary way we fund the United Church Queensland Synod. The Mission and Service Fund provides support for ministry and mission activities which include theological education, presbyteries, chaplaincy, administration of church resources, payroll and supporting ministry in rural and remote areas.

The following snapshot is to give you a further update on the activities of the Mission and Service Fund for 2008. It shows the sources of income into the fund and the way that money was spent. It notes that the deficit for this fund during 2008 was \$340,000.

As mentioned in my *Journey* column last month, over many years U.C.I.S has been a significant contributor to the fund, but is now in a position where it is unable to do so. Although adjustments have been made, further actions need to be taken as we move forward.

As the Body of Christ, we need to consider how we will respond to this challenge.

Now you are the body of Christ,  
and each one of you is a part of it.  
1 Corinthians 12:27

Please read the information displayed, refer to the further information and stories on the Synod website ([www.ucaqld.com.au](http://www.ucaqld.com.au)) and consider what part you can play.

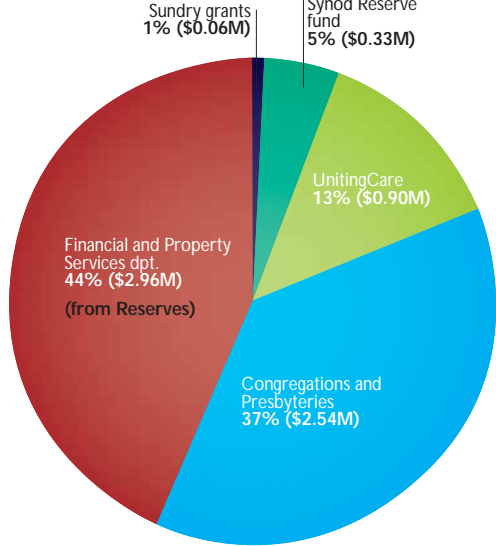
Is this the opportunity to consider alternative ways for determining which activities should be funded and how best to resource them?

Can individuals and congregations increase their giving to the Mission and Service Fund to support ministry in the wider church?

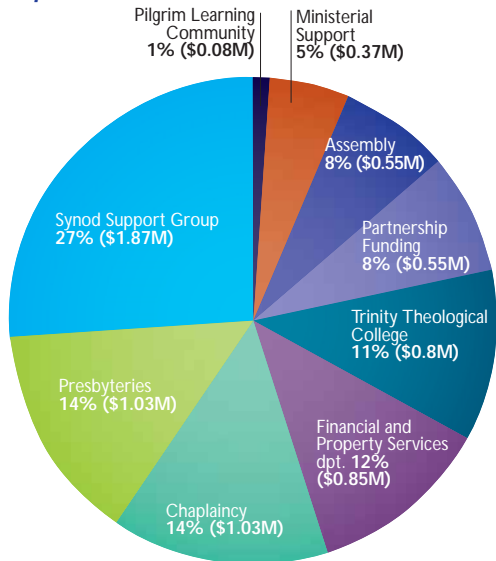
Can we review the resources, particularly property, that is in excess of our needs locally so that the church across Queensland can benefit?

As we, the people of God, continue on the way together, how will we respond?

### Income 2008



### Expenditure 2008



### More information at [www.msf.ucaqld.com.au](http://www.msf.ucaqld.com.au)

- find out more detail about the Mission and Service Fund, its areas of income and expenditure
- mission in action—Mission and Service Fund stories
- how you and your congregation can respond
- for a copy of the Synod's audited financial statements, please call Cassandra Barraclough on 07 3377 9711.



Income 2008	\$ Million
Financial and Property Services dept. (from Reserves)	2.96
Congregations and Presbyteries	2.54
UnitingCare	0.90
Synod Reserve fund	0.33
Sundry grants	0.06
TOTAL	6.79

Expenditure 2008	\$ Million
Synod Support Group	1.87
Presbyteries	1.03
Chaplaincy	1.03
Financial and Property Services dpt.	0.85
Trinity Theological College	0.80
Partnership Funding	0.55
Assembly	0.55
Ministerial Support	0.37
Pilgrim Learning Community	0.08
TOTAL	7.13
NET OPERATING DEFICIT	(0.34)



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# Jubilee a hub of ecumenism

By Elaine Rae

JUBILEE PRIMARY School on the Gold Coast is testament to the change that has occurred in ecumenical relations over my lifetime.

In June the school community and visitors gathered to bless and officially open the new Middle School 'Hub'.

Representatives of the

Catholic, Anglican, Apostolic and Uniting Churches worshipped and participated in the ceremony.

While the school is owned and administered by the Catholic Education Office, it has been established as an ecumenical venture.

It functions with a working group of the local clergy having input to the policies and practices of the school.

The question with ecumenical ventures which are begun by local champions is whether they can sustain a change of personnel.

With Rev Jim Honke now the local Uniting Church minister and a new Jubilee principal David Sewell, as well as changes of Anglican and Catholic priests, Jubilee has proved it can be done.

What a positive witness to the local community.



Local church representatives, staff and students at the opening at the 'Hub'. Photo courtesy of the Jubilee Primary School

# Spirit surges through the Church

By Priscilla Raepom

"THE UNITING Church in Queensland is about to experience a spiritual surge of energy," said Tom Kerr, young adult ministry coordinator of the Youth and Children Ministry Unit (YACMU).

Mr Kerr said that despite the downsizing of YACMU and other Synod support services, there were positive signs of the

Church's potential to achieve the ministry's goals.

"Times are very hard in some areas, but that is all the more reason for God to come through for our Church now," he said.

"When we are weak, God is strong.

"There's a definite new breeze of the Spirit gently blowing. It may only be a zephyr at this stage, but perhaps it will grow into something more," he said.

Mr Kerr said significant indicators of the surge included the growing interest from young people in various activities of the Church, the infallible passion and support for youth ministry by the Church, a new spirit of cooperation and the Church's capacity to encourage and nurture discipleship development in local congregations.

He said YACMU was calling the Church to take up the

"Growing Together Whole Church Challenge", which invites adults and young people to take up personal spiritual disciplines for four weeks or more to practise sharing their faith.

He encouraged faith conversations and challenged the Church to mentor their young people who attended activities such as Summer Madness to follow up on their growth.

"Rob Bos, Duncan Macleod and the YACMU staff are also looking at simple but effective ways to change the Church culture and to free us up to talk happily about our faith inside the Church and beyond it," he said.

Mr Kerr said opportunities to further this growth include the development of youth worship teams, multi-generational and multicultural study groups, day camps, NCYC2011, the formation of Uniting Young Adults (UYA) and many more.

He said people should be inspired to share good news stories from congregations about God's activity in our midst throughout the state.

"There are miracles happening in Uniting Church communities ... there is some thing special going on around our churches."

Mr Kerr said there were combined youth and young adult worship services happening in many Queensland presbyteries

where young people visited one another's worship.

He said there was also talk of combined youth rallies across Brisbane in 2010 with about 500 young people expected to attend.

"Imagine if our church schools decided to join in as well and bussed their boarders to these events!" he said.

Mr Kerr said this would be a great lead up to NCYC 2011 and added that other Synods are willing to work together on future discipleship training events.

He said many events for young people, such as day camps, have been operating for many years with minimal YACMU assistance.

"Great ministries have been going well for years ... they need to be appreciated and celebrated," he said.

Meanwhile, a group of volunteer young adults have formed the Uniting Young Adults Network building on YACMU's work with young adults and taking it into the future.

However Mr Kerr said these possibilities were fraught with difficulties and needed support from the whole Church.

"The whole thing needs a lot of prayer for that surge to leap up," he said.

"Let's hoist our sails to catch the wind of the Spirit and surge forward."



