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GAMBLING TASKFORCE PAGE 4

"For every problem gambler at least one child is affected and 10 other people are directly adversely impacted."
Rev Alistair Macrae

WORKING FOR JUSTICE

"Working for justice is an integral part of my faith." Rev Sue Pickering

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THE POLITICS OF FOOD

By Mardi Lumsden

WITH OBESITY and eating disorders on the rise and the apparent abundance of food in Australia it is hard to think that the lack of food (and its production and distribution) in years to come is already shaping the policies of the world's most powerful governments.

And it's hard to imagine that something as simple as what we eat can change the way the world works and the way governments legislate.

Agri-food expert and Head of the School of Social Science at The University of Queensland, Professor Geoffrey Lawrence, told *The Courier-Mail* that food prices will skyrocket by about 50 per cent over the next decade.

Dr Lawrence was speaking at the Global Food Futures Forum in Brisbane last September and said the increase in food costs will put food security at the top of national and international political agendas.

Take into account the United Nation's predicted global population increase from 6.8 billion in 2010 to nine billion by 2050 and food may be the most valuable commodity in the years to come.

Perhaps even more alarming is that a 2009 report to the UN's Economic and Social Council said population growth is expected to rise in the "least developed countries" that are even now struggling to feed their population.

"Between 2009 and 2050, the population of Africa is projected almost to double, passing from one billion in 2009 to two billion in 2050," the report stated.

This raises many justice issues as well as food security issues.

In the paper *Food security explained: issues for Australia and our role in the global challenge* the CSIRO said in the next 50 years the world will see a 70 per cent increase in the demand for food which will be driven by

population growth, economic development, dietary changes and consumption levels.

"Australia doesn't currently have a problem feeding its own population but has a humanitarian interest in food security and stability for developing countries," the report stated. "Australian agricultural exports support global efforts to achieve food security."

American documentaries such as the 2010 Academy Award nominated *Food Inc.*, the 2004 Academy Award nominated *Super Size Me*, and films like *Fast Food Nation* have attempted to explore how what we eat not only changes our wellbeing but also the planet.

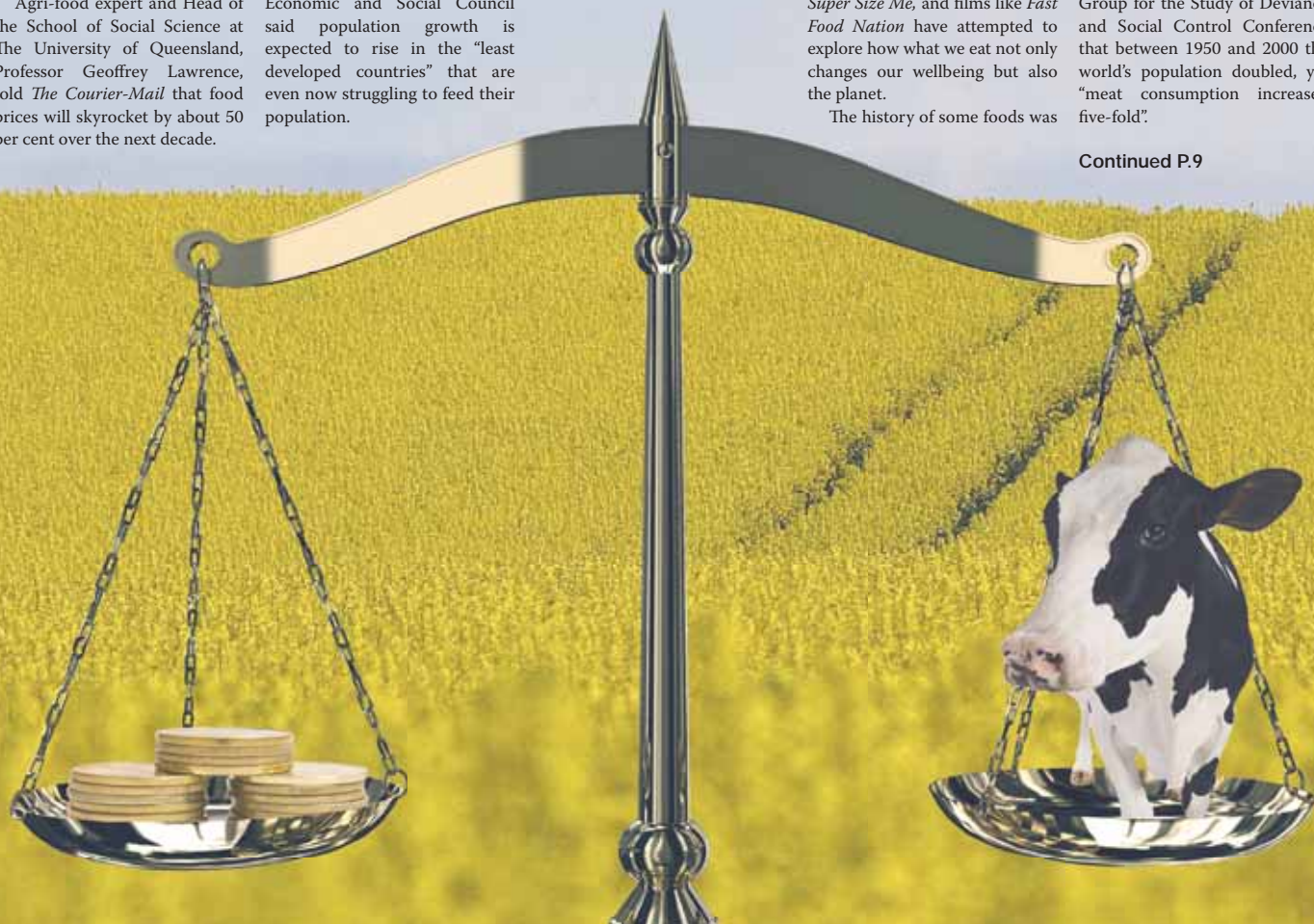
The history of some foods was

touched on in *Food Inc.*, which explores the industrialisation of food production in America and its effect on the environment, health, economy and workers' rights.

The film reminded people that when margarine was invented, consumers demanded it be bright pink so everyone knew it was not butter.

New York Times food writer, Mark Bittman, said during a TED (a nonprofit group devoted to "ideas worth sharing") talk filmed during the 2007 European Group for the Study of Deviance and Social Control Conference that between 1950 and 2000 the world's population doubled, yet "meat consumption increased five-fold".

Continued P.9



Welcoming the darkness

I BEGAN learning Greek when I was 14. The minister of my church had decided that I would become a minister so he took me into his study before the Sunday evening service and tried to teach me New Testament Greek.

He retired not too long after that so I didn't learn much Greek. I tried again when I went to university but am still not too good at it.

I still know the Greek letters however and some of the main words that recur in the New Testament. So when I was in Athens a couple of years ago I took great pride in reading the signs and telling my wife Heather when I recognised a word.

Imagine my surprise when I sat in the MacDonald's near the old part of the city and read the word 'Eucharist' on the rubbish bins. I thought about what they have on these bins in Australia: "Thank You".

Of course the word 'Eucharist' comes from the Greek word for thanks. Thus the word on the bin

in Athens simply meant thank you.

This caused me to ponder the links between the Eucharist and that which we discard. Many within our society have discarded anything to do with the Christian faith.

What connection does belief in Jesus have to do with the pain and struggle we are all experiencing as a result of floods, cyclones and earthquakes? Why do we still

What connection does belief in Jesus have to do with the pain and struggle we are all experiencing as a result of floods, cyclones and earthquakes?

believe in this strange, outmoded religion?

Psalm 118 is quoted in several places in the New Testament in discussing the way Jesus was treated: "The very stone which the builders rejected has become

the head of the corner."

It is apparent that following the events we remember as Easter, many realised that this one who was discarded was the one that could bring redemption and healing to the world. Thus the meal of remembrance became more than a memorial meal, but the thanksgiving meal: the Eucharist. In this sacrament we rejoice and give thanks for all that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection has done.

This Easter the Christian church across the world has the wonderful opportunity to re-tell our central story in a way that might help people realise its significance for their lives. They may choose to take up what they had discarded.

The experience of Jesus has been re-lived by millions. Many have experienced the torment of Jesus' Gethsemane experience in recent months. What should I do? Should we stay where we are or go to a safe place? If we go what should we take? How do I know what the

Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



right thing is?

Many have lost everything and cried in one way or another, "My God, my God why have you forsaken us?"

Can we help them realise that Jesus has entered into their cry of despair?

Right now it feels like they are lying in the tomb. They have lost so much. Many people feel alone and abandoned; many don't know if there will be a future for them or what it will be like.

Like Jesus they lie in the darkness waiting and hoping for new life.

Never before have I realised the importance of Easter Saturday.

We who have experienced God's love and grace in the past need to stand firm and proclaim our conviction that no matter what it feels like at the moment

we continue to believe in the resurrection and that God can bring new life from all this chaos, pain and confusion.

I believe that we in the Uniting Church, through our congregations and agencies, can help those who have been profoundly impacted by the events in this state and beyond. We can help people recognise that in Jesus God has experienced our confusion, pain, loss and death.

We can assure them that because of Jesus' resurrection we too can look towards new life.

We can invite them to join in thanksgiving and welcome them to the Eucharist.

It doesn't matter that people have discarded Jesus in the past; in the risen Christ there is always a new hope.

Sign of the times



ASPLEY UNITING Church, in Brisbane's north, is using all their communication tools to get their message out.

"We're using Facebook as another way to connect with the community and to let them know about what we do at Aspley," said youth leader Reece Weber.

"The sign board is very important to put messages on as people do look at it. We've had many enquiries about different things and hopefully by putting our facebook address up there people will look there and see what we do too.

"On our Facebook we link to our recorded morning worship services, post notices, photos etc about the life of the church."



Sign of the Times is sponsored by Blackstar Coffee. The chosen entry will be contacted by Blackstar to receive their prize of freshly roasted organic fairtrade coffee. www.blackstarcoffee.com.au.

A growing intolerance

I'VE NEVER been more preoccupied with food than when I couldn't have it.

Many times in the past few years there have been weeks when even the sight of food made my stomach churn.

I thought I had a virus, but it looks like it may be a gluten intolerance. Research suggests that up to 15% of people (1 in 7) are gluten sensitive.

So after four solid weeks of eating only a piece of toast per day (the worst thing possible) I headed to the supermarket in the hope that I could digest something.

Now, I think I eat pretty healthily (everything in moderation, including moderation!) but everything I pulled off the shelf had some form of gluten in it.

Fresh fruit, vegetables and meat were all fine but soy sauce, some tinned fruit, noodles, pasta, bread, some chocolate and most pre-made sauces were all out. And what is wheat doing

in ice-cream?!

