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"Young people are learning about what it means to be the pilgrim people of the Uniting Church today." **James Hughes**

## STOP THE TRAFFIC PAGE 6

"There are currently around 2.6 million children in India aged between five and 14 trapped in forced labour." **Tom Ganderton**

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# LIVING ON THE LAND

By Mardi Lumsden

You don't have to analyse National Church Life Survey (NCLS) data to realise that life in rural communities has different challenges from those of urban centres.

In fact, the best way to understand what life is like further than 100km west of the coast is to talk to the members of our churches and agencies.

In communities all over the country churches and church agencies support the spiritual, emotional and social wellbeing of people in their communities.

McKay Patrol and Cloncurry Uniting Church's flying padre Rev Garry Hardingham said rural ministry gets a bad wrap.

"It's hard to get ministers or lay ministry agents to go out bush," he said.

"Many get themselves so entrenched in the city lifestyle and family obligations that getting them to leave is, as a rural bloke once said, 'as hard as getting a camel to pass through the eye of a needle'.

"And when they do get out in the bush they face an array of issues like 'fish bowl' living, lack of work and educational opportunities, dirt roads and some quaint bush ways like people actually wanting to care for you.

"There may be no musician in your 10 strong congregation meeting at

the local disused Anglican Church or CWA hall.

"But, then there will be the joys of clear starry nights, ripper sunsets, bonza waterholes and fantastic tucker.

"Rural ministry doesn't suit everyone, but the rewards can't be measured in a simple pros and cons list."

Mr Hardingham, who is also the secretary of the International Rural Churches Association, said the lack of ministry agents in rural areas may be because we call it 'rural ministry'.

"We label it and by doing this we automatically make it appear outside what is often seen as 'normal' ministry.

"Rural ministry needs to be seen in the context of all ministry ... a fair dinkum expression of who Christ is in and through the work of the church."

Rural Ministry Coordinator for the Central Queensland and Mary Burnett Presbyteries Karyl Davison said population decline in rural communities was a major issue.

"Very few rural congregations can afford to pay for full-time or even part-time ministry let alone financially support missional ventures in their communities," she said.

"In most cases the congregation's energy goes into keeping the doors open for Sunday worship, as if the most important thing the church does is offer a service of worship."

Ms Davison said lay leaders were critical to the future of the rural church.

Many lay people have been approved to conduct Communion and Baptisms however the guidelines for lay presiders assume a situation of vacancy between 'ministers' requiring them to be regularly re-approved.

"We expect a great deal of them and in many cases give them very little support or encouragement."

She said working ecumenically also has its own issues.

"Working ecumenically often means a reversion regarding women in ministry," said Ms Davison.

"Lay presiding of the sacraments is an issue for other denominations."

She said distance was probably the biggest issue for the rural church, making face-to-face meetings almost impossible.

"Their big gathering opportunities are at annual Picnic Race events.

"Where is the church? Back in town running worship."

Clermont-Capella Uniting Church minister Rev Dr David Ferguson said mining towns are faced with their own challenges of work-life balance.

"Sporting clubs in mining towns will often need to forfeit matches due to unavailable players and congregations need to use

appropriate resources (for studies etc) that will not disadvantage people for missing a session or two."

The congregation in Moranbah have adopted two strategies to deal with that.

"One has been to provide particular support for the partners and families of miners, and the other was to change their regular service times to an evening."

Downs Presbytery coordinator Rev Marius Kruger said the Presbytery tries to help congregations by posting sermons, training videos and podcasts on their website.

"Being church in a rural setting forces you to think outside the square," he said.

"The bigger challenge at the moment is probably how to be more effective as a church in dealing with the changes towns are going through as more mining companies are entering the town.

"There is always the fear of good farming land being used for mining but also there are many workers living in town during the week who leave town on weekends - how can we as church reach out to those families?"

Continued P.8



# Reconnecting with the heart

THE DOCTORS told me that I had a close shave with death.

It's not that I had not been warned.

Six years ago an angiogram showed that I had a partial blockage that might need bypass surgery if the cholesterol continued to build up in the arteries.

It did not bother me much since I was taking some of the best cholesterol reducing medication and being reasonably careful about what I ate.

It was only the chest pain I felt when I walked for more than 10 minutes that made me go to the doctor again.

When the cardiologist saw the angiogram he would not let me go home.

The surgeon told me what he would do and then said I had three other options; "pine, spruce or mahogany".

When faced with those options I chose the surgery.

I was scheduled for a triple bypass first thing the next morning.

Bypass surgery is interesting. The surgeon took two arteries from the upper chest wall and redirected them to send blood to my heart, then took a vein from my leg using it to bypass another blockage.

Now my heart functions better than it has for some time and if I make some lifestyle changes I can avoid a heart attack.

I want to thank all those who

have visited, sent cards and flowers and prayed for my family and me. It is deeply empowering and very encouraging to know that I am cared for by this wonderful church and many who are part of other churches.

While I am slowly recovering, interestingly enough the only pain I feel is from those areas of the body from which the arteries and veins were taken for the bypass.

This experience has caused me to ponder it as a parable for the Uniting Church in Queensland.

We are in a dangerous place.

It is not as if we have not been warned.

For many years now we have been told that our congregations

## We must now take some radical steps to redirect resources to the heart of the Church.

need to be revitalised if our church is to have a future.

Yet not too many congregations have done the hard work of making the changes necessary that they might connect with their communities in new ways; ways that serve their neighbours in the name of Jesus Christ.

Not many of us have taken the time to develop the confidence to share our faith in Christ with those around us.

We have kept doing what we have always done and drawn on the accumulated assets we inherited from our forebears.

The financial crisis that we are confronted with now forces us to take this situation seriously.

It is a wake up call and tells us that we need some radical surgery.

The rest of my body was fine. However if my heart stopped, then my whole body would die.

The *Basis of Union* reminds us that the visible expression of the whole Church is seen in the gathering of God's people in worship, witness and service as a fellowship of the Spirit.

This gathered community, the congregations, are the heart of the Church; the body of Christ.

If congregating for worship, witness and service stops, then the whole body dies.

We must now take some radical steps to redirect resources to the heart of the Church.

It is not about maintaining the properties and buildings, but restoring the passion for our love of Christ.

Our worship must be renewed so we focus on what God has done in Christ, drawing hope and inspiration from the Gospel.

We need to teach and encourage one another to bear witness to the work of Christ in action and word.

## Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



We need to give renewed attention to the needs within our community, nation and beyond so that we serve our world as Christ would.

It will be painful to sell property to enable the heart to thrive.

It might hurt to redirect our material and spiritual resources in new directions.

It may be painful for congregations to realise that they can no longer stand alone, aloof from the rest of the body, and will need to share their resources with others.

There will be scars and it may take some time before we see the new life, but as I found out, to try to ignore the situation in which we (and much of the mainstream church) find ourselves will leave us with the sort of choices the surgeon offered me.

But do not despair. Having

gone through the surgery I underwent, while it has been painful, I know that my heart and my whole body is in a better state that it has been for some years.

Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

As we know Jesus did go through the suffering and death that he feared, but it led to his glorious resurrection.

As we undertake this journey together, we can be confident that if we are obedient to the call of God and seek his renewal we too will come through to a glorious new life as God's people.

The process of renewing the congregational life of our Church may hurt, but it will lead to new life and a fulfilment of God's call to us as The Uniting Church in Australia.

## Sign of the times



CHERMERSIDE UNITING Church is on a main road near one of Brisbane's largest shopping centres.

In this sign (displayed in late September) they are getting into the Christmas spirit early and reminding people of the true meaning of Christmas. Thanks to Bob and Nola Warrick for sending this photo in.



## At home out bush

WHEN I was fourteen I was lucky enough to spend one school holiday with a school friend on her family's sheep property near Longreach.

Aside from the long bus trip to get there, what struck me most about the visit was the freedom, and consequent maturity, of my friend and her two brothers.

It was shearing season so there was plenty to do.

We helped in the shearing shed (with the city kid on the 'bellies' which is removing the poo from the wool), made smoko for the shearers, even mustered sheep on horseback from various paddocks, mostly without adult supervision.

We played polocrosse, spent

a day with her younger brother in his School of the Air class, sat around the camp fire and heard stories.

On one occasion we discovered a sheep in the house paddock that had what looked like a broken neck.

Calmly my friend told her father and distracted me while he put it out of its misery.

On another occasion we were on a dirt road hours from anywhere when something happened to the horse float and we were unable to keep driving.

We were forced to wait by the side of the road while her mother rode a horse to the house to get help.

For hours we sat by the

roadside; my city-slicker mind veering off into horror stories.

As the sun went down and ghost stories came up I realised how at home these kids felt in what I thought was the middle of nowhere.

Something that was so vast and terrifying to me was home to them.

Wide open spaces gave them room to dream big and grow up in their own time.

I often wondered how my friend coped living in a boarding house with hundreds of other girls for the rest of the year. She must have longed for those holidays.

Mardi Lumsden  
Editor



# Journey wins top honours

By Mardi Lumsden

IN ITS best ever performance, *Journey* took home two gold awards and a bronze award from the 2010 Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) awards in Tasmania in September.

*Journey* was presented the gold award for best feature (multiple authors) for the July 2009 edition which looked at the 20th anniversary of the Fitzgerald inquiry and the Church's role as a social arbiter.

The best feature award is one of the most hotly contested categories of the ARPA awards which include professional Christian media from all over Australia and New Zealand.

Judges said the edition

contained "a salutary message for those in the church who say the church should have little to do with civil affairs.

"Here is a powerful illustration of the church as salt and light.

"From individuals working within the system, to activists demonstrating on the streets, to church leaders leading prophetically; this feature leaves you wanting more in the best sense," said the judges.

"Significantly, the lessons are not left twenty years in the past but consistently brought to bear on today's reality.

"In what could be dry ethical territory, the power of the personal voice is compelling."

*Journey* also received a gold award for the item or feature that

shows the most originality for the Easter 2009 front page story *Easter for Gen Y* written by John Harrison.

The story looked at how the Easter story would be spread now and used Facebook as an example of how people communicate news quickly in today's world.

The bronze award was for *Journey's* outstanding layout, mostly the work of designer Osker Lau.

Judges appreciated the "powerful covers that project the main story with immediacy".

They also enjoyed *Journey's* use of illustration, photography and commented on the masthead.

Other Uniting Church publications were also rewarded for their excellence in the



*Journey* designer Osker Lau and editor Mardi Lumsden with current and previous ARPA awards

professional field of religious media.

The South Australian Uniting Church magazine *New Times* received a silver award for best headline and two highly commended awards for best news release and best website. The Quiet Space: Online Prayer Room.

*Crosslight*, the magazine of the

Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, received a bronze award for Best feature (single author) and bronze for best original photograph.

*Revive*, the quarterly magazine for the Synod of Western Australia, won a bronze award for best ecumenical story.

The Assembly's *The Transit Lounge* won a bronze award for best electronic publication.

