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## NAMBOUR / CLONCURRY PAGE 3 PARTNERSHIP

"It is our prayer that people can see something of the love of Christ in the actions we have taken." **Graham Warne**

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"I believe that there is a vision and if people could catch onto it we would have an incredible amount of power to do good things." **Katie Wallis**

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# DIVINE INSPIRATION

## Rediscovering a place for art in the Church

By Mardi Lumsden

THE WORLD'S most famous places of worship are laden with a rich history of the great masters of visual art.

Michelangelo's fresco on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican is viewed by thousands of tourists every day.

The Vatican museum has one of the most impressive art collections in the world, with the Catholic church commissioning many great works of art throughout history.

One wall of the refectory of the convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan, boasts Leonardo da Vinci's fresco *The Last Supper*. But these days our Churches seem almost void of visual art.

Many Uniting Churches express faith artistically through expertly and meticulously created banners, but what happened to commissioning the great artists of the time to embody the scriptures through art?

Artist and ministry candidate Dona Spencer often ponders the lack of visual art in Uniting Churches.

"This is always surprising when one reads in Exodus of the detailed descriptions of the embellishment of the temple and of the anointing of artists in order to carry out this work," said the Moggill Uniting Church member.

"The Christian church since its beginnings has been coloured by the iconoclastic debate and the Reformed church, under Calvin and Zwingli, responded to this struggle by removing most or all imagery from the church, for fear that the congregation would worship the images."

The reason for this was the interpretation of the first and second commandments and the idea that people would worship the art, or idol, rather than God.

"I personally believe that idolatry is now found in selfish individualism, in the worship of our 'selves' – our possessions, career, social status and the like.

"It is time for the church to encourage her artists to discover a language with which to worship God, with integrity, through their art. It is time for the church to learn to understand and appreciate art through a theological lens.

"The twenty-first century is a visual world. Let's learn to engage with this visual world – aesthetically and critically – with discernment, wisdom and, most of all, affirmation," she said.

Beenleigh Uniting Church minister and artist Rev Alan Robinson said with the invention of the printing press, people began to trust the written word and began to distrust visual art.

"It may now be changing but I believe the Uniting Church has been obsessed with words," he said.

"Every major Uniting Church worship event seems to have required booklets with endless spoken responses.

"An image can evoke a response where words fail."

But he said for art to truly honour God it needs to be of the highest calibre.

"When we visit what have been the great places of Christian worship in Europe and consider the art heritage that the Church has sponsored through its history we are reminded that we, in our time and place, too easily settle for the mediocre.

"Finding the compromise between the well-intentioned but poor and the excellent is not easy. God requires nothing less than our best as a church."

Paintings by Dianne Minnaar  
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[www.minnaar.com.au](http://www.minnaar.com.au)



# Connecting with the culture of creativity

I KNOW nothing about art.

When I visited the art galleries of Europe I admit that I didn't really understand most of the art works I saw, and sometimes wondered why they are called art and deserved a place in a gallery.

However I remember the wisdom of a minister of my childhood, who said that a person who says they don't like classical music passes judgement on themselves, not the music of the masters.

Throughout Europe the art that interested me most was the art of the Cathedrals.

Mostly however I found myself marvelling at the skill and dedication of those who spent years creating these visual feasts.

St Mark's Basilica in Venice has 8000 square metres of gilded mosaics on the walls, vaults and cupolas that tell both biblical stories of the Old and New Testaments as well as the stories of the saints and allegorical tales of a people of faith.

This art developed over centuries and stands in stark contrast to the transitory images of modern multimedia attempts to convey the faith in our rather stark places of worship.

Despite my fascination even these impressive displays of art seemed didactic, rarely touching me at any deep level.

I was surprised therefore when I encountered two most well known and acclaimed pieces of art.

The first was the effect Michelangelo's sculpture of David had on me and the second was

disappointed with the *Mona Lisa*.

It seemed less impressive than they expected; it was smaller than they expected; they were more impressed with *The Wedding Feast at Cana*, a huge painting by Paolo Caliari, that hung at the opposite end of the room.

I guess it shows that art touches people in different ways.

In my office I have three paintings that break up the monotony of the walls.

What is special to me about them is that they speak to me about the artists and those who gave them to me.

One is a scene of the Peak Ranges and was painted by Kaye Dahlenburg who was a member of Capella congregation. It was given to me as a farewell gift.

The second is a rural landscape painted by Glen Barnett, a colleague from my days in Trinity College.

Glenn is wheelchair-bound and paints with a brush in his mouth.

I bought it because it spoke to me of a person of deep faith who did not let his physical limitations stop him from responding to God's call on his life.

When I am transfixed by the beauty of our world I am deeply mindful of the artist who created it.

seeing Leonardo da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*.

Like most people I had seen pictures of these.

Yet as I stood before each of them I found myself transfixed.

There seemed to be a life in each that caught hold of me.

I still wonder at the experiences and found myself wanting to learn more about the artists and what motivated them.

As I have discussed this experience with others, I find that not everybody responds as I did.

Many say that they are

## A rich pallet in history

HUMAN BEINGS have always told stories by drawing.

From sketches in caves to Egyptian hieroglyphics and Australian Indigenous rock paintings, the visual arts have told the story long after the original story tellers were gone.

So what happened to this tradition in the modern Western church?

I have been fortunate to visit a few of the great art galleries and cathedrals of Europe.

These buildings are home to some of the most famous religious art in the world.

Paintings and sculptures by the likes of Michelangelo, Botticelli, and Leonardo da Vinci grace the walls of these sacred spaces.

I still remember the feeling of first seeing architect Gaudi's still unfinished masterpiece the Sagrada Familia cathedral in Barcelona.

It was evening and as my taxi

sped to a red light I looked out the window to a wall.

As I looked up, a sand-dribbled cathedral lit from below stretched up to the heavens. Before I could catch my breath, the taxi was off again and my moment of peaceful awe at one man's imagination and perseverance was gone.

I feel the same way about some Australian Indigenous art.

The amount of time and precision that goes into each work to tell the stories of history is beyond comprehension.

I like that the interpretation of a painting is just as important as the painting itself.

Indigenous art is also looking into the future with exciting works by people like Papunya Tula artist Adam Gibbs Tjapaltjarri.

In researching this edition of *Journey* I have gained a new appreciation of the number of talented artists we have in the Uniting Church.



Gaudi's Sagrada Familia cathedral, Spain

How can we use their calling to express faith through visual art in the Church today?

Mardi Lumsden  
Editor

Apology:  
Blue Care Director of Mission Colleen Geyer is a lay person and is not ordained as we advised in last month's edition.

## Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



The third is the painting of an Aboriginal elder from Mornington Island painted by my sister, Allana, who spent several years there as a nurse.

It speaks to me of the ancient wisdom of the Indigenous people of this country.

In these three works it is the artists who are most significant to me.

Their art reminds me of them; it helps me understand something about them; it helps me retain my relationship with them.

I have a deep appreciation of the world in which I live.

When I am transfixed by the beauty of our world I am deeply mindful of the artist who created it.

Moments of awe at the size and wonder of the world remind me of God's presence; help me understand God, and affirm my relationship with God.

As a Christian I recognise that my most authentic experience of God comes through Jesus Christ, who is God in a form I can understand.

In Jesus Christ I see the desire of God the creator to be at one with all creation.

I see not only all that we humans might be, but all that we can be in Christ.

I don't always understand my experiences of God; I don't always appreciate God but occasionally even I am shaken by God through the art of others.

## Sign of the times



JOURNEY EDITOR Mardi Lumsden snapped this sign on her travels through Toowoomba in February.

This funny, yet poignant, sign in front of St Stephen's Uniting Church, Toowoomba, not only makes the passer-by think, it tells the community what kind of people worship at this Church.





# Church looks for the way, together

By Mardi Lumsden

AROUND 50 Uniting Church members and staff gathered in February in response to a 27th Synod resolution to begin to discern a shared direction for the next 10 years of the Uniting Church in Queensland which enriches community; local, state, national and global.

This is a grassroots approach that aims to inspire, renew and energise congregation members and Church and agency staff.

Over the past five months the Synod Leadership Team has been working with facilitator Sr Margaret Endicott and secretary/theological resource person Rev Allan Thompson to develop a process to enable the Uniting Church in Queensland to undertake the journey they have called *Together on the Way*,

*enriching community*. General Secretary Rev Douglas Jones hopes the process involves as many Church members as possible.

"Over the past two years a number of factors including spiritual, governance and financial have emerged that have led to a determination to invite the people of the Uniting Church in Queensland to be involved in a process to look more deeply at the essence and future of the Church," he said.

"The journey we have called *Together on the Way, enriching community* provides an exciting opportunity to draw on the wisdom and inspiration of as many people as possible who share in the life of our Church in Queensland."

The initial workshop was to train leaders from each presbytery,



Facilitator Sr Margaret Endicott at the January workshop. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

key synod and agency staff and chairpersons to work through a process with groups from their congregation or workplace.

As a follow-on from that workshop, there will be a series of workshops conducted across Queensland that will provide opportunity for people in the Church and its agencies to engage in the discernment process.

Worship and workshop resources are now available from a dedicated section of the Synod website: [www.ucaqlld.com.au](http://www.ucaqlld.com.au).

Just look for the *Together on the Way, enriching community* button on the Synod website home page.

Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson encouraged people to get involved and to pray for the journey.

"No matter how you share

in our life I urge you to join this adventure and allow God to lead us through you," he said.

"I am sure that together if we are open to the word of God, we will be renewed and energised by God's Spirit."

For more information visit [together.ucaqlld.com.au](http://together.ucaqlld.com.au)

## Economic safety net a possibility for Pacific partners

By Tom Ganderton

AUSTRALIA SHOULD follow New Zealand's lead and offer Pacific Island Nations an economic safety net against catastrophic climate change.

This is the claim made by former Garnaut Review economist, AusAID Chief Economist and World Bank Lead Economist, Professor Stephen Howes from the Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University.

UnitingWorld Associate Director Church Solidarity (Pacific) Mr Bruce Mullan said Professor Howes' suggestion was a radical alternative to current options for the low-lying nations

under greatest threat, but is worth serious consideration.

"It would cost us little," said Professor Howes.

While he does not deny that countries like Kiribati and Tuvalu are highly vulnerable to rising sea levels, he believes there are a range of factors to be taken into account, including their economic strength as nations.

"Often these countries are already not viable. They are simply too small and isolated, and would collapse without foreign aid," he said.

"Like a lot of good policies, it's one that should be adopted even if climate change wasn't happening."

Professor Howes referred to studies showing that small

economies do best when closely integrated with larger economies.