Steph Dwyer, Shelby Armstrong, Charlene Swanepoel, and Megan Palmer at the Moggill Day Camp. Photo by Mardi Lumsden



## Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia

*"Confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaiming the Truth, renewing the Church"*

The Assembly of Confessing Congregations is pleased to advise Queensland UCA members that the ACC Queensland Movement is the host state movement for the **2009 ACC AGM and Conference**.

**Public Rally: 7.30 pm Friday 4 September 2009**

**Speaker: Revd Dr David Millikan**  
**'The End of the Liberal Experiment'**

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# Congress matters

MANY ITEMS of Assembly business related to the relationships between the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Congress and other branches of the Church. Most of these were highly emotional.

The first business day began with a moving celebration of the Covenant established at the 1994

Assembly between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Uniting Church members.

Jill Tabart, Assembly President in 1994, repeated her expressions of sorrow and commitment made to Indigenous Church members 15 years ago.

Newly-elected Congress Chairperson Ken Sumner and

Vice Chairperson Roberta Stanley then reaffirmed the 1994 response of acceptance.

Assembly members read together a statement affirming grief over past actions and commitment to restitution and healing.

Rev Ronang Garruwura from Elcho Island read a passage

from Luke's Gospel in his Djamburpuynu language.

Mr Garruwura's wise and calm counsel was appreciated throughout the meeting.

The most dramatic moments in the Assembly were experienced in deciding the new preamble to the Church's Constitution.

Debate had been anticipated with both excitement and apprehension. Although strongly supported by the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and others, it had determined opponents too.

On Sunday evening many members spoke, argued, asked questions and proposed amendments.

Profound distress was expressed by many speakers.

At one highly emotional point Congress representatives told the meeting they felt unsafe and withdrew from the meeting.

This was followed by expressions of profound hurt, dismay, sorrow and apology by non-Indigenous members.

President Alistair Macrae then led the entire Assembly outside the meeting hall where they joined with the Congress representatives before re-entering as one in the body of Christ.

It was agreed late Sunday evening that the preamble proposal would be put to the Assembly again first thing Monday morning without any further discussion.

The next morning President

Macrae sought passage of the resolution by consensus, meaning all 260 plus members of the meeting needed to agree.

This failed and the Assembly then shifted to formal procedures where a 75 per cent majority is required.

A 97 per cent majority supported the proposal.

The controversial preamble takes the Uniting Church Covenant between Indigenous and non-Indigenous members to a new level formally recognising Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander people as integral, with all other members, to the life and witness of the Church.

Later on Monday, the Assembly experienced an equally difficult session. This related to the constitutional amendments which give expression to the changes to the status of Congress reflected in the preamble.

Not all proposed amendments were accepted, but most were.

These allow for Congress to request the transfer of rights, powers, duties and responsibilities of a synod or presbytery, with an appeal mechanism if a synod does not respond to a request from Congress for such a transfer.

When all deliberations had ended with most proposals passed, there was an overwhelming sense of relief.

Many present, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, once again cried for joy or relief. Most felt a profound spirit of reconciliation.



Aboriginal Elder Bapa Ken embraces General Secretary Rev Terence Corkin in an emotional celebration of the Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress

## Flood of tears

From P.1

Principal of the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology in Adelaide Rev Dr Andrew Dutney was chosen as President-elect.

Rev Terence Corkin was reappointed as the Assembly General Secretary.

The Assembly noted with sadness the recent closing of Coolamon College, the national training body for lay education in Adelaide, and recorded appreciation for Dr Lee Levett-Olson and Dr Marelle Harisun for their service through the College.



Far left: Rev Gregor Henderson sheds a tear as members of the 12th Assembly give him a rousing and appreciative farewell



Left: Rev Dr Andrew Dutney was voted President-elect and will be the next President of the Uniting Church in Australia. Dr Dutney grew up in Charleville and Brisbane attending Brisbane Boys' College, the University of Queensland and Trinity Theological College in Brisbane

## Assembly song competition

SONGS THAT Unite 2009 is the inaugural national songwriting competition of the Uniting Church in Australia.

With a focus on congregational or group singing, rather than solo performance, the competition aims to encourage the development of Australian Christian music for use in congregations, by recognising high quality material and promoting it across the country.

For more information visit [assembly.uca.org.au](http://assembly.uca.org.au)

## Special Weekend Workshop



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### Why Can Christians Feel Defeated?

The feeling of defeat may be evidenced through emotions such as stress, failure, anxiety, despair or burnout. "Breaking Free" is a Bible based workshop that will take you on a journey that could change your life forever! We will look at why we can feel defeated before understanding the abundant life God intended for us. The weekend is informal, interactive and non-threatening.

Presented by Abiding Life Ministries International  
For further information telephone;



Ph: 07 5463 0999

Email: [info@mountalfordlodge.com.au](mailto:info@mountalfordlodge.com.au)

## Canberra's Tuggeranong Valley seeks a Minister to grow its congregation

Tuggeranong Congregation is looking for a full time Minister of the Word to lead us in vision making and mission development.

The Minister who leads our congregation will need:

- ① The ability to bring strong preaching and leadership to the worshipping community, valuing traditional and contemporary styles of worship
- ① Skills and experience in visioning and mission development to help our faith community focus on new possibilities
- ① Pastoral skills, working alongside our existing small group structures.

Tuggeranong congregation serves a large suburban population of around 90,000 people. Our community is a very pleasant place to live and is well served with educational, health and community facilities. Please visit our website [www.tuc.org.au](http://www.tuc.org.au) to discover more about our congregation. Inquiries to Rev Kevin Dilks on (02) 6299 3384 or email at [jnc@tuc.org.au](mailto:jnc@tuc.org.au)

Please apply to Meg Herbert, Associate Secretary, NSW Synod,  
PO Box A2178, Sydney South NSW 1235

Under the Children's and Young People's Act 1988 (NSW) it is illegal for prohibited persons to apply. A Working with Children check will be required.

## Tuggeranong A.C.T.



Coverage of the 12th Assembly was the collaborative effort of staff of Synod and Assembly communications departments.

For stories and photos from the 12th Assembly visit [assembly2009.uca.org.au](http://assembly2009.uca.org.au)



## Holy ground

THE ASSEMBLY has created a new class of church property called "available for alternative missional use".

This follows calls from several synods and presbyteries wanting disused or underutilised buildings to be available for other than traditional congregational purposes.

Alternative uses were listed as including:

- new congregations, faith communities or worship gatherings
- growing or migrant congregations with inadequate property resources
- approved strategic mission initiatives such as leadership

It authorises presbyteries to make decisions on alternative building usage.

But also requires the presbytery to take account of the rights of the local congregation in any changed application of a property.

Disputes between Uniting Church congregations sharing premises are now less likely to end in bitterness.

The Assembly decided that where two or more Uniting Church groups use one property base, "a culturally sensitive and appropriate form of memorandum of understanding or covenant [not a tenancy agreement] will apply to that relationship".

It is expected this will resolve problems that have arisen in recent years with the rise in the number of worshipping groups meeting in Uniting Church buildings.

## Participation with partners

THE ASSEMBLY was enriched by 45 guests from Uniting Church overseas partner churches.

"We are deeply connected with many partner churches," Mr Macrae said in welcome. "It is part of the DNA of the Uniting Church in Australia."

Bishop Samantaroy from North India observed that, despite the seriousness of many discussions, the Assembly also laughed.

"I appreciate your sense of humour," he said. "I laugh with you. And then I laugh again when I realise what was said. Then I laugh a third time when I realise I laughed first without understanding."

Presiding Bishop Simbarashe Sithole of the Zimbabwe Methodist Church told the Assembly of the

enormous challenges now facing his country.

Mrs Helen Grace Paris of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines spoke passionately about human rights abuses and the many recent killings of church members in her country.

Rev Jemina Mirino Krey of the Evangelical Christian Church in Papua talked about the work of the church in one of the world's most remote and underdeveloped regions.

She described the Papuans' struggle for "a just, sincere and respectful dialogue between Papuans and Jakarta to answer basic problems and bring an end to the conflicts and human rights abuses in our land".