## Reflecting on resourcing and mission

By Jane Moad

IN LOOKING to the future of the Uniting Church, it is important to look at the lessons of the past.

Written 15 years ago, the 1996 Curtis Report (entitled *On the Way*) was the report of Synod Review Task Group initiated by the 18th Synod. It raised many issues similar to those facing the Queensland Synod today.

The Report spoke of the

Mission and Service Fund's continuing role in the life of the Uniting Church.

"The resources of the Fund are utilised to conduct those activities that are deemed to be a part of the Fund for the extension of the mission of the Uniting Church," the Report said.

The Task Group reviewed the management structure, functions and responsibilities of the Synod and presbyteries to

make recommendations about their effectiveness in resourcing and facilitating the ministry and mission of parishes and congregations.

The Report continues with several points about the Mission and Service Fund.

"The majority of the finance is pre-committed to basic activities and there has been little scope for inclusion of new activities in recent years.

"Parish income is growing slowly, and thus contributions to the Fund also grow slowly.

"The major contributions from the departments arise from U.C.I.S and insurance activities.

"The fund is regularly overspent.

"Much lengthy but generally fruitless effort has been directed to defining priorities."

It also noted that in a supplementary report to the 10th Synod, the Management Consultancy Task Group observed that amongst important issues requiring further consideration was the need to devise "more effective ways of determining priorities with respect to the allocation of resources from the

Mission and Service Fund".

Although similar, current financial issues are significant: outstanding debt, a failure of investments compounded by the global financial crisis and deficits in the Mission and Service Fund budget.

This resource shortage restricts the Church's ability to invest in new mission and areas of growth.

But as was also highlighted in the Curtis Report, the Uniting Church in Queensland is asset rich and cash poor.

"Scattered through the property portfolio are a range of 'lazy assets'. By this the Task Group means assets which are not providing appropriate value to the current operation of the church," the Report stated.

One of the ways that congregations, presbyteries, agencies and the Synod office can meet resourcing challenges is by identifying underutilised properties and encouraging the beneficial users to appropriately steward these assets to further God's mission for the Church.

The current renewal process, *Together on the Way*, enriching

community, is about engaging the whole Church in Queensland to consider the future of the Church.

Director of the Synod Finance and Property Services (FAPS) Robert Packer said the *Together on the Way* process can assist in reviewing how we utilise our resources.

"With a shared direction, spiritual, governance and financial issues could be addressed with more clarity," he said.

"Setting priorities for mission and resourcing those activities will be informed by the vision and structures discerned by the whole of the Church."

To find out more about the financial position of the Church, including responses to questions raised at the 28th Synod, visit the News & Resources page of [www.faps.ucaqld.com.au](http://www.faps.ucaqld.com.au).

To get involved in *Together on the way*, enriching community visit [www.together.ucaqld.com.au](http://www.together.ucaqld.com.au)

Jane Moad is Communications Manager of FAPS



FAPS Director Robert Packer. Photo by Holly Jewell



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# Grace journeys through The Gap

ON THE first weekend of September The Gap Uniting Church hosted a full-day seminar and evening concert with musicians Geoff Bullock and Stu Larsen called *Journeys in Music and Grace*.

Mr Bullock and Mr Larsen are both well-known and talented song writers and The Gap Uniting Church minister Rev John Ruhle said it was a "privilege, a challenge and an encouragement" to hear their stories.

"Stories of achievement, fantastic music and great highs as well as stories of brokenness and despair."

Mr Ruhle said both men move their own life stories into themes of music and grace as participants in the seminar were given a real, gritty and very personal glimpse into their lives.

"We were also challenged

to fully understand grace, to fully understand worship and to understand how music does and does not play a role in authentic worship," said Mr Ruhle.

The evening concert was a celebration of their music, journeys and grace.

"The music was first class and the stories of grace were heartfelt and inspirational," said Mr Ruhle.

Mr Bullock joined The Gap Uniting Church congregation for a special Father's Day service the following day where he drew attention to our heavenly father.

"As it was Father's Day, Geoff focused on the theme of the *Father Heart of God* and was again very open and honest in sharing about his relationship with his own father and how this has impacted on his life, music and ministry."



Geoff Bullock performs at The Gap Uniting Church. Photo by Cameron Todd



Chapel Hill Uniting Church's Nearly Spring Fair. Photo courtesy of Jenny Brecknell

## Fair's Spring flare

By Jenny Brecknell

MEMBERS OF Chapel Hill Uniting Church in Brisbane's west made an extra big effort to pull off a successful fair the week after the federal election used their facilities as a polling booth.

The biennial Nearly Spring Fair was held on 28 August with many stalls also operating on polling day (21 August). Community support and great congregational teamwork ensured both days were very successful.

Local Brisbane radio personality (and *Journey*

journalist) Phil Smith popped in to spin some yarns, while Devonshire teas and a sausage sizzle kept the crowds well fed.

More than thirty local artists, photographers and handcraft artisans exhibited at the fair.

A variety of stalls offered cakes, jams, books, toys, plants, crafts and second-hand goods for sale.

New this year was the Green Stall which stocked items creatively crafted from recycled goods.

With lots of activities, games and competitions to occupy the children, including face painting

and a jumping castle, there was something for everyone at the Fair.

Some of the money raised at the Nearly Spring Fair will be donated to support a local ministry to homeless people and a project of the Uniting Church which translates Scriptures into Indigenous languages.

The remainder will help to refurbish the worship centre at the church. But Chapel Hill congregation members can't rest just yet.

The local City Council member was elected to the House of Representatives, so a by-election has been called for October and the church will once again be used as a polling booth.

# Sunday not blue in Stanthorpe

By Carol Morrison

ON SUNDAY 29 August the Granite Belt Uniting Church celebrated Blue Care Sunday at their church in Stanthorpe.

Personal invitations were sent to all staff, committee members, volunteers and clients.

During the service, members of each of these groups participated, commencing with Service Manager Sandra Bamberly lighting a blue candle to represent the special role of Blue Care.

Rev Alan Baker, Chaplain of Blue Care at Gold Coast/Tweed Region gave the message and reminded those present that we are never too old for God to use us and our talents to work for him.

There have been many changes since the early days of 1965 but one thing that has not changed is the wonderful work ethic and the willingness to go the extra mile.

John Morrison, chairman of the Blue Care committee, thanked all present for their support and

thanked everyone for attending. Morning tea followed the service.

The Granite Belt Uniting Church thanked Blue Care Queensland for the support given to the service and the resources supplied to make this a special time for Blue Care and the Church.

Carol Morrison is treasurer of the Granite Belt Uniting Church



Peter Bryan, Helen Cavallaro, Annette Powell, Jill Goulter, Sandra Bamberly, Pat Bryan and Alan Baker celebrate Blue Care Sunday in Stanthorpe. Photo courtesy of Carol Morrison

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Graham Clarke



# Language no barrier for youth

By Mardi Lumsden

THE RELATIONSHIP between Uniting Church young people from Indigenous communities near Weipa and the Crossways Korean congregation in Brisbane continues to strengthen after a visit to Weipa in August.

Ten Crossways members headed to far north Queensland at the invitation of Frontier Services' Cape York Patrol minister Rev Michelle Cook and her husband, Western Cape youth worker, Pastor James Hughes.

Led by Rev David Won Kim, the Crossways team spent two months preparing for the trip where they visited Weipa, Napranum and Mapoon.

The team had many aims for the trip including continuing to build the friendships between the two groups which began when the Crossways congregation hosted some of the youth from Weipa after the Summer Madness youth camp this year.

"We hope to become advocates ... for the benefit of aboriginal communities in Weipa; learn about the history of aboriginal communities; understand and embrace what it means to be multicultural Australia; and learn more about what the Uniting Church in Australia has been doing for churches and communities," he said.

The Crossways team prepared a worship service, music, entertainment, booklets on Christianity and T-shirts that said "God loves Weipa".

They visited Mapoon School, a medical clinic and joined 100 children at Napranum Uniting Church for two nights of sport and music and ran activities such as nail painting, producing instant free photos for those present, and doing hip-hop dancing and Taekwondo demonstrations.

"People accepted us so quickly even though most of us were not able to communicate well in English."

Mr Won Kim said one team member, Kevin Oh, was so moved by the trip that he plans to return as a ministry worker.

"It was a privilege for me to witness how God works through us to reach out to those neglected and pushed away people," said Mr Won Kim.

"All we did and said was, 'We are here to love you because God has created us in his own image and loved us all' and it worked!"

Uniting Church president Rev Alistair Macrae and Congress chairperson Rev Ken Sumner also spent time with both groups.

Mr Hughes is passionate about giving the youth from Weipa, Napranum and Mapoon as many opportunities for personal and spiritual growth as possible.

Mr Hughes and Ms Cook have taken groups to Summer Madness, Uluru, NCYC and the National Aboriginal and Islander Youth Gathering (with assistance from the Western Cape Communities Coexistence



Crossways and Western Cape young people share in fun and faith. Photo courtesy of David Won Kim

Agreement). Mr Hughes said the Crossways' youth visit renewed old friendships and forged new ones and was enthusiastic about the exchange.

"These two groups of young people knew very little about each other's culture and lives before and this visit helped break down stereotypes about both.

"There was a real sense of joy and openness to each other as they talked and shared good times together during the week."

Mr Hughes hopes relationships continue to grow in the future.

He said the young people who attend Uniting Church activities in the Western Cape are making

positive choices in their lives.

"Through this cultural exchange they gained skills in communicating and organisation as well as an appreciation of the wider Uniting Church as they participated in programs the elders and their local church make available for them.

"Their faith in God grows and their confidence blooms as they experience the consequences of leading challenging and balanced lives which reach out to others.

"Young people are learning about what it means to be the pilgrim people of the Uniting Church today — together on the way."

## Thursday Island provides new start

By Mardi Lumsden

THE MINISTRY of pastor has opened up exciting opportunities for Pastor Jan Bryde and her husband Colin as they took up a placement on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, 39km north of Cape York Peninsula in late July.

Pastor Ian Ness of Townsville Central City Mission said he was delighted to attend Ms Bryde's commissioning.

"Jan was piped out of the commissioning by her husband Colin on bagpipes," said Mr Ness.

"Then followed a meal and traditional dancing which we

were later invited to participate in, dressed suitably in bark skirts for the women and wraparound skirts for the men."

North Queensland Presbytery chairperson Rev Bruce Cornish conducted the commissioning and despite the North Queensland weather making travel to Thursday Island difficult, the commissioning went off without a hitch.

Mr Ness said it was exciting to see where Ms Bryde's path has taken her.

"Our journeys to ministry have a number of points at which they coincide," he said.

At a 2008 North Queensland Presbytery meeting they both shared that God's call was on their lives.

"I was off to Thursday Island for about six months of supply ministry.

"As I was packing my bags to leave, Colin and Jan moved to Thursday Island for what were a few months of supply ministry after which they returned to the mainland."