"It's one of the reasons why Polynesia (such as Tonga, Samoa, Cook Islands) does better economically than Melanesia (such as Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, PNG).

"New Zealand already has schemes which give a special migration quota to some of the Pacific Island states," he said.

"Australia should adopt a similar scheme."

The Uniting Church in Australia, which has the largest network of Pacific partners of any Australian Church, is currently working with Pacific partner churches to facilitate a range of exchange opportunities.

The exchange program increases their leadership capacity, passes on vital skills and strengthens relationships.

"We recognise the difficulty our partners will face in the next few decades," said Mr Mullan.

"Professor Howes' radical suggestion seeks to helpfully support our Pacific neighbours, and it is worth serious consideration."



Bruce Mullan receives a cheque for UnitingWorld from Keith Lawson, President, and Marion McDonald, Treasurer UCAF Qld Synod Committee. Photo courtesy of Keith Lawson

## Fellowship supports Pacific

IN FEBRUARY the Synod Adult Fellowship (UCAF) Committee presented a cheque for \$6663 to UnitingWorld's Bruce Mullan for the Timor Leste Livelihood Project.

In 2009 the UCAF Queensland Synod Committee decided to adopt as its theme for the year Sowing Seeds for the Kingdom.

The UCAF encouraged Fellowships throughout the state to support this agricultural project in East Timor assisting

farming families to become more self-sufficient through education in farming methods, purchase of equipment, establishing home-based industries, and marketing produce.

It also helps achieve the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals.

The Queensland Synod UCAF have been heartened by the way Adult Fellowships have caught the vision of the theme and its practical out-working.



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# UnitingCare Qld Board appoints City Council CEO

By Dot King

UNITINGCARE QUEENSLAND, has appointed Jude Munro, Chief Executive Officer of the Brisbane City Council, to its Board.

UnitingCare Queensland's CEO Anne Cross said Ms Munro's experience in a range of local government positions made her

an excellent choice as a Board member.

"Jude's dedication to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of communities is well proven and her knowledge and skills gained through her experience in a wide range of executive roles both in local government and in government

community service departments will enable her to provide valuable input to the work we do in UnitingCare," said Ms Cross.

"We look forward to the contribution she will make as we work together to reach out to those in need, to provide high quality care and speak out for fairness and justice."



New UnitingCare Queensland Board member Jude Munro.  
Photo courtesy of UnitingCare Queensland



Estelle Charlish receives a Moderator's Medal from Rev Bruce Johnson at the 27th Synod meeting in 2008. Photo by Osker Lau

## Moderator's Medal recognises dedicated volunteers

By Dot King

DESCRIBED AS "a tireless worker who is well known and well thought of throughout the community", Estelle Charlish of Murgon was one of a group of dedicated volunteers who were awarded the Moderator's Community Service Medal at the 27th Synod meeting in 2008.

"I was overwhelmed and humbled and certainly very surprised when I heard that I had been selected as a medal recipient.

"I had not expected any recognition for my volunteer

work as it is just part of my life and something I love to do," said Ms Charlish.

"Attending the presentation was a great thrill especially as my husband Lindsay and other family members were there to share the occasion as were members of my 'Church family' which was very special."

Ms Charlish was awarded the Moderator's Community Service Medal for 45 years of work as a volunteer for many organisations including Blue Care where she had been a committee and auxiliary member for at least 20 years, the National Seniors group, Meals on

Wheels and a Day Respite centre for the elderly, as well as being very involved in her local church.

This year's nominees should reflect the UnitingCare Shared Values of compassion, respect, justice, working together, and leading through learning.

Nominations close Monday 5 April with the medal presentation held during the Queensland Synod's 28th meeting, 21-25 May 2010 at the Alexandra Park conference centre on the Sunshine Coast.

Visit [www.ucareqld.com.au](http://www.ucareqld.com.au) for more information or a

## Coping with disaster

FEBRUARY MARKED the anniversary of the devastating fires in Victoria, and the severe flooding in Queensland.

While some Queensland communities have been hit again with floods, others rebuild, but memories are not as easy to repair. Many people are continuing to deal with issues relating to personal loss - loss of life, property, and personal security.

In response, Lifeline has developed two new self-help tool kits: *Helping your children cope with the after effects of a natural disaster* and *Coping with loss and change in a community after a natural disaster*.

Anniversaries can be a painful reminder of distressing events and individuals may experience concerns such as; trauma, stress, anxiety, depression, relationship troubles, financial pressure or feelings of hopelessness and frustration. These feelings are not unusual, and help is available.

To download these resources visit [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

## Wesley Mission Brisbane hosts city Pancake Day

By Aileen Wallace

A NEW kind of Pancake Day was held in the spiritual heart of Brisbane on Shrove Tuesday.

Wesley Mission Brisbane's Albert Street Uniting Church members were flipping pancakes with the help of Grace Grace, state member for Brisbane Central.

Many people chose to make a donation as well as purchase their breakfast. All proceeds will be donated to the Uniting Church's Sudanese Nuer Faith Community at Saint David's Coopers Plains.



Members of the Uniting Church Sudanese Nuer Faith Community help Grace Grace, member for Brisbane Central, flip pancakes in Brisbane's CBD. Photo by Aileen Wallace and courtesy of WMB

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# Nambour's mission possible

By Phil Smith

FROM BOULIA to Bourketown, people are shaking their heads about Nambour Uniting Church.

As the water recedes from floods, airstrips are reopening for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, the Frontier Services flying patrol and other essential services.

Eleven of those runways will be available thanks to the blood, sweat and tears of Nambour Uniting Church members, aged eight to 68, who travelled thousands of kilometres last year to refurbish nine airstrips and build three more from scratch under the supervision of Cloncurry's Rev Garry Hardingham (Frontier Services Patrol Minister).

Mr Hardingham received a Cloncurry Shire Council

Achievement Award as part of the Australia Day Awards for the work he and the Nambour congregation members did rebuilding the airstrips.

The convoy measured, graded and marked nine bush airstrips, painting more than 500 tyres to mark the 1000 metre long runways.

Three new strips were cut by a grader driver on the team.

What some considered impossible was the opportunity many congregations dream of.

*Mission Possible* engaged organisations outside the church.

It also built strong bonds between age groups.

The project took volunteers on an adventure demanding faith and resilience and it demonstrated Christ's people in service to complete strangers.



The Southern Team (which reached as far as Boulia in South West Queensland) with Rev Garry Hardingham and the Mackay Patrol aircraft. Photo by Jenny Brown

Team member Graham Warne said the airstrips have already saved four lives.

"People asked us why we were doing it," said Mr Warne.

"It was our pleasure to be able to tell them we were doing this as a service, in the name of Christ - no charge!"

"It is our prayer that people

can see something of the love of Christ in the actions we have taken.

"And to cap it all off, it was really great fun!"

Uniting Church in Australia  
Queensland Synod

hungry?

Satisfy your sweet tooth and your soul this Easter.

www.ucaql.com.au

## Feeding your soul this Easter

GIVEN THE early date of Easter this year and printing lead time we are unable to produce Easter postcards and posters for congregations.

However, we have designed an A3 poster, a postcard and PowerPoint slides with this year's theme *Hungry? Satisfy your sweet*

*tooth and your soul this Easter.*

These resources are available for free download at [www.ucaql.com.au](http://www.ucaql.com.au) for congregations to print out individually.

Black and white versions are available, but colour is preferred.

These resources are intended for high quality printing, such

as a local print shop, and high resolution images are available online.

In order to maintain consistency, designs should not be altered in any way other than to include your congregation's Easter service times in the space provided.

## Ministry expo hunts for stories

THE BREMER Brisbane Presbytery is looking for great stories about ministry in action for their Ministry Expo to be held on 17 April at Glebe Road Uniting Church, Ipswich, and 24 April at Centenary Uniting Church, Brisbane.

They are looking for stories that will inspire and encourage others to think about how their congregation might share in God's mission in the world.

Congregations from across the Presbytery and Church agencies will share ideas and resources.

There will be displays, take-home materials, people to talk to, visual presentations and invited speakers.

Featured projects include the Kid's Hope project, how to connect with the community at Christmas, how to partner with an overseas church through UnitingWorld, how to use the



Children enjoy the Chapel Hill Uniting Church's successful Nearly Spring Fair. Photo by Jeff Bond

visual arts in worship, and much more. There will also be entertainment, including a jumping castle.

Ministry Expo organising team member Rev David MacGregor said mission is at the heart of the Church.

"Have you ever noticed kids in a

jumping castle? Their excitement is contagious. Every move they make has an impact on others. Church can be like that!

"Come along to Expo and bounce your ideas off others."

To participate contact David MacGregor on 0414 392 802

## Bioethics call for members

THE SYNOD Bioethics Committee is conducting a study to help develop a Uniting Church Resource to assist patients and families to cope with emotional, spiritual and ethical end of life issues.

The committee is inviting expressions of interest from

people who have an interest and expertise in the topic.

Meetings are usually on the second Thursday of the month at 5pm at Rosalie, Brisbane.

For more information contact Rev Brian Gilbert, 12 Ridgehaven Crt, Caloundra QLD 4551, or ph 54997324.

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# Singing for their supper

By Mardi Lumsden

A THREE-WEEK mission trip to Africa changed Centenary Uniting Church member Katie Wallis's life in a way she never predicted.

Since then the musician and former exercise physiologist has recorded an EP of five original songs and a full length album, travelled around Africa twice more and has just returned from a three-and-a-half month, 35-date tour of the United States and Canada with her band Remember Seven.

It sounds like the typical rock and roll lifestyle except for one major difference – most of the money they make goes to projects they support in Africa.

"We did this little EP because I went to Africa and got ruined by the experience and wanted to raise some money," she said.

"What started out as musically 'maybe not great,' God has used to

do some good stuff.

"The important thing is the story behind what we are trying to do."

The first EP raised money for a feeding project for orphans and vulnerable children in Mwandi, Zambia, where fellow Uniting Church member Fiona Dixon-Thompson works and where Ms Wallis visited as part of a group led by youth worker Jason Bray.

Ms Wallis couldn't afford to go on the trip but during a Chrysalis weekend she was given an anonymous cheque to cover the cost.

"God needed me to be in Zambia at that time and I guess now it makes sense why a lot of things happened in my life that allowed me to be there."

The third trip saw the whole band travel to Zambia.

"We went back together to pray and work out what it was we were meant to be doing," she said.

"It just really felt like we were

supposed to record an album to tell more stories about the people we were meeting and tour it in America!

"I've never felt so sure of something before.

"We played 35 times, sometimes in lounge rooms and sometimes in big churches, just telling our story."

The group stopped selling their CD and gave it away for a donation.

"Sometimes we would give a bunch of CDs to people we just felt wanted them and couldn't afford them and then sometimes someone would write us a cheque for \$500 for one CD.