Foods that have not been altered or processed are generally fine. So why are we eating so many foods that have been altered?

With all our technological advances and 21st century convenience are we making ourselves sick?

In 2008 Diabetes Australia reported that "242,033 Australians had Type 2 diabetes as a result of being obese", a 137% increase from 2005.

Causes of obesity are multidimensional and include socioeconomic, psychological, and justice factors; and it is incredibly hard to change behaviours associated with why and how we eat.

But the sad truth is that it costs more (in the short-term) to eat healthy food.

But what are the long-term costs of what we eat, both to our bodies and to the planet?

Mardi Lumsden
Editor

Journey has some new icons to help you explore issues addressed in the edition further:



LISTEN

Music, pod casts, seminars



WATCH

Films, TV, theatre, photographs



READ

Books, articles, news stories



WEB

Online resources, links, experts

Church members dig deep for flood victims

By Amy Goodhew

THE UNITING Church in Australia has raised more than one million dollars in aid of flood victims in Queensland, Victoria, northern New South Wales and

Western Australia. The President's Appeal was launched by the Assembly in cooperation with the Queensland Synod and Lifeline Community Care Queensland, in immediate response to the flooding that devastated parts of

rural Queensland, Brisbane and northern New South Wales in January.

Subsequent flooding in Victoria and Western Australia expanded the focus of the appeal, facilitated by Lifeline Australia

and the Share Appeal in the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

The Uniting Church in Australia has a history of responding to disasters, most recently providing immediate and ongoing assistance after the

Victorian bushfires.

Both Lifeline Community Care and the Share Appeal have not charged an administration fee for the processing of the donations and have covered the cost of printing and posting.

Donate online at <http://ucfloodappeal.gofundraise.com.au>

Japan quake and tsunami appeal

By Rob Lutton

IN MID-March the Uniting Church in Australia launched an emergency appeal in response to the devastating impact of the Japan earthquake and tsunami.

UnitingWorld, the relief and development agency of the church, will facilitate the appeal.

UnitingWorld is in contact with the leadership of the United Church of Christ in Japan (UCCJ), assuring them of the Uniting Church's prayers and concern.

The UCCJ leaders have asked for the financial support of the Uniting Church in Australia to help provide food and water, medical support, safe shelter and pastoral and counselling services.

President of the Uniting Church in Australia, Rev Alistair Macrae, encouraged church members to support the appeal.

"Our friends in Japan are

suffering through a terrible disaster," he said.

"We can support them with our prayers and with financial contributions to UnitingWorld's disaster appeal.

"Australians have consistently demonstrated compassion for those affected by the destructive forces of nature, in the Victorian bushfires, the Queensland and Victorian floods and the earthquake in Christchurch.

"We have an opportunity to express that compassion again for communities recovering from the impact of a ruptured earth and inundated land and now with fears of radio-activity."

Kerry Enright, UnitingWorld National Director said, "Our partner, the United Church of Christ in Japan, has facilities that survived the devastation

and which sit amid affected communities.

"These facilities will be centres of care, providing clean water, distributing necessities and offering shelter and pastoral support.

"The United Church has a remarkable history and is one of Japan's strongest churches.

"We can support them as they minister to people in great need."

Donations can be made to UnitingWorld online at www.unitingworld.org.au, via phone on 1800 998 122, or by mail to PO Box A2266 Sydney South 1235.

The appeal is also registered at <http://japanearthquakeappeal.gofundraise.com.au> for online fundraising.

Japan is a developed country and at present UnitingWorld is unable to offer tax deductions



Otsuchi, Iwate prefecture, Japan on 17 March 2011.
Photo by Kiyomu Tomita

for emergency assistance to applied for tax deductibility for developed countries but have this appeal.

Church calls for end to Christmas Island detention

By Gabrielle Lloyd

THE UNITING Church in Australia has expressed its horror at the excessive use of force against asylum seekers on Christmas Island in mid-March.

On 17 March the President of the Uniting Church in Australia, Rev Alistair Macrae said, "The confirmation by the Immigration Minister that 'beanbag' bullets, along with tear gas, were used against an unarmed group of people partaking in a peaceful demonstration is of extreme concern to us.

"Uniting Church members around the country have

expressed their own distress about this incident.



UnitingJustice Director
Rev Elenie Poulos

"We fear that this use of force against already traumatised people will compound their trauma and despair," he said.

"This action is reminiscent of the worst of the Howard Government's punitive treatment of people seeking our protection. It appears that it was the deployment and actions of AFP officers that led to an escalation of what had been a peaceful protest."

Director of the Uniting Church's national justice and advocacy agency, UnitingJustice Australia, Rev Elenie Poulos, agreed.

"This incident confirms the total inappropriateness

of immigration detention on Christmas Island," she said.

"When you detain people for months on end in overcrowded and unsuitable conditions, providing little information about their case and prospects of release, it is understandable that their frustrations and desperation will boil over.

"The Government's commitment to the removal of children and families from detention is a welcome step forward, it is clear from this event and the countless other incidents in detention centres across the country, including a hunger strike only recently ended at Villawood,

that the detention environment is unfit for any human being – man, woman or child.

"The continued use of mandatory detention for asylum seekers on Christmas Island and in other locations on the mainland is a breach of Australia's international human rights obligations and our duty of care to vulnerable, traumatised people.

"We await the release of the full terms of reference for an independent inquiry into this incident.

"We also reiterate the Church's call for an end to the inhumane, damaging and costly policy of mandatory detention," she said.



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PCC General Secretary
Fe'iloakitau Tevi.
Photo by Joe Yaya

Pacific Conference marks 50 years

By Hisashi Yukimoto
for Ecumenical News
International (ENInews)

THE LARGEST ecumenical church grouping in the Pacific region is planning to celebrate its 50th anniversary from 30 August to 4 September in Samoa.

"The 50th anniversary is a celebration of the achievements of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) over the last five decades," said an ENInews

statement. "The occasion will also give the opportunity for the PCC to look at what's in store for it in the immediate and long-term future."

General Secretary, Fe'iloakitau Tevi, said the celebration will look back at highlights of the PCC's contribution to the formation of the Pacific region, its independent countries and the issues that Pacific island countries and people have had to address.

A number of key speakers, former staff members and

other experts will contribute.

It will also look at contextualising the issues facing people today and how the church is responding to these issues, said Mr Tevi.

"This is an opportunity for the Pacific Conference of Churches to lay out and present the concept of 'Rethinking Oceania'," he said.

"This concept is now the underlying premise of the work of PCC and in its essence, it calls for the re-introduction of the notion

of self-determination into the discussions of our societies and how well we can be equipped to face the challenges of the future," Mr Tevi explained.

"In addition there will be numerous celebrations of the ecumenical movement in the Pacific in true Pacific style," he said.

The PCC is asking people in the region to send any stories or pictures to them so that they can use them in publications to mark the occasion.

For more information visit www.pcc.org.fj

Chasing sheep for Outback Links

By Rebecca Beisler

WHEN KEITH Nutley retired he decided to put his talents to good use. That's how he found himself chasing sheep in the Outback.

"I really enjoy it. Sometimes it can be really fun. Particularly mustering sheep in gully country," said Mr Nutley.

"You can be chasing them on your motorbike across paddocks that are as rough as anything and suddenly have to stop in front of a 6ft gully.

"You have to learn real quick how to move them or you have them everywhere."

The 66-year-old has developed a knack for mustering sheep, cattle and even wild goats as a volunteer with the Frontier Services' Outback Links program.

Frontier Services has provided services to people who live in

isolated or remote regions of Australia for nearly 100 years.

Mr Nutley has volunteered nine times with the program that supports families living in remote Queensland.

His role is to provide an extra set of hands around the property to help families who need assistance for a short period of time.

Mr Nutley, a member of the Beenleigh Regional Uniting Church, has assisted families with many tasks including fencing, fixing windmills, house repairs, laying tiles, feeding animals and helping out in the shearing sheds.

He is often a caretaker for families who are away from their property and cannot leave it unoccupied.

"People out there are very friendly. They appreciate everything you do, no matter how

much or how little it is," said Mr Nutley.

After Mr Nutley retired he wanted to use the talents God had given him to help other people.

"I feel that's what God wanted me to do," he said. "It gives me great enjoyment and keeps me out of mischief."

On two of his trips Mr Nutley's wife Erica has joined him. They have spent the past two Christmases lending a hand to a family in the middle of Queensland. It is an experience he recommends to others.

"Go and do it. It's interesting, people are always friendly and they really look after you. They appreciate that you come and help."

Outback Links places volunteers with all kinds of skills. Participants have included trades people, nurses, teachers, speech



Keith Nutley dreams of heading back out West. Photo courtesy of Frontier Services

pathologists, retired people, and backpackers. The Outback Links website has a list of more than 50 volunteering opportunities across Australia.

For more information visit www.frontierservices.org/outbacklinks or phone 1300 731 349

Churches launch national gambling taskforce

By Judith Tokley

AUSTRALIA'S MAJOR churches met at a national forum in Canberra on 22 March to launch the Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce amid calls for urgent action on gambling reform.

Senior representatives from the Uniting, Catholic, Baptist and Anglican churches and The Salvation Army attended along with senior representatives from the church-based social services peak bodies. Existing gambling taskforces were also represented.

Uniting Church President and forum chair, Rev Alistair Macrae, said that each year thousands of children suffer because of the impact of someone's poker machine gambling.

"For every problem gambler at least one child is affected and 10 other people are directly adversely impacted," said Mr Macrae.

"Between 2008 and 2009 Australians spent \$12 billion on poker machines."

He said 15 per cent of regular gamblers account for 40 per cent of expenditure on the pokies.

"These gamblers are estimated by the Productivity Commission to lose on average \$21,000 each year.

"The social costs are high – relationship breakdown, mental health issues, unemployment, debt and financial hardship, theft and social isolation.

"These costs are estimated at \$4.7 billion a year.

"Our priority is to ensure gambling policy supports consumer protection and harm minimisation.

"The Australian Churches want to see measures which, if

people choose to gamble, will help people to do so more safely.

"A national pre-commitment scheme that is mandatory in all gaming machine venues is one effective consumer protection measure.

"It will help people to help themselves to set and stick to their limits," said Mr Macrae.

The Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce calls on all states and territories to sign on to legislation that will ensure all gaming venues have mandatory pre-commitment technology in place by 2014.



Rev Alistair Macrae. Photo courtesy of the Assembly

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Chaplain challenge heads to High Court

By Phil Smith

A TOOWOOMBA resident has challenged the federal funding of Scripture Union Queensland's (SU QLD) School Chaplaincy in the High Court of Australia.

Atheist, Ron Williams, is supported by the Australian Secular Lobby and other Queensland groups including the Sunshine Coast Atheists.