The Assembly resolved to urge the Australian Federal Government to continue to encourage the Indonesian Government to more thoroughly and respectfully implement the Special Autonomy status of West Papua and to uphold the human rights of West Papua citizens.

An emotional message on behalf of the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma was brought from the Chairperson of the Uniting Church's Fijian National Conference in Australia, Rev Jovilla Meo. Fijian invitees were unable to attend due to events within Fiji.

Mr Meo wept openly as he described the suffering of Methodists in Fiji.



Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea Rev Park Soo Kil and the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church in Korea Rev Dr Cho Seong Gi present Rev Alistair Macrae with a gift to commemorate the 120th Anniversary of the Christian missionaries in Korea

## Plans for the future

MANY CHANGES were approved to the Church's internal structures and operations.

The Assembly unanimously agreed to continue its effective working relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

It also unanimously affirmed continuing to engage in Jesus' ministry of peacemaking within the Church and the world.

That would be pursued by developing resources to strengthen skills and strategies for living together in a peaceful, multicultural

and diverse church, promoting human rights and fostering respect for God's creation.

Decisions in the three other areas proposed were deferred pending further discussion to clarify the wording of the proposals.

They were evangelism, Christian education within the Church and loosening restrictions on local councils and congregations.

The number of Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress representatives at future Assembly meetings will increase from six to 16.

The Assembly agreed to spend the next three years in conversation about what kind of church we need to be in the Australian context.

The rationale for this decision was recognition that the Uniting Church's current Constitution and Regulations reflect the Australian context of the 1970s and that society has since changed.

The Assembly also passed a proposal to allow the Assembly Standing Committee to review the regulations to simplify the language and remove parts that are overly prescriptive.







Assembly delegate James Ellis, from Armidale (Synod of New South Wales and the ACT), was touched by a visit to the Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross, Sydney. Assembly members had a choice of a number of Sydney congregations to attend on the Sunday morning

## Starting afresh

AT THE END of a long and difficult day on Monday, Aboriginal Elder Bapa Ken presented President Alistair Macrae and General Secretary Rev Terence Corkin with branches of gum leaves.

With further tears, Shayne Blackman said it was hard to express the joy of acceptance and inclusion in the church, which came as a result of the Assembly's historic decisions.

"It has made us truly happy, your willingness to discuss this and to seek God's direction and to come to

the resolution you have and we want to say thank you for that," he said.

"I've been asked if I'm going to do a dance," he joked. "That may not happen."

Congress Chairperson Ken Sumner then asked everyone who was able to kneel in prayer. "We get on our knees, we put our faith and trust in our Lord, because this is a new journey for us," he said.

"We don't know what is before us, but it's wonderful to start afresh."

## Inclusiveness

ECUMENICAL GUESTS included Sister Elizabeth Delaney of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, Major Paul Kinder (Salvation Army), Father Shenouda Mansour (Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney) and Bishop Albert Chew (Chinese Methodist Church in Australia).

Sister Delaney was moved by the consensus model of decision-making.

"I find the continual movement to prayer is very important," she said. "The President has been superb in voicing the prayer of the whole group."

Several representatives of other faith groups attended the Assembly and the Assembly launched the new Relations with Other Faiths website.

## Bible studies

BIBLE STUDIES led by Rev Dr Elizabeth Raine and Rev Dr John Squires, both New Testament scholars at the United Theological College in Sydney, explored the Assembly theme *Living Water, Thirsty Land*.

# The Church in the world

UNITING CHURCH members, councils and agencies will be asked to commit themselves to living at peace with each other and the planet, following the Assembly's adoption of a visionary statement.

The document, *An Economy of Life: Re-Imagining Human Progress for a Flourishing World*, was prepared by UnitingJustice to address the current crises.

It imagines a different story for God's creation, an "economy of life", marked by regard for the common good, where all people have access to what is necessary for their flourishing and where people contribute to the continued flourishing of the planet.

Some members were concerned that the document was not specific enough and that it could appear hypocritical for the Church to be asking for governments to take steps it had not yet taken itself.

Professor John Langmore, from the UnitingJustice reference committee, said the paper was about paradigms, not action. It was not prescriptive about tactics, he said, but it spelled out important church responsibilities.

The Assembly called on the Australian Government to "develop economic systems and structures which recognise that human and ecological flourishing require much more than the creation of wealth".

The Assembly commended the Rudd Government for its promise to boost the aid budget to 0.5 per cent of gross national income (GNI) by 2015 but urged the Government to increase it even further (to 0.7 per cent) to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

The Assembly heard an impassioned call for the immediate end

to the federal Intervention in the Northern Territory.

The Intervention, announced

by the Howard Government in the lead-up to the 2007 election, has entailed significant loss of Indigenous human rights.

"The Intervention cannot and will not work for Indigenous people," said Congress

administrator Rev Shayne Blackman.

"For policies to be effective they must be driven by Aboriginal people."

Mr Blackman called on the churches to be a platform for engagement between Indigenous people and governments. The Assembly overwhelmingly supported the proposal.

A strong document challenging free trade, neo-liberalism and market fundamentalism was adopted.

UnitingWorld's paper *Trade Justice – A Uniting Church View* provides a theological basis for the Church's education, representation, advocacy and action.

The paper said the benefits and burdens of increased economic interdependence have not been equally shared.

"Globalisation has had uneven effects: while some have enjoyed increased prosperity, the poorest are often left behind."



UnitingJustice Australia National Director Rev Elenie Poulos

# Stories light faith fire

JACKY MATTHEWS describes herself as a Redcliffe wife, mother, artist and urban evangelist.

She and her husband became Christians after they got married, a decision they made in the search for a shared foundation for their marriage.

In the *Faith Stories DVD* and study prepared by Duncan Macleod and Graham Beattie, Ms Matthews talks about connecting with others through personal stories.

The interview with Ms Matthews is used to stimulate conversation about ways to connect the stories of Jesus in the Bible with our own stories and the stories of others.

Ms Matthews was motivated to share her faith with others by the realisation that many people do not know that

they are loved unconditionally.

"Some people have all their love tied up in romantic relationships and the demands of family," she said.

"A lot of people don't feel they belong anywhere."

She said that everyone has an important story to tell, but that she was still discerning which parts to tell, and in what situations.

Ms Matthews discovered that it helped to rehearse her story so that she was ready to share when opportunities open up.

She is helped by discussion starters, like her T-shirt with the word "Sorry" printed on it.

From experience, Ms Matthews has learned that many people engage in "God talk" only after building a relationship of trust.

Her first approach is to share appropriate parts of her own story.

She tries to find ways to talk about God that relate to where people are at, focusing at different times on the Creator and essence of the universe, the Spirit who is intimately involved in our everyday lives, and Jesus who shows us how to live and helps us discover God's love.

Mr Macleod said that Ms Matthews' approach helped people realise that evangelism can be part of everyday conversation, without cringe.

"It's different for each of us," said Mr Macleod.

"Jacky's quirky approach to conversation is complemented by the quieter approach of her friends."

The *Faith Stories DVD* includes a printable



Jacky Matthews with a copy of the *Faith Stories DVD*. Photo by Peter Armstrong

participants' guide for eight sessions, each designed to last between 90 and 120 minutes, with time for discussion, Bible study, prayer, personal reflection and creative small group exercises.

For more information visit [www.faithstories.org.au](http://www.faithstories.org.au) or contact Duncan Macleod on 3377 9809 or [duncanm@uqaqld.com.au](mailto:duncanm@uqaqld.com.au)

## Brisbane to Baghdad

By Tim Hodgson

I WATCHED the gunner quickly tranverse his 50 cal machine gun around 180 degrees. He was at the ready to engage with insurgents who had previously fired on convoys with rocket propelled grenades or blown them up using improvised explosive devices.

