



PHOTO COMP WINNER

Top photos displayed on the new *Journey* website www.journeyonline.com.au

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EASTERFEST WRAP-UP

"You can just feel the spirit of God here. It's really amazing!" **Luke Poulsen**

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SUSTAINING CREATION

Eco-justice in body, mind and spirit

By Mardi Lumsden

THE CALL for Christians to be stewards of creation is an ancient one.

Synod Green Church advocate, Rev Dr Clive Ayre, said the need to care for creation plugs into some of the key doctrines of the church.

"For example a doctrine of grace, the whole idea of covenant is all involved," he said.

"James Nash [eco-theologian and author] said grace is not only the forgiveness of sins but forgiveness of life through redemption and creation.

"The whole of nature, the bio-physical universe, is not grace but rather an expression of grace and that understanding ultimately comes from the influence of Joseph Sittler some decades ago."

A Lutheran theologian, Mr Sittler wrote several books and essays on the church's ecologic responsibility including *The Ecology of Faith* (1961). His writings remain relevant today.

As scientists and governments all over the world debate climate change, Christian groups suggest it is a moral issue.

In *The Ecumenical Review* ("Churches Caring for Creation and Climate Justice", July 2010) World Council of Churches (WCC) General

Secretary, Rev Olav Fykse Tveit, said eco-justice and climate change are bringing Christian groups together.

"In a very disturbing way, the climate crisis brings us together as one humanity. Therefore, it also brings us together as one fellowship of believers, as one church," he said.

"We cannot say that life on the planet is only for some of us. It is a matter for all of us: when this planet is threatened, it is threatening for all of us."

Rev Martin Robra, director of the WCC program on ecumenism in the 21st century, noted that the WCC helped place the term "sustainable society" into the public domain three decades ago.

"Churches are well-equipped to point to long-term needs of the planet. Politics often gets stuck in short-term issues," he said.

Now, there are global conferences with top eco-theologians on the topic of faith and the environment.

One such conference is the Symposium on Christian Faith and the Earth, to be held in Cape Town in August 2012.

The brain-child of Ernst Conradie, professor in the Department of Religion and Theology at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa, the conference is the culmination of an international, collaborative research project on ecology and Christian doctrine launched in 2007.

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Consuming our eco-mission

SOME YEARS ago I heard an interview with a farmer who said he had changed from being a cattle producer to being a "preserver of soil".

For years he had focused on producing cattle as efficiently and cost effectively as possible.

He kept data about the amount of fertilizer he used to keep his farm producing.

He knew the most cost-effective fodder to use and made sure that he cleared as much land as possible to grow the most feed.

He had data about the rates of growth of the different cattle breeds and he knew just what it cost to produce every kilo of beef.

Then he realised that his land was degrading.

He realised that if he continued his current practices, it would not be long before his land would not be productive.

So he focused on the well-being of his soil, not on the cattle.

Now he kept data about the soil composition and about how various grasses and legumes impacted on the soil.

He took care of the waterways and revised all his land management practices so that everything he did nourished the soil.

He planted tress to help prevent erosion and made sure his stocking practices did not compact the soil too much.

The by-product of this change

I am not sure if this will be a long term reality or if once we have made some significant changes we might find that we are all much better off, even if it does increase our expenses.

However, I am most interested to consider how what I learnt from that "preserver of soil" can help us sustain the Church.

For many years now we in the Uniting Church have been focused on how we grow the church.

How do we reach more people and encourage them to join us?

How do we incorporate more people into the congregations?

What do we need to change to attract younger members?

The financial shock that confronted the Synod in 2008 has caused us to take a long hard look at what it means to be a healthy, mission focused, sustainable church.

In a social context that regards the Church as largely irrelevant, it is confronting to be asked to consider how the church faithfully fulfils its calling.

The financial shock that confronted the Synod in 2008 has caused us to take a long hard look at what it means to be a healthy, mission focused, sustainable church.

of focus was that his cattle were healthier and more valuable and he was now making a much better return from his farm.

He had created a sustainable cattle farm.

We are in the situation at present where environmental sustainability is being seen as increasing costs to everyone, from miners, to primary producers, to consumers.

It's not easy being green

I'VE ALWAYS been an arm-chair greenie.

I have the passion for it, but perhaps lack the conviction to be a model environmental citizen.

But this year all that was going to change.

I bought a bike so I could ride to work rather than drive, but the mountain between home and the office has dissuaded me somewhat. Then the dog ate my pedal and the bike is now under the house.