While Mr Williams claims to have received overwhelming and heart-warming moral and monetary support from appalled parents and concerned citizens Australia-wide, SU QLD CEO Tim Mander said, "This is a small but vocal and committed minority who are ideologically opposed to this very effective program that's helping our kids."

Six basic points of Mr Williams' challenge centre around the legal ability of the Commonwealth to provide funding to the National School Chaplaincy Program and the "qualification" of chaplains to work within that funding agreement.

He argues that the Commonwealth is imposing a

religious test as a qualification for office under the Commonwealth in contravention of Section 116 of the Constitution.

Section 116 provides: "Commonwealth not to legislate in respect of religion. The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth."

SU QLD claims it is significant that the case says nothing about chaplains' access in schools.

It concerns only whether the Commonwealth may fund school chaplaincy under the terms of the current guidelines.

However, Mr Williams has often complained publicly about chaplains' "access all areas" work in classrooms, playgrounds and with lunchtime bible study groups.

The High Court has agreed to hear the case and has set down 10-12 May for the hearing.

Mr Mander said SU QLD and



SU QLD chaplain Stuart White at Caloundra State High School. Photo courtesy of SU QLD

many other stakeholders and supporters will fight the High Court challenge vigorously over the coming months.

"If this High Court challenge is successful, a large proportion of kids' support in schools could disappear," he said.

Mr Williams is also aware of the wide impact of the case saying,

"It concerns all Australians, of all faiths and none, who support the secular 'wall of separation' concept concerning church and state.

"This 'wall of separation' is required to safeguard our multicultural, multi-faith and non-faith liberal democracy that has become the hallmark of the

civilised 21st century nation Australia rightfully claims to be."

The legal battle will be costly and both sides are raising funds via public donations.

SU QLD has started a website regarding the High Court challenge: www.supportschoolchaplains.com.au

Seeking life-changing schoolies

By Mardi Lumsden

FOR AROUND ten years Rev Louise Edwards has been helping young people celebrate finishing high school by experiencing a faith and culture exchange in a remote island in Fiji.

Consequently, the island of Taveuni has become somewhat of a second home to Ms Edwards, who is a Deacon at Broadwater Road Uniting Church in Brisbane.

From 20 November to 2 December this year Ms Edwards will take another group of school leavers to discover what life is like in a small village on a remote island in the Pacific.

"Three young people came with me in 2010 and they had an amazing and life-changing experience," said Ms Edwards.

"They talked about the effect the people and the children in the village had on them as they saw how the people lived, loved and shared with each other.

"One young person said she had heard about life in villages like this but it was nothing compared

to experiencing it. She was saying life will be different for her now as she does not want to be caught up with the material side of things in life.

"Another said she realises you don't need to have things to be happy and the people and the children in the village taught her true happiness and love."

This has been the common response from participants over the years.

Participants experience village life as the locals do with fresh Fijian food and scarce electricity.

Ms Edwards said last year one of the elders spoke of the effect the groups had on the village.

"He spoke of the children in the village and how they looked forward to our visit and how over the time we have been visiting, the children's English has improved," she said.

"Over the years we have been able to support the local school by taking books and other school supplies with us.

"By doing this, it means every child in the school has the school

supplies they need.

"When Cyclone Thomas hit Fiji early in 2010 their village was very badly damaged – many houses and crops were destroyed.

"They were very thankful to the Uniting Church for the financial support they received in order to rebuild their lives.

"Overall I see the trip as an amazing and life-changing experience, both for the young people who participate as well as the people in the village."

Registrations are now open for the 2011 trip (20 November-2 December). Cost is \$1550.

For more information contact Louise Edwards on 3849 8548 or visit the Fiji Schoolies Trip Facebook group.



Louise Edwards with a young friend on the island of Taveuni during the Fiji Schoolies trip last year. Photo courtesy of Louise Edwards



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The big questions

This year *Journey* explores questions from the pews, namely from a (fictitious) person exploring faith and the Uniting Church. This month our (fictitious) church goer, Nova B. Lever, asks:

What is the *Basis of Union*?

I WAS PUZZLED about our denomination's name. There are plenty of 'united' churches around the world. Considering there's been no sign of anyone else joining in

the last 34 years, I wondered about the adjective 'Uniting'. So I asked one of our elders after a service.

He pointed me toward Jesus' prayer in John chapter 17: "That they may be one," and the idea in the book of Hebrews about being a pilgrim people moving on toward our real home.

He suggested a process, a journey and the idea of being in Australia, but not of it. My mentor suggested I read the *Basis of Union*.

We were overheard by one of the old timers who has filled the same seat every week since 1977. "*Basis of Union*?" He rolled his eyes. "I'm still waiting for church union!"

I'm new and want to make

an informed decision about becoming a member.

Yet when I asked around, it seemed almost no one in the congregation had read the *Basis of Union*. At only 18 paragraphs, it's not a big read.

On the foyer shelves I also found the 1963 version of *The Church, its Nature, Function and Ordering* along with the proposed *Basis of Union* (someone paid six shillings for that back in the day.)

Mouldering next to that was *Reports of the Joint Commission on Church Union: "The Faith of the Church"*, published in 1959.

Behind decades of denominationalism I discovered centuries of tradition "within the faith and unity of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church".

That rang a bell – a phrase projected on the wall during a baptism. The *Basis of Union* pointed me back to the first centuries and Nicene and Apostle's creeds, encouraging me to dig into them for instruction

in the faith. So what about the Bible, the word of God?

While I was taken by a rather stern injunction which laid "upon members the serious duty of reading the scriptures", I kept noticing 'the Word of God'.

Not mere words on a page or from a pulpit, but Christ as "the Word of the God who acquits the guilty, who gives life to the dead and who brings into being what otherwise could not exist."

If there's a wow-factor to the church with the seventies logo, it's not so much the history, but the hope outlined in its essential document.

We're "living and enduring through the changes of history", awaiting "with hope the day of the Lord Jesus Christ on which it will be clear that the kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever."

The *Basis of Union* is available online in the Resources section of www.ucaql.com.au

UnitingCare welcomes carbon price

By Judith Tokley

IN FEBRUARY UnitingCare Australia welcomed the Federal Government's plan to legislate for a price on carbon, with the support of the Australian Greens.

National Director, Lin Hatfield Dodds, said the agreement was an essential step in encouraging industry and households to reduce carbon pollution and shift to less damaging energy sources.

"It's absolutely appropriate to send a price signal to industry and other consumers regarding the impact of carbon pollution and global warming," Ms Hatfield Dodds said. "A move to a low carbon future will require all of us to change the way we use energy."

"But the introduction of a carbon price must include a safety net and other support for low income households who must not be pushed into deeper financial hardship."

"Australia doesn't need to make a choice between protecting the environment and protecting low income and vulnerable Australians. We can protect both."

Financial update March 2011

Uniting Church Queensland Synod Office

Synod in Session meetings and subsequent reports have highlighted the serious nature of the Synod Office financial position.

This update focuses on the Synod Office; the whole of the Church across Queensland is not in financial difficulty.

The financial position of Synod managed funds is stable but still serious. The operating fund is making a surplus, but has more liabilities than assets.

The Operating Fund

To simplify the complex structure of Synod funds, a two funds model has been adopted, consisting of an operating fund and a capital fund. (The former Mission and Service Fund is just one component of the larger operating fund.)

The balance sheet position of the Operating Fund is \$25 million more in liabilities than assets.

The financial year to date operating surplus is \$1.9 million.

Outstanding debt

Debt outstanding to ANZ has reduced from its peak of \$198 million to \$139 million at the start of this financial year (July 2010). Since that time it has reduced further to its current level of \$62 million.

However, as UnitingCare's development program progresses, particularly in aged care, the amount of debt is forecast to increase.

Investments

The effects of underperforming investments and the global financial crisis are still being felt:

- ▶ impaired loans—an estimated \$50 million is still to be recovered from loans where no interest is being earned by the Synod
- ▶ commercial property—still producing low returns; market conditions have not provided a favourable time to sell these assets
- ▶ equities—have improved but not yet recovered to their original value.

Actions being taken

- ▶ Congregations, presbyteries and agencies have given or promised \$10 million in underutilised property to support the Synod Office financial position. Beneficial use of other underutilised property is still being sought to reach the initial request of \$20 million.
- ▶ Property Resources team is working with Receiver Managers on two major impaired loans—to sell a residential and retail complex; and to review rental or sales options on a residential unit tower.
- ▶ Finance team and the FIP Board are developing a Synod Treasury Policy and a Synod Investment Policy for clear future guidelines on the management and investment of the funds and resources of the Synod.
- ▶ A working group of the Synod Standing Committee is reviewing funding for activities supporting the Synod.
- ▶ A focus group as part of the *Together on the Way, enriching community* process will focus on "Developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the Church in Queensland".

For more detailed information on this financial update, please contact Finance & Property Services on 1300 UCAQLD or finprop@ucaql.com.au.

Or visit www.faps.ucaql.com.au.



The Uniting Church in Australia
Queensland Synod

Breaking the bread of eternal life

By Rev Peter Lockhart

WHEN JESUS was being tempted by the devil to turn stones to bread the Scriptures record Jesus' response:

"One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

In John's gospel Jesus calls himself the bread of life, whilst at the last supper Jesus offers bread to the disciples as a sign of his ongoing presence with them.

After Jesus' resurrection the disciples on the Emmaus Road had their eyes opened to Jesus' presence in the breaking of the bread.

Whilst for many of us when we pray "give us this daily bread" we may not be thinking of anything beyond the meeting of physical needs, it is clear from very early

in the history of the church these words have been understood as having another spiritual meaning.

In the Egyptian Coptic version of the Lord's Prayer, this line is loosely translated "give us this day the bread of eternal life" which is understood as a reference to the communion bread and the concept that Jesus is the bread of life.

Jesus, who claims to be the bread of life, said, "I am the way the truth and the life ... no one comes to the Father but through me".

Our faith revolves around the crucified and risen Jesus who in freely offered grace and mercy brings us home into our relationship with God and so into sharing in God's very life.

In this instance the prayer moves us into thinking about our

relationship with God through Jesus and our desire to enter more deeply into that relationship – give us this day our daily bread thus comes to mean give us this day Jesus' presence in our lives, give us this day the bread of communion to help us know and experience that presence.

It is notable that John Wesley (who might be considered the father of the Methodist Church) encouraged people to have communion as often as they could – even daily.

To ask for Jesus' presence daily, whether spiritually or in the bread of communion, once again knits us into God's life and the previous line of the prayer "your kingdom come, your will be done"; a prayer which again suggests the powers and structures of this world are out of kilter with God's will.



Breaking the bread. Photo by Ian Britton

"Give us this day our daily bread" are words of grace, defiance, justice, and peace.