The Queensland Synod and the United Church of Papua New Guinea usually alternate in providing a ministry agent on Thursday Island but it became



Pastor Jan Bryde being commissioned to ministry on Thursday Island. Photo courtesy of Ian Ness

clear the United Church of PNG was unable to do so.

"Colin and Jan's heart for the people and the call of God drew them back to Thursday Island where they will now be for at least

18 months," said Mr Ness.

In 2007 members of the Queensland Synod helped raise funds for extensive repairs needed on the manse on Thursday Island.



Uniting Church in Australia  
Queensland Synod

### PRESBYTERY MINISTER/OFFICER

Mary Burnett Presbytery Full Time Position

The Presbytery Minister/Officer will:

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2. Lead the Presbytery in its responsibilities of oversight in worship, witness and service.

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Position Description available from Mrs Sue Mulcahy, Secretary of Mary Burnett Presbytery, [marybpres@dovenetq.net.au](mailto:marybpres@dovenetq.net.au)

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# Closing the door on child trafficking

By Tom Ganderton

INDIA IS a country that overwhelms the senses.

Visitors describe it as vibrant, expressive, hectic, hot, confronting, charming and spiritual.

But amongst the romance sits a dark reality where vulnerable children living in poverty come face to face with the realities of sex trafficking and child labour.

With Nepal to the north, Sri Lanka to the south, China and Bangladesh to the east and Pakistan to the west, there are an unbelievable number of people moving through North East India.

Many of its communities suffer the effects of extreme poverty.

As a result, children who are poor and vulnerable often become victims of human traffickers for

slave labour. At just 10 years of age, Noha (not her real name) was forced to drop out of school because her family were unable to pay her fees.

Instead, she had to work and contribute money to the household.

When a wealthy family in North Bengal sent a scout to look for a domestic cleaner, they promised good pay and treatment to Noha, together with shelter and sufficient food.

For the next two years Noha was rarely allowed contact with her parents.

She toiled long hours from dawn, seven days a week, earning less than \$0.50 a day.

Her body grew weaker as she washed heavy clothes and linen by hand.

The day Noha refused a task,

due to exhaustion, she was beaten beyond recognition.

After hospitalisation, she was sent home - with only the clothes on her back.

UnitingWorld's Anti-Trafficking program, operating in partnership with the Church of North India, seeks to give hope to boys and girls like Noha.

The program builds awareness about the dangers of being tricked into slave labour and prostitution, with an aim of expanding into counselling and support for survivors.

There are currently around 2.6 million children in India aged between five and 14 trapped in forced labour.

The most common destinations for trafficked children are brothels, factories and domestic homes.



Every day children like Noha are trafficked in countries all over the world. Photo courtesy of UnitingWorld

For more information visit [www.unitingworld.org.au](http://www.unitingworld.org.au) or phone 1800 000 331

Tom Ganderton is communications coordinator for UnitingWorld

# A new Eden at Parkview

By Christina Murphy

WESLEY MISSION Brisbane's (WMB) newest aged-care community, Parkview, has successfully achieved registration in the Eden Alternative which is a caring philosophy of person-directed care.

Parkview, in Brisbane's northern suburb Chermside, is now the only Eden Alternative registered aged-care community in the Brisbane metropolitan area.

In Australia, the Eden Alternative believes in challenging the norms in aged care and focuses on facilities as homes which actively promote health and wellbeing by empowering residents, staff, families and other

stakeholders to provide a better life for residents.

WMB has been registered with Eden for the past eight years and believes that living a positive and healthy lifestyle, both mentally and physically, is important when the human body begins to age.

Parkview's Leisure and Lifestyle coordinator Kay Craw is a passionate advocate for Eden.

"It is incredibly rewarding to spend time with the residents and to see them happy and unfurling in this environment," she said.

"The Eden philosophy has given a name and a structure to what I have always felt is the way people should be treated.

"With Eden it isn't about the destination, it is all about the journey, about every day, the

small things that make life rich and rewarding," said Ms Craw.

And the journey has been extremely successful for Parkview with residents, staff, families and visitors all enjoying the space.

"It is all about making a positive difference for the residents and their families," said Ms Craw.

"You don't stop living the Eden philosophy when you leave work.

"The respect and honour you show the residents is something you carry into all relationships. It is an inspiring philosophy."

Maintaining a sense of community, decision making, socialising and living as normal a life as possible are all things that can contribute to maintaining an optimistic and enriching lifestyle.

The Eden philosophy supports



Director of Eden in Oz and NZ (EiON) Cathy Meyer (left) hands Parkview Director of Nursing Annie Gibney the official plaque. Photo by Aileen Wallace

the need to include these significant factors in the lives of aged care residents.

WMB and Parkview assist residents to continue maintaining

their own lives as much as possible, even though they are living in and supported by an aged-care community.

Parkview staff describe their main focus as making the residents feel safe, cared for and happy. In alignment with the Eden philosophy they honour and respect residents' needs and values and always remember they are visitors in the residents' homes.

The Eden philosophy was even embraced when the building was being designed with future residents being asked for input and to share their views and needs for comfort.

Some of the suggestions that were implemented included increased light, a place to sit and talk with family and friends, their own quiet room with plenty of privacy and a spacious environment.

Christina Murphy is a school student doing work experience with WMB

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**Queensland Synod**

**PRESBYTERY MINISTER**

The Central Qld Presbytery

The Presbytery Minister's principal responsibilities are to provide missional and pastoral leadership, and strategic vision for the presbytery.

The position is available for suitably qualified Ministers of the Word or lay persons who must be a member of the Uniting Church. They must have a sound general knowledge of the functions of the councils of the UCA. A Position Description is available by contacting Rev Euan McDonald [eandymcd@bigpond.net.au](mailto:eandymcd@bigpond.net.au)

Applications should be sent to

**Central Queensland Presbytery Minister JNC,  
C/o Secretary of Synod Placements Committee,  
Uniting Church in Australia, (Qld Synod),  
GPO Box 674, Brisbane Q 4001**

Applications close by 5.00pm, 30 October 2010.



# Standing on solid ground

By Phil Smith

A PROMINENT Sydney clergyman was once quoted as saying: "God cares for people more than sheep. So we need to send gospel workers where there are more people than sheep."

There were plenty of sheep and quite a few people in western Queensland sixty years ago when wool was a pound a pound and the church was a central plank of community life in thriving towns such as Longreach.

In 1953, Rev Ron Smith (the reporter's father) was the superintendent Methodist minister in Longreach.

Communications technology consisted of a Ford utility for an area that stretched for hundreds of miles.

"There was a mile and a half of bitumen either side of town," Mr Smith recalled.

"After that you hit the dirt."

The minister in Winton travelled as far as Kynuna (over 90kms). The minister in Blackall had congregations in Alpha and Jericho.

Church social activities included swimming and fishing in the river or occasional shooting trips.

In 2010 the Uniting Church congregation in Longreach still

holds its place among the social activities of the town, but Sunday worship competes with sport and quick trips to the coast.

The congregation is exploring an online Sunday School, using internet resources for its children's ministry.

Minister Rev Jeanette Gillam rejoices in her congregation's love of fun and vitality when they gather on Sunday.

"We're not a young congregation," said Ms Gillam. "It's great when we get outside our own four walls."

Ms Gillam is one of only a handful of ordained Uniting Church ministry agents west of Rockhampton.

Other denominations are in similar circumstances.

"I'll be doing a baptism with the nuns in 'Barcy' next month," she enthused. "A while back I helped out the Lutherans, who don't have a pastor at present."

Once a month the Christians of Longreach enjoy Churches Together and gather to celebrate Easter and Christmas.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century tens of thousands of people have left once robust rural centres, heading for the 'big smoke', leaving local churches to face significant challenges.

The Australian Community

Survey showed that 63 per cent of adults live in urban areas. Eight per cent live in communities of between 200 and 2000 people and three per cent live in centres of 200 people or less.

The Christian Research Association (CRA) said the move away from traditional farming industries contributed to a decline in church attendance.

While population has stabilised or increased in areas focused on tourism and mining, the ageing farming population has retired to the coast and urban fringes.

Farmers have the highest level of church attendance of any work area or profession, according to CRA's Philip Hughes.

"Anecdotally churches in the broadacre farming areas seem to have the most vitality," he said.

"They may no longer be central to the community's social life, but they are foundational, providing fundamental values for community living."

Mr Hughes said that was evident when small communities face crises and hold together to support one another.

"This could be because churches provide opportunities for social interaction, although other community organisations do this too.



Rev Ron Smith (left) with the members of the Longreach Sunday School and Youth Group. Taken on a box brownie circa 1953. Photo courtesy of Phil Smith

"Alternatively, the higher attendance levels among farmers could be because the way of life of farmers and their work in providing the necessities of life receives greater affirmation from the churches than most other occupations."

According to the CRA the decline of stipended church agents in country Australia has left a patchy response from the organised church to issues including mental health and suicide.

The Uniting Church's Rural Mission Planning initiative has had low-key success on some country show circuits, providing 'pit stop' stalls where people can drop in for a casual health and emotional wellbeing check.

Mr Hughes recounted an

example of a church member recently holding a street party in rural South Australia, along the length of his 35km road.

While the event was not an official church activity, the farmer's ministry was to help neighbours look out for each other, watching for signs of isolation or loneliness.

Ms Gillam recognises times have changed yet despite statistics, demographic trends and social patterns, some things do not change.

"We're still here, the church – the body of Christ – ready to welcome every man and his dog," she said confidently.

"In fact we had a woman bring her dog to church for a few weeks, but that's another story."

## Facing unique challenges

NATIONAL CHURCH Life Survey (NCLS) research has found that despite considerable differences between key issues facing churches in rural and urban environments, across measures of health and vitality there is little difference between rural church attendees and the national average.

Some 42 per cent of churches that took part in the 2006 NCLS were in rural settings (and more than half of those were Anglican or Uniting); a considerable proportion of Australian churches.

Key issues facing rural communities include drought, decline of jobs and decline of churches.

Many rural churches are small in size, which presents a problem for funding ministry agents.

Over 60 per cent of rural churches have regular congregations of fewer than 51 people.

Some 25 per cent of rural churches have a declining financial base and a further 14 per cent feel their viability is threatened by finances.

Almost half the rural churches surveyed were led by teams and leaders were likely to have responsibility for multiple congregations.

For some, these leadership structures were a choice, while for others it was the result of insufficient clergy to fill positions for which there were sufficient funds, let alone places where the finances were inadequate.

Rural church attendees were less likely to be university-educated or employed, which aligns with their older age profile.

While 75 per cent of respondents said access to aged-care accommodation was excellent or very good, only 29 per cent said access to youth facilities and activities was very good.

Rural church attendees are more likely than urban attendees to be involved in church-based community service, social justice or welfare activities (26 per cent vs. 21 per cent) and are more likely to be involved in certain community-based activities.

Rural attendees were much less likely to have been born in a non-English speaking country.