"Lots of churches we visited now have mission groups set up where they had never had an outward mission focus before."

The group only paid for accommodation five times.

"The way was already prepared for us.

"We got near the end of our

tour and were able to give a boot-full of food to a homeless shelter."

For Ms Wallis life continues to be one big adventure as she attempts to live by faith.

"I think in Church we keep trying to make things cool, relevant, exciting or youthful.

"I think people are looking for something that is authentic.

"That is what we strive for."

She praised her family and home Church for their endless support.

"I'm a product of the Uniting Church. Sometimes things really frustrate me about the Church in light of what I've seen and done,

but I believe that there is a vision and if people could catch onto it we would have an incredible amount of power to do good things."

Ms Wallis said her biggest fear is that people will think buying one of their CDs is enough of a response to poverty.

"We are really interested in talking about changing lifestyles."

Remember Seven is available to visit congregations, particularly near the Brisbane area. For more information visit [www.rememberseven.com.au](http://www.rememberseven.com.au) or email [band@rememberseven.com.au](mailto:band@rememberseven.com.au)



Katie Wallis with a little girl in a home for orphans in Zimbabwe. Photo courtesy of Remember Seven

# Give it up for Lent

By Phil Smith

This year for Lent I'm giving up trying to understand Lent.

This liturgical season is a big slice of the church tradition pie, and it's not as simple as giving up big slices of pie for a few weeks.

That's where it starts. Actually, where it starts depends

on your tradition. In Western Christianity Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes in the ninth hour of Holy Thursday. That's 44 days in the Catholic Church.

For everyone else Lent ends on Easter Sunday (46 days), unless you worship in the Archdiocese of Milan, in which case Lent begins exactly four weeks before

Easter, and the six Sundays in Lent are not counted toward the 40 days.

Don't start your diet yet, we haven't passed go.

In the Eastern Orthodox Byzantine tradition and Eastern Catholic churches the calculation begins on Clean Monday (I hadn't heard of it either), Sundays are counted and the fast ends

on the Friday before Palm Sunday. However, Lazarus Saturday(?), Palm Sunday and Holy Week are separate periods of fasting.

Have you decided on red meat or chocolate?

The Coptic, Ethiopian and Eritrean Orthodox Churches observe 55 days of fasting. Hungry yet?

It was a lot simpler for the early church. Easter Eve was a special celebration for the baptism of new converts. The initiates had been preparing and a 40 hour fast was observed. This may have correlated to the 40 hours Christ was in the tomb.

As with many religious festivals, Lent and Easter roughly coincide with seasons of the northern hemisphere.

Coming out of winter rural communities knew all too well what the Britons called the Hungry Gap: the period when stored food supplies ran low and another crop was some way off.

This is a period of fasting and doing without.

As spring comes the days begin to lengthen. The Anglo Saxon term was *Lencten*.

In our luxurious modern lives the idea of going without has been generalised as a call to simplify things and focus on Jesus' victory.

Instead of food, perhaps your fast could include technology, sport, television, music or strange rituals and traditions.

I have decided to give up Google and Wikipedia.

## 2010 MODERATOR'S COMMUNITY SERVICE MEDAL

Do you know a volunteer who has contributed in an outstanding way to the Church's mission in community service in Queensland? The Moderator's Medal is one way to honour them. This year we are looking for nominations that reflect the UnitingCare Shared Values as we believe that these are fundamental to the work we do and express the mission of God being present in our lives to offer hope, healing and transformation.

Our Shared Values are:

- Compassion
- Respect
- Justice
- Working together
- Leading through Learning

Medals will be awarded for each category and if there is a deserving nominee whose work is exceptional but does not fit easily into one of these categories a Moderator's medal for general excellence might be awarded.

Nominees must:

- be a volunteer, past or present
- have exhibited outstanding service over a number of years
- be involved in community service work other than congregational work (e.g. Blue Care, Lifeline Community Care, UnitingCare Hospitals, Wesley

Mission Brisbane or community service agencies outside the Uniting Church)

- were/are not in paid employment connected to their volunteer work

Nominations should be submitted electronically, a link to the form can be found on the UnitingCare Queensland website <http://www.ucareqld.com.au>

NOMINATIONS CLOSE COB Monday 5 April 2010



Uniting Church in Australia  
Queensland Synod



## Lent explained

By Rev Dr David Rankin

Lent was first mentioned formally (though it pre-existed this) at the Council of Nicaea in 325.

It was the combination of two existing church practices: an extended fast before Holy Week/Easter, and a regulated period of preparation before baptism.

The 40 days comes from the

length of our Lord's fast in the wilderness.

By the 8th century the season of Lent began in the West on Ash Wednesday with the ritual ashing.

When the practice of adult baptism declined, the penitential aspect of the season came to the fore.

Lenten studies retain the educational, preparatory aspect of the season.



# Visual art and the church

By Rev Dr Geraldine Wheeler

IT WAS only about 500 years ago that the church started to think that there was visual art in places of worship.

Churches were filled with images, icons and visual decorative patterns, but much of it had a function related to worship.

Different Christian traditions still have diverse views about the visual dimension of the church's worship.

The first known place of Christian worship with images on the walls (apart from some early catacombs in Rome) was at Dura Europos, a town in present day Syria built around 230-240 AD.

This town, buried through war by 300, was only found and excavated in the 1930s.

There was a house church with a baptistery which had a good shepherd fresco and other images.

Surprisingly a nearby synagogue also had frescoes depicting biblical stories.

After more than 100 years of

fierce debate the eastern church accepted the Second Council of Nicea (787) recommendation that there should be icons of Jesus, Mary and the saints and that the icons be honoured as a link, for prayer, between worshippers and those beyond this life who would bring their requests to God.

In the western church Pope Gregory the Great (c. 600), faced with the problem that people were reported to be worshipping the images in the church, recommended that the people be taught to read the images.

The pictures were to be a visual telling of the biblical stories and the lives of the saints for people who could not read.

Two centuries later, some in the western church had serious doubts about the Second Council of Nicea.

The carving of three-dimensional figures increased, including the cross and the crucifix.

By the 13th century gothic churches were emerging, filled with carved pillars, colourful

painted walls, and new, large stained glass windows.

By the time of the Reformation (16th century), many practices relating to visual images were regarded as idolatrous, and the reformers recommended either a middle ground (e.g. Luther, that pictures were for teaching) or that all the images should be removed from the churches (Zwingli and Calvin, both of whom, however, supported visual art in home and community).

Those reformers feared people would use pictures in the church in an idolatrous way.

There was a re-numbering of the 10 commandments to help guard against this, making "You shall not make a graven image/idol" a separate commandment.

By the latter part of the 19th century Protestant churches were beginning to reconsider how pictures or images could be used in the churches in a responsible way.

There were pictures in books used in teaching Bible stories to children, but even today there are

people who grew up in very plain church buildings, sometimes not having even a cross.

Now we live in a highly visual culture.

How do Reformed churches use visual art in worship without lapsing into idolatry?

Biblical story telling in images and artists' interpretation of scripture can be complementary to the preaching and teaching of Scripture.

Such pictures may be of a permanent nature – printed on paper, in stained glass windows, on seasonal banners or installations – or as fleeting virtual images flashed on a screen.

Beauty, light, colour and visual harmony can help people become ready to be drawn into the worship of God.

What is seen should speak to people about faith in Christ.



A fresco in the synagogue of Dura Europos (Syria) depicting a scene from the book of Esther. Between 1928 and 1937 Yale University participated in the excavation of the ancient Byzantine city



## Who done it?

THIS PAINTING of Jesus' head was used in an interactive art piece at the 2010 Summer Madness camp.

It came originally from another youth ministry event and had been stored at YACMU for at least 8 years.

Tom Kerr reported that no one can tell us where it came from. Do you know who painted it and what event it was for?

At Summer Madness many young people wrote their names beside Jesus as a way of expressing their commitment to stand with him and to be on his side.

Email [journey@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:journey@ucaqld.com.au) if you have more information about this painting

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Uniting Church in Australia  
**Queensland Synod**

## General Secretary

*Synod of Queensland*

The Synod of Queensland is seeking a new General Secretary to commence from December 2010 due to the retirement of Rev Douglas Jones. The Position Description and application information is available at [www.ucaqld.com.au](http://www.ucaqld.com.au).

Queries should be directed to Bruce Johnson, Moderator Qld Synod ([bruce.johnson@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:bruce.johnson@ucaqld.com.au) or 07 3377 9705)

Please mark correspondence with the title "General Secretary – Expression of Interest" and send to Ana Mila ([ana.mila@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:ana.mila@ucaqld.com.au)) or Rev Bruce Johnson.

Applications should be marked **CONFIDENTIAL** and addressed to: Rev Bruce Johnson, GPO Box 674, Brisbane QLD 4001.

Closing date for receipt of applications: COB 31 March 2010.



Uniting Church in Australia  
**Queensland Synod**



## Director of Studies

*in Old Testament*

Applications are invited from suitably qualified people, lay and ordained, women and men, for this position.

Trinity College is the UCA's theological college in Queensland with responsibility for training people for both ordained and lay ministries. Ministry candidates undertake the academic elements of their program through Australian Catholic University while continuing their broader ministry formation through Trinity. See <http://www.trinity.qld.edu.au/>

Inquiries should be made to:

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson

Tel: 07 3377 9950

Email: [geoff.thompson@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:geoff.thompson@ucaqld.com.au)

Applications should be lodged by 4 pm, Friday 16 April 2010, with the Secretary Placements Committee, Queensland Synod, GPO Box 674, Brisbane Qld 4001 or by email at [marian.zaunbrecher@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:marian.zaunbrecher@ucaqld.com.au)

# Minister drawn to preach

By Mardi Lumsden

LAST SEPTEMBER the Beenleigh Region Uniting Church, South Moreton Presbytery, got more than just a new minister.

When artist and children's book author and illustrator Rev Alan Robinson and his wife Sharyn (a visual arts teacher) arrived the congregation gained a new appreciation of art in worship.

Mr Robinson had been Senior Minister at Pittwater Uniting Church on Sydney's Northern Beaches for 15 years and had established something of an artistic community there.

Now, in Beenleigh, the pulpit has given way to an easel to allow Mr Robinson to draw as he preaches.

"I usually do one or two pictures," he said.

"I often make changes to the pictures as the message unfolds.

"They are done very quickly on paper using soft chalks.

"They are not permanent works of art. They are for the moment only and then for the recycling bin."

Mr Robinson learnt a valuable lesson many years ago while attempting to preach in a Sydney shopping mall.

"People ran away like I had the plague," he said.