Words which have the power to transform our self-centred

political and economic systems as well as remind us that it is God who gives life in all its fullness through offering the true bread of heaven to us – Jesus.

Serving up community

By Phil Smith

THERE WAS a Sunday afternoon joke among hungry college students attending the North Rockhampton congregation in the late 1970s and early 80s: "I hope there's as much tea as fellowship at the fellowship tea." Food and the gathering of believers have gone together since time immemorial. Killing a goat isn't so common in Queensland these days, although it remains the done thing in Timor Leste.

Freshly dug yams and baked fish is a memorable after-church lunch for newcomers in Bougainville.

In the suburbs there's many a welcome over an egg sandwich, tuna mornay, and the 'ole spag bol'. This is no trifling matter.

There's a good reason why even people who may not share our

experience of faith, feel welcome at café church, pot-luck dinners and fellowship teas.

The act of sharing something basic and essential speaks volumes about what is essential for our spirits.

That which sustains us should also delight us and not only as individuals, but by joining us in community. To "put your feet under the table" is to become family.

There is promise, commitment, generosity and blessing.

Around the table there may also be robust conversation and challenging ideas as people share their stories. It's no wonder we speak in terms of Jesus inviting us to his table.

It is with wonder that we break the bread together.

Writing in *The Distributist Review*, G.K. Chesterton scholar

and author, Dale Ahlquist, put it this way: "Food is a necessity as well as a pleasure. Because it is so basic, it finds itself at the centre of economic policies, but also philosophical ideas and even religious practices.

"Economics is not about money but rather about the struggle for daily bread.

"But the swallowing of food transcends the crunching of numbers.

"Eating becomes a moral act when we make choices about how we produce, sell, and buy our food, taking into account how others are affected by our decisions.

"It becomes a religious act for even deeper reasons. Fasting and feasting mark the liturgical calendar. We have the opportunity to demonstrate that we are more than our animal appetites but also



Moggill Uniting Church became the centre of the community during the January flood. Church member Cheryl and community member Annabelle sort food for emergency relief.

Photo by Catherine Solomon

that we should enjoy God's gifts and 'taste and see that the Lord is good.'

By the way, if you're tired of egg sandwiches, check the Cleveland Cowboy Church next time you're

in the United States.

A recent notice said: "We had a BIG pot of chilli left over from the Jubilee and plenty of fixins. So come ready to stay after church for some food and fellowship."

Communion bread

Cathy Irish is a cook and blogger from Washington DC. Journey came across her recipe for communion bread and she has graciously let us reprint it.

EVERY TWO months or so it is my turn to bake communion bread for my church.



It's a simple recipe for unleavened bread consisting of just whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, and water.

The ingredients are stirred together, kneaded, and then allowed to rest for a few minutes. They are then shaped, cut and baked.

My tools are simple: a couple of biscuit cutters and a bench scraper.

The recipe makes eight loaves and each loaf is cut into forty pieces.

Most of the time while I'm making the bread, I don't really think about its significance, but when I come to cutting it,

particularly when I make the two long cuts (like a cross) I will silently give it a little blessing. The baked bread has a nutty sweetness that is very good. Of course, I've never eaten more than one small piece at a time.

Communion Bread

Ingredients:

4 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
1 1/3 cups all purpose flour
2 1/4 cups warm water

Process:

Preheat the oven to around 230° C.

Mix flours together, then add water all at once. Stir until flour is moistened and begins to 'clean' the sides of the bowl.

When I make the bread I find

there's still quite a bit of flour that is not incorporated into the dough at this stage – that's fine.

Dump the whole mess out onto the counter or a board and begin kneading. Knead for 5 minutes or until smooth – you may need to add a little flour as you go if it becomes sticky (use whole wheat flour).

When done kneading, cover the dough and let it rest for 5 minutes.

Divide the dough into 8 parts. Roll each piece into a ball then press into a circle about half an inch thick (it should be about 8.25cm in diameter).

Score each loaf into 40 pieces (see photo). Cut the smallest circle first, then the larger circle, then cut two straight lines at right angles all the way across the

circle, then cut each quarter of the two outer circles into thirds (two cuts in each quarter), then cut each section in the outermost circle in two.

When making cuts, cut all the way through or nearly so.

Place loaves on cookie sheets lined with parchment or lightly oiled. Bake bread for 15 to 18 minutes until the centre is firm and loaf sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom.

Cool on a rack.



WEB

Visit Cathy's blog at <http://mylittlekitchen.blogspot.com>

Filling the hole

By Katie Wallis

I LIKE food. I like it a lot.
I am from a family of good eaters. I am from a family full of people with that wonderful gift called hospitality ... people who

want to feed the world and love the world.
The older I get, the more I find these two ideas inextricably linked. The older I get, the more I wonder if it's possible to love the world without feeding it.

The older I get, the sadder I become that we call ourselves a people of love and yet somehow consistently forget to feed our brothers and sisters in need.
Sometimes I go without food for a period of time to remind

myself of its value. I hate it every time. I hate feeling hungry.
But if I didn't make a conscious decision to invite hunger into my days, I know that I could roll from one meal to the next for my entire life without ever really experiencing it.
Truly hungry people know the value of food so much more than I ever will.
It seems to be reflected in the very core of their beings.
It seems to be that the more they hunger for bread, the more they learn to hunger for the true bread of life.
Most of the time hungry people show me Jesus a lot better than full people do, so I like to spend as much time with them as I can.
I've spent many months of my life sitting with orphans and vulnerable children in developing countries; children who are hungry more often than they're full.
Jesus once said this strange thing. He said, "He who comes to me will never go hungry."
I get confused by this because I've spent a lot of time with people who daily come to Jesus and daily go to bed hungry.
But then there's another part of me that is inspired as I see orphans daily coming to Jesus.
For I see that they aren't hungry for the things that I am hungry for.

They aren't hungry for popularity or mansions. They aren't hungry to be defined by what they wear. They aren't hungry for a better body. They aren't hungry for status and power.
They are hungry for things that matter ... food, education, clothes, shelter, love, and Jesus.
I wish I could say that I only hunger after things that really matter. But I do not.
So I will continue to sit with hungry orphans and widows.
I will continue to sit and marvel at that amazing thing God does with the least of these.
That he would reveal himself so clearly to me in the faces of the hungry is a daily miracle.
That he would call me to be like them is a daily challenge.
I often wonder about really stepping into their world.
If we could all allow ourselves to be inspired by these people then maybe, somehow, we'd become the solution to the things they hunger for. The things that matter.



Katie Wallis with Caleb, an abandoned baby living in Isaiah's home of love, one of the projects Ms Wallis' band Remember Seven supports. Photo by Joy Stovall

LISTEN

The Same Old Story
a new CD from
Remember Seven
www.rememberseven.com.au

Nourishing those in need

By Mardi Lumsden

EACH WEEK the volunteers who run the Wesley Wednesday Night Community Meal in Brisbane's Fortitude Valley see first hand the value of food.
Providing a three-course meal for 40 to 90 homeless people or those at risk of homelessness each

week will do that to you.
Cook, Jeni Parker, said theirs is the only sit-down meal of this type on a Wednesday night in Brisbane.
And she insisted the dinner was a community meal, not a homeless meal.
"We have people who are not homeless," she said.

"We have people who are living within the city, but by the time they pay their rent they have nothing left. Occasionally we also have families with young children living in cars," she said.
An activity of the Wesley Mission Brisbane / Albert Street Uniting Church Servant Network, Ms Parker said the meal is about serving the community.
"The absolute basics of life are simply food and nutrition, community and a roof over your head to sit down and eat when it's raining," she said.
"We're not just providing the basics of food for a week. It is a good healthy meal.
"I feel that providing the meals for people is a very basic part of what Jesus would do.
"He gathered the people to teach, he knew that they were hungry and he created a massive meal by the grace of his Father, with virtually nothing. In a sense we follow that very closely."
Each Tuesday a group visit Foodbank Queensland gathering enough food to feed 100 people.
"We have never not had enough," said Ms Parker.
Over Christmas and during the Brisbane floods volunteer numbers waned but the community need remained.

"The morning that Brisbane flooded there was discussion between the community meal coordinator, David Nix, and myself and John (the other cook who has been homeless himself and lives much in poverty) as to the safety and the need for the volunteers to do the community meal during the floods," said Ms Parker.
On advice from John, who said there would be people who would not get fed (perhaps for days) during the floods, the meal went ahead with limited staff.
"Coming in on the train you could see the flooding in Rocklea which was already quite apparent at 10am," said Ms Parker.
"It was really a very eerie experience to come in and do the meal that day.
"To me God's provision was just amazing.
"Here was the entire city of Brisbane flooding, going under.
"The silence in the city – no movement, no traffic, no nothing – and here we were sitting down to one of the most luxurious meals you could possibly imagine.
"We fed about 45 people that night."
Having experienced homelessness himself, John suggested there would be a

WEB

TED Partner Series
online seminar: Mark Bittman on what's wrong with what we eat
www.ted.com

WATCH

Food Inc (2008)
A documentary about the American food industry.

Babette's Feast (1987)
A film about food and community spirit.



Wayne Lemon, John Ryan, and Terraze Anderson in the kitchen on the Wednesday Brisbane flooded. Photo by David Nix

number of people who would be "too proud" to go to the evacuation centre at the RNA showgrounds for a meal and somewhere to sleep.
"This experience is something that I am very proud to be a part of," said Ms Parker. "It is very humbling."
For more information contact David Nix on 0423 116 174 or dnixwcm@gmail.com

Eating for life

By Mardi Lumsden

A PAPER by the School of Nursing at Queensland University of Technology in 2000, titled *The encultured body: Policy implications for healthy body image and distorted eating behaviours*, said Anorexia nervosa is the third most common chronic illness for adolescent girls in Australia (after obesity and asthma).

A 1998 Newspoll Study said 1 in 20 Australian women admitted to having suffered from an eating disorder and 1 in 4 individuals knew someone who had.

Eating issues, as Amanda Dearden, coordinator of the Brisbane eating issues centre, Isis, prefers to call them, are indiscriminate.

Eating issues affect women and, increasingly, men, regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic factors, or family support.

The Australian Psychological Society (APS) said eating disorders arise from a complex mix of factors, such as cultural, personal, genetics and "western society's idealisation of thinness and the 'perfect' body as synonymous with beauty and success."

This belief encourages dieting, which predisposes an individual towards eating problems.

"Feelings of inadequacy, depression, anxiety and loneliness, as well as problematic family and personal relationships" and "a history of the disorder in the family" are all factors according to the APS.

Ms Dearden also added a history of abuse as a possible factor.

An Isis fact sheet said eating issues involve "disturbed eating habits or weight control behaviour that disrupts a person's physical and psychosocial functioning".