A surreal feeling crept over me as I travelled down Route Irish for the first time. Just an hour before, a female suicide bomber had blown herself up at a checkpoint in the International Zone. In the armoured vehicle with me were US soldiers. They were ready to fight if needed with their M16s and M4s loaded.

My mind inadvertently started to wander. I remembered my family and how much I enjoyed our Sunday afternoon trips through the cane fields at Ormeau and our Sunday evening roasts.

A thud hit the side of the armoured vehicle and brought me back to reality. 7.62 mm?

Operation Catalyst has concluded. With the exception of the security detail providing protection to the Australian Embassy in Baghdad, the last Australian troops have left Iraq.

So ends Australia's military contribution to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Iraq that commenced in 2003.

Iraq is a different place today compared to what it was during Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. There is no longer rampant corruption. Codes of accountability have been slowly implemented.

Evidence of this has been in the arrest and trial of the Iraqi

Minister of Trade who tried to leave the country after resigning from his post following allegations of widespread corruption within the Ministry. Interestingly the Minister was a member of Prime Minister Maliki's political party.

Throughout Saddam Hussein's reign censorship was strictly enforced. Now free speech is accepted as a norm in Iraqi life.

Six months ago an Iraqi online journal published a defamatory article about Mr Maliki. He responded by going to court and sued the author and owner of the Iraqi online journal. Mr Maliki later dropped his case after coming under pressure by

monument and say "mar-haban" (hello) to them and see a mosque every few streets.

The working tempo was also high. It wasn't unusual to do a pastoral visit to maintenance staff working on an aircraft at the flight line at 2am in the morning.

Church and worship were not always held on Sundays, but whenever there was a lull in taskings. You had to go with the flow and do worship, Bible studies or prayers at short notice or on the spot.

Working with Americans was a positive experience. They are as culturally and politically diverse as Australians. I found they didn't

always get our jokes as we didn't get theirs.

A memory I won't forget from my deployment was Christmas Eve. I held a carols service at the Australian compound.

We celebrated with Holy Communion, joined

by the Americans, Canadians and Brits. Watching and listening to fellow Australians singing *Silent Night* whilst holding lit candles is something I will always remember. It brought a number to tears.

Without the support of our families and the Church, our time away on operations would have been more difficult.

I wish to thank individuals, families and congregations from around Australia who sent me lollies to distribute to our troops. Those little treats often meant a lot to our servicemen and women.

Rev Tim Hodgson works with homeless people through Wesley Mission Brisbane.

He has been deployed twice to the Middle East with the ADF in the last year



Rev Tim Hodgson on deployment in the Middle East. Photo courtesy of Tim Hodgson



## Any comments? Blog it!

[blog.journeyonline.com.au](http://blog.journeyonline.com.au)

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# Seeing through the curtain

## UnitingWorld finds the real North Korea

By Amy Goodhew

HOW OFTEN does a Westerner have the chance to visit a place like North Korea?

Leading up to my visit in May extraordinary events rapidly spiked my blood pressure — the sentencing of two American journalists accused of illegally crossing into North Korea, the nuclear weapon test, and general escalation of hostilities. Regardless, we continued with our plans.

A bridge over the Tumen River separates China and The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) immigration building.

The DPRK building stands alone on the side of a barren hill with a dirt road snaking over the crest. Pictures of the Eternal President Kim Il Sung and the Dear Leader Kim Jong Il look down from the wall at proceedings.

The room is seemingly untouched from the 1950s and filled with people wearing the uniform that Kim Jong Il made famous. Every chest bears a badge of the President's face over the flag of the DPRK.

I sat meekly to the side with my travelling companions Rev John Barr, UnitingWorld Associate Director for Church Solidarity Asia, and Mr Hong who heads up UnitingWorld's projects in North Korea.

Eventually we were given the nod to proceed through security. We piled into an old taxi and started the long, winding drive over mountains and into valleys filled with rice fields and vegetable

gardens towards Rason city, the port town where our projects are located.

What followed was three days of zero contact with the outside world; no news, mobile phones, internet or unescorted travel.

Government officers accompanied us 24 hours a day to approve all photos and interactions.

We arrived in planting season, a time where everyone from office workers to farmers and school students was in the rice paddies, hard at work.

In Rason we were shown to the hotel for foreigners before heading to the orphanage to oversee the deposit of 40 tons of rice we brought in with us. This rice will be distributed to workers associated with UnitingWorld projects. Food is scarce in the DPRK.

Children at the orphanage rise at dawn to eat before their hour long walk to the local primary school. They return to the orphanage for lunch so four hours of their day is spent walking.

Mr Hong and his wife come from the Korean Church of Melbourne, a Uniting Church

Everywhere we went we were met with gracious hospitality and warmth.

congregation, and have been working in North Korea since 2002. They work with the permission of the North Korean government in the North Eastern corner of the country which has been designated a special economic zone.



Amy Goodhew meets the locals in North Korea. Photo courtesy of Amy Goodhew

The Hong's work with local people in their projects — an orphanage, a computer skills training school and a TB clinic. They also have projects under construction — a nurses' school and a larger TB clinic.

It is a constant struggle to find funds for these projects and there is a lot of work to be done.

Mr Hong hopes to find resources to buy a school bus for the children, to finish the construction of his medical facilities, to buy bed frames and mattresses for those who lie dying of TB, to find enough TB medication, to acquire a second X-ray machine and create an ambulance/mobile health clinic for those who have no way to access medical care.

Our visit to the TB clinics was sobering.

Within Rason we visited the testing centre and saw the long

line waiting for their turn for the X-ray machine.

Outside Rason, on the side of a lonely mountain, is another centre where they send the patients who have little hope. One patient had died during the morning and another wasn't expected to make it through the day.

However, in the midst of these struggles we were grateful to experience the extraordinary generosity and kindness of the North Korean people. Everywhere we went we were met with gracious hospitality and warmth.

As we left the country in the driving rain I bowed to our Government escort and said "kam-sa-ham-ni-da. Chosun cho-sum-ni-da, Donji." ("Thank you very much. Korea is good my friend") in my dreadful Korean. While my language skills were inadequate, I think he appreciated my sincerity.

Now back home, I can't get the people of the DPRK out of my

head — our government escorts, the doctor at the TB clinic who used her own mouth to draw out fluid causing lung blockages because she lacks the proper equipment, the children who walk four hours every day just to get to school; and the nameless people who smiled and bowed as we passed them in the street.

These are the people I wish we thought of in the West when we hear talk of tougher sanctions and nuclear programs.

The DPRK may be considered a rogue state by many yet there are millions of ordinary people simply trying to survive.

They will be the real victims in any conflict.

Amy Goodhew is the Communications Coordinator for UnitingWorld

To support UnitingWorld projects in North Korea call 8267 4269 or visit [www.unitingworld.org.au](http://www.unitingworld.org.au)

## Building blocks for habitats

SEVERAL UNITING Church members in Ipswich are working with the non-profit, ecumenical Christian housing organisation Habitat for Humanity building simple, decent, affordable housing in partnership with people in need.

The local Ipswich committee was formed in 2008 by retired minister Rev Trevor Foote, a member of the Glebe Road Uniting Church, Booval.

The Glebe Road congregation has committed to support Ipswich Habitat for the next five years.

Habitat builds houses in partnership with families caught

in the rental/poverty cycle and who otherwise would have no hope of ever obtaining a loan from a bank or mortgage firm.

The Ipswich committee is in the throes of building its second house which will be officially opened and dedicated on Saturday 5 September.

The house will be owned by a couple and their three children.

The family is contributing 500 hours of "sweat equity" and they have made a deposit of \$500.

Partner families retain dignity and pride by helping to build their own home alongside an army of volunteers.

When the house is valued, they will repay the mortgage, interest free, at no more than 25 per cent of their gross weekly income over the next 20 years.