"At the same time ... the water

colour class I attended would go to a place like Balmoral Beach to paint landscapes and people would cluster around us like flies to see what we were doing.

"I figured there was something to learn from that.

"Art has a way of sneaking the message in the back door when the front one is boarded up."

Beenleigh congregation members Rhyl and Ross Hindmarsh said Mr Robinson's interesting preaching style has been welcomed by the congregation.

"Alan's drawings during the sermon are something so different to anything we've experienced before and were such a pleasant surprise," said Mrs Hindmarsh.

"They add a visual dimension to the message that really holds your attention.

"He is so very talented and is using this talent to spread the Gospel message in a very effective way."

The congregation has also auctioned some of Mr Robinson's drawings to raise money for overseas mission projects.

Despite the struggle of finding creative space amongst the call and duties of an ordained minister, Mr Robinson said art helps him communicate God's message more clearly.

"Preaching and teaching are a vital part of what I do as a



Beenleigh Region Uniting Church minister Alan Robinson at work. Photo courtesy of Alan Robinson

Minister. They require effective communication. Anything that will assist that needs to be employed in what I do.

"Sadly, I think artists don't often feel comfortable or understood in the average congregation.

"We have this need to compartmentalise art; there's 'Christian' art and 'Christian' music and then there's 'the rest'

(which, presumably, belongs to the devil).

"Art defies the false sacred-secular divide," he said.

When Mr Robinson released two children's books last year he felt an expectation that they should have an overtly Christian message.

"I think some people were puzzled that they didn't," he said.

"Frankly, I think there is really only 'good' art and 'bad' art.

"All good art will in some way be glorifying to God, whether it names him or not."

Rev Alan Robinson is author and illustrator of the *Grandpas' Farm* series published by New Frontier. For more information visit [www.newfrontier.com.au](http://www.newfrontier.com.au)

## Stations find urban setting

By Dianne Jensen

CHRISTIAN PILGRIMS have sought to retrace the footsteps of Christ since early times, pausing before holy places and sacred

images to pray and reflect upon the journey to the cross.

This year, as Easter approaches, an innovative Stations of the Cross walk through the Brisbane city centre conducted by artist Lindsay Farrell will use secular and religious landmarks to bring a contemporary focus to the tradition.

The Stations walk starts at St John's Anglican Cathedral and en route participants will visit locations including All Saints Anglican Church, Anzac Square, Jacob's Ladder, The Baptist Tabernacle, Albert St Uniting Church and the Salvation Army Citadel.

The 14 associated artworks will be on display in St Andrew's Uniting Church, Ann St Brisbane, from 22-26 March.

Dr Farrell, Head of the School of Arts and Sciences at the Australian Catholic University, Banyo, and a member of the Visionaries Christian visual arts group, developed the concept during Lent 2009 when he spent time walking through the Brisbane CBD.

The project seeks to engage with the Brisbane CBD and churches across the city, and to present a way of tracing the story of Easter in our place and time.

"I was doing a spiritual direction course and used this project as a way of thinking about God's presence in our city," he said.

"So often we imagine that we bring God to certain places (usually sacred spaces). To my surprise I found that God's big story is already present in our city.

"It occurred to me that this is how pilgrim routes developed.

"Last year I walked the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem. It caused me to consider that this pilgrim experience can be just as valid and real in my own city of Brisbane.

"The division between the secular and the sacred is for me a false divide," said Dr Farrell.

"Our task as Christians is to be signposts, pointing out the signs and symbols of God's presence."

He said in Brisbane's GPO square there is a Celtic cross.

"The images in Anzac Square

## Liturgical Calendar celebrates banners

INDOOROOPILLY UNITING Church has produced a 2010 Liturgical Calendar with images of the month appropriate fabric banners made for their worship services.

The quilted patchwork and painted banners are the work of Helen Kidd and Pam Kerr.

The calendars are now available as a fundraiser for the Church for a discounted price of \$15.

Contact calendar designer Frank Dingle on 0438829493 or [dingle1@bigpond.com](mailto:dingle1@bigpond.com) for more details.



are at one level about our historical story but at the deepest level they are also about God's great story of sacrifice and love."

He said walking up convict-built stairs (Jacob's Ladder) to the Tower Mill also reminded him of the suffering of people in that place.

"Every time I walk and pray this pilgrim route I feel the pain of Christ's stumble and death, and think of those convicts and

Indigenous people who were chained and killed in that very place in our city."

Several significant pieces of religious artwork also are included in the walk.

An accompanying booklet with images, readings and prayers is available at [www.visionaries.ucaweb.com.au](http://www.visionaries.ucaweb.com.au).

Dianne Jensen is the editor of the Anglican magazine *Focus*



Lindsay Farrell's interpretation of one of the city Stations of the Cross, *Jesus is crucified* (Brisbane GPO Cross and Square)





Artist Htoo Htoo Han (left) as his painting for Wesley House is admired by Wesley Mission Brisbane Superintendent Rev Lyn Burden and mentor Cees Slidrecht. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

# Powerful message from the margins

BURMESE ARTIST and former political prisoner Htoo Htoo Han packs immense amounts of meaning and detail into his art.

Last year the refugee won the Wesley Mission Brisbane Art from the Margins prize for his work *Elephant*.

One of his paintings will soon be hanging in the foyer of Wesley House in Ann St, Brisbane City.

A lot of Mr Han's work reflects the struggles of oppressed people.

He masterfully weaves his detailed knowledge of political issues (such as those facing the Middle East) and personal experience as a political activist and prisoner, a United Nations worker and an asylum seeker into his artwork to create more of an educational tool than purely an aesthetic piece.

Most of his artwork is accompanied by a written story or poem.

"The poem is not really just a story," he said.

"I used to be a student leader ... I was always making decisions for the organisation.

"Sometimes I make the decision wrong. I had to sacrifice a lot of my comrades, my friends.

"We did have good achievements. Sometimes my decision made a government policy change."

But his university studies were disrupted by a student uprising and at the age of 18 Mr Han was a political prisoner dealing with issues of life and death in solitary confinement.

He still carries the scars of his time in prison, physically and psychologically, but the wounds that remain raw are the memories of his friends who also suffered, particularly of a disabled friend.

"No matter how much I suffer I can't forget," he said as he choked back tears.

"They beat him very badly.

"It was Christmas time. It is a very cool time in Burma.

"We had no blanket on the concrete but we had each other.

"There was no toilet and a lot of flies came in and made their eggs.

"You could see maggots everywhere in the room.

"I questioned what kind of people would do that?

"My government, I don't hate them, I just want to change them. Why do they hate me?"

The pair survived in this room for a month before they were given a blanket.

They won the fight for political prisoners not to do hard labour.

After three assassination attempts in Thailand when Mr Han was working for the United Nations, he was sponsored by Anglicare to relocate to Australia.

It seems that Mr Han's immense talent as a painter is secondary to his passion for justice, but that passion and social awareness springs from each of his canvases.

His dots of colour, an indigenous Burmese style, weave stories and struggles of a world in need of justice.

"I want to be Obama. I want to be Kofi Annan or Kevin Rudd. But I am Htoo Htoo Han, refugee from Burma."

Perhaps Mr Han's paintings will open the doors that politics has closed.

## How is spirituality expressed in your art?

By Cees Slidrecht, visual artist

I SEE my ability to paint as a gift from God.

Although I continued a career in Teaching and Business Management, I was somehow, always involved in the art scene.

It gave me satisfaction, a sense of creativity and achievement.

Life without practising and admiring art was incomplete.

As a Christian I believe that God intended me to speak about my faith but also, when appropriate, visually represent it.

As a Member of Visionaries in Brisbane, we are encouraged to paint certain themes related to the Bible.

I see faith expressed in visual arts at least as important as expressing faith in words.

It is a bit like Jesus speaking to us in parables. He sketched in his wording an image people could see in front of them.

This is the same when seeing meaningful religious visual art.

What people see in front of them is sometimes more real, convincing and closer to their heart than what they hear.

I think it is only a natural development that Churches are beginning to understand the importance of visual art in places of worship.

Visual artworks will enrich the congregation; stimulate visitors to enter the church which may lead to a religious awakening, renewed interest or revival of their faith; deepen the meaning of the gift the artist has received; relate to God's creativity; and give glory to God.



Artist Cees Slidrecht in his studio. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

## Five minutes with Dona Spencer, artist and ministry candidate

**What is your theology of art?**

We have a supremely imaginative Creator-God who, in creating the universe, has graciously given us a visual array of forms, sights and sounds, limitless in beauty, variety, texture and colour.

To create art is to respond to these daily stimuli, whilst expressing ourselves emotionally and intellectually, with honesty and integrity, reflecting in a small way what our Creator God has done.

**How is spirituality expressed in your art?**

My art practice has primarily involved the facilitation of art workshops for groups of children and adults.

Last year I helped organise creative arts day at Chapel Hill Uniting Church.

I look forward to using the arts to develop the spiritual gifts of teaching, preaching, healing (e.g. art therapy), prophecy, and serving.

Since studying theology I have been experimenting with works which are either scripturally inspired or which depict personal experiences where I have engaged with my surroundings from a theological viewpoint.

A recent painting was based on a view of Fiji as I was flying back from a ministry experience in Kiribati.

The clouds in the sky formed the shape of a cross. Not long after, the troubles in Fiji were exacerbated. For me, the painting was strangely prophetic.

Many artists have had similar experiences. I know of an abstract artist who found herself continually painting twin towers of abstract colour in the weeks leading up to 9/11.

**Could art be distracting?**

The placement and selection of art works is extremely

important. If works are selected for viewing during worship, care should be taken that colours, shapes, and content have qualities that will enhance the quality of worship.

**What is the place of visual art in the church?**

When the art works displayed in the church have been created by members of the church, the building becomes an expression of the spirituality of the members.

The arts help to balance the style of church worship to include all learning and worship styles.



Dona Spencer with her work *Return from Kiribati*



The meeting place of two oceans. Kerry, Austin, Erin, Andrew, Travis, Alison, Lizzie, Mel and Kate on an NCYC tour from North East Victoria. Photo courtesy of Lorraine Threlfall

# Enjoying the NCYC journey

By Jane Moad

GOOD PLANNING, an enthusiastic group and openness to what God might be presenting you with are three essential ingredients for a successful journey to the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC).

That's the view of NCYC groups guru Lorraine Threlfall of Shepparton, Victoria.

The Gold Coast hosted ncy11 will be the seventh NCYC that Ms Threlfall has coordinated a group to attend.

"NCYC is an experience that challenges and deepens your faith; to be part of that journey with young people as they discover new things about their faith is an amazing experience," she said.

Ms Threlfall has learnt a lot from her first experience of taking a group to NCYC.

"We didn't realise the

importance of the preparation and briefing time in the whole experience.