Across all measures of health and vitality — faith, worship, belonging, vision, leadership, innovation, service, faith-sharing and inclusion — there was little difference between the responses of rural attendees and the national average.

The inflow of newcomers was also similar for rural churches compared to the national average.

Other significant challenges across rural communities include the maintenance of community infrastructure and changes in rural agriculture as it adjusts to

climate change realities and the pressures of global economics.

Understanding the unique contribution made by rural churches to their communities will be part of the upcoming 2011 National Church Life Survey.

NCLS Research Director Dr Ruth Powell said it was important to see the whole cross-section of Australian churchgoers.

"We specifically want to improve how we serve rural churches," she said.

"We will aim to adapt the survey experience for small rural and remote churches, including potential cost adjustments."

For more information about the next survey visit [www.2011ncls.org.au](http://www.2011ncls.org.au)



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# Tradition runs deep

By Mardi Lumsden

FOR THOUSANDS of years before westerners arrived in Australia Indigenous people were living on the land using practices that are, in some places, still used today.

Ena Koongotema, an Indigenous member of Aurukun Uniting Church in Far North Queensland, remembers how her people used to live off the land.

"They used to go out; they used to walk (no vehicle and that) into the bush collecting food," she said.

"In the dry season the grass used to be dried and they would go out and burn it.

"Then when the rain came you would have green shoots."

The use of controlled burning not only encouraged regrowth of grasses, attracting animals for hunting, but it also cleared scrub making it easier to walk through and making snakes more visible.

Smoke also flushed animals out of hiding places making them easier to hunt.

This practice changed the

landscape of some parts of the country, with more fire resilient plants becoming dominant.

These days hunting spears have been replaced by rifles as traditions adapt to modern technology.

Ms Koongotema said that while Indigenous people moved around, they did so to specific places of importance to their clan.

She said people in Aurukun these days do the same thing.

"We have five clans and they go to their outstation," she said.

"People from the north go to the north.

"They would have to make a canoe in the old days and now we have the outboard motor and transport.

"I'm from the inland, timber country."

Ms Koongotema has a fondness for the bush and said people were healthier living on the land.

"People don't get sick and they are healthier out in the bush."

She also spoke of the benefits of bush medicine and said it was important to eat what was in season.

Author Meredith Lake reflected in *Tear Australia's Target* magazine ("Land for development" issue 3, 2010) that land is not just a place that provided food and water.

"It's connected to everything we do as communities, cultures and societies," she said.

"Land is fundamentally about culture as well as nature.

"For most of human history, land has been a crucial part of how people and communities have understood themselves, their relationship to others, even their relationship to God."

She said for Indigenous Australians land is intrinsically linked to their identity and spirituality.

"For Aboriginal people, land is not so much an object to possess as something to be part of and belong to.

"It is a source of personal identity not in the mere sense of being from this or that place, but in the very intimate sense of kin identification with particular sites and the plants and animals that exist on them."



Ena Koongotema. Photo by James Hughes

## Australia on top of rural ministry

By Garry Hardingham

WITH SIX Australian delegates attending the International Rural Churches Association's (IRCA) 4<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial conference held in Germany in September, Australia has shown that when it comes to rural ministry, we have a lot to teach as well as learn.

Indeed IRCA had an Australian, Rev Lloyd Vidler, at the helm as Chairperson in its early days.

The 2010 Conference centred around the issues of hunger, food justice and how food has become a source of political unrest, migration and corporate greed.

Speakers from across the world spoke of the pressure being placed on churches and their agencies to provide support and comfort to people affected by international policies concocted by governments and in board rooms on the opposite side of the

globe. One speaker asked: "Why should farmers and their families die of starvation while producing tonnes of canola?"

The fact is the world needs farmers if people want food.

Yet across the globe the needs of farmers and rural communities are given almost no thought in global trade negotiations.

France is not the only country to have seen recent farmers' strikes but often rural voices are not heard.

Organisations like the IRCA are a voice to the voiceless, encouraging the networking of rural churches and ministry workers across the globe to give support, and often solutions, through experience to those who are at the bottom of the human food chain.

Australia has had its fair share of rural communities that have had to find a voice to protect what is intrinsic about their communities and to help our city cousins understand that without farmers, there is no food.

Uniting Church rural ministry

agents will gather once again at the end of October for the annual National Rural Ministers Network conference which will be held in Hyden, Western Australia.

Your prayers for our farmers, their communities and churches are welcome.

Rev Garry Hardingham is secretary of the International Rural Churches Association.

For more information visit

[www.irca.net.nz](http://www.irca.net.nz)

# LIVING ON THE LAND

From P.1

MR KRUGER has high hopes for the rural church but said, like city churches, they needed to rethink their notion of the church.

"In many cases it would be better to sell the church building and do church simply, maybe use shared facilities or coffee shops.

"We remain strong in our faith and look for possibilities to be more effective in sharing Jesus with the world."

In Central Queensland's Dawson Valley Uniting Church cluster Rev Peter Taubner is the minister to seven towns.

"The communities are very transient, particularly the mining and agriculture sectors, with fly in, fly out workers or seasonal casual workers.

"Many congregations have temporary members while they live in the area but they are subject to transfer and re-location."

A former youth worker, Mr Taubner said there are many issues affecting young people.

"Twelve hour mining shifts and the associated four days on, three days off shift rotations are not good for family life," he said.

"Many high school students do not seek tertiary places because they can get a good paying job with the mine company."

Mr Taubner said farming families also struggle with economic downturn and isolation.

"They are subject to such things as deregulation of industries (dairy and beef), commodity prices (cotton and grains), and even the price of coal."

Uniting Church agencies like Frontier Services provide assistance to rural and remote families.

Lifeline Community Care Director of Mission Rev Bob Harriman said Lifeline also provides essential support to rural communities.

"We take a lead role during and after traumatic events by providing Psychological First Aid, face to face counselling, financial counselling, suicide and bereavement support," he said.

Frontier Services' Flinders Patrol minister Peter Harvey said people in ministry are often the first to recognise and provide a space for people in rural communities to deal with mental health issues.

But mental health issues are

not the only health issues that plague rural communities. There are also a high number of farming accidents and deaths each year.

"Farming accidents generally happen because people are so overworked," said Mr Harvey.

"Where things aren't going so well is where mental health issues are more prevalent.

"Being able to get out there and provide support in situ has been a big thing in a number of situations.

"Being able to get out and be part of their life has been a great thing."

Blue Care's Director of Mission Colleen Geyer said in many towns Uniting Church agencies, staff and services are the lifeblood of the community.

She said Blue Care is often the town's largest employer and only provider of aged care.

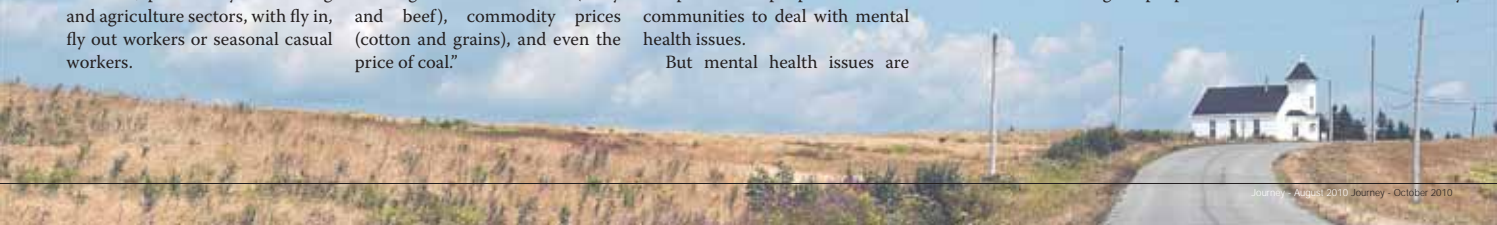
"Whether it's caring for people

in their homes, providing respite activities for clients and their families, offering allied health services or providing residential facilities Blue Care supports people where and when they need care," she said.

Mr Hardingham said there is a need to develop a rural theology that does not stand over or against current thinking, but becomes a vital ingredient in the 'great stew of theology' that makes up who we are and who we understand God to be.

"It begins by making sure that in our training for ministry we create models that give rural students the opportunity to undergo rigorous theological training without forcing them to move and live in the city," he said.

He also suggested setting up a rural placement to help prepare all candidates for rural ministry.





# Living faithfully

By Mardi Lumsden

LAND IS a valuable thing, especially if you make your livelihood from it.

Be it farming stock, crops or mining, land is often the most valuable asset. And living on the land requires a large amount of resilience and faith.

Through drought, flood and community upheaval, rural communities battle on to provide the rest of the country with food, energy and even water.

Rev Iain Watt, minister in the Mary Valley, had first hand experience of a community standing together and winning the fight against the proposed Traveston Crossing Dam in the Sunshine Coast hinterland late last year.

While people need water Mr Watt, and Environment Minister Peter Garrett MP, said a dam at Traveston Crossing was not the answer.

Mr Watt said the effect on the community was what he struggled with.

"It alienated the Mary Valley community from the wider community who saw the potential for jobs and more water supplies," he said.

"The aggressive, politically motivated project poured money into wasted land purchasing.

"Inevitably, hope of stopping the dam evaporated as over eighty per cent of people signed some form of agreement."

After the three-and-a-half year battle Mr Watt said the community is quite different now.

"It is war weary, wiser and adapting to the new reality."

He said living in limbo brought challenges that still need addressing.

"Many families and businesses have left ... At Kandanga school

only five of around 50 children are from original families.

"The church has a lead role in encouraging community 'social capital' and just leadership at all levels."

Ann Hobson, Church Council Chairperson at Theodore Uniting Church in central Queensland, said it isn't just dams, droughts or floods that bring water to the forefront of rural communities.

"Fifty years of copper and gold mining have turned the living waterway into a waste drain for deadly water," said Ms Hobson.

She said politicians needed to be more aware of the effect of mining on waterways.

"In air-conditioned offices in Brisbane and Canberra politicians and public servants will decide if it's OK for Coal Seam Gas extraction to release more than 85 megalitres of salt laden water per day for 25 years into the quiet grazing land in the catchments of the Dawson and Condamine Rivers.

"The people of Brisbane have learned how to eke out this precious resource, and to realise that if it doesn't fall out of the sky for ten years, no amount of damming rivers will cause it to materialise."

Ms Hobson said it was large corporations, like mines, that need to reduce water usage.

But those mines can also provide a town with jobs, money for community services and even a sense of community itself.

Clermont-Capella Uniting Church minister Rev Dr David Ferguson worked as an industrial chemist and lived in rural communities before going into ministry.

He is now on the Central Queensland Presbytery Mining Impact Task group, formed to



Jenny and Peter Coombes. Photo by Shauna Coombes

articulate the community costs and benefits associated with mining.

He said these complex issues were different in each situation and it was necessary to balance the negative community impacts of mining with the positives.

"Mining is a reality and a necessity," he said.

"How can we as a church promote that this is done justly and with minimal impact to communities and individuals?" he asked.