All workers on the project are volunteers and many firms and businesses have contributed materials or given generous discounts, to enable the construction of the home.

Over the last 30 years, Habitat has built 300 000 homes throughout the world.

For more information contact Trevor Foote on 3812 7889 or visit [www.ipswichh4h.org.au](http://www.ipswichh4h.org.au) or [www.habitat.org.au](http://www.habitat.org.au)



Habitat for Humanity volunteers in front of the home they are building in Ipswich. Photo courtesy of Trevor Foote

## August 29 Paddle Adventure

7am-2pm. Baffle Creek, Bundaberg



View of Baffle Creek from Flat Rock, the end point of the paddling event. Photo courtesy of John McIntyre

Sign up for the aquatic adventure of a lifetime and help support Andy's Place which provides meals and companionship for the homeless and disadvantaged people of Bundaberg.

For more information contact coordinator Bronwyn Prentice on 4159 8243 (A/H) or John McIntyre on 4154 2863 or email [themacs@internode.on.au](mailto:themacs@internode.on.au)

**Aug 1, 9am-11am. Trinity Ipswich Anniversary Service** at Trinity Ipswich Congregation. Contact Vilami Mila on 3812 3110 or [vilami\\_anamila@bigpond.com](mailto:vilami_anamila@bigpond.com).

**Aug 2, 2pm-3.30pm. Jordan Pollard in Concert**, Aspley Uniting Church, Brisbane. Jordan is an outstanding young light baritone. Bookings open now. Cost \$15. Contact Peter Waltisbuhl or Olwyn Conomos on 3882 3328 or 3325 0307 or [pwaltisb@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pwaltisb@bigpond.net.au).

**Aug 5, 10am-3pm. Australian Christian Meditation Community Day of Silent Prayer and Quiet Reflection** at Brookfield Centre, 139 Brookfield Road, Kenmore Hills. Cost \$15. Contact Gabby Nelson on 371 4227 or [toga@bigpond.net.au](mailto:toga@bigpond.net.au).

**Aug 8, 9am-1pm. Northside Community Fair** at Northside Uniting Church, Andergrove, Mackay. Contact Zelma Wasson on 4942 1613 or [zelma@bigpond.com](mailto:zelma@bigpond.com).

**Aug 11, 9am-12.30pm. UnitingWorld Support Group (Qld)** meeting at St. Andrew's Uniting Church, Ann St, Brisbane. Congregations are invited to send representatives. Speaker: John Jeffreys. Contact Judith Finau on 3711 4622 or [ljinu@doventq.net.au](mailto:ljinu@doventq.net.au).

**Aug 13-Oct 15, 7.30pm-9pm (Thursdays). The Hospitality of God - Studies in the Gospel of Luke** at Kenmore Uniting Church, 982 Moggill Rd Kenmore. Cost \$40. Contact Heather den Houting on 3378 4505 or [kenmore@doventq.net.au](mailto:kenmore@doventq.net.au).

**Sep 10-12, 9am-3.30am. Laidley Uniting Church Quilt and Craft Expo** at Laidley Uniting Church Patrick Street, Laidley. Contact Robyn Muller on 5466 5436 (A/H) or email [rob.mul@bigpond.com](mailto:rob.mul@bigpond.com).

**Sep 12, 8am-1pm. Elanora Uniting Church Spring Fair and Flower Show**, Gold Coast. Official opening at 10am by Rev Ian Lord. Contact Mary Flynn on 5598 8733 or [flynn10@bigpond.com](mailto:flynn10@bigpond.com).

**Sep 12-13, 10am-12.30pm. Flower Festival** at Coolum Beach Uniting Church, 22-26 Elizabeth Street, Coolum Beach. Contact Margaret Hall on 5446 1493 or [mlchall@bigpond.com](mailto:mlchall@bigpond.com).

**Sep 25, 7.30pm-9.30pm. Lay Forum Seminar on Contemporary/progressive Worship** at Sherwood Uniting Church, Cnr Sherwood Rd and Thallon St, Sherwood. Key note presenter Rev Rex Hunt. Registration \$10 (cons \$5). Contact Reg Collard on 3378 4258 or [rcollard@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rcollard@bigpond.net.au).

**Sep 26, 8.30am-4pm. Lay Forum Conference** on Future of the Church: Safe Space & Voice for Progressive Christian Questioning and Action, Wesley House, Ann St, Brisbane. Registration \$20 (cons \$15). All welcome. Contact Reg Collard on 3378 4258 or [rcollard@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rcollard@bigpond.net.au).

**Sep 27, 9am-10am. Worship with Contemporary Elements**, Albert St Uniting Church, Brisbane. Guest preacher Rev Rex Hunt. All welcome. Contact Reg Collard on 3378 4258 or [rcollard@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rcollard@bigpond.net.au).

**Note: Change of venue.** Frontier Services Auxiliary now meets at Wesley House (level 2), 140 Ann St, Brisbane at 10am on the first Thursday of every month.

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

## Choristers' finale

By Ron Ramsay

THE PYC Choristers, made up of former members of the Presbyterian Youth Choir, will present their last church service on 16 August at 2pm at St Paul's Presbyterian Church in Brisbane.

The original Presbyterian Youth Choir made their first public appearance in St Andrew's Uniting Church in Brisbane 50 years ago on Monday 17 August 1959.

For the next 20 years the PYC helped spread the gospel through music and song in metropolitan churches, hospitals, institutions and nearby country areas.

The choir's numbers swelled to over 40 members by 1969 and remained high until they closed soon after Union.

However, 20 years later, the former members came together again to hold an annual camp and to resume their music ministry. They have also changed their name to the PYC Choristers.

The group invites former choristers and friends to join them to celebrate their 50th anniversary and help draw to a close many years of musical ministry.

Contact David or Dianne on 4661 3527 or Christine on 3273 2159



Some of the members of the PYC soon after inception. Most of those shown here are still in the PYC Choristers today. Photo courtesy of Shirley Ramsay

## Celebrate Blue Care Sunday

UNITING CHURCH congregations are encouraged to celebrate Blue Care's contribution to local communities on Sunday 23 August. Blue Care Sunday is an opportunity for congregations to include thanks and prayer for care services in their worship.

Based on the compassion of Christ, Blue Care staff and volunteers provide care for more than 12 500 people every day.

For more information or to access resources prepared for the day visit [www.bluecare.org.au](http://www.bluecare.org.au)

## Lay Forum events

THE LAY Forum is inviting clergy and laypeople to a week-end of events in September.

25 September features an evening seminar at Sherwood Uniting Church in Brisbane on contemporary worship with keynote presenter, retired Uniting Church minister Rev Rex Hunt.

On 26 September a conference at Wesley House, 140 Ann St Brisbane, will explore the Future Church; on providing safe space and voice for progressive Christian thinking, questioning and action.

On 27 September, Mr Hunt will lead a morning service at Albert Street Uniting Church.