Ms Dearden said these behaviours can be a form of punishment or control that serve to numb, disconnect, or distract from thoughts and feelings relating to problems, issues and conflicts.

"We live in a crazy world that tends to pressure us to look a certain way and gives us lots of mixed messages about what is healthy, so sometimes we can actually be doing our body harm, or heading towards dangerous eating patterns without realising it.

"The diet and weight loss industries, for example, are making millions from selling diet tips and basically setting us up to fail in order to profit from 'self improvement' marketing and unrealistic comparisons

with celebrities and magazine images that contribute to low self-esteem," she said.

"Instead of focusing on our human rights, such as affordable access to quality forms of nutrition, time to eat, sleep, exercise and finding balance in life, we have become disconnected from our bodies and our health needs.

"We tend to blame individuals for weight problems and fail to recognise diversity - that health and beauty can come in a range of shapes and sizes.

"Both the increase in obesity and eating disorders reflect the unhealthy obsession with thinness in modern society and makes invisible that dieting is actually a risk factor for both of these issues."

In 1997 a new term was coined by American doctor, Steven Bratman: Orthorexia nervosa - an obsession with healthy eating to the point of damage to the body, physically or emotionally.

In his book *Health Food Junkies*, Dr Bratman warned of a new form of eating disorder (or at least health phenomena) particularly affecting young professional women in their 30s. The key to Orthorexia is obsession to the detriment of health, not just healthy eating.

Recovery from an eating disorder is a very slow process and can take many years, but it is possible.

For families and carers of those suffering, it can be a frustrating, stressful and painful experience but there are many organisations like Isis, Eating Disorders Queensland and The Butterfly Foundation that can assist.

Easter chocolate fast facts

1. The custom of exchanging decorative eggs was prevalent in many of the world's ancient civilisations. Eggs were regarded as a symbol of the universe. They also represented fertility, resurrection and new life.
2. 38% of British children are unaware of the traditional reason for eating eggs at Easter. (www.eggsateaster.co.uk)
3. An estimated 12,000 children have been trafficked into cocoa farms on the Ivory Coast, which produces half of the world's cocoa. (www.independent.co.uk)



READ

The Theology of Food: Eating and the Eucharist

By Angel F. Mendez Montoya

THE POLITICS OF FOOD

From P.1

"After energy production, livestock is the second-highest contributor to atmosphere-altering gases. Nearly one-fifth of all greenhouse gas is generated by livestock production - more than transportation.

"Half the antibiotics in this country [America] are not administered to people, but to animals.

"Now, I'm no more anti-cow than I am anti-atom; but it's all in the way we use these things."

Then there are issues such as the ethics of genetically modified (GM) food and seed patenting by multinational companies.

While technological advances have led to amazing things like longer shelf-life for GM fruit and vegetables, a greater resistance to pests and viruses, and even higher nutritional values, the potential risks to health and land development are unknown and ethical concerns are being debated across the globe.

Closer to home, UnitingWorld PNG programs coordinator, Michael Constable, said food security is more than just lifting agriculture production.

"It's a whole range of things like improvement of livelihoods and building community resilience," he said. And each country will have to deal with food security in its own way.

"For PNG, where you have a whole lot of subsistence and semi-subsistence agriculture, food security is primarily addressed by lifting productivity.

"The further you get away from subsistence you also have to address issues of more effectively functioning markets and building community resilience to impacts such as a sudden drought or unexpected catastrophe."

He also noted more long-term factors like the HIV/AIDS epidemic in PNG and Africa, which is removing the most productive age group of potential food producers.

"It also denies the following generation the

food production skills," he said. "Our capacity to feed a population that has more than doubled in half a century has been due to technological advance and more effective use of resources.

"That has been highly dependant on petrochemical resources ... and there are varying views on whether we have reached peak oil.

"Globally as we face a situation where we have to feed a significantly larger number of people our capacity to do that will eventually decrease.

"We're facing a real issue here," he said.

"There are things you can do.

"Awareness and knowledge are important.

"We also need to start to develop a coherent policy response to these issues.

"This is probably going to be impacting in our lifetime and definitely in our children's lifetime so we really need to raise this issue with our elected representatives as a policy priority."

Mr Constable suggested a few simple ways individuals can make a difference: minimise food wastage, eat local produce, and eat seasonally.

Michael Pollan, author of *In Defense of Food*, also has some good advice: "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants."



The 2010 Easterfest Mainstage 2010. Photo by Trent Rouillon

Easterfest puts Toowoomba back in news

By Joy Argow

THE COUNTDOWN is on for thousands as Easterfest 2011 draws near. The Queensland city of Toowoomba started the year by making international news when an 'inland tsunami' crashed through the centre of the city.

However, as Easter approaches, the city is getting ready to once again make international news, but for very different reasons.

Each Easter Toowoomba hosts Easterfest, the largest Christian event and largest drug and alcohol-free festival in Australia.

Easterfest is a festival with a mission to remember and celebrate the true Easter story and tens of thousands of people from across the nation travel to be part of it.

This year over 200 artists will perform, including Switchfoot, Naturally 7, Darlene Zschech, the Paul Colman Trio and even a reunion of 80s rock band Petra.

The atmosphere is electric as churches of every denomination unite to reflect and celebrate the Easter message. However, the exciting wild card (and shock) for many Christians is that Easterfest

is as mainstream as it is Christian.

It is a rare example of the churches of a city operating in unity outside their own four walls.

Queens Park, the original epicentre of Easterfest, has been brimming full for years, so in recent years the festival has spilled out into the adjacent city centre to engage the entire town with events in cafes, restaurants, shopping centres, theatres, churches and even pubs.

The Gospel message of Easter takes over the whole city.

Local police sing the festival's praise because Toowoomba

now claims the rare honour of dramatically increasing its population for one weekend yet simultaneously reducing the crime rate.

The Chamber of Commerce is delighted with an economic injection of over 10 million dollars each year.

The Council now recognises the role Easterfest plays in putting the city on the national and international map.

If it is true that you can measure a city's health by what it celebrates, then the long-term diagnosis for Toowoomba is

looking positive.

And in the months and years after the devastating events in January this year, Toowoomba and its surrounds will continue to need support from the wider community.

Easterfest 2011 will be held from 22-24 April in Toowoomba.

Accommodation is available in local motels or by camping on-site in Queens Park.

Significant group and family discounts are available.

For more information visit www.easterfest.com

Passions run high

THE SHOWBIZ term 'break a leg' became reality for Tony Barnes, this year's Moogerah Passion Play director.

In a fall from a roof he suffered multiple fractures, a cracked vertebra and a smashed heel.

Yet if you visit the Lake Theatre at Lake Moogerah on a Saturday afternoon you will find him directing the cast of players and, while he might not be running across the 80 metre stage, he barely has a limp.

Mr Barnes is well-versed in amateur and professional theatre

and with the help of a Queensland Government Regional Arts Grant, the Moogerah Passion Play has been able to employ him to direct this year's production of *He's Alive!*

Under the direction of Mr Barnes, who worships with the Salvation Army, the script was altered to direct it at non-believers as well as the converted.

He starts the play with a young sceptic who, by the end of the play, is firmly convinced that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah.

After his fall, the miracles of

healing in the Gospels have taken on new meaning for Mr Barnes and his direction gives special emphasis to these.

This is the 18th year of the Moogerah Passion Play Association. Performances will be on 16, 17, 22, and 23 April. All performances start at 5pm and are free. Visitors are advised to bring a rug or a chair, and warm clothing.

For information visit www.moogerahpassionplay.org.au, or phone 5463 5691



Moogerah Passion Play director, Tony Barnes, rehearses with young actors. Photo courtesy of Carroll Simons

Surveying the lives of churches

ONCE AGAIN Uniting Churches all over the country are getting ready for the 2011 National Church Life Survey – for which each denomination will be allocated a survey month from September to November.

The National Church Life Survey (NCLS) is a tool that provides churches with evidence-based insight to equip them for ministry and mission.

It has helped participating churches access information about themselves and their communities for over 20 years.

NCLS research and resources help churches assess qualities

of vital church life, including faith, worship, belonging, vision, leadership, innovation, service, faith-sharing and inclusion.

The Church Life Pack helps build church vitality and nurture growth in faith, vision and outreach.

Uniting Church Rural Chaplain Julie Greig said, "To have all the information in one place, categorised and graphed, and not spend hours digging it out from ABS data is a huge benefit."

In 2011 NCLS will have optional extras, including one that allows local churches to find out more about the spiritual

beliefs, needs and hopes of people who don't regularly attend.

National Census data and the NCLS surveys are used to profile a local community, its people and social changes.

The Community Connections Pack helps churches connect with their local area.

Gary Koo, a minister at St Paul's Anglican Church, Carlingford, Sydney, said NCLS data helped staff determine what type of ministries and church plants to develop.

They could see the percentage of people in a certain ethnic group, age groups, languages

spoken, socio-economic status and how a local area had changed over time.

The 2011 survey will have the most practical and grounded focus on community yet, with online surveys for young people and local church contacts such as people at playgroups.

This project seeks to gain insight and understanding into the changing face of church and spirituality; to equip churches to connect better with their communities; and to invite the wider community to reflect upon its spirituality and the church's place within it.

For more information visit www.2011ncls.org.au



Rural Chaplain Julie Greig. Photo courtesy of Insights

Working for Justice

By Sue Pickering

WHAT IS justice? Where do we start? How can we change the world? How do we stand against injustice?

These are all questions I ask myself regularly and each time I feel that what I come up with is quite inadequate.

Working for justice can seem like a huge mandate, but in reality, I believe, it is part of our call to discipleship.

Therefore we are challenged to consider what it means for each of us and to consider how we are to live out this call as Easter people.

For me working for justice is an integral part of my faith.

We worship a God who had a preference for the poor, a God who called for justice through the prophets, a God who in human form, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, modelled a life of justice and peace.

Jesus didn't go to the cross for being a meek, mild-mannered man but because he challenged the status quo, because God's vision was one of justice, reconciliation, peace, mercy and forgiveness and we, as disciples of Christ, are called to that radical alternative lifestyle.

So many people in the world live in the shadow of injustice; usually the people who do are among the most vulnerable.

I believe that as Easter people we are called to consider carefully how we live.

One of the very basic responses we can make is in relation to our consumerism.

How just are the products we purchase and the companies we purchase from?

Do we consider the working conditions of the people who produce our goods, the ethics of the companies that display their logos on the goods we purchase?

Do we know whether the source of our product is fair and just?

Have we considered issues such as debt-bonded slavery, sweatshops and fair pay?

Do we think about the language that we use and how we oppress our neighbours?

Do we consider the impact on 'the other' in the way we speak when we discuss disability, sexuality, social status?