Dr Ferguson said in Clermont, which has almost 150 years of shared mining and agricultural industry, the expansion of the Blair Athol mine was a key moment in the town's history.

"A town that was in decline went into expansion and built a

**How do we proclaim that all people are important while they watch their community supports diminish.**

whole new area, including a new school.

"Services in the town increased and property values rose.

"Unlike many regional cities 80 per cent of students who complete their education in Clermont stay on and work locally," he said.

But the opening of the mine was not such good news for Blair Athol township which was part of the mining lease and now no longer exists.

Dr Ferguson said in some towns, such as Moranbah (which was created to open the area for mining), the increased population due to mining work has forced the rental market to skyrocket, highlighting what he calls a "two speed" economy.

"There will be miners on six figure incomes and those in service industries on the minimum wage.

"Those on minimum wages cannot afford to live in town."

For Dr Ferguson the challenge of the rural church is to spread the gospel in their local community despite shift work, loss of young people, drought or flood.

"How do we proclaim that all people are important while they watch their community supports diminish as they are not considered economically viable?"

"How do we stand with those who feel powerless in the face of a system that places mining at such a priority over other land users?"

And when a mine closes there are different challenges.

So what will happen when the Blair Athol Coal (BAC) mine in Clermont closes in 2016?

"The mine has no intent to leave the community with a bad taste in its mouth, and they have been actively funding projects that assist the community in thinking of what they can do after the mine closes."

Jenny and Peter Coombes "contract grow" pigs from around

the age of eight weeks to market specifications.

While Mr Coombes focuses on running the piggery, Ms Coombes is lay pastor at Murgon-Goomeri Uniting Church and is doing a Bachelor of Ministry, externally, through the Adelaide College of Divinity.

She said their faith played a large part in their decision to leave city life and move to the country.

"It's what keeps you going through all the tough times," said Ms Coombes.

Those times include watching animals die due to drought, experiencing the downturn in the pork industry, poor internet coverage and just life on a farm.

"And the smell!" said Ms Coombes. "It gets in your hair and on your hands."

Then there are issues fought out in the media by animal welfare groups and major supermarket chains.

"Coles has declared that it will not take Australian pigs from facilities that use sow stalls from about 2013, but they do not apply this criteria to their imported products," she said.

But for the Coombes family the positives outweigh the difficulties.

Ms Coombes particularly appreciated "realising our children had a well rounded and practical education" and "seeing the little pigs arrive and eventually leave on target for growth rate, feed usage and meeting market specifications".

## Bush devotions prove fruitful

THE SEARCH for a bush themed devotional for a young couple led Gympie Uniting Church member Linda Watt (pictured right) to create her own.

The result, *Abundance in the Bush*, is based on 31 days of life in the bush and was so popular that Ms Watt received orders while still writing it and sold 250 copies in the first month.

"I find God's signature all over the Australian bush: the creeks, majestic gums, a myriad of stars in the night sky, the stock camp and bush telly (fire), the cattle, the parable in every horse, the amazing working dogs, and the inspiring men and women," she said. "The bush offers lessons richer than I've found in any classroom."

And Ms Watt has certainly

had a well-rounded education.

"I've been privileged for the last seven years to be part of a mustering team, handling cattle and learning from seasoned cattlemen, some of whom helped me with the devotions," she said.

"I think people appreciate the Aussie language and the practical application of faith to their life on the land."

One of the biggest compliments Ms Watt has received was from a farmer who said: "You have certainly succeeded in connecting what is for us the real Australia and our daily walk as Christians".

"My answer to that is it's been a privilege," said Ms Watt.

*Abundance in the Bush* is available from Linda Watt at PO Box 1, Imbil 4570, ph 5488 6752 or email dusterduck@hotmail.com



# Living for the end of time

*Journey* continues exploring Brian McLaren's 10 questions he says are transforming the church. This month we look at the 'future' question.

By Mark Cornford

IS THE world getting better or worse?

What is the Christian hope for the future?

Does any of this matter to how I live my life?

These are all questions to do with what is known in Christian theology as 'eschatology' (the study of last things).

Unfortunately it seems that for many people the answer to the question "does it matter?" is "no".

Books like *Revelation* are so foreign to our comfortable middle class lives that we prefer to ignore it and other apocalyptic passages in the New Testament and leave them to the cranks and cultists.

The result is that we no longer know what we believe about 'the end' and consequently we are unable to live in the power of hope that is able to sustain faith and love as a living powerful witness to the good news of the gospel of Christ.

Let me give a brief and necessarily caricatured account of two popular ideas about eschatology.

Firstly, that God will help the world grow into the Kingdom of God. The world will get better as

history progresses.

Of course hardly anyone believes this today as it is patently untrue. The world is not getting better.

While material living standards and technology have developed beyond our ancestors' wildest imaginations, humanity's ability to live in peace and with justice has not.

The 20th century was one of the most violent on record, not only because of the scale of conflicts, but because of their frequency and brutality.

Add to this our power to greatly harm creation through human activity and our inability to live at peace with God's creation and

Love, justice and mercy may not reign in this world now – but they will and so we live according to God's future.

you do not have much reason to hope for humanity changing into a peaceful and loving people.

Secondly, the idea that the world will get worse before God finally consigns it to the dustbin

of history and sends all of us to heaven.

While proponents of this view claim that there is hope – that we go to heaven – it is not a hope that inspires life in abundance.

According to this view, anything we do is hopeless as history is set and all we can do is wait in our lifeboats for the end and throw out life rings to those not yet in our lifeboats.

The good news is that neither of the above has much to do with the teaching of the New Testament.

The New Testament teaches of a hope that is powerful and able to sustain Christians and their communities through periods of darkness, whether they be times of persecution or a fading church.

But it is a hope that is foreign to our comfortable western materialist rationalistic view of the world.

It is a hope that is able to unveil the brutality of the world and yet remain hopeful.

It is a hope that is able to perceive that times of great suffering will come and go, yet does not lose faith.

It is a hope that knows justice and mercy will never prevail in our world, yet never stops loving. In short it is a hope of "the end".



It is a hope that knows that one day God will stop history as we know it.

The dead will rise. The martyrs, the innocent suffering, the people who have given themselves to faith, hope and love, will walk with the Lamb and suffering, pain and death will be no more.

But those who have given themselves to greed, violence and hate – they will be no more as will their evil works.

There will be a new creation and humanity will finally be at peace with God, each other and creation, and that day will last for eternity.

So how does this change how we live? It is about knowing that when we pray "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" these are not just words but a statement of what we know will happen and a commitment to live according to God's future now.

Love, justice and mercy may not reign in this world now – but they will and so we live according to God's future.

This saves us from trying to save the world; our job is to witness to "the end".

We need to be a community that, in the power of the Holy Spirit, lives out partially the vision of *Revelation* 21.

As we live not according to this world, but according to the world to come, our lives and churches will be salt and light in a world full of brokenness and pain.

You might not know much about eschatology and find *Revelation* and other apocalyptic passages difficult, but I invite you to read *Revelation* 21 and 22.

They might be strange but they could give you hope.

May the vision they ignite inspire us to live faithfully as outposts of God's future of hope.

## Geering still disturbing the peace

EMERITUS PROFESSOR Sir Lloyd Geering, a renowned statesman of progressive

theology, conducted a seminar at Trinity Theological College in Brisbane in

September. The controversial New Zealand theologian who challenges the fundamentals

of orthodox Christianity was in Brisbane for a series of talks.

Now in his 90s Sir Lloyd told how, from a non-religious home, he was sent to Sunday School but his interest in religion grew at university in the Student Christian Movement.

The Presbyterian minister eventually became head of theology at Knox College in New Zealand where he wrote *The Resurrection of Jesus* describing a resurrection of faith for the disciples rather than a physical resurrection. He then wrote *The Immortality of the Soul* that denied immortality.

These two papers provoked charges of "doctrinal error" and "disturbing the peace of the church" that led to a heresy trial in 1967 from

which he was acquitted.

Uniting Church Lay Forum member Reg Collard said Sir Lloyd is a superb communicator who believes in his interpretations and values Christian heritage.

"How should the church respond to arguments made by people of the calibre of Lloyd Geering who holds an Honours degree in mathematics, a Doctorate degree in Divinity, has studied the Bible intensively and, as a Hebrew scholar, has undertaken his own translation of *Ecclesiastes*?" asked Mr Collard.

"Clearly we should listen."

The seminar was sponsored by the Lay Forum, which aims to provide safe spaces for open discussion of matters of faith.



Sir Lloyd and Lady Shirley Geering (centre) with members of Lay Forum (from left) Reg Collard, Merv Bengston and Paul Wildman, Rodney Eivers. Photo courtesy of Reg Collard



# NCYC Bible studies cater for all

By Jane Moad

WITH ONLY three months until the biennial National Christian Youth Convention (ncyc11) begins on the Gold Coast, leaders from across Australia are warming up some challenging and interactive Bible studies.

NSW Synod Youth Unit coordinator Rob Hanks and his team will be leading a "surfing" level Bible study for those just starting out in faith.

"We promise to offer an interactive and experiential Bible Study space using live music, multimedia, small groups, creativity, puppets, drama and 'stations' in the space with different styles each day to help the participants unpack what they hear in words and music," said Mr Hanks.

As a Bible study leader at the last NCYC in Melbourne, Mr

Hanks said the studies at ncyc11 will have a similar flavour but embrace the ncyc11 theme *Turn it Up*.

"*Turn It Up* will be an opportunity for participants to discover their own voice and to seek harmony with God's tune."

Vic/Tas Synod Young Adults Discipleship Educator Adrian Greenwood will run an "activist" Bible study, among other ncyc11 jobs, in response to the popularity of the submersion mission activity he led at NCYC09 - a public rally in Federation Square in Melbourne's CBD.

"I'm leading an activist Bible study that links the biblical texts with social and environmental issues and personal ways to engage these issues as Good News," he said.

"I hope people keep connecting the social, political and personal dimensions of our faith.

"I hope they feel strengthened in their souls to keep influencing and creating communities of hope in the world and I hope they leave with a sneaky activist smile and some fun ideas for holy mischief!"

For people ready to jump further into the deep end with their Bible studies, the "Scuba Diving" level offers a deeper level of reflection on the ncyc11 themes.

Dave Andrews, author, educator and advocate of radical spirituality and incarnational community will be helping people to rediscover the beatitudes.

Alison Cox, ncyc11 coordinator, said the team was passionate about seeing the convention as a truly national event.

"It will be great to hear from people with different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives," she said.



Adrian Greenwood (black T-shirt) hands out flyers as part of a 'flash mob' in Melbourne. Photo by Mike Emmett

"These leaders are talented, creative people who have already turned up their own faith and walked this road themselves.

"They're inspiring just to spend

time with because they live and breathe their faith in their daily lives, not just teach it"

For more information visit [www.ncyc11.com.au](http://www.ncyc11.com.au)

## Acting with love

By Mardi Lumsden

THE 28<sup>TH</sup> Synod affirmed a five line Call for the Uniting Church in Queensland in discerning the future of the Church.