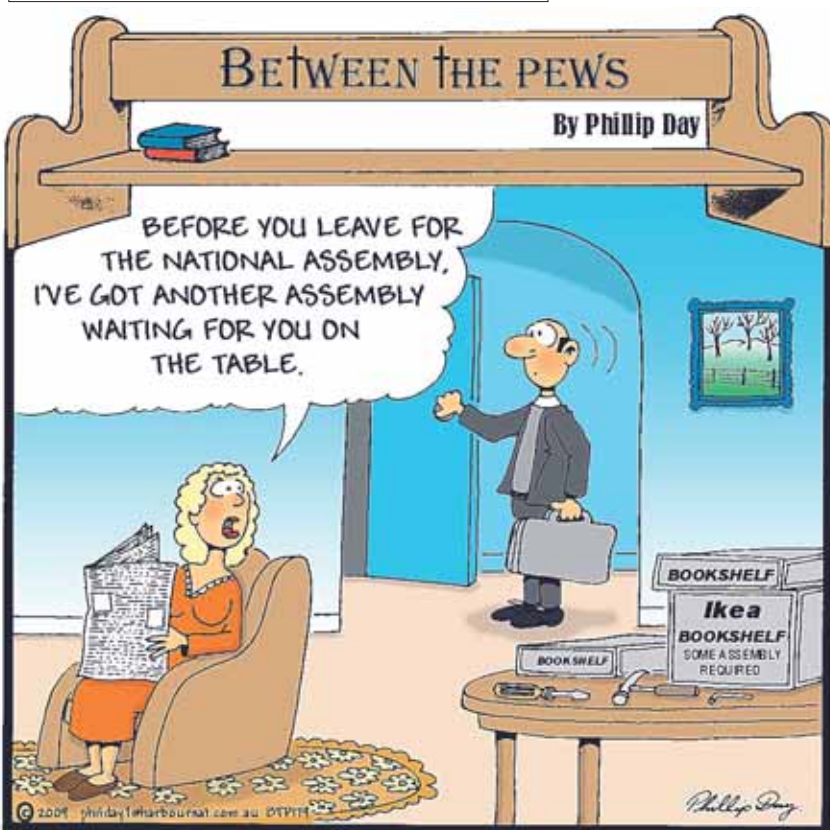
Contact Reg Collard on 3378 4258 or [rcollard@bigpond.net.au](mailto:rcollard@bigpond.net.au)

## Vale: Daphne Hooper

MRS DAPHNE Hooper passed away at her home in Brisbane on Tuesday 30 June 2009.

Mrs Hooper (nee Lanham) came from Nambour. She served with her husband Rev John Hooper in the Indian Division of the Methodist Church in Fiji from 1965 to 1973 and following this, supported him during his time as Queensland State Secretary for Overseas Missions in the Methodist and then the Uniting Church.

Mrs Hooper was known for her support for the Queensland Friends of Vellore and the Hindi Speaking Christian Fellowship in Brisbane. She had been suffering from cancer.





# This Sunrise of Wonder: Letters for the journey

By Michael Mayne, Dartman, Longman and Todd, 2008, RRP \$39.95

Reviewed by Barbara Bailey, a retired Uniting Church minister.

WRITTEN OVER 20 years, the Anglican priest and writer of this volume, Michael Mayne (who died in 2006) offers reflections on life to his two grandchildren.

The pages are certainly food for the journey. The reader is captivated by wonder as Mr Mayne creatively and challengingly shares his vision for life. "Learn to see, learn to be attentive to the world around you" is his recurring theme.

Reflections beautifully peppered with reference to art, story, poetry and literature, he confronts today's rather shallow expressions of reality with considered thought, deep reflection and his insistence on the value of wonder at the

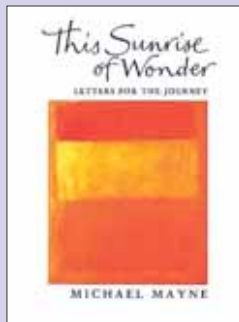
world and people around him. The reader can't help but be awakened to their surroundings as if seeing them for the first time.

The 23 chapters of these letters to his grandchildren are full of enthusiasm and optimism.

The reader is led into subjects such as the spontaneous wonder of a child, the creation as sacramental and living the Eucharist.

But for all the references from the academic, literary and artistic world this book is deeply grounded in the spiritual.

In Mr Mayne's postscript he writes, "The ultimate act of seeing is that partial but authentic vision of God which I see in Jesus Christ and the kingdom of which he speaks. Its language of love is universal; its goal holiness and



community; its building blocks justice, freedom, compassion, forgiveness and mercy."

*This Sunrise of Wonder* speaks powerfully from the heart and mind of a deep thinker and disciple.

Take time to digest, even its bibliography will thrill. Highly recommended.

## The Cast of the Kingdom: Biblical characters who model faith

By the Staff and Students of Ridley Hall, Cambridge, Canterbury Press, 2008, RRP \$19.95

Reviewed by Jan Bryde, a home group leader and member of Tully Uniting Church.

*THE CAST of the Kingdom* is a study for Lent. The 47 days are numbered, beginning on Ash Wednesday and ending on Easter Sunday.

Each day begins with a Bible reading accompanied by an insight from one of the contributors.

Each day focuses on a virtue or character trait highlighted by a biblical character.

Some of the characters used are well known such as Mary, mother of Jesus, John the Baptist and Jonah.

Others are not so often studied such as Mrs Zebedee, Naaman's slave girl and Benaiah.

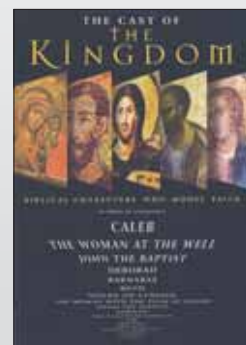
Each of the insights is personalised and written in an easy to understand format.

The reader can associate with both the biblical character and the application to our lives today.

The personal touch helps the reader see that we can apply these virtues to our own lives.

Each study was very thought provoking and short so that it was not a lot of reading each day.

A wonderful tool for Lent, however it could be used at any time as a personal challenge.



## Blessing the Animals

Edited by Lynn L. Caruso, SkyLight Paths Publishing, RRP \$19.99

Reviewed by Rev Lucie Bennett, an animal lover who enjoys spending time contemplating nature and what it can teach us about God.

AS THE title suggests *Blessing the Animals: Prayers and Ceremonies to Celebrate God's Creatures, Wild and Tame* is a collection of poetry, prayers and prose from a variety of spiritual traditions on various species of the animal kingdom.

The book is divided into four parts focusing on blessings for companion and wild animals, blessings from animals and rituals and ceremonies.

Each section is preceded by an introduction by Ms Caruso which provides food for thought in itself.

The items are taken from spiritual traditions ranging from those of the native American Indians to Christianity, Hindu and many other diverse areas.

*Blessing the Animals* would be a good resource book for parents wondering what to say when their child is distraught over the death of a pet, or even a grasshopper, for anyone wanting to hold a service of blessing for pets, and anyone who loves animals and

enjoys being stretched in their spiritual life.

These poems, prayers and prose provide much food for reflection on nature's creator.

In a way we are drawn into looking closely at the animal world (God's creation) and thereby drawn into looking closely at ourselves and our relationship with the one who created us.

As we plumb the hidden depths with the poet we are encouraged to plumb the hidden depths of our own being.



## The 8 Secrets of Happiness

By Paul Griffiths and Martin Robinson, Lion Hudson, 2009, RRP \$16.95

Reviewed by Sally Algate, a member of The Gap Uniting Church.

*THE 8 Secrets of Happiness* delivers what its title suggests – eight ways of achieving a happier life.

But first it explores the idea of what happiness is.

It concludes that, "Happiness is not a goal so much as an outcome of particular ways of living" which "enable us to connect the physical with the spiritual in creative, life-enhancing ways".

This well-researched book includes numerous, wide-ranging references from the work of modern psychologists to ancient Greek and Asian philosophers as well as many examples from popular culture.

Christian teachings are also in *The 8 Secrets of Happiness*, but are often referred to as

being from an older Western tradition.

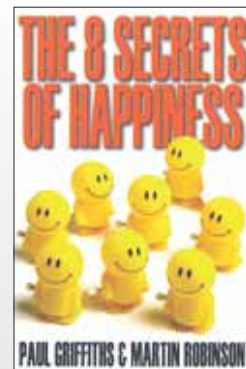
I suspect this wording is used so the book will not be labelled as a Christian book so it will have wider appeal.

The authors seem at pains to conceal their own Christian mission work and are simply referred to as authors and speakers on spirituality.

Even so *The 8 Secrets of Happiness* can't help but reveal its true character through its many references to Christian ways.

I can't say whether the book contains all of the ways to find happiness but it certainly covers the main ones such as counting your blessings, practising acts of kindness, savouring life's joys and learning to forgive.