Is our speech just? Does it build up or tear down?

I believe that working for justice means that sometimes we may be the lone voice, sometimes we make choices that people will mock and ridicule and perhaps even worse.

We are called to "bring good news to the poor, proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free".

I have yet to find a passage that

The 28th Synod affirmed a five line Call for the Uniting Church in Queensland in discerning the future of the Church. This edition we look at the final phrase: Working for justice.



Sue Pickering enjoys a game in India with a 5-year-old boy who had been abandoned because he had a disability.

says it would be easy.

While many may believe that the real threats to humanity are things like climate change, weapons of mass destruction and poverty I would like to suggest that ultimately the biggest threat

to humanity is humanity.

It is humanity that oppresses, humanity that discriminates, humanity that controls wealth distribution and humanity that scrambles for power using military force.

Bright future for young scholars

By Smaraki Samantaroy

MEET AMI (not her real name). She goes to school.

For many reading this, going to school would not be part of a usual introduction. But for this Indian child it is a chance not every girl in her village gets.

For a five-year-old, she has seen more than her share of life.

She is one of three children and lives with her grandparents in a small village in Punjab.

Her older sister is seven and goes to school too. Her twelve-year-old brother works in the fields for a landlord.

Ami is from Kangra Girls' Hostel, Kangra, India – a home and school for girls who would otherwise have no access to schooling. Uniting Church partners, through UnitingWorld,

support the Diocese of Amritsar, Church of North India in this project. A few months ago she

was too shy to meet people.

Today she introduces herself with pride and would happily

recite a poem or two if asked.

Teacher Yuthika Austin said education for an Indian girl is of utmost importance.

"Empowerment comes through the liberation of the mind," she said. "A broader thought perspective on various issues not only helps her impart all good things to her family but helps her ensure that the 'dharohar' she passes on to her children will build a better nation."

We spoke to a few girls from the hostel. They know how necessary education is and understand that they are blessed with such an opportunity.

They have friends who have to work instead of studying. For some families it is an essential source of income.

For some the expectations of a girl are to marry and look after

the household and children.

The young women in the hostel said they aspired to develop into women who would change the society: to become teachers, nurses or doctors.

We asked Ami what she likes and what her dream is. She flashed the brightest smile. "I love to dance! And I want to be a teacher!"

I wait for the day when every Indian girl has the freedom to decide her career.

There is a long way to go, but the journey has begun.

Smaraki (Jita) Samantaroy is the communication assistant for the Diocese of Amritsar, Church of North India. She recently spent six weeks in Australia learning communications with *Journey*



Kangra Girls' Hostel, in Northern India. Photo courtesy of the Diocese of Amritsar, Church of North India



"Find a job you love and you will never work another day in your life."

Mark Twain

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Uniting Church in Australia
Queensland Synod

DIRECTOR OF THE PILGRIM LEARNING COMMUNITY (PLC)

(Full time; 3 year initial contract)

Applicants are now being sought to fill the position of Director of the Pilgrim Learning Community, which, along with Trinity Theological College, forms part of the Queensland Synod's Network for Christian Formation (NCF). The Network provides a highly respected centre of excellence in theological education that equips both lay and ordained leaders for ministry in the Church.

Working with the other key leaders of the Church, the Director will create a learning community which will facilitate the equipping of God's people with knowledge and skills to fulfill the Gospel imperative in the 21st century.

The individual (lay or ordained) sought to fill the role will have a passion for Christian adult education and formation. He or she will have exceptional leadership, service delivery, management and educational skills.

Applicants must have:

- Membership of the Uniting Church in Australia, and commitment to and understanding of the mission and ethos of the Uniting Church.
- Thorough knowledge of the Uniting Church and its polity.
- Demonstrated capacity to implement strategic plans in complex organisations within fluid and changing environments.
- Experience in providing educational resources, delivered through a variety of methods.
- Demonstrated effective communication skills.
- Qualifications/ experience in Christian adult education.

The full application pack is available via the website (<http://www.ucaqlld.com.au/job.aspx>) or by contacting Ana Mila (07) 3377 9705 or ana.mila@ucaqlld.com.au. Applications will close Friday 29 April 2011.

April 12, 7-9.30pm

Living Jesus Seminar

Newlife Uniting Church, Robina.



A Christian (ecumenical) gathering exploring the relevance of Jesus in our lives. Hear three heads of churches (including Rev Bruce Johnson) talk about their faith.

For more information visit www.livingjesus.org.au.

Photo by Conan Whitehouse.

April 1-4. Cycle of Life: Earth Gift art exhibition at the Francis Rush Centre, Elizabeth St, Brisbane city. 60 artists will exhibit and sell their work on an environmental theme. Free entry. Contact Margaret Moore on 3870 9427 or mollyjon@tpg.com.au.

April 2, 7-10.30pm. Remember Seven CD Launch. More than half the proceeds from sales of their music goes to mission projects abroad. \$20. Purchased at www.rememberseven.com.au. Schonell Theatre, Union Road, UQ, St Lucia. Contact Katie Wallis on 0408 768 909 or rockstarkato@hotmail.com.

April 3, 6.30pm. Service of Farewell and Retirement for Rev Peter and Mrs Betty Clark at Sandgate Uniting Church. 116 Board St. Deagon. RSVP Robyn Deutschmann Church Office 3869 0277 or Jan Buchanan 3269 3788.

April 3, 3-5pm. Cool and Classic Concert at Kenmore Uniting Church with Pepperazzi Jazz Band. Tickets \$25/adults, \$20/concessions, \$5/primary children. Visit www.kenmore.ucaweb.com.au or contact Carolyn on 3374 1647.

April 9, 10am-3pm. The Gap Uniting Church April Fair. 1050 Waterworks Road, The Gap. Phone 3300 2712 or email office@thegapuca.org.au.

April 9, 6am-12pm. Giant Garage Sale at Paradise Point Uniting Church, 126 Paradise Parade. Contact Peter Alfredson on 5529 3669 or office@ppuca.org.au.

April 10, 8.30-9.30am. Easter Pageant at Brookfield Uniting Church. Contact Kay Barnes on 3300 5397 or geobarn39@hotmail.com.

April 12, 10am-12pm. Easter Bonnet Parade at Brookfield Uniting Church. Contact Kay Barnes on 33005397.

April 16, 7-11.30am. Quick health checks and healthy living advice at the Jan Powers Farmers Markets, Manly Foreshore. Contact Sonia Kennett on s.kennett@bluecare.org.au.

April 16, 7.30am-12.30pm. Buderim Uniting Church fete. Contact Doug Benckendorff on 5445 4683 or vanden_plas4@yahoo.com.au.

April 19, 9.30am-12.30pm. UnitingWorld Synod Support Group. Wesley House, 140 Ann St, Brisbane. Contact Judith Finau on 3711 4622 or email ljfinau@gmail.com.

April 22, 7-10pm. The Call North Queensland Easter Convention. Speakers include Rev Ron Brookman and Pastor Faylene Sparkes. Mt Louisa House of Praise, Townsville. Contact Anne Harley on 4774 6089 or anniehaha@dovenetq.net.au.

April 22-25. Queensland Synod Easter Family Venture Camp. Glengarry Education Centre Mt Tarampa. Contact Clive Finter on 0417 072 008 or cfinter1@bigpond.com or visit www.qldeastercamp.ucaweb.com.au.

April 25, 10am-4pm. The Power of the Cross seminar - Sexual Addiction and Internet Pornography. Led by Rev Ron Brookman. Mt Louisa House of Praise, Townsville. Contact Anne Harley on 4774 6089 or anniehaha@dovenetq.net.au.

April 30, Centenary of Worship in Toowoomba. Luncheon with memorabilia display and a celebration service at 9 am on Sun 1st May. Lifeworks Uniting Church, 202 Russell St, Toowoomba. Contact Jon Ferguson on 46355481 or carajon2@bigpond.com.

April 30-May 2, 10.30am-4pm. Elanora Uniting Church Art Show. Enjoy afternoon tea in the courtyard. 17 Applecross Way, Elanora 4221. Contact Dianne Malimonenko on 5522 5102 or church@elanorauuniting.com.au.

April 30-May 2, 9am-2pm. School Of Discipleship, at Glebe Road Uniting Church, Ipswich. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/SchoolOfDiscipleship>, ph 3377 9724 or pilgrim@ucaql.com.au.

May 1, National Prayer Day for School Chaplaincy. For more information visit www.suqld.org.au.

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

Wesley Bible stand remembers Robin

By Emily Bonney

AN EXQUISITE gold plated bible stand made from brass and Carrara marble was dedicated to the Wesley Hospital chapel, in Brisbane, in memory of Robin Slaughter on 14 February.

Wesley Chaplain, Richard Lance, said Mrs Slaughter was a patient at the hospital, coming in regularly throughout her illness and enjoyed spending time in the chapel.

"There is a bit of an Auchenflower community that come to the Sunday service here at the Wesley Chapel and Peter and Robin were a part of that," said Mr Lance.

When Mrs Slaughter passed away last year her husband Peter wanted to give something to the chapel in her memory.

After approaching the Pastoral Care Department, it was decided



Mr Peter Slaughter (left) and Dr Tony Milne with the Bible stand. Photo courtesy of the Wesley Hospital

the chapel could use a Bible stand.

"Peter wanted something special in memory of his wife and was put in contact with Peter Vamvarkaris who had the chapel's Jerusalem Cross commissioned by retired Paediatric Surgeon and talented craftsman, Dr Tony Milne," said Mr Lance.

He said the new Bible stand would not be out of place in St Stephen's Cathedral in the city.

Mr Slaughter said it is a fitting memorial for his wife.

"Robin enjoyed spending time in the chapel and I thought the bible stand was something that my wife would have liked."

The Wesley Hospital Pastoral Care team thanked Mr Slaughter for his generous contribution to the chapel, which is a popular part of the hospital.

Joan Stott Bursary

APPLICATIONS ARE now open for the 2011 Uniting Church Adult Fellowship Joan Stott Bursaries. The UCAF National Executive may award up to two Bursaries each year, to the value of \$1500 each, to assist those committed to, or who already are, studying in the field of leadership or theology, within the ethos of the Uniting Church.

At the time of application each applicant must be under the age of 35 years.

For more information contact Fran Moss on 3393 5873 or franmoss2000@yahoo.com.au



The Moreton Bay College Oral History Morning in March celebrated the history of the Wynnum school. Mrs Bronwyn Herbert, left, and Mrs Glenys McIntyre hold a photo of themselves at the 1938 Moreton Bay Girls' High School "Indian Fete". Photo courtesy of MBC



Confessions of a Lapsed Catholic

By Sheila Cassidy, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., London, 2010, RRP \$34.95

Reviewed by Marian Zauchenbrecher, Queensland Synod Associate General Secretary.