"It's a great reason to get your congregation involved in sending and receiving a group—so they know how to listen and respond to what youth share when they return."

Now Ms Threlfall's groups always allow at least two nights to travel to NCYC.

"The first day and night is usually spent getting to know each other," she said.

"We use the extra time to get ready for NCYC with the themes, Bible readings and general expectations for the event."

Resources to help congregations prepare for ncy11 are available at [www.ncyc11.com.au](http://www.ncyc11.com.au), including a list of Lorraine Threlfall's top four ideas

## ncy11 discount prices extended

THE NCYC11 organising team have extended the last discount registration period until after Easter.

Until Sunday 11 April 2009, individuals and groups can still register for \$290 plus the price of their accommodation choice.

From Monday 12 April, individual registration will cost \$349.

For those registering in a bulk group of 10 attendees or more, the price will be \$320. Adult volunteers remain at \$150 each.

For information on ncy11 please contact NCYC coordinator Alison Cox on 07 3377 9750 or [alison.cox@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:alison.cox@ucaqld.com.au)

# Facing an online congregation

By Phil Smith

RESEARCH INDICATES most Australians looking for a church go online first and look at church websites.

People will not waste six weeks visiting churches when they can get a good picture of half a dozen churches in half an hour.

Congregations eager to explore new opportunities are adding to the roadside sign and pew bulletin with social media tools such as Facebook.

Facebook is a free social networking site where individuals and groups can establish a profile and publish snippets of information, photographs and video clips whenever they like.

Other users can become their "friends", exchanging information, questions and bits of news.

The big difference between Facebook and the pew bulletin, and what may well disturb the status quo, is the two-way, conversational nature of this tool.

Toowoomba's Middle Ridge Uniting Church is one Church using Facebook.

Middle Ridge minister Rev Rob Callow would much prefer face-to-face contact but sees social networking as another tool to share the gospel.

He first used Facebook building a young adults group in a previous congregation.

"Facebook allowed me to issue invitations to events, engage young adults in online discussions, and post photos of our times together," he said.

The challenge is reaching out into our communities and connecting.

"Facebook also enabled me to share in their lives (in small ways) as they posted comments about their day and I responded in brief, but hopefully meaningful, ways."

Mr Callow said Facebook is different to the road sign, pew sheet or classified ad.

"There is a personal element to it.

"Facebook doesn't replace any other medium, it's just another to add to the list of potential communication tools."

Middle Ridge youth worker Andrew Bell sees connecting with this generation of young people as one of the great challenges facing a Church that is no longer the centre of social interaction.

"We no longer have that advantage of people coming to us so the challenge is reaching out into our communities and connecting," he said.

"Facebook opens a window into people's lives and in that I see opportunity to build community, to share information, and to connect people with the Church and with each other."

Facebook groups can be limited to church members only or open to anyone in the world.

Online discussion boards allow members to ask questions and bounce ideas around.

Pine Rivers Uniting Church also has a Facebook group: 'PRUC'.

The group's 73 members are not all regular church attendees.

The congregation uses the page to promote events, inviting people to sign up for activities



Just a few of the Uniting Church related Facebook pages

such as Clean Up Australia Day.

Organisers could see replies coming in throughout the week instead of waiting for the Sunday morning run around.

Even *JourneyOnline* has a Facebook page.

Facebook also provides an advertising opportunity. For a fee advertisements can be targeted to users within your church's neighbourhood.

Cypress Meadows Community Church in Florida reported great success using Facebook advertising to tell people about their Christmas production.

Cypress Meadows Community Church Pastor Paul Steinbrueck said that over the nine days the ad was run, it was displayed 900,000 times and clicked on 600 times at a cost of \$475.

"Tickets were reserved (144 in total) by people who indicated they heard of the performance through Facebook." Like any media, social network media create connections.

It's up to God and his people to turn that into community.

Mr Steinbrueck added that one family who came to the Christmas performance as a result of

the Facebook ad has now joined a small group in the church.

In future articles *Journey* will explore opportunities with Twitter, ideas for more effective web sites, and online systems for congregations that want to stay in touch from Monday to Saturday.

Thanks to Rainbow Books *Journey* has a few books to give away. The first five people to post a comment on the *JourneyOnline* Facebook fan page about how your Church uses Facebook will each receive a book



# Ripping yarns and the biblical narrative

Each edition of *Journey* this year will explore one of Brian McLaren's 10 questions that are transforming the Christian faith. The emerging church movement leader said people ask the same 10 questions on the way in and on the way out of the church. Question one: What is the biblical narrative?

By Phil Smith

HAVE YOU ever read the Australian constitution? No, I didn't think so.

Nonetheless, that document forms the basis of our government and thereby regulates the life of the community we enjoy.

We can react the same way when it comes to the document that forms the foundation of our faith community and regulates its life.

The Bible – God's word in print – is basic for Christians.

It tells about the God of love whom we worship, inspires us to imagine a community of faith under his rule and stirs us to live as individuals made in his image.

Yet we often read it from obligation, as a legal tome to be interpreted by priests and debated by those in power.

In his book *A New Kind of Christianity* Brian McLaren asks what exactly is the shape of the biblical narrative.

"We have been answering that question the same way for about 1600 years," he said.

"My personal belief is the way we have been answering that is not with a Christian answer but with a Greco-Roman answer.

"The Bible has been used in harmful ways in the past.

"I suggest that we must raise 'the Bible question' in order to avoid repeating similarly tragic mistakes in the future.

"I suggest that the standard way of reading the Bible – as a legal constitution – is inherently inappropriate and problematic.

"I propose seeing the Bible as the essential library of a culture or community known as the descendants of Abraham."

For Dr McLaren the Bible narrative is a series of nested stories. Paul's letter to Philemon comes within the story of Paul's travels and the growth of the young church, within the story of the Roman Empire and the associated story of slavery and the economics of the day.

He asks readers to see the conversations of the Bible, as generations argue and debate the same big questions about God and faith.

"In the gospels, Jesus enters ongoing conversations among Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Herodians, priests, scribes, prophets, Roman authorities, excluded sinners, and the poor."

Among his challenges are reading the Bible missionally; to

see the arc of God's great mission to renew and transform his world and his people.

Rather than a legal document of rules and regulations, Dr McLaren asks people to explore a library that shapes our responses to life's circumstances, even down to matters of politics, economics and personal relationships.

*Journey* asked a variety of Church members how they interpreted the biblical narrative.

Roley Forbes has served as an elder and lay preacher in the Pine Rivers congregation. As a long-standing member of the Gideons, for him the written word is precious.

"When I was in the third year of a law degree I had the opportunity to read the Old Testament from cover to cover," said Mr Forbes.

"I was left with the impression that the God of the Old Testament was, despite all the awkward and difficult parts, a powerful, just, loving and merciful god.

"That overview impression has no doubt influenced my reading and meditation of that part of scripture ever since."

Mr Forbes insisted that we must be careful not to expect to find in the Bible things it is not intending to teach.



The Arrest of Christ from the Book of Kells, an illuminated manuscript transcribed by Celtic monks in the 9th century now housed in Trinity College, Dublin

In his second letter, Paul tells Timothy: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work".

"However, the Bible is not a scientific or medical textbook," said Mr Forbes.

"Reading the Bible as God intended may mean we need to struggle at times with the text.

"Nonetheless, the Bible is reliable and trustworthy."

Greg Adsett serves and worships at Redcliffe Uniting Church.

He wrestles with the way a 21st Century church expresses eternal truths first spoken thousands of years ago.

"God loves us and wants to be in relationship with us," said Mr

Adsett. "God wants to see lives transformed and lived to their fullest."

For him the biblical narrative must be more than words on a page. It's a life story and a living story.

"The Bible meshes into my life because it takes me on a journey of individuals and communities and their ongoing relationship with God.

"The Bible is where I meet God. It is where my worship, prayer and relationship with God spring from.

"One example is a group I meet with every fortnight.

"We call our time together 20/20/20: 20 minutes of reading the Bible, 20 minutes journaling, and 20 minutes sharing.

"I continue to be amazed how alive God comes to me in that hour," he said.

## Homelessness advisory group launched

By Andrew Johnson

IN RESPONSE to the 27th Synod resolution, *A Place to Call Home*, the Synod Leadership Team has appointed an advisory group to assist those in the Church wanting to respond to the issue of homelessness and housing affordability.

Drawing on a diverse range of skills and experience the Synod Advisory Group on Housing and Homelessness will assist people to explore and critically reflect on their ideas and develop creative projects.

Members include people who know the church and have backgrounds in homelessness community

development, human services, real estate, architecture, and insurance.

Group member and Lifeline chaplain Rev Bob Harriman said, "I'm excited to see the church taking the initiative in forming a group to help people explore how they can respond locally to the issue of homelessness.

"The situation in Mt Isa may be very different to the community in Mackay or suburban Brisbane.

"The advisory group is here to help people explore the most helpful and life giving response.

"We hope to be able to provide advice to people developing a range of local exciting initiatives, to connect people with other community organisations and en-

sure a good experience for people experiencing homelessness."

The group is able to assist those who have noticed an increasing number of people experiencing homelessness in their community and who have a passion for working with those people but are not sure where to start.

They also can provide assistance to people already working with those experiencing homelessness and who want to develop the idea further.

The advisory group is not designed to be another layer of bureaucracy or an approval body, rather a group of people who can connect local communities with expertise, help develop initiatives, provide advice to the Church and



assist in navigating an approval process.

For more information or to share your idea with the advisory group visit [www.housing.ucaqld.com.au](http://www.housing.ucaqld.com.au), email [uc.socialjustice@ucareqld.com.au](mailto:uc.socialjustice@ucareqld.com.au) or 3025 2013

March 21, 3pm

## Redbank Plains Uniting Church closing service

AFTER 148 years of service in the Redbank Plains area, the Uniting Church (formally Methodist) has come to an end.

The congregation joined with the Goodna Uniting Church congregation.

The service, with afternoon tea to follow, will be held at 382 Redbank Plains Rd.

We invite anyone who has had any association with our Church to join with us that day.



Contact Shirley Woods on 3814 4943 or [shirleywoods@optusnet.com.au](mailto:shirleywoods@optusnet.com.au).

**March 2, 9am-2.30pm. Spirituality of discipleship training day** at Living Faith Uniting Church, 330 Pine Mountain Road, Carina Heights. Presenters Pastor Karen Ross and Rev Bob Miles. \$20. Morning tea and lunch provided. Contact Rev Bob Miles on 3343 1019 or [livingfaithuniting@bigpond.com](mailto:livingfaithuniting@bigpond.com).