In looking at each of the eight secrets, it works through what



each one means, ways it can be achieved and provides examples of how these strategies can be put into practice.

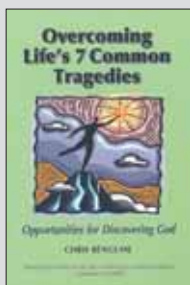
It also acknowledges that sometimes "life sucks" and provides strategies for coping with stress and hardship.

This easy to read book is packed with good advice on how a person's life can indeed be filled with happiness.

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

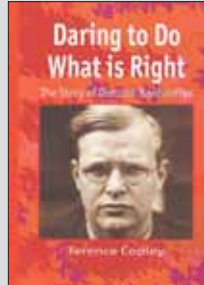
### Overcoming Life's 7 Common Tragedies

By Chris Bengue, Paulist Press, New Jersey, 2008, RRP \$29.95



### Daring to do what is right

By Terence Copley, Religious and Moral Education Press, 2008, RRP \$16.95



### The Lion Storyteller Bible

By Bob Hartman and Krisztine Kallai Nagy, Lion Hudson Plc; illustrated edition, 1995, RRP \$19.95



## Books reviewed 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)

# Youth learn it's OK to be different

By Garth Read and Mardi Lumsden

ASPLEY UNITING Church hosted an interfaith youth event in June.

The event brought together members of the Christian, Buddhist, Jewish and Muslim communities.

Aside from fun, games and dinner, the group watched the film *The Imam & the Pastor* and shared pieces of their faith in an attempt to foster understanding and respect for each other's religion.

The slogan for the evening was: "It's OK to be religious. It's OK to be different. It is not OK to be rude to or intolerant

of others who are different."

Biblical Storyteller Jeff Lawrence began the more formal part of the evening telling, in dramatic style, a Christian story from the New Testament and a Jewish story from the Hebrew Bible (Christian Old Testament).

Dilum Ekanayake, a Buddhist student from the Sunshine Coast Grammar School, gave an overview of his Buddhist beliefs and demonstrated one form of meditation.

Jewish representatives demonstrated the Havdalah ceremony used by Jewish families to mark the end of Shabbat (Sabbath Day).

Muslim representatives demonstrated aspects of the five daily prayers and the importance for the prayer mat to face the direction of the Ka'ba in Mecca.

The evening closed with all present gathering around a sand tray in the shape of a map of Australia.

Twenty-four young people placed a small candle in the sand tray, lit by a representative of the Christian, Buddhist, Jewish and Muslim communities.

The national anthem was sung and Rev Pierre van Blommestein closed with a Christian prayer and benediction.



Storyteller Jeff Lawrence. Photo by Janelle Bennett

## Honouring our elders, nurturing our youth

By Priscilla Raepom

A CHURCH service held in Brisbane last month to officially launch the 2009 National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week has been described as a celebration of Indigenous cultures and faith.

Pastor Billy Williams from Dihiiyaan Baptist Church spoke on the theme *Honouring our Elders and Nurturing our Youth*, a fundamental element in Aboriginal culture, and drew

attention to how similar this element was in the Word of God.

Georgia Corowa, coordinator of Queensland Churches Together's Indigenous People's Partnership said the event was organised by Indigenous ministries from various denominations and opened with a moment of honouring God and the people who have gone before us with the playing of the didgeridoo.

"It was a beautiful time of coming together. The theme encourages our community to acknowledge and respect our

elders and to see them as role models for our youth," she said.

Ms Corowa said the church service was the first of the week-long event's activities which also included the NAIDOC Awards Ceremony and Ball held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre.

"Every community had their own celebrations in some way, so there were a number of events throughout the country. One main event in Brisbane was Musgrave Park Family Fun Day," she said.

Ms Corowa said NAIDOC week empowers Indigenous people to achieve in life, to have permission to celebrate culture in its many forms and gives a sense of pride.

"It helps break the stereotypes and images that are placed on Aboriginal people ... but most importantly it unites our people; therefore it is of high importance," she said.

The event celebrates Indigenous cultures and recognises the contributions of Indigenous Australians in various fields.



Georgia Corowa. Photo courtesy of Queensland Churches Together

### Sunday 9 August: Cairns Emmanuel Uniting Church

CAIRNS EMMANUEL Uniting Church has a passion for helping the homeless.

In July this year the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported that nearly 27 000 people are homeless in Queensland.

In this report it was also stated that Cairns was the major city (outside of Brisbane) with the highest rate of homelessness.

*The Cairns Post*, 11 August

2008, reported that the city's rising homeless population was putting welfare groups under pressure and more public housing was urgently needed.

In response to this need, as part of our calling to reach out with Christ's love, our congregation established the Good Samaritan Ministry Centre, a crisis and transitional accommodation facility to help the poor, homeless and marginalised, in the old Blue Care nursing home facility.

We are currently utilising 32 rooms and have submitted an application to the Queensland Government for \$4.7 million to help us purchase half the land,

increase our use to 98 rooms, and upgrade the facilities to ensure they are robust into the future.

We are very thankful to UnitingCare (Lifeline Community Care and Blue Care) for their prayerful consideration of our vision and current situation, and for the support given to ensure that we develop a sustainable and high quality service into the future.

We ask members of the Uniting Church in Australia and the Queensland Synod to remember the Good Samaritan Ministry Centre in their prayers this month.

### Sunday 23 August: Elanora Uniting Church

ELANORA UNITING Church is at the southern end of the Gold Coast, adjacent to the M1 motorway and next door to the Blue Care administration and retirement facilities.

We are a caring, community minded fellowship of around 160 members under the leadership of Rev Ian Lord.

We have a wide cross-section of members, a few young families but predominantly seniors, and our focus is firmly on outreach.

God has blessed us with excellent facilities that are used by people from the community each week, including Church run activities such as the Leisuretime arts and crafts group, Carpenters' Workshop, Garden Club, Adult Fellowship, Toastmasters, and community groups such as fitness groups and playgroups.

We would value prayer for:

- Kids Hope program as it resumes on 2 September and for mentors and children at Elanora Primary School

- New chaplaincy to commence at Elanora State High School and the chaplain who will take up this role that it will be effective in witness and pastoral care

- The work of our volunteer chaplains in Tweed and John Flynn hospitals

- The Leisuretime program which reaches around 300 people each week

- The Currumbin Valley folk who meet regularly each month in the little Currumbin Valley Church

- A successful Spring Fair on 12 September, that it is an effective witness to the community and

- Carpenters' Workshop, a weekly woodwork program for children from Elanora Primary School Special Education Unit that will recommence on 23 September.





## July edition a hit

CONGRATULATIONS ON the July *Journey*, prompted by the 20-year anniversary of the Fitzgerald Enquiry.

The social justice theme was covered from numerous angles, touching on National Reconciliation Week, the naming of Blue Care as a Queensland icon, and conditions in prisons, to name just a few.

In particular, readers were reminded of the public stand taken in church literature and by individuals and groups who courageously challenged the establishment as they sought to apply their faith to the political and social situation of the day.

Such reminders encourage us and challenge us.

It may also be salutary

to consider the number of Christians who endeavour to work for social justice by actually going into politics.

Let's not assume that only the critics care about the fairness and health of our society.

I am sure that being part of the establishment, with integrity, is every bit as hard as challenging it; Christian politicians deserve our prayer.

They also remind us that active involvement in political parties is an additional, though perhaps mundane, option available to any of us as we seek a fair and healthy society.

Jane Trewen  
Toowong



## Looking for answers

THE TWO letters in the July *Journey* ("Working for the future of the Church" and "More to Learn") both raise questions in my mind.

What does the Lay Forum mean when they say they have "respect for our Christian traditions"?

Most of the ordinary men and women in the street have that sort of respect but in no way does that make them a believing Christian.

Surely we don't need to employ a tolerance that accepts a widening diversity of opinion to improve on the gospel stories of Jesus to bring people into the saving knowledge of Jesus.