I HAVE been a fan of Sheila Cassidy since I read her first book, *Audacity to Believe*. Ms Cassidy is a Roman Catholic laywoman, who was raised in Australia, trained and worked as a doctor in the UK and was in Chile during the time of the coup d'état backed by the CIA when the democratically elected leader was replaced by the dictator Pinochet.

Ms Cassidy was imprisoned and tortured in Chile for providing medical assistance to a political opponent of the regime.

The Catholic faith that had been her inspiration, strength and guide maintained her

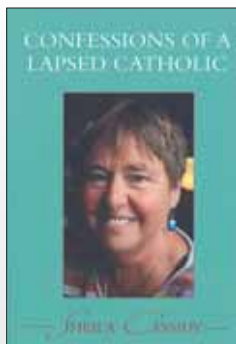
through this time and through her subsequent detour into a convent and then to being Medical Director of a hospice.

In reading her latest book *Confessions of a Lapsed Catholic* I realised how much her journey had its counterpart in my own life.

Again I connected with her through my own ageing process and experiences of the church.

Now retired, she questions not her faith, but the way the Catholic Church has mediated the worship of the Divine.

While once she had found God in the Church's liturgies, worship, music and the Host, she now experiences God in people,



Scripture, poetry, music and the natural world.

She concludes by outlining how she wants to respond to the God so revealed by caring for the planet, others, and ourselves.

I loved her confessions of being a shopaholic, loving her dogs, her contradictions and watching the illuminating documentaries that can be seen on evening television.

This book is an undemanding read that may yet demand our response and challenge our preconceptions.

The Give and Keep (CD)

By Sarah Hart, hippArt Music / Sarah Hart Music, RRP \$22.95

Reviewed by Tara Burton, *Journey* community liaison officer.

LISTENING TO the music of Sarah Hart is truly an enriching and inspiring experience.

Drawing from her religious background and passion for women's ministry, her songs are compassionate and heart-felt.

Her new release *The Give and Keep* is her tenth album. It makes for very easy listening.

I found her music highly enjoyable, putting it on repeat in the *Journey* office.

The Give and Keep includes eight songs about worship, love, friendship and life.

Her lively style is a perfect blend of folk and contemporary rock.

Her voice has a raw yet soft tone.

Sarah Hart's music is refreshing, original and soothing.

I really resonated with these lyrics; "we're stumbling all the time, that's the way it is. Living



in this beautiful mess we call life. We've all got mountains that we've got to face. Together we can make the way much easier to climb. So let's say we can agree, with everything that's in our hearts."

I found the song 'Love we'll leave' to be very powerful and emotive.

It is clear that Ms Hart is a very talented singer, songwriter and producer.

This CD beautifully encapsulates spirituality and is perfect for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Hot Rock Dreaming: A Johnny Ravine Mystery

By Martin Roth, Ark House, 2010, RRP \$19.95

Reviewed by John Rhule.

HOT ROCK Dreaming is a further instalment in the Johnny Ravine detective series by Martin Roth.

Set in Alice Springs and surrounding remote Aboriginal communities *Hot Rock Dreaming* follows the trail of a murder mystery.

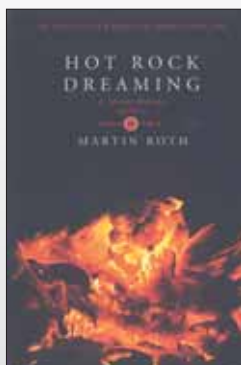
The book invites you to join private investigator Johnny Ravine as he sets out to solve the mystery of why a famous 80-year-old Aboriginal artist is found dead at exactly the same time as high pressure water is added to the hot rocks deep within the Aboriginal

Dreamtime landscape

This highly readable book adds the elements of mystery, spirituality, Aboriginal Dreaming, celebrity endorsement and commercial business together to create a uniquely Australian story.

It is refreshing and somewhat disconcerting at times to read a mystery novel written specifically in the Australian context.

You will be both entertained and educated as you meet characters such as the East Timorese PI, Johnny Ravine, the ageing rock star and social justice advocate Wolfstead Gannon, the famous Aboriginal artist Old



Albert Wallaby Walker and the beautiful and mysterious Korean pastor, Mi-Young.

Children's Bible (NRSV)

Abingdon 2006, \$34.95

Reviewed by Barbara Bailey.

THIS WELL-presented hard-cover Children's Bible has a massive 1500 pages plus colour plates and maps.

While it is difficult to guess at what age a child could appreciate this I suggest children from the age of six to adults would value this volume.

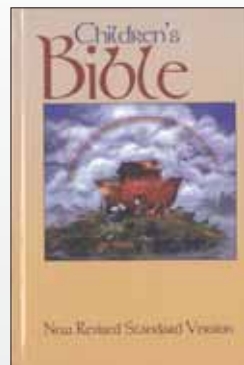
There are two full colour sections, positioned before the Old Testament and again before the New Testament.

In the first there is a Presentation page followed by appealing figure drawings which map out a timeline from Creation to the Gospels, then pages illustrating a Temple Cutaway, a map of Jerusalem in the time of Jesus, and a double page cleverly illustrating prayer stances.

The second set of colour plates shows drawings of items mentioned such as the lyre, and the high priest's breastplate.

A contemporary Lord's Prayer and Beatitudes follow, then an interesting double page of lesser known biblical folk and finally an explanatory map of the flow of the Christian year.

At the end of the Bible is a series of maps.



Another significant feature throughout this *Children's Bible* is the icon legend.

These square blue icons come with four definitions: God's Path, Finding the Path; Light on the Path; Points along the Path.

To add to the reader's understanding is a dictionary of four hundred words at the back of the Bible. The cover has a print of the painting *The Promise* based on the story of Noah.

The font in this edition is easy to read.

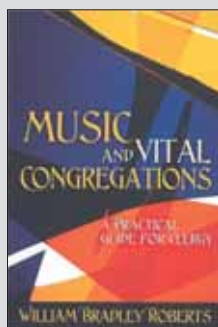
I would highly recommend this publication.

It would make an excellent gift for any child or teenager.

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

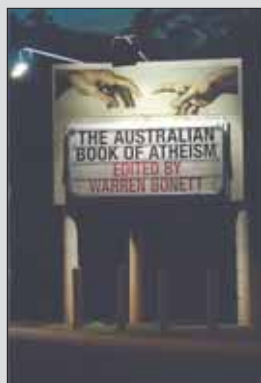
Music and Vital Congregations: A Practical Guide for Clergy

By William Bradley Roberts
Church Publishing, NY, 2009
RRP \$29.95



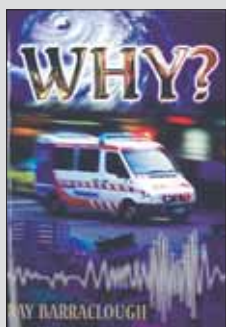
The Australian Book of Atheism

Edited by Warren Bonett
Scribe Publications, 2010
RRP \$35.00



Why? The Challenge of Giving Explanations for Tragic Experiences in Life

By Rev Dr Ray Barraclough
Zeus Publications, 2010
RRP \$31.95 (online \$26.95)



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

Finding room for May

ON SUNDAY 13 February the May Walker Room was dedicated at St Andrew's Uniting Church, Brisbane, honouring a woman of remarkable faith and outstanding character.

Deaconess May Walker was invited by St Andrew's in 1912 to be the "Lady Missionary" to work in Spring Hill.

She answered the call with dedication, kindness and loyalty for nearly 40 years.

Her work involved teaching in schools, hospital visitation, pastoral care for mothers particularly and their families, weekly services and meetings

of Christian Endeavour, Sunday School, Band of Hope and annual events such as the Sunday School Treat, Anniversary Service and Prizegiving.

She valued the support and encouragement of St Andrew's Uniting Church people in many ways.

Sister Walker became well known and highly respected in the suburb. She died in February 1979.

The service of dedication was conducted by Rev Ray Herrmann, and was attended by many members of the Walker family and former deaconesses.



The May Walker Room opening. Photo by Ross Clacher

Theodore's journey continues

MODERATOR REV Bruce Johnson travelled through flood-affected communities in the Dawson Valley in March hearing from farmers,

townspeople and community leaders about the impact of the floods and the progress of the recovery so far.

In Theodore, Mr Johnson, (pictured far left, with Bill

Stevens and Kevin Tysoe) inspected a recently top-dressed section of the church grounds that the floods had denuded.

Church members spoke of their experiences during the flood, evacuation and recovery and of concern for people suffering the worst hardships during the flood and in subsequent disasters around the world.

Financial donations made it possible to engage a local tree lopper and a contractor to top-dress the swampy part of the grounds where seating is usually placed on the grass for large congregational events, including funerals.

Photo and story by Ann Hobson



Making waves in West End

By Rev Kerry Pierce

BRISBANE-BASED Grammy Award winning band Wolfmother joined forces with Blackstar Coffee Roasters, Marty and Vonney Richards, and West End Community Association's (WECA) Darren Godwell to raise funds in a local Flood Benefit event in March.

The impressive line-up of artists entertained over 500 people, young and old, in this alcohol-free event in a community that experienced Brisbane's January floods firsthand.

Auspiced by WECA and sponsored by local traders, Westpac and the West End Uniting Church (Brisbane), the people of West End came

together in a celebration of music, dancing, food, great coffee and community.

Approximately \$9000 was raised alongside the spirit of the community which can't be measured. Thanks go to all the committed community members who made this event a great success.



Wolfmother perform at the West End, Brisbane, flood relief gig. Photo by Tony Robinson

On Sunday 10 April please pray for Bald Hills and Bracken Ridge Uniting Churches

BALD HILLS and Bracken Ridge Uniting Churches are linked congregations in Brisbane's north, sharing a passion for God and for the local communities in which we live.

We're ordinary people who seek to follow the way of Jesus Christ, as well as welcoming others to join in with the journey of faith.

Amongst our regular activities we gather for worship every Sunday in two historic locations.

There has been a continuous worshipping presence in Bald Hills for 137 years (not all of that time in a building). We celebrate our more traditional service each Sunday with around 45 people.

At Bracken Ridge, our more contemporary service venue, we have about 40 gathered each Sunday.

Both services intentionally welcome young families and have dedicated time for young children during worship.

The congregations also sustain a couple of intentional outreach worship ministries: at PM Village Aged Care Centre, (Wednesday fortnightly), and Jacana Acquired Brain Injury

Centre (every six weeks).

These are not only times of worship, but relationship building and pastoral support.

There is an active childcare business utilising the Bald Hills facilities on weekdays, as well as regular social and sporting clubs active in both locations during the evenings.