**March 5, 10.30am. World Day of Prayer service** at Bayside Uniting Church. Guest speaker Rev Gwen Fisher. Contact Margaret Drinnen on 3890 2392 or [bayuca@tpg.com.au](mailto:bayuca@tpg.com.au).

**March 6, 7am-12pm. Edmonton Uniting Church Monster Garage Sale.** Everything from clothes, toys, manchester, books, furniture and much more. Contact Anita Brown on 4036 4199 or [anitarbrown@hotmail.com](mailto:anitarbrown@hotmail.com).

**March 6, 9am-4pm. Life Needs Religion Renewed seminar** at Merthyr Road Uniting Church, 52 Merthyr Rd, New Farm. Progressive Spirituality Network and St Mary's Community in Exile present speakers Dr Val Webb and Father Peter Kennedy. \$50. Contact Ross on 0409 498 402 or [drargn@bigpond.net.au](mailto:drargn@bigpond.net.au).

**March 6. Geoff Bullock seminar** and concert at Caboolture Uniting Church. Contact Rose Joyner on 5496 0157 or [rejoyner@tpg.com.au](mailto:rejoyner@tpg.com.au).

**March 13, 6am-12pm. The Gap Uniting Church Garage Sale.** Contact Scott McDonald on 0419 927 988 or [you\\_got\\_what\\_i\\_want@hotmail.com](mailto:you_got_what_i_want@hotmail.com).

**March 13, 9am-12pm. Church ministry enrichment day** at Chermide Kedron Community Church. Practical workshops, networking and sharing among lay leaders. Sponsored by the Moreton Rivers Presbytery. Contact Aaron Ghiloni on 3369 8929 or [aaron@moretonriverspresbytery.org.au](mailto:aaron@moretonriverspresbytery.org.au).

**March 14, 2-5pm. Mangofest** at Chermide Kedron Community Church. Fun, food and fellowship to raise money for the Moreton Rivers Presbytery project Jima with entertainment from jazz group Mango Jam. Contact Rev Jenny Sims on 3350 4302 or [jenny@ckcc.org.au](mailto:jenny@ckcc.org.au).

**March 18-19, 9am-4pm. Prepare-Enrich Training** at Chermide Kedron Uniting Church. Training in the new customised version of the Prepare-Enrich resources. The new version is customised to suit each couple. Contact Bob Warrick on [nolabob@optusnet.com.au](mailto:nolabob@optusnet.com.au).

**March 19-21. Partners in Ministry Retreat** at the Alexandra Park Conference Centre, Sunshine Coast. Contact Lyndelle Gunton on 38513844 or [agunton@westnet.com.au](mailto:agunton@westnet.com.au).

**March 20, 12-2pm. Survive Past Five 5th Birthday** and Brisbane Symphonic Band's *Tubby's Teddy Bear Picnic* children's concert at Trinity Wilston Uniting Church, cnr Kedron Brook Rd and Hawdon St, Brisbane. \$2 entry. Contact Sue Pickering on 3352 6082 or [trinitywilstonuca@gmail.com](mailto:trinitywilstonuca@gmail.com).

**March 27, 7.30am-12.30pm. Buderim Uniting Church Annual Fair**, cnr Gloucester Rd and King St, Buderim. Contact Bob Patrick on 5445 6518.

**March 30, 10am. Meeting of Retired Ministers and Spouses** luncheon at Emmanuel Uniting Church, 249 South Pine Road Enoggera. Guest Speaker Rev Bruce Johnson, Moderator. Contact Clive George on 3885 8062 or [macgeorge@optusnet.com.au](mailto:macgeorge@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.

## Passion brought to life at Lake Moogerah

By Carroll Simons

ONCE AGAIN the story of the Passion will be brought to life at Lake Moogerah, an hour south west of Brisbane.

A cast and crew of around 80 volunteers from all over south-east Queensland will give four free performances of the play *He's Alive!* to thousands of spectators on Good Friday, Easter Saturday and the Saturday and Sunday prior to Easter.

Spokesperson for the Moogerah Passion Play Association, Mary Gasteen, explained that the audience do take part in a number of different ways but declined to be specific.

"That would spoil the element of surprise," she said.

Founding president of the Moogerah Passion Play Kosti Simons said those not fortunate enough to be able to travel to Germany to see the famous



A scene from last year's Lake Moogerah Passion Play. Photo by Alan Purvis, Criss Cross Creations

Oberammergau Passion Play will enjoy the Moogerah play's use of natural surroundings to tell the story of Christ's last days.

"We are all, on both sides of world, doing honour to the one who died for each and every one of us, and therefore only the best is good enough," he said.

Mr Simons and his wife Carroll will experience the real

thing when they host a tour to Oberammergau in May.

"For many decades, we have wanted to visit Oberammergau, and have never had the opportunity," he said.

For more information contact Kosti Simons on 07 5463 5691 or [passion@skymesh.com.au](mailto:passion@skymesh.com.au)

## Newsboys to headline Easterfest

IT IS EASTERFEST time again when thousands of festival goers descend on Toowoomba's Queen's Park over the Easter long weekend for Australia's largest drug and alcohol free festival.

Also Australia's largest Christian event, Easterfest not only has a feast of music and arts to devour, but also rides, faith discussions, a Lifeline super store, ball, and much more.

This year the program involves venues around Toowoomba including the Empire Theatre and several churches.

This year's headlining bands include America's Newsboys, Hawk Nelson and Superchick plus 2009 Australian Idol winner R&B soul singer Stan Walker and much more.

The Newsboys have recently undergone a makeover with former front man Peter Furler handing over the lead singer role to DC Talk's Michael Tait.

According to Easterfest CEO, Isaac Moody, the new Newsboys will be a massive hit.

"Anyone sceptical about the Newsboys line-up change will be amazed at the new sound, the fresh energy and the energetic live concert experience."

Another innovation at this year's event will see some of the headlining bands also perform in sideshows in Melbourne and Sydney.

Visit [www.easterfest.com](http://www.easterfest.com) for more information

## Nobby Uniting Church turns 100

NOBBY UNITING Church, south of Toowoomba, celebrates its centenary on 16 May with a 10am service at the Nobby Uniting Church with special guest, Moderator, Rev Bruce Johnson.

The service will be followed by a light lunch in the Nobby School of Arts hall. Anyone with an interest in the Church is invited to help celebrate this occasion.

Contact Margaret Ferguson at [glenviewglmi@bigpond.com](mailto:glenviewglmi@bigpond.com).





# With or Without God:

Why the way we live is more important than what we believe

By Gretta Vosper, HarperCollins Canada, 2008, RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Reg Collard, a member of the Lay Forum.

IN 2004 Gretta Vosper became the chair and founder of the Canadian Centre for Progressive Christianity, within the West Hill United Church in Toronto where she actively ministers.

Ms Vosper has set out her ideas in this powerful and provocative book that needs to be read and debated.

She opens the debate, "The Christian church, as we have built it and known it, has outlived its viability. Less and less vulnerable to religion's absolute claims, people are no longer content with its ethereal promises.

"It is precisely because of the challenges present in today's world that we most need the

strength church might be able to offer should it survive the mess in which it currently finds itself."

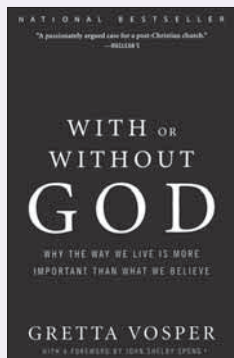
Thus begins a challenging and exciting journey where Ms Vosper takes her readers through a history of Christian beliefs into a dilemma of new understanding formed by modern biblical scholarship.

She sets out a way forward and some requirements to achieve this.

In the reconstruction she examines the roles and concepts of God, Jesus, the Bible and life itself.

She provides an appendix tool box dealing with new ways for faith, language, worship, prayer, sacraments and music.

As I put it down, I thought,



there is hope. We need to start now.

Gretta Vosper will be in Melbourne for the Common Dreams 2 Conference 15-18 April and in Brisbane for the Common Dreams on the Road series, Saturday 1 May, Albert St Uniting Church.

## Christ in the Margins

By Robert Lentz and Edwina Gateley, Orbis Books, New York, 2003, RRP \$39.95

Reviewed by Marian Zaunbrecher, Assistant General Secretary of the Queensland Synod.

*CHRIST in the Margins* would be marvellous for the liturgist or educator who regularly uses PowerPoint illustrations.

It has over 50 icons painted by Mr Lentz and they are thought provoking yet attractive.

Some of the icons are of Christ. Others are of Christian leaders, prophets, visionaries, mystics and servants of the church.

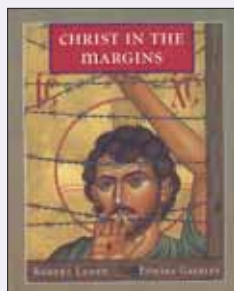
Each icon is accompanied by a biography and then a reflection on the challenge which that person's life brings to our lives.

I could not sit down with this book for a long time: it had to be consumed in small bits or else one suffered from overload.

It is slightly expensive but every page could be used to provide worship opportunities for small groups, or as discussion starters.

Some of my favourite pictures and stories were that of Harvey Milk of San Francisco, Mother of the Streets, Saint Vincent de Paul, the Navaho Madonna and Pax Christi, where the picture evokes the symbolism of the prophet Isaiah where the Christ child stands above a coiled snake.

Above all however, this book is



a reminder that Christ is found at the margins of the world.

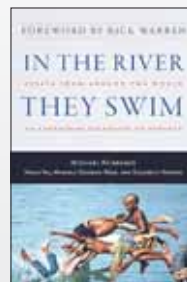
As the authors say we find him when we go to the margins and see Christ's crucified face and are reminded that the cross is more than a pretty decoration.

"Change seldom occurs at the center (sic), but works its way inward from the margins." P.144.

## In the River They Swim: Essays from around the World on Enterprise Solutions to Poverty

Edited by Michael Fairbanks, Marcela Escobari-Rose, Malik Fal, and Elizabeth Hooper, Templeton Press, 2009, RRP \$47.95

Reviewed by Karyl Davison, Rural Ministry Coordinator for the Central Queensland and Mary Burnett Presbyteries.



THE ABIDING memory most of us have of Rwanda is of the terrible inter-ethnic violence beamed across our TV screens, when it is thought 800,000 people lost their lives, 15 years ago.

Now with strong government backing, Rwanda is working hard to transform itself from an agrarian based economy to a middle income, knowledge economy "where African businesses succeed, and lives, communities and countries are transformed".

This book taps into the experiences and deepest reflections of leaders in their fields to find creative ways to solve one of the world's biggest challenges – creating wealth and fostering self-sufficiency among the world's poorest people.

*In the River they Swim* is not reflection at a distance. Each of the essayists has "swum in the river" themselves resulting in personal and moving stories of their experiences as they seek to make a real difference.