This edition we continue our series of discussion starters exploring what each of the five Call phrases mean to different people.

This edition we look at the second phrase: Acting with love.

Rev Doug Foster has been a Police Chaplain in North Queensland part-time since 2002 and full-time since 2009.

In his work he is often called to love those who others may not.

"I live and work with the beautiful privilege to be with people at some of their best and worst life moments," he said.

"For me acting with love comes as a challenge to hold to Paul's recollection of God's call through Jesus for us to be agents of reconciliation.

"The group I work with are often confronted by society at its lowest ebb.

"Acting with love is the challenge to help reconcile these people to a hope that, in spite of what they may see and experience, the world has not been abandoned to chaos and evil.

"It reminds me, as I hope I can remind those with whom I serve, that God is never in some distant place waiting for us to come to him.

"He is with us, wherever and however we might find ourselves.

"Acting with love helps me to

experience a deepening of faith as I see God acting in ways beyond my understanding."

As Mr Foster suggested, when done in a Christ-like way, being called to act with love can be quite a confronting task.

Brisbane's Trinity Wilston Uniting Church minister Rev Sue Pickering has a passion for social justice and has spent time in India working with women.

She said the phrase "acting with love" was her starting point.

"I believe that the heart of the gospel is love, not in a warm and fluffy sense, but in a challenging sense," she said.

"How can we honestly say we are acting with love if we are supporting injustices and failing to respond with compassion and mercy even in the most difficult

circumstances? Acting with love for me is about acting with integrity, with a preference for the poor (in its widest sense), challenging understandings and systems that oppress and

bring about injustice, which will undoubtedly in some cases bring discomfort and unrest for others.

"Acting with love for me is a challenge to consider my actions, responses and values."



Sue and Alan Pickering with women and children in India in 2007. Photo courtesy of Sue Pickering

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**October 10, 9.30am.**

### Bald Hills Uniting Church 137th Anniversary



Guest preacher Rev Barry Dangerfield. A basket lunch will follow the service.  
2131 Gympie Rd, Bald Hills.  
Contact Don Whisson on 32617891 or dgwhisson@optus-net.com.au.

**October 2, 11am-4pm. Trinity Ipswich Uniting Church Multicultural Festival**, 114 Jacaranda Rd, North Booval. \$7. Contact 3812 3110 or [viliami\\_anamila@bigpond.com](mailto:viliami_anamila@bigpond.com).

**October 9, 8am-1pm. Bald Hills Uniting Church annual Garage Sale.** Toys, books, crockery, cakes. 2131 Gympie Rd Bald Hills. Contact 3261 7891 or [dgwhisson@optusnet.com.au](mailto:dgwhisson@optusnet.com.au).

**October 9, 6am-12pm. Paradise Point Uniting Church Giant Garage Sale.** Books, craft, electrical goods, children's activities. Contact Peter Alfredson on 5529 3669 or [office@ppuca.org.au](mailto:office@ppuca.org.au).

**October 10, 2pm. Welsh hymn singing festival** at the Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Fortitude Valley. Free, with an offering.

**October 13, 10am-12pm. October Morning Tea/Lunch** at Holland Park Uniting Church. \$10. Contact Lorraine Bettenay on 3278 7899 or [randlbettenay8@bigpond.com](mailto:randlbettenay8@bigpond.com).

**October 13, 7-9pm. Mental Health Week public seminar** at Redcliffe Uniting Church. Gold coin donation. Contact Lynne Davis on 0417 008 096 or [lynneadavis@bigpond.com](mailto:lynneadavis@bigpond.com).

**October 14, 10am-12pm. Mental Health Week public seminar** at Redcliffe Uniting Church. Gold coin donation. Contact Lynne Davis on 0417 008 096 or [lynneadavis@bigpond.com](mailto:lynneadavis@bigpond.com).

**October 14, 6-8pm. Nutritional Shopping Challenge** with Blue Care at Wynnum Plaza. Contact Blue Care on 3308 5861 or Sonia Kennett on 0416 082 158.

**October 16, 7am-2pm. Samford Valley Community Church Monster Garage Sale** and car wash. Contact Vicki MacPherson on 0428 912 233 or [vickimacpherson@oracletelecom.net.au](mailto:vickimacpherson@oracletelecom.net.au).

**October 16. Order of Knights, Girls Comradeship and Rays reunion** at Ipswich City Uniting Church. Contact Paul Coker on 3288 0535, 0437 335 800 or [pcoker1@bigpond.net.au](mailto:pcoker1@bigpond.net.au).

**October 16, 8-9.30am. Nutritional Shopping Challenge** with Blue Care at Wynnum Plaza. Ph 3308 5861 or Sonia Kennett on 0416 082 158 or [skennett@bluecare.org.au](mailto:skennett@bluecare.org.au).

**October 17, 2.30pm. Australia – Whose Land?** Dr Peter Adam DVD presentation at West End Uniting Church, Brisbane. Contact Andrew Johnson on 0417 783 495 or [westendcommunityjustice@gmail.com](mailto:westendcommunityjustice@gmail.com).

**October 17, 4-6pm. Kenmore Uniting Church Cool & Classic Concert.** 982 Moggill Rd. \$25/\$20. Children 3-12yrs \$5. Contact Dawn Langford on 3878 3936 or [langfords@askandrew.net](mailto:langfords@askandrew.net).

**October 18, 7-9pm. Dr Val Webb lecture *Searching for the Sacred in a Multifaith World*** at St Aidan's Girls School, Corinda. Contact Kate Luxford-Morgan on 3514 7424 or [kluxfordmorgan@ministryeducation.org.au](mailto:kluxfordmorgan@ministryeducation.org.au).

**October 19, 7.30am-9.30pm. Middle Ridge Uniting Church Adult Fellowship coach trip.** \$65 inc morning tea, lunch, and entry to attractions. Contact 4636 3850 or [mruc@bigpond.com](mailto:mruc@bigpond.com).

**October 19, 9.30am-12.30pm. UnitingWorld (Qld) Support Group Meeting.** Wesley House 140 Ann St Brisbane. Contact Judith Finau on 3711 4622 or [ljinai@gmail.com](mailto:ljinai@gmail.com).

**October 23, 9am-4pm. Living Rivers Uniting Church antique assessment day.** 5 Nerang River Dr, Nerang. Contact Jim Hohnke on 0428 129 462 or [jebtrece@bigpond.com](mailto:jebtrece@bigpond.com).

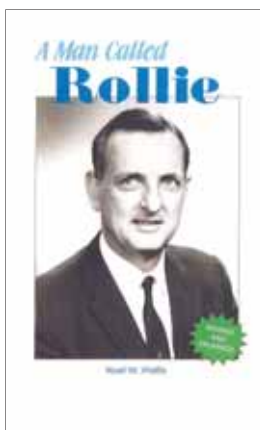
**October 23. Aitkenvale Uniting Church celebrates 125 years.** Anne St, Aitkenvale. Contact Rachel Mudge on 4778 3186 or [aitkenvaleuc@bigpond.com](mailto:aitkenvaleuc@bigpond.com).

**October 23, 7am-2pm. Kangaroo Point Uniting Church Garage Sale.** Plants, face-painting, furniture, family chill out zone, sausage sizzle and lots more. 48 Linton St, Kangaroo Point. Contact Lesley Whitfield on 3391 1355 or [info@wkpuc.org.au](mailto:info@wkpuc.org.au).

**October 23, 2-8pm. Lay Preachers' In-Service Training and AGM.** \$15 inc dinner/afternoon tea. RSVP to Grahame Tainton 3279 0185 or [jimandnoelene@optusnet.com.au](mailto:jimandnoelene@optusnet.com.au).

**November 6. Word Writers Fair** at Bayside Christian Church, Moreton Bay Rd, Capalaba. Contact Rochelle Manners on [info@thewordwriters.com](mailto:info@thewordwriters.com).

## Revisiting Rollie's biography



NINE YEARS after Rev Dr Noel Wallis' biography on Rolland Arthur Busch was launched at the Broadwater Uniting Church the author has completed a revised and enlarged edition.

On the encouragement of friends, Dr Wallis has self-published a very limited edition update of *A Man Called Rollie* that includes a new cover and an extra chapter called 'Christian Educator'.

Dr Wallis has given copies to some of the main libraries in

Brisbane as well as the National Library of Australia. A copy has also been donated to the Trinity Theological College library.

Only 300 copies of the revised publication have been published, but it is nonetheless a credited work. In lieu of finance being available for a professionally produced edition, Dr Wallis' contribution in memory of Rollie is gladly accepted.

For more information contact  
Rev Dr Noel Wallis on  
3372 2145

## Conductor masters St Andrew's choir

By Steven Nisbet

BRISBANE'S ST Andrew's Uniting Church Sanctuary Choir has been blessed with the talents of conductor Katherine Chan who graduated in June with the degree Master of Music (Choral Conducting) from the University of Washington, in Seattle, USA.

Ms Chan was appointed to the conducting position at St Andrew's in February this year after finishing her coursework at the University of Washington in January.

She previously graduated with a Bachelor of Music Performance and Pedagogy from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University.

She is an accomplished pianist, singer and clarinetist, but her great musical love is choral music.

When not conducting at St Andrew's, Ms Chan is busy with her roles as co-music director of Vox Pacifica Chamber Choir (at St Andrew's), music director

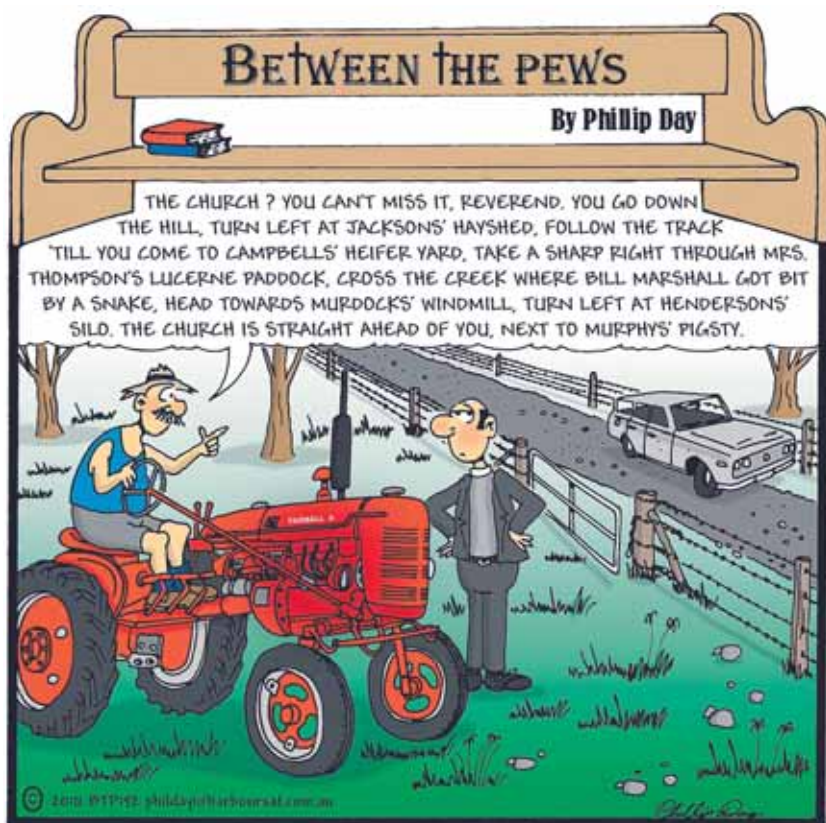


St Andrew's Sanctuary Choir conductor Katherine Chan

of the Australian Youth Choir (National Institute of Youth Performing Arts Australia), and advertising manager for SingOut, the magazine of the Australian

National Choral Association.