Won't we, as we continue to learn how to communicate and demonstrate our own faith meaningfully by the things we do and the things we say in everyday living, open the way for the Holy Spirit to lead those we are dealing with into a knowledge of the saving grace which is a gift from God?

I am puzzled how our Uniting Church brothers and sisters, who are seeking to remake the old story under the banner of progressive Christianity, handle the fact

that the *Basis of Union* is very clear on holding firmly to the ancient creeds of the Church?

No doubt they are sometimes in a congregation where the creed is recited, do they not join in or do they join in and close their minds to the content of what they are saying?

The Sponges and McNabs have always been with us, and that is surely the reason why the Holy Spirit led Paul to write so many of his letters to those early churches who were struggling with faith issues.

The writer of the letter "More to Learn" mentions faith and trust.

The writer of Hebrews gives us some food for thought about faith and my small dictionary told me that "trust is to accept without investigation".

Perhaps that is what we Christians need to clearly remember in these days when so many in the Uniting Church are endeavouring to rewrite and change the Word of God, which presents the very basis of our faith.

Ted Butler  
Atherton



## Unity in diversity

WOULD NOW be the time to take this concept to the next level and accept the challenge in a positive state of mind?

Australia is a multi-faith society and the Interfaith Dialogue to be held in

Melbourne in December this year presents the Uniting Church with a great opportunity to participate and lead us toward a better understanding and appreciation of the other faiths which are part of our nation today.

Basil Gillespie  
Beachmere



## A call for clarification

IN THE July edition of *Journey* (page 7), John Harrison expressed some opinions about my appointment as Queensland Integrity Commissioner which call for clarification.

For 28 years I served as a judge.

During those years I always let others decide if I was fit to undertake any task. I did not advertise or apply for positions.

I was appointed as the first Queensland Integrity Commissioner in August 2000, and completed my term on 30

June 2004. Gary Crooke QC, who was Counsel Assisting the Fitzgerald Inquiry was appointed to succeed me.

Following Mr Crooke's recent retirement, David Solomon AM, long associated with the Fitzgerald process has been appointed as Integrity Commissioner.

The function of the Integrity Commissioner is one which must be undertaken seriously, but it hardly allows for 'rocking the boat'.

Alan Demack  
The Range



## Working for the future of the Church

THIS IS what we must learn to do; we must relate the story of Jesus in a way that will communicate with those we meet in our daily lives. As a Church we must engage in a free, open and honest discussion about our beliefs.

John  
McElhinney  
Toowoomba



## Pleasure seekers

MICHAEL JACKSON on stage was exuberant; physically active and musically innovative, a superstar.

From the little we know, his purposeful isolation at home was one way to relax after his demanding performances. Experimenting with prescription drugs was quite a different way. If pleasure seeking was his aim, he had enough money for a plethora of legal substances.

One thing is sure: addiction to prescribed drugs is not uncommon. A misuse of medication is hidden – never

talked about. Maybe you know a relative, a friend, a neighbour, who is struggling alone. Your visit and care means they are halfway to a cure!

The contented addict – if there is such – visits several doctors, using the same story and with the same expectation – a script.

Say 'drugs' and the popular mind thinks of heroin and disposable syringes. No one talks about your temptation, hidden in the medicine cabinet.

We move from stage glitter (and troubled home life) to drugs and professional sport. From the simplest 'buzz' to the cheers in a crowded stadium, the player 'gets a high'. So does the honour of representing one's country.

There is pride in being the best hero, the fairest player, an

esteemed role model. In our national statistics, alcohol as the cause of death is far ahead of all the other drugs combined.

Whatever the sport, alcohol always wins. There is a binge-type celebration for the winners, while glass by glass, losers cry into their beer!

In good old amateur days, unpaid coaches instilled the 'proper' attitude in team games. Winning or losing was not the big thing. It was how they played the game.

Vince Lombardi torpedoed that noble stance when he said, "Winning isn't everything. It is the only thing".

Phillip Ramsay  
Manly West



## New slang

AMONGST THE current Christian catch phrases, 'doing church' would be among the strangest.

Church is who we are. How can we 'do' our identity?

Phil Smith  
Pine Rivers



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# What are your hopes and dreams for the future of the Uniting Church in Australia?



## Rev Alistair Macrae

MY HOPE is that the Uniting Church will creatively build on the strengths and gifts it brings to the whole Church and to our community.

We have a unique but complex relationship with the First Peoples of this land through the Congress.

This relationship needs careful attention, honesty, patience and forgiveness if the Church is to model to the wider community what reconciliation might look like in this nation.

I hope we can deepen this partnership and I dream of an Australia which honours its First Peoples symbolically and substantially.

I hope we can learn new ways to share the richness of our cultural diversity in the UCA so that our multicultural character informs our theology, spirituality, worship and witness.

I hope we continue to call people into relationship with the living God and continue our commitment to justice-seeking, peace-making and community service as integral to the same gospel.

I hope that our activism is undergirded by prayer.

I hope we can maintain our passion for deep and respectful conversation with the scriptures and our theological heritage (without idolising the past) whilst exploring new ways and words (without idolising innovation) to bear authentic witness to the Gospel in this time and this place.

I hope and pray for the renewal of our congregations so that in our gatherings for worship, prayer, community engagement and the presence of God is palpable.

I hope that in the great issues of our day — care for God's creation, peace built on justice, fair distribution of the earth's resources — the prophetic voice of the Christian Church can be heard.

If, as one theologian wrote, "the mission of the Church is to create analogies to the kingdom of God", I pray that the Uniting Church in its many expressions can continue to pray and live "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven".



Rev Alistair Macrae is the new President of the Uniting Church in Australia.  
Photo by Paddy Macrae and courtesy of *Crosslight*

## Roberta Stanley

I WOULD really love to see the Uniting Church and Congress look at covenanting, for people to understand that under God we are in this together.

We are the family of God, we're going to walk together.

I'd love to see covenanting, where we really understand where each one of us is coming from — that in

God's country, we walk together as a family and share that mutual respect.

We've all got something to bring to the table. We share that and we walk together.

I'm looking forward to allowing people to say, we're the First Peoples of this nation, we have a right to be here, let's work together, let's (under God) have a mutual respect for one another.

Accept it, we're here together; we're going to walk together for a long time.

We've all got something to learn from each other. Let's see how we can work together, learn together, grow together and walk together.

That's what I'd really love.

You know the Congress logo with the two hands; it's about learning and growing together and breaking down a lot of those barriers.

For too long there have been so many misconceptions on both sides but you realise under God, we're in this together.

Roberta Stanley is the deputy chair of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

Photo and interview by Alison Atkinson-Phillips and courtesy of *Revive*



## Anne Brown

INITIALLY I dreamed of churches filled with worshipping families, that all generations may know the joy and the reality of Jesus as Saviour and Lord.

Times change, structures and strategies change, we change and communities change, but God is our constant.

I hope that the Uniting Church in Australia embraces these changes, seeing them as opportunities to listen and discern God's purpose differently, seek his vision and plan, remain relevant and committed to a practical Biblical vision.

I am grateful to be part of a church that stands strongly for social justice.

May this become stronger, as needs become greater.

I hope also that we never lose sight of God's mission in the world to "make disciples" and to "be witnesses".

This is often caught not taught, but our spiritual disciplines and good leadership training are vital preparation to help follow God's call.

May we never discount the importance of good communication, trustworthy relationships and the

untapped potential and vision of youth in the Church and beyond.

I hope, as we see beyond ourselves through praise, worship, prayer, service and love, we live passionately for the kingdom of God and the nature and lifestyle of Jesus.

We then may discern God's purpose in doing justly, loving mercy and walking humbly with him.



Anne Brown is a Lay Preacher in the Longreach Congregation and has a passion for listening to people's stories. Photo by Andrew Brown

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