In Kenneth Hynes' essay

*Waiting for Mr Anderson*, we hear of a couple of Jamaican farmers waiting for the buyer, Mr Anderson, to return to buy their crop of dasheen.

Mr Anderson never did return and what dasheen did not rot in the ground was bought for a song. They never did know why they had lost Mr Anderson's business.

*In the River they Swim* will inspire, through the stories of people and their fight for survival, and overwhelm, as you grasp the enormity of the problem.

Thanks to Rainbow Books, *Journey* has one copy of *In the River they Swim* to give away. Email your name and address to [journey@ucaql.com.au](mailto:journey@ucaql.com.au) and tell us who wrote the foreword

## Grandpa's Farm: A Spring Day

By Alan Robinson, New Frontier Publishing, 2009, RRP \$24.95

Reviewed by Caroline Holland, an avid reader of children's books, often fighting off her own children to be the first to read a new book. She works in communication for Blue Care.

MATT IS about eight years old and off to stay at his Grandpa's farm for the spring holidays "where lambs are born and sheep are shorn".

We explore the farm with Matt and share his excitement in all the animals during a typical day on an Australian wool farm.

Matt follows wool from sheep to shearing to baling and works alongside the colourful characters of the shearing shed.

All the expected farm friends are there: the sheep dogs, lambs, pigs and hens along with lovely farm traditions like bacon and egg breakfasts, cream morning teas, and of course, early to bed and early to rise.

The gentle rhyming of the verse and the soft watercolours used in the rural illustrations

make *Grandpa's Farm: A Spring Day* a lovely book to share with children about four to seven years old.

This is a great introduction to the rhythm of farm life and the comfort of spending time with grandparents.

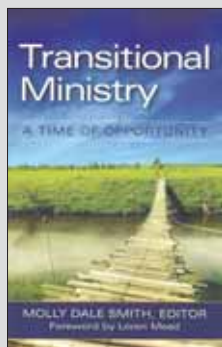
My young children wanted this book read three times over on its first read – always a good sign!



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

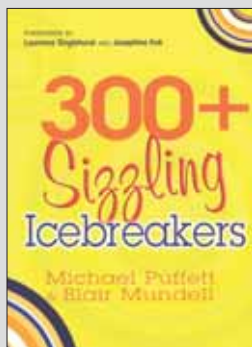
### Transitional Ministry: A Time of Opportunity

Edited by Molly Dale Smith, Church Publishing, 2009, RRP \$34.95



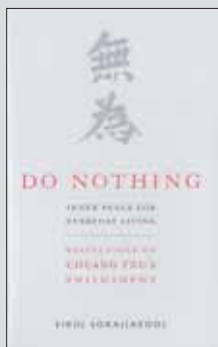
### 300+ Sizzling Icebreakers

By Michael Puffett and Blair Mundell, Monarch Books, 2009, RRP \$24.95



### Do Nothing: Inner Peace for Everyday Living, Reflections on Chuang Tzu's philosophy

By Siroj Sorajjakool, Templeton Foundation Press (Pennsylvania), 2009, RRP \$35.95



## Books available from ...

Many of the titles reviewed in *Journey* are available from 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)



Wendy Lowry and Roger Landbeck with some of the Fairtrade products for sale. Photo by David Lowry

## Fair's fair on the Sunshine Coast

The Caloundra Uniting Church social justice group is embarking on a new initiative this year - a Fair Trade and Green Market on the church premises on 22 May.

Market day organising committee convenor Margaret Landbeck said the congregation have long supported Fair Trade products and have recently been certified as a Fair Trade Faith Community by the Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand.

"Fair Trade is a much broader concept than that of just and equitable trading of tea and coffee alone," said Ms Landbeck.

"It encompasses initiatives both locally and in the wider world that seek to ensure that producers get a fair price for their goods - prices that empower their own or their community's development. "Fair Trade also advocates for ecologically responsible production."

The aim of the Fair Trade and

Green Market is to broaden both the congregation's and the community's exposure to Fair Trade products and issues and will also include an ecological focus.

The group hopes the market day will promote a variety of Fair Trade and environmental initiatives, offer an educational experience, and provide valuable contact with the Sunshine Coast community.

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

### Sunday 14 March: Caloundra Uniting Church

THE CALOUNDRA congregation is the southern-most Uniting Church Congregation on the Sunshine Coast, and is in the midst of rapid growing residential developments.

The Sunday congregation is usually about 160 people including a number of families who have joined us in the last few years.

Our worship is described as traditional in style, but contemporary in thought, and we have held a number of studies which have explored modern writings.

Many congregation members are involved in supporting Blue Care facilities.

There is also a strong relationship with Unity College - a joint Catholic/Uniting Church P-12 College at Caloundra West.

Please pray for divine inspiration and leading in:

- Specific work with children through the Kid's Hope and Mainly Music programs.

- The development of a Christian education program for all ages.

- The present studies on Ecological Christianity.

- The Fair Trade Market Day planned for May.

- The planning process the congregation is engaged in as it examines possibilities and hopes for the future.

- The relationship with the Catholic community through Unity College and joint services over Easter.

- The Congregational link through UnitingWorld with Tonga (Unity College has a partnership with a school there), and the possibility of exploring links with the diocese of Amritsar, North India.

- The further development and refinement of our Pastoral Care program.

## Learning from our elders

SYNOD STAFF were honoured by a visit from two Uniting Church members who have been active in the Church for many years and had never before

visited the Synod office.

Elizabeth Christiansen and Joyce Roberts both attend Kangaroo Point Uniting Church, central Brisbane.



Mrs Roberts, who is 90 years old, has been attending that congregation since 1958.

81-year-old Ms Christiansen has taught Sunday School in the congregation for around 10 years.

Both women have some good advice for Church members.

"Give your life to the Lord every day," said Mrs Roberts. "And come to church."

Mrs Christiansen said it was important to have close encounters with God.

"He is there wherever I am and wants to lead my life," she said.

"And sometimes I let him!"

Elizabeth Christiansen (left) and Joyce Roberts (right) enjoy a chat with Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson. Photo by Osker Lau

## Scoring one for the team

By Matt Gees

ON A WARM Sunday Afternoon before Australia Day Glebe Road Uniting Church, Ipswich, challenged a group from Wellers Hill / Tarragindi, Brisbane, to a seriously social game of cricket in Yeronga Memorial Park.

Showing great sportsmanship the younger Glebe Rd team offered to field in the heat and sent the older boys from Wellers Hill in to bat.

Greg Dart top scored for the Brisbane side on 32.



Peter Choy of Wellers Hill / Tarragindi Uniting Church in action. Photo by Matt Gees

The second half didn't go the way of Wellers Hill / Tarragindi with the more seasoned batsmen from Glebe Road stacking on the runs quickly.

Glebe Road top scorer (and man of the match) was Tristan

Albury who was unbeaten on 35.

Organiser Matt Patrick said the day was a great success.

"I would love to see it across the uniting church as a way of blokes encouraging each other," he said.

### Sunday 21 March: Logan Uniting Church

LOGAN UNITING Church has a clear purpose of "Drawing people into a life transforming relationship with Jesus Christ".

To help us fulfil this we have a culture of:

Fun: sharing God's joy in the reality of life

Friendship: creating the space to be truthful in love

Faith: trusting and growing in Jesus

Our discipleship process is that "fun leads to friendship leads to faith"

At the end of 2008 we set Big Hairy Audacious Goals that we believed God would use to call us into his future.

They include that by the end of 2013 we would have 500 new disciples of Christ and a congregation which is involved in the community and in maturing as disciples, plus much more.

Thus far we have seen 61

people trust Jesus as Saviour and Lord through the ministry of people connected with Logan UC.

We have employed Tim Bennett to work on the communications systems, administration, property and finances.

Rev Tim Robinson is developing strategies for the establishment of a worshipping community at Carbrook.

Please pray for:

- 100 new disciples in 2010

- 15 new faith life groups (including five in the Mount Cotton / Carbrook area)

- Tim Bennett as he develops communication systems and helps grow the finances necessary to meet the ongoing stretch God has called us to.

- A draft plan regarding our bridgehead mission and associated faith community.

### Sunday 28 March: The Hills Uniting Church

THE HILLS Uniting Church is located in the north-west of Brisbane, taking in the suburbs of Arana Hills, Ferny Hills, Everton Hills, Keperra, Ferny Grove and Upper Kedron.

New housing estates in Ferny Grove and Upper Kedron have seen a rise in young families in the area and we are seeking to respond to the very real challenge of serving these new communities.

The congregation has a well-attended playgroup,

a lively Sunday School and a growing youth group.

A men's shed group has also commenced in the last year, drawing new members from the local community, and responding to the growing awareness of the social needs of men in retirement.

An ongoing ministry is the distribution of morning tea baskets to local service providers, such as fire, police, ambulance and schools to show our appreciation for the work they do across the

community.

The congregation continues to run a Refugee program, women's fellowship, a families ministry group, and aged care ministries. Please pray for:

- The men's shed as it seeks to identify purpose / direction

- New families within our community as they seek a place to belong

- The Church groups as they seek to be the outworking of Christ in our community

- Our minister, Rev Andrew Gunton, the church council, elders and pastoral care team.



# Defending the call

IN REMEMBERING the Call (February *Journey*) Scott Stephens rightly reminds us of who we were called to be.

He also lays very serious charges against The Uniting Church in Australia.

Through high-pitched polemic (even higher in the longer, more strident version published on the *Faith & Theology* blog), he accuses our Church of apostasy, Church patriotism, and of abandoning our founding theology.

Finally, he suggests that God is killing the UCA.

No doubt, the rhetoric will satisfy those who already have axes to grind with the UCA.

So, in replying, sifting substance from rhetoric is essential.

First, we do need to hear Rev Dr McCaughey's warning about "church patriotism".

But is there really such a simple correlation between this sin and church decline?

Can it not be found in churches precisely when they appear strong and vibrant? Surely, a deeper analysis of our malaise is necessary.

Secondly, is our problem simply that we have favoured a doomed liberal Protestantism over evangelicism, Pentecostalism etc?

So presenting the issue implies that we should get behind a more successful option from the present smorgasbord of theological camps.

Yes, liberal Protestantism is doomed – it has repeatedly proved to be a spiritual and intellectual dead-end.

But that's not the reason to resist it.

The real challenge bequeathed by the framers is to join in a common confession of the crucified and risen Christ, a confession leaving no

theological party (doomed or successful) undisturbed.

Thirdly, we most certainly do need to re-engage the *Basis of Union*.

But Mr Stephens' use of it obscures its theological centre.

The *Basis* doesn't just summon us to repentance and renewal.