St Andrew's Sanctuary Choir sings at the 9.30am Sunday services. Membership is open to interested singers.





# Saving Jesus from the Church: How to Stop Worshiping Christ and Start Following Jesus

By Robin R. Meyers, HarperOne, 2009, RRP \$20.99

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

AS PART of the worldwide Christian church we have an amazing and transforming message to share – the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But in a society that sorely needs something real to change lives, much of the church looks more like just another service provider, selling easy answers for individual salvation.

Congregational pastor and author Robin Meyers surveys the state of the church and contemporary Christianity, both conservative and liberal, and doesn't find much that points to the message of Jesus.

He suggests the church has overemphasised belief and individual piety over lives lived in reflection of Jesus.

That is, we are so busy worshipping the Christ as a "supernatural deity on a rescue mission" that we forget what it means to follow Jesus.

Particularly helpful is Mr Meyers' exploration of the developing theology in the New Testament scriptures.

Using Jesus' parables as an example Mr Meyers notes that Mark, the earliest gospel, has an entire chapter of parables including the line indicating that Jesus did not even speak to his disciples "except in parables".

But by the time of John's gospel, Jesus has become the pre-existent Christ with not a parable to be found.

This well written book would make a great resource for group



study, although there are no discussion questions included.

It does assume some familiarity with contemporary biblical scholarship, however it does a good job of summarising existing scholarship and asking the question: "So what do we do now?"

I commend this book to anyone who really wants to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Do you have the courage?

## The Bible's Buried Secrets

NOVA, SBS TV (12 and 19 September, 2010). [www.sbs.com.au](http://www.sbs.com.au)

Reviewed by Karyl Davison

THIS DOCUMENTARY, aired on SBS in two one-hour parts, uses the latest archaeological scholarship from the Holy Land to explore the beginnings of modern religion and the origins of the Hebrew Scriptures, also known as the Old Testament.

It tackles some of the biggest questions in biblical studies: Where did the ancient

Israelites come from? Who wrote the Old Testament? When? Why? And how did the worship of a monotheistic God come into being?

Filmed on location throughout the Middle East, this film transports viewers into the world of the Old Testament through guided explorations of ancient ruins and advanced digital animation techniques.

It brings sacred places, including the long-lost Temple of Solomon, to life.

Artefacts and ancient manuscripts are discussed and explained by leading archaeologists and biblical scholars making it a fascinating and informative program.

It explores the historical authenticity of the biblical narrative using a powerful intersection of science, scholarship and scripture that helps give insight into the deeper meaning of the Hebrew Scriptures.

I highly recommend *The Bible's Buried Secrets* to anyone who wants to understand the Old Testament more fully.

## Living with Dying

By Grace Sheppard, Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd. 2010, RRP \$36.95

Reviewed by David Ford, a retired Uniting Church minister still active in ministry in Kilcoy

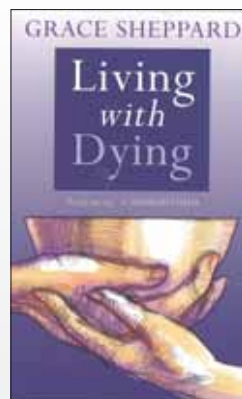
*LIVING WITH Dying* is not a 'how to' book and author Grace Sheppard acknowledges that people's experience of living with dying and the mourning after the death of a loved one may vary considerably.

What Ms Sheppard has achieved is to give a wonderful, honest and moving picture of her marriage to David Sheppard, and the love, both human and divine, which helped them cope after the diagnosis of his cancer and when it became clear that it was to be terminal.

Two of Ms Sheppard's statements stand out: "Love is the best shock absorber of all" and "The notes and letters of support resonated with Christ's own words, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"

Ms Sheppard uses the terms 'love' and 'friendship' interchangeably, based on her understanding of Jesus' words to his disciples in John 15: "I call you servants no longer. I call you friends ... Love one another as I have loved you".

Archbishop Desmond



Tutu's foreword describes David Sheppard as a gentle giant, caring and compassionate in his work as Bishop of Woolwich and later as Bishop of Liverpool.

He played cricket for England and was later honoured with a peerage.

It is almost impossible to read this book without shedding a quiet tear.

It makes clear the importance of having the conversations about "what if you die?" and "how will you cope when I am gone?"

The account of the moments of David's death is rightfully very emotive.

What shines from this account is the amazing courage of this couple during the four years of David's illness, as they face the inevitable reality that affects all of us: that we must each face death in the end.

## It's Really All About God – Reflections of a Muslim Atheist Jewish Christian

By Samir Selmanovic, Jossey-Bass, 2009, RRP \$42.95

Reviewed by Alan Renton

THIS BOOK is as mind-blowing as its title and, surprisingly, Christian and interfaith.

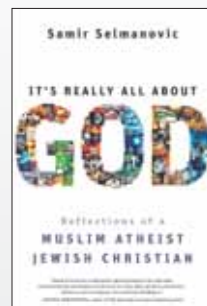
It is relevant, especially to us in the Uniting Church, as we consider the question: "Was God here working with Australia and its Indigenous people before Christianity came?"

On the anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Centre on 11 September, it is also relevant to the question: "How can Muslims, Christians and people of other faiths share our world together?"

Author Samir Selmanovic began life as a Croatian Muslim in atheistic, communist Yugoslavia.

While a conscript infantryman he became a Seventh Day Adventist Christian. He is now a leading churchman in America.

He reflects on his life's



journey and personal desire for good relations with his own Muslim kin and their faith.

He suggests a way in which God works through all peoples.

*It's Really All About God* is easy to read, concise and logical.

Yet it challenges ordinary evangelical Christians like me to think deeply about how God may have worked in all his world and its people.

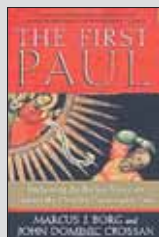
Almost every page is a challenge. A must read for those interested in interfaith dialogue.

If there are any deficiencies they are more than made up for by the positive challenges.

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

### The First Paul: Reclaiming the Radical Visionary Behind the Church's Conservative Icon

By Marcus J. Borg and John Dominic Crossan, Harper One, 2009, RRP \$22.99



### Bible stories for Little Angels

By Sarah J. Dodd, Illustrated by Dubravka Kolanovic, Lion Hudson, 2010, RRP \$19.99



### As My Own Soul: The Blessing of Same- Gender Marriage

By Chris Glaser, Seabury Books, N.Y., 2009, RRP \$34.95



## 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)

# New magazine targets poverty

The Make Poverty History (MPH) campaign launched a free newspaper in August, distributed to 50,000 commuters, coinciding with the commencement of the United Nations Department of Public Information conference on global health issues in Melbourne.

*Every Minute Counts* (EMC) is a tabloid style free newspaper aimed at making the issues surrounding poverty and development accessible to everyone.

MPH co-chair Andrew Hewett said poverty was an issue all people should be concerned about and involved in.

"We think it's time we took the message about poverty alleviation to the man and woman on the street," he said.

4000 copies of EMC were distributed in Brisbane where 25 volunteers teamed up to hand out the papers to commuters in the CBD, Fortitude Valley,

Chermside, West End and St Lucia.

Make Poverty History is a coalition of more than 60 aid agencies, community groups and religious organisations working to hold governments accountable to their commitment to halve global poverty by achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

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



Make Poverty History volunteers Candice Caine (left) and Jade McClain help distribute copies of *Every Minute Counts* in Brisbane. Photo courtesy of OxfamAus

## Great Scott heads for new hills

By Judy Scholes

THE HILLS Uniting Church in northern Brisbane farewelled

its oldest member, Bob Scott (aged 95), in July as he moved to Toowoomba to be near his family. Born in 1915 Mr Scott has

lived in Perth and Brisbane.

While a church-goer most of his life, after the tragic death of his eldest son at the age of 32 and with the passing of time Mr Scott's church attendance lapsed.

When he lost his wife of 60 years in 2005 he felt the need to reconnect with the church but was unsure of where to go.

While on his way to a dental appointment he saw a sign pointing to The Hills Uniting Church.

He decided to give them a go and once he stepped inside he immediately felt at home.

Mr Scott then explored the deeper aspects of his faith and was baptised and confirmed in 2006, his 90th year.

An inspiration to all, he will certainly be missed at The Hills Uniting Church.



Right: Bob Scott with his farewell cake at The Hills Uniting Church. Photo by Judy Scholes

### On Sunday 10 October please pray for Ashmore Uniting Church

ASHMORE UNITING Church is experiencing positive change where young and old are growing together in worship and witness.

Thursday and Friday playgroups have begun to open the door to younger families and grandparents in the community.

Several times a year we run Holiday Fun Days during the school holidays which connect us with the children in our local schools.

The commencement of Kids Hope Aus (a World Vision program), which is a mentoring program in the local school, has been very beneficial to the children being mentored, the local primary school and our wonderful mentors.

We also have a number of Religious Education teachers serving each week.

Please pray for all these people.

Our Good Shepherd Op Shop serves the community in many ways.

Open for business 5.5 days per week, it has a great reputation for friendliness, quality of goods and fantastic prices.

We give huge amounts of surplus stock to other charities and Christian ministries.

Please pray for our many volunteers who give their time freely to serve this ministry.

We have just completed an Alpha Course with 55 participants.

It was a joint effort with the Spanish Pentecostal Church which uses our building on Saturday nights.

This partnership has been a beautiful experience.

Please pray for the next step.

Our motto *Reaching Out, Changing Lives* has had a significant impact on the way we are living out our Christian lives both as a Christian church and as individuals.

Thank you for upholding us in prayer.

### On Sunday 17 October please pray for Bayside Uniting Church

BAYSIDE UNITING Church is a congregation of about 200 members and is located in the Wynnum-Manly district of Brisbane.

Over fifteen years ago a number of properties were sold to enable the purchase of land on Wondall Road, next door to Moreton Bay College, and the construction of a new church and hall began.

Also on this land are Blue Care independent living units.

The Church retained a property adjacent to the Blue Care complex at Lindum and services are held at both venues each Sunday.