Regular support for Chaplaincy and CRE in schools in the local area is a current focus of our ministry, and we are just about to begin a time of community review and strategic planning for the next five to ten years of life and ministry together.

Please pray for:

- this time of transition in leadership of the church councils

- renewed vision and energy for the developing ministry directions God is leading us into

- wisdom and joy for our current ministers into the local community

- an eagerness to discover the new places God is calling us to engage with in our local communities.

For more information visit <http://bhbr.unitingchurch.org.au>

On Sunday 17 April please pray for Graceville Uniting Church

THE SUBURB of Graceville is about seven kilometres from Brisbane's CBD and is practically enclosed on three sides by the Brisbane River.

The heritage listed church is a miniature cathedral in the suburbs, affectionately known as the "wedding cake church".

The congregation is led by Rev Christopher Barr and comprises a group of faithful and gifted workers for Christ who care greatly for one another and whose influence permeates the local community and beyond.

Graceville and surrounding communities were badly affected by the January flood.

The impact on these communities is enormous;

many families have lost homes and possessions. Inundated houses (or what is left of them) remain empty while families move in with family and friends or face the financial burden of renting another place to live.

Please pray for members of the congregation and wider community who have been flooded and those who are caring for them; may they know God's peace, strength and healing presence.

Pray for Easter services and this opportunity to minister in the community.

Give thanks to God for all the wonderful acts of generosity, care and concern that we continue to experience.

Please pray for our new

initiative Friends of Graceville (securing a local icon's future) which was launched at our 80th Anniversary service on 28 November 2010. Check it out at www.friendsofgraceville.com.au.

Give thanks to God for good ecumenical relationships, expressed primarily through R.E., school chaplaincy, and shared worship.

Please pray that we might be attentive to the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit as we consider how best to fulfil our high calling as servants of Christ in this place and time, especially as we seek ways to faithfully minister in this damaged and hurting community.

Imagining God

IT IS ALWAYS good to read articles in *Journey* where writers actually think through the implications of the theological positions that have been promoted, rather than asking us to do theological gymnastics in order to make ancient explanations fit into a twenty-first century scientific world.

Rev Dr Rob Bos' article "God and Nature" (February *Journey*) raises the many questions that percolate up into our minds in horrific moments such as

the recent Queensland floods, the Christchurch earthquake and now the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

He addresses these questions with honesty and common sense, rather than pious platitudes past their use-by date.

Thinking Christians can no longer simply ignore the age-old dilemma: if God is both all-powerful and all-good, why does evil exist and why does a loving God permit suffering (the theodicy question)?

What we need are new images

for God and new explanations for how the Divine works within our universe that make sense in light of our contemporary knowledge and experience.

Thank you, Rob, for helping us along this road.

Dr Val Webb
Mudgee, NSW



Ed: Dr Webb is author of *Like Catching Water in a Net; Human attempts to Describe the Divine*.

Baptismal commitments

I FEEL for Nova B. Lever (March *Journey*).

I am neither a brilliant scholar (my late departed lecturers would testify to that) nor am I one to take fools gladly.

I approached my early ministers within my denomination (Methodist) and also a couple of Baptist Ministers, to ask a similar question.

My question was answered by both parties with a well-developed theology. From both sources I was given a biblical, theological foundation to work through.

I eventually embraced the infant baptism stand but have never ceased to wonder why we, the church, still accept people from outside the worshipping congregation who want their children to be baptised and pretend that

we are sure that the Holy Spirit will zap them on the day of the baptism, all will be well, and wonder of wonders, church and family will diligently fulfil the promises that are made.

To place this kind of expectation on people who, I believe, are usually quite sincere in their request (even though their sincerity is founded on their past generational conditioning) rather than a biblical or thought through theological process, leaves them with a satisfaction that they have "done their bit" and all is well with the world.

If all we have baptised, and their parents, and the church congregations, were able to keep their vows, we would have churches that would make the Crystal Cathedral look like a beach mission tent!

I am not blaming the parents. They know no better and have had the conditioning of generations

to give them the idea that "we gottagethimdone".

Had I had Nova's minister as my minister, I may have joined the Baptists, or possibly the Salvation Army, who have no sacrament of baptism and I am convinced that the Lord is very active in his church in that denomination and they run "dry".

If we, the church, really desire to be relevant let's place the 5th century behind us, when the bicycle wasn't even invented, and concentrate on becoming a vital church in the 21st century, where people are more informed and when the world could hear of the earthquake off the shore of Japan before the tsunami reached the shore.

Ossie Kadel
Rothwell



Be fire ready

I REFER to the article in March *Journey* from W.A. by Alison Atkinson-Phillips "Church responds to bushfires".

My wife and I have recently returned from Western Australia after spending some weeks with family in an outer Perth suburb.

I grew up in the country and became very aware of the potential of bushfires and the need to take precautions.

As I walked around the streets of this hilly bushland suburb I became deeply concerned at the locations of some of the homes.

Some were almost surrounded by eucalypts with low limbs close to the roof and

various shrubs close by.

Other vegetation was tinder dry and the temperature in the shade was, on some days, over 40 degrees Celsius with strong winds blowing at times. A firefighter's worst nightmare.

Over 70 homes were destroyed by fire in another area when we were there but the potential for further losses is, I believe, very real.

I wonder if authorities really understand the situation.

It may sound strange just now but I hope Queenslanders are aware of fire hazards near homes.

Brian Henman
Toowoomba



CLASSIFIEDS

Accommodation

Holiday unit, modern, pool. 100m from Kings Beach Caloundra from \$390/wk. Ph Ray 04279 90161.

London B & B. In lovely home, self catering facilities, spacious rooms, easy city access, reasonable rates. Email rachel@brockleybandb.fsnet.co.uk. Tel 001144 2086946538.

Boulder Creek Holiday Centre, 281 Hill Rd, Mothar Mountain, via Gympie. The ideal place for your next Church or Family group camp. Catered accommodation for up to 100 persons. Self cater available for small groups. Check www.bouldercreek.com.au for more information or ph 5483 5221.

Email your classified advertisements to journey@ucaqld.com.au

Send your letters to journey@ucaqld.com.au or *Journey* GPO Box 674, Brisbane QLD 4001.

Please keep letters to a maximum of 250 words. Letters may be edited due to space limitations.

Preference will be given to letters responding to articles or letters in the most recent edition of *Journey*.

Upload your photos at www.journeyonline.com.au/photographiccompetition/

before
30 April 2011

Hospital chapel needs Uniting Church help

By Rhonda Lynch

ON THE third Sunday of each month it is Uniting Church Sunday at the Princess Alexandra Hospital chapel Brisbane.

There is a need for six Uniting Church people to be volunteers

at the monthly Uniting Church chapel service.

One person needs to play the organ, a second needs to be the door person, the third person sits with the people and talks to them, and two more people go around the five wards in the Geriatric and

Rehabilitation sections to wheel patients to and from the chapel service.

Another volunteer needs to set up the communion elements.

People from other denominations are currently filling in those spaces as well as

doing the first and fifth Sundays also.

We can arrange to meet you in the foyer of the Geriatric and Rehabilitation Unit, or in the chapel, to show you around if you would like to be involved.

For more information contact Rev Sione Afu on 0402 625 118



Fakes to steal show at Elanora

THIS YEAR the Elanora Uniting Church Art Show is once again celebrating local Gold Coast art at its best.

Publicity officer Janine Kinnear said the team is "working hard to make this year's art show bigger and better than ever".

Held from 30 April to 2 May, with an opening night party on 29 April, entries are now

open for categories including: watercolour (including gouache), oils or acrylics, drawing (pencil, pen and wash, scraperboard), pastel, other (includes collage, mixed media), miniatures, children's section (8 years and under, 13 years and under).

Ms Kinnear said this year's show will feature a new

category called Fabulous Fakes: famous paintings painted by local artists.

Entries for all categories close 20 April.

For more information contact Dianne Malimonenko on 5522 5102, Janette Cope on 5599 2348 or visit www.elanorauniting.com.au



Janette Cope, also a member of our church, with her copy of John Constable's *The Haywain*.

What are you hungry for this Easter?

I am hungry for the church to become a place of more acceptance.

It always strikes me that the first thing Jesus said to the disciples in the upper room after the resurrection was "peace be with you", when he could have said "why did you let me down".

But he accepted them and he loved them and it would be great for the church to be a place in which people are accepted and loved.

Rev Dr Paul Walton, Minister, Centenary Uniting Church

This Easter I am hungry for change; the change that comes through the power of the resurrection; the same spirit that actually raised Jesus back to life.

That changes me forever and it transforms the whole of God's creation.

There are some big things afoot Easter Sunday.

Phil Smith, Campus Minister, Unity College

I'm hungry to see new life and new hope for the people of Queensland after the floods and cyclone.

It seems to me the story of Easter allows us to go through that journey with Jesus from questions and doubts, suffering and death and eventually resurrection resonates with what we've been through and I long for people to discover the new life that's possible after what many people have experienced that is almost a death experience.

Rev Bruce Johnson, Moderator, Queensland Synod

I'm hungry for an experience that cuts through the sentiments and platitudes with which we in the middle-class church have surrounded Easter for so long.

I'm hungry for an experience at Easter that enters into the radical grace and mercy of God that it's about and to hear the call to radical living and radical discipleship that Easter is about.

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson, Principal, Trinity Theological College

I am really hungry for some peace and quiet and some time to just take some space out and do some reflection.

Life is very busy and full of so much and at Easter I always look forward to having the space to ask, "What is it about me and my connection with God and how am I going to think about that for the rest of the year?"

Colleen Geyer, Director of Mission, BlueCare

I'm really hungry to understand the whole crucifixion and the whole story of Jesus being crucified and raised from the dead.

I've been a Christian and I've been in church since I was four years old and hungry for God all this time and yet I've never really understood and got a grip on the concept of Jesus dying for me.


Jeni Parker, cook, Wesley Wednesday Night Community Meal

I am hungry for a clearer vision as I journey through the wilderness experience; as well as peace and trust in God and strength to get through it.

Fa Ngaluafe, student, Trinity Theological College

 WATCH

A downloadable video asking this question will be available from www.journeyonline.com.au from 1 April for use by congregations and agencies. Also see it on the JourneyOnline Facebook page.




Hi my name is Alex Gow!

5th Gow Family Generation

You may have heard me talking on the radio about funeral pre planning. My dad says planning ahead for a funeral service is one of the best things you can do for your family. The Alex Gow 'Guide to Thoughtful Funeral Pre-Planning' will really help.

If you would like a **FREE** copy of the guide please fill out this coupon or call my Dad on 3852 1501 and please mention my name Alex Gow!

Alex Gow Funerals
56 Breakfast Creek Rd,
Newstead, 4006.
Name:
Address:
p/c:



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100% Australian-owned family company