It's a constructive document built on a theologically profound, even daring, christological core.

It contains a rich interplay of convictions about Jesus' ministry, the church, scripture, sacraments, and mission.

Abstracted from a commitment to be formed by these convictions, it is difficult to know what we are being asked to repent of or be renewed for.

Fourthly, does God kill churches, and because they deserve it?

The church always stands under God's judgement (1 Peter 4:17), which Mr Stephens rightly describes as gracious.

But surely the Christian faith calls us away from the idea of a moralistic, murdering god.

Is it not the essence of the gospel that God acts graciously towards us despite our sin and failure (Rom 5:8-10) and way beyond what we deserve (Matt 20:1-16)?

Mr Stephens is right: to be the church envisaged by the framers is a task which still lies ahead of us.

But we should take up that task not from fear that God is killing us, but because we are drawn in by the unmerited faithfulness of God.

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson  
Trinity Theological College



## In Christ alone

LEN NOTENBOOM (February *Journey*) is quite right in suggesting that the word "trust" can be used where English versions sometimes translate "believe". For example, Jesus said: "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15 NIV)

This could have been translated as, "Repent and

trust in the good news".

In fact, belief in Jesus isn't of the kind that Jesus is asking for at all, unless this belief means we also entrust ourselves to him, and trust in him.

Faith in Jesus has much to do with both trust and belief. One cannot trust in Jesus if one does not believe in Him.

A couple of months ago I said that faith is, "Believing what is unbelievable, because God has said it is true".

I would be quite happy to rephrase this as faith is "trusting in what is unbelievable, because God has said it is true".

The *Basis of Union* unashamedly holds Christ at its centre.

It leaves no doubt what faith / belief / trust is in and through Jesus Christ.

Where Notenboom's *Lesson learnt* left me perplexed, was his question as to whether trust in humans could "change our world".

The answer is clearly, no.

A Christian's faith / belief / trust is properly placed in Christ alone.

Michael Brumpton  
St George



## True love understood

THE MODERATOR'S article *Love is a many-splendoured thing* (February *Journey*) has solved for me something that I

have been wondering about since my husband's death eighteen months ago.

We read, or are told, that we should say "I love you" everyday to our loved one.

Over 63 wonderful years of marriage I don't recall either of us saying that we loved each other.

John's marriage proposal was,

"I had better write to your father".

Love over the years has shown up in countless deeds of kindness and physical affection.

Thank you Rev Bruce Johnson.

Ruth Blom  
Buderim



## Blogging agape

I ENJOYED reading Bob Harriman's piece on the real meaning of agape (February *Journey*). I've been doing research on the meaning of agape, and in the process I started a blog dedicated to reporting on my research.

I agree that St Paul co-opted the word for a very special use. But at the time he did that, agape was not a common Greek word for love.

It was an archaic term that had not been used for many years.

It referred to the devotion a worshipper had for the god being worshipped.

Paul began giving it new meaning.

I agree completely with Mr Harriman's statement: "The energy to keep giving comes from the Spirit who energises us to keep journeying together." I assume that idea came from Romans 5:5.

If you take that idea and apply it to the very unusual use of agape in 1 Corinthians 13, you see that Paul could not have been talking about love, but instead was talking about spiritual energy.

The King James Version followed an ancient tradition of not using "love" in those verses of 1 Corinthians 13.

So in the 19th and 20th Centuries a major mistake was made to go against that ancient tradition and start plugging in the English word "love" where Paul would not have wanted it used.

So far my research has led me to

see that Paul started informing the Greek-speaking Christians about the practical functioning of spiritual energy.

What I have not been able to find is the connection between Paul's innovation and the translation of the Aramaic language into Greek.

More specifically, the development that led the Greek-speaking Christians to translate the Aramaic word that Jesus used into the Greek word "agape".

Take a look at my blog, [agapepower.blogspot.com](http://agapepower.blogspot.com), and let me know what you think about my research results.

Bob West  
Colorado, USA



## Preamble thoughts

JESUS CHRIST is optional: that is the implication of paragraph 3.3 of the proposed preamble to the UCA constitution.

There are good intentions behind this paragraph, but in declaring that God was known outside of Jesus Christ, the proposed preamble contradicts the biblical witness to Christ and has the potential to jeopardise the unity with other churches on which our *Basis of*

*Union* places such high value.

Look at Paul's addresses to Gentile audiences recorded in Acts.

Paul takes up the language and concepts of his audience to engage with them: the indigenous culture becomes the medium of the Gospel.

But the word of grace is at the same time a word of judgement against "former ways" and a call to repentance.

Although God "has not left himself without a witness in doing good", it is Jesus Christ who reveals the creator God, and who through the Spirit is the means by

which we connect to this God.

Jesus Christ does not merely complete a particular religion's search for God, but contradicts and overturns it, introducing a radical newness.

May we move forward together in Christ, in whom there is neither first nor second peoples, with the courage to face the Gospel's critique of our cultures and to accept the true reconciliation that it alone can bring.

Joel Corney  
Oxley



## CLASSIFIEDS

### Accommodation

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

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

### General

**Uniting Church Institute:** Employment: Journalist required half-time up to \$35,000 p.a. gross. Preferably inclined to Progressive Christianity. [eiversrh@telstra.com](mailto:eiversrh@telstra.com). For info on progressive Christianity and Uniting Church email [eiversrh@telstra.com](mailto:eiversrh@telstra.com)

**Keep the Faith** song books needed for aged care. Copies for sale or give away please contact Lyn Faville 0407374136

Email your classified advertisements to [journey@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:journey@ucaqld.com.au)

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.

Please keep letters to a maximum of 250 words.



# How has a work of art moved you?

## Dianne Minnaar

MY PAINTINGS weave a tapestry of my faith, life experience and gift of creativity. *Paradise in Park View* tells just that story.

It is a large and luminous interpretation of Queensland flora and fauna. It also serves to celebrate growth and life in all its fullness.

Light is the main "colour" that I used. It is an emblem of joy, a manifestation of the eternal and a revealer of beauty.

When I paint, I stretch out my hand to God to ask for his radiance on my canvas.

I painted this art commission for Wesley Mission Brisbane from 2008 to 2009.

It was done at a time when I was grieving the loss of a loved one who had battled cancer for four years.

As the painting progressed, it became charged with life and an enduring light.

It was a deeply restorative process.

The painting commission evolved to

become a journey on canvas that combined paint, brush, colour and light, to point to the Master of Creation, the Giver and Source of all Life.

It was not only a prestigious art commission, but an expression of gratitude and a tribute to life.

The three metre by two metre painting is on permanent display in the entrance foyer of the new Wesley Mission Wheller Gardens Park View retirement complex in Chermshire, Brisbane. It is my sincere prayer that the painting will illuminate the lives of all who stand before it.

An award winning artist, Dianne Minnaar's work is held in private and corporate collections in the USA, South Africa, China, India, Australia and New Zealand. Visit [www.minnaar.com.au](http://www.minnaar.com.au) for more details or email [finart@minnaar.com.au](mailto:finart@minnaar.com.au)



Dianne Minnaar with her work *Paradise in Park View*. Photo courtesy of Dianne Minnaar

## Andrew Gunton

I FIRST saw the painting *The Mockers* by Arthur Boyd on a trip to Sydney in 1999.

At first glance all I saw was a chaotic crowd scene.

Upon taking a second look, I noticed the King sitting on a tree in the foreground and then became aware of Christ on the cross, in the background.

This immediately made me stop and look again.

I stared at it for a long time, looking further into the painting. I saw a mob, who were mocking the king and Christ.

This mob were fighting and jeering, cavorting around; they were unruly and lewd.

At first I was disgusted with them.

How could they treat Christ like this?

Wasn't his crucifixion enough?

As I pondered further, it occurred to me that I was one of those mockers.

My actions continue to mock my Saviour, who was crucified for me.

In this painting I see the true picture of our broken humanity and my own complicity in it.

The magnitude of the sacrifice that Christ made on the cross hits me, and I feel great sorrow, humility, love and awe for the one who saved a wretch like me.

Rev Andrew Gunton is a minister with The Hills Uniting Church in Arana Hills, Brisbane



Andrew Gunton with Arthur Boyd's *The Mockers*. Photo courtesy of Andrew Gunton

## Phil Day

ONE OF my favourite pieces of artwork is a cartoon by the very imaginative cartoonist, Bill Watterson.

All of Bill's cartoons are beautifully drawn. This particular one was part of an exhibition of original *Calvin and Hobbes* Sunday pages, 1985-1995, at the Ohio State University Cartoon Research Library back in 2001.

What moves me about this particular work is that it was Bill's final strip of *Calvin and Hobbes* before his retirement.

In the cartoon, we eavesdrop on a conversation between Calvin and his toy tiger, Hobbes.

They talk about how it snowed last night and how wonderful it is.

The world looks brand new – like having

a big white sheet of paper to draw on.

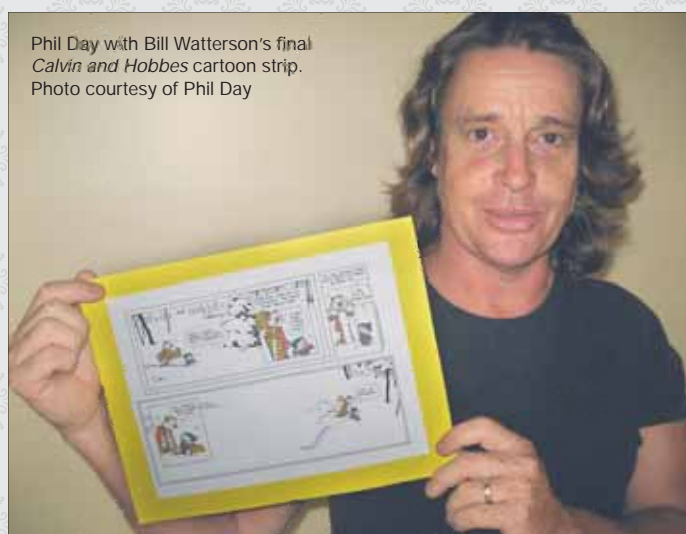
The final words in the strip are, "Let's go exploring!"

From an artistic point of view, Mr Watterson typically colours panel borders and word balloons, but in this strip, he left everything, except the characters and sled, white. The drawing has a very sparse and open look to mirror his ideas in the dialogue.

Although, not typically funny, I smile every time I see this drawing. I'm reminded how every day is a new start, full of possibilities.

Each day we can begin with a clean slate through the love and grace of God.

Phil Day is the creator of the *Between the Pews* cartoons and an elder at Beaudesert Uniting Church



Phil Day with Bill Watterson's final *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon strip. Photo courtesy of Phil Day

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