Two years ago, the congregation spent considerable time envisioning the future and discerned that

our focus for the next five years would be to live out our worship and faith by:

- Exercising the diverse gifts of the Spirit
- Enhancing our care for one another
- Enabling a vibrant small group ministry
- Engaging young people in the congregational life
- Extending our outreach to the local and wider community
- Embracing more effective use of resources

Since then we have endeavoured, through the strength of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, to live out that vision.

In 2010 we welcomed Rev Lu Senituli to our congregation and we are excited that we already

sense God's call to reach out even further to our local community.

Please pray for:

- Rev Lu Senituli and his family as they establish themselves and their ministry in a new community
- the appointment of a pastoral care worker who will assist us to enhance our care for one another as a witness to Christ's love for us.
- discernment as we explore how we might serve our local community
- our forthcoming spiritual retreat led by Dr Patrick Oliver
- the greater involvement of our people in small groups.

### On Sunday 24 October please pray for Nambour Uniting Church

NAMBOUR UNITING Church is a warm, welcoming community of God's people on the Sunshine Coast.

The church complex is ideally situated on the main road through town, directly opposite Nambour State Primary and Nambour State High Schools.

The church has established excellent rapport with both schools and is involved in

chaplaincy programs, School Scripture programs, and provides breakfast for children at the primary school twice a week.

We also provide breakfast at Burnside State High School.

The church has built bridges into the community through a local pre-school Play Group, which meets in our hall three mornings per week.

Please pray for the children and parents in our care through

this program.

Another ministry that is extremely important is Crossroads.

Our minister Rev Darren King is supported by an active Church Council and worship team.

Under their leadership, the church has developed an inclusive worship style, which incorporates both traditional and contemporary worship styles.

Our Pastoral Care Division,

Amity Care, offer counselling, DVD ministries and financial counselling.

Worship is multi-generational and participatory and all our services are recorded on DVD and made available to people isolated by either ill health or distance.

Our church facilities are well utilised by local community groups such as Nambour Probud, Nambour Garden Club, Nambour Floral Art, Orchid Society, Fusion International, choral and bowling groups.

The Church Council meets bi-annually for a retreat where strategies for effective outreach into the community are discussed.

The Council is excited at the possibilities which are open to us in this community and seeks your prayers for wisdom and direction to make the vision a reality.

Please pray that we may be the people of God for Nambour we desire to be.



## Standing up for asylum seekers

THE SEPTEMBER 2010 edition of *Journey* I consider to be excellent with thoughtful, well-researched articles on asylum seekers backed up with evidence.

Many of the articles are by the editor, Mardi Lumsden, who certainly made a strong case establishing that boat people can hardly be thought of and so easily demonised as queue-jumpers and who also quoted the words of a detention centre director who said that detention centres are

"mental illness factories".

I urge you, the readers, not to leave it just to a spokesperson of the Uniting Church to speak out about the treatment of asylum seekers.

What is needed is a groundswell of public opinion. Here are some suggestions.

Why not write to federal politicians with your concerns even with copies of some of the articles to counteract the fear campaign and misinformation that have been apparent?

Why not write to newspapers

particularly when at the end of an article the question is asked what you, as a reader, think?

I have done this myself, questioning the lack of objectivity in articles dealing with asylum seekers.

Remember the wise words of Edmund Burke, the 18th century political thinker, one of whose pithy sayings was: "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."

John Broere  
Kuluin



## Synod finances

IN RESPONSE to Jim Pearce's letter (September *Journey*), I would like to encourage all members of the Uniting Church in Queensland to participate in understanding the financial issues that the Church is facing.

There are several ways that members can do this: engage with your presbytery, review the presentation resources available on the Finance and Property Services (FAPS) website, [www.faps.ucaqld.com.au](http://www.faps.ucaqld.com.au), read minutes and reports from the Synod in session (available at [www.ucaqld.com.au](http://www.ucaqld.com.au)).

In particular, the 27th and

28th Synods have discussed recent aspects of the Church's financial position, including a time for repentance and grief.

The challenges that the Church faces are not just financial so I would also encourage you to participate in workshops for the *Together on the Way, enriching community* process as it seeks to discern the values, missional priorities and a shared direction for the Uniting Church into the future.

Regarding your specific financial questions, the Synod has had a line of credit in place since 2004. In 2009 a refinancing of a line of credit was achieved; the outstanding debt is currently

approximately \$100 million, however this is forecast to increase to fund capital development by agencies including UnitingCare, Wesley Mission Brisbane and schools.

The Mission and Service Fund has an ongoing deficit of between \$2 and \$4 million.

It is the intent of the Synod to reduce outstanding debt and to resolve impaired loans; although cash poor, the whole church in Queensland is asset rich and should aim to productively use these assets to facilitate and resource missional outcomes.

Jane Moad  
Marketing and  
Communications  
Manager for FAPS



## Truth about debt

I AGREE with Jim Pearce (September *Journey*).

Please advise the Uniting Church people about the debt; how did we get into such a mess? Who is the money owed to? How is it going to

be serviced? How is it going to be repaid? Two million dollars is a lot of money. Is our money in U.C.I.S safe?

Uniting Church members are people, not mushrooms to be kept in the dark.

Could not members be asked to subscribe so much each to repay the loan/debt?

When I came here from Sydney I was amazed how 'top heavy' our connexional office appeared to be.

Maybe we should economise? Come on, let's have the facts about our debt.

H. A Stanton  
Enoggera



## Calling for gifts and graces

"WE ARE NOT the Greens at Prayer" says former Uniting Church President and General Secretary Gregor Henderson, and plies us with the standard clichés about being "church at prayer" and "church at mission".

However, my proposition that Uniting Church policy on social justice is largely generated within the church

bureaucracy by processes that do not call on the gifts and graces of the 'laos' – the whole people of God – is unchallenged.

We are assured that the theological hard yards are being done, but are unreported.

Yet spaces like the ABC's new Religion and Ethics portal are so far devoid of postings from the Uniting Church's theological front row forwards.

In the world of new media, to go unreported is to be less than diligent in taking up the available opportunities.

What intrigues me more is that the titles of two recent Uniting Church initiatives "*Together on the way, enriching community*" and "*An economy of life*" do not carry the words God, Christ, Jesus, or church.

John Harrison  
Indooroopilly



## Literal living needed for church

I READ with much interest the articles in the September *Journey* and I am saddened as to where the Church of today is headed.

In the article by Kaye Ronalds (*Sexuality secrets set church door swinging*), she states that "Unfortunately the Bible doesn't take into account ...". When following the Bible's teaching, we believe it is correct for all our living requirements.

To follow Christ is to believe the Bible in total and live according to it – it is that simple.

The Bible states, "do not add to or take away from", therefore we should not be trying to

make excuses for any person who is living on the outside of God's law to justify the presence of something that is not deemed correct in the eyes of God.

The New Testament also tells us that man is head of the house as Christ is head of his Church.

If we believe this, how then, can we have women leadership in our churches?

Please let us get back to the basics of Scripture as this is the only way we will win people for Christ and that is what we should be all about.

Elaine McKinnon  
Buderim



## No to seekers

I HEARTILY disagree with the comments regarding asylum seekers (September *Journey*).

To name all who disagree with you as people who are fearful is erroneous.

Anger would be more to the point at those who usurp; anger at those who disregard another country's sovereignty.

To me they are illegal immigrants and need to be treated as such as Australian law says they should be and that is not a heinous position to be in.

People who enter Australia illegally need to understand that Australians are not a push over.

It matters little to me what other countries are doing.

Australia is a good country to be a part of because its people have, through the centuries, adhered to the Judeo-Christian philosophical baseline in framing its law.

Those who would trample on Australian law with impunity are sadly mistaken in not understanding this feature of the Australian ethos.

There were far too many articles based on sentimentality and erroneous biblical exegesis and I found none of them compelling enough to change my mind.

Fay Williams Burton  
Gold Coast



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# What does church look like in your neck of the woods?

By Peter Harvey

CHURCH IN the Flinders Patrol doesn't look much like the traditional congregational model that we have become so tied to.

Church happens whenever and wherever people gather as a community.

Be it a Royal Flying Doctor Service's (RFDS) clinic at a remote homestead, a gathering of kids and their families at a School of Distance Education outreach camp on an isolated bush race track, or simply a family gathered around their meal table with the mustering team after bringing in a mob of cattle.

Church is wherever and whenever people are able to reflect on life, who they are and where they're going, and how they're doing.

God is there and as Patrol Minister I'm privileged to be able to share the hope of God's love in Jesus Christ by being part of their community.

For the people out here it's not about a liturgy or being somewhere special; rather it's about relationship and simply being real.

Peter Harvey is the Frontier Services Flinders Patrol Minister and is based in Hughenden, north-west Queensland.



Beth Baker

AS WE ARE a very small congregation we have learnt to work in what we call a "community within a community".

The different groups who use our facilities feel a sense of belonging and of community.

The making of a community within a community has been a slow process and is still very much in its infancy.

Through phone conversations and visits from different people within the wider church we were shown what a great asset we have here.

The patchwork group was already meeting and have just celebrated 25 years with a lovely display (pictured left) for a weekend in the church building.

Other groups that now meet there are Jellybabies playgroup and Triple B Line Dancers meeting a couple of times a week, as do the Patchworkers.

A local Indigenous women's group and justice group meets fortnightly and spend the whole day there.

A jewellery making workshop is held once a month. A Disability Services Carers group and Mental Health have both used our church for groups.

We are better able to reach into the Blackwater community because of the way we have reached into ourselves.

It is great to outreach in this way. It's not just about being Christ to others, but seeing Christ in every person we meet and work with.

In the words of Kev Carmody: "From little things, big things grow."

Beth Baker is a member of Blackwater Uniting Church and was awarded a Moderator's Medal this year for her respect of others, particularly her work with Indigenous people in her community.

By Dennis Cousens

WELL FOR a start it is big and it covers an area of 100,000 square kilometres.

It is not confined to any particular building but enjoys many.

It is not hung up on denominations but shows inclusiveness and respect for all.

It doesn't meet regularly but meets often, that is, unless something else comes up.

In 2008 my wife Sally and I, along with our two dogs, came to this vast brown land.

Our role has been to bring the church, in the form of Christ's hospitality, to individuals and families from Bollon in Queensland to Innamincka in South Australia, through Frontier Services.

When we have a church service, as such, it may be held in the Uniting Church

building at Cunnamulla, but it could just as easily be in the Catholic or Anglican Church in Eulo, Thargomindah or Wyandra.

I may officiate on my own or with a congregation member or with the Catholic Priest to sixty people or two.

The service may precede a party at the pub, or it may be around a BBQ and it finishes when the meat is cooked.

Often the Catholic Priest and I travel together, arriving at the properties of people we both know and serve communion from either tradition.

We celebrate the fact that distance and traditions have no restrictions on the love of Christ.

Dennis Cousens is the Frontier Services Cunnamulla Patrol minister.



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