This year I have also committed to only buying seasonal, locally grown and organic food and eating less meat.

But then I go out to dinner and never ask if what I am eating was locally grown.

Now I have decided (after

watching the BBC series *Blood, Sweat and Luxuries*) to only buy things I really need and to make sure they are made by people who are earning a fair wage. This has been something I have been passionate about for years, but now is crunch time.

The challenge will be the end-of-financial-year sales.

Bargains are my weakness, particularly when it comes to clothes, but putting a human face on the products I buy helps me make more informed choices.

If the workers are paid well and have ethical working environments being 'made in China' is only an issue because of the travel miles the clothes are clocking up.

To help me in this endeavour

I have been looking online for ethical fashion.

There is surprisingly little available in Australia but I did find the Ethical Clothing Australia website (www.ethicalclothingaustralia.org.au).

But being 'green' is more than just about my personal decisions. This is an issue much bigger than you or I alone.

As the earth's population edges closer to 9 billion, with most of the growth happening in the developing world, living out the theological call to care for the earth has never been more justified.

Let's lead by example just as the church has on so many justice issues in the past.

Mardi Lumsden
Editor

Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



The last Synod considered the question, "What sort of church is God calling us to be?"

We expressed our answer as: Uniting in Christ: acting with love; living with hope; witnessing in faith; working for justice.

In adopting this statement of Call, we identified five Gospel Values that we believed were important at this time: faithfulness, compassion, humility, truthfulness and justice.

These values take our attention off the issue of "How do we get more people?" to "Who are we called to be?"

It is focusing on the soil not the cattle. Instead of measuring our effectiveness by counting the people who come to our worship services, we are considering our effectiveness by asking if we are growing more like Christ.

The *Together on the way*,

enriching community journey is about ensuring that we are becoming a united community of disciples growing in our own relationship with God and one another so that all within our church find themselves being concerned about how they participate with Christ in reconciling the world with God.

This reconciling work encompasses an engagement with the whole of creation. As we focus on being a faithful, mission-focused community, numerical growth will be a by-product.

The *Together on the way* journey is not about making sure everyone is doing things the same way or toeing some party line.

It is about renewing the Uniting Church in Queensland so that we are all focused on making Christ known individually and corporately.

Sign of the times



ST STEPHEN'S Uniting Church in Toowoomba didn't know how true their sign was until 40 young people camped in their hall after getting flooded out of the Easterfest campsite. Read the full story on page 11. Thanks to Matt Gees for sending us this photo.



Winning photo works for justice

AS PART of the *Together on the way, enriching community* process to discern the direction of the Uniting Church in Queensland, *Journey* invited people to explore the five phrase Call through a photographic competition.

The competition, launched late last year, asked people to submit photos representing each of the five sections of the Call – Uniting in Christ: acting with love; living with hope; witnessing in faith; working for justice.

We are now pleased to announce that the winner is Matt Gees for his photo depicting the phrase “working for justice”.

The aim of the competition was to creatively explore and present the church’s Call and how that can be interpreted by different people.

While attending Easterfest, Mr Gees saw a moment he felt captured the church in action.

“Compassion Australia was encouraging attendees of Easterfest to consider child sponsorship and release a child from poverty in Christ’s name,” he said.

Mr Gees wins a Canon digital camera and other entrants received a Canon prize pack.

The winning photo and highly

commended photos by Christine Murphy, Rob Callow, Lewis Yu, and Alex Baker are on display at the new *JourneyOnline* website.

The new site provides space for photo galleries, video and audio, as well as news from the local church and around the globe.

Communication Manager, Mardi Lumsden, said the team is excited about the new site.

“It means we have greater capability to use multi-media in our communications and incorporate our social media channels more easily,” she said.

Visit the new *Journey* website at www.journeyonline.com.au



Matt Gees’ winning photo showing ‘working for justice’ in action

Future focus for the journey

By Mardi Lumsden

AS THE *Together on the way, enriching community* journey continues Church members from all over Queensland are reflecting on the future of the Church in their own context.

In the light of the Church’s 2020 Call and Vision, the five areas of priority in the next two years are: enabling a demonstrated commitment to the shared call and vision, promoting a discipline of prayer and spirituality (individual

and corporate), developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the Church in Queensland, facilitating renewal of leadership for the mission of the Church and, providing opportunities for intentional, open community connections and partnerships.

Focus Group A is looking at how to enable a demonstrated commitment to the shared Call and Vision.

Focus Group A member, Rev Linda Hanson, said one step

to achieving that is for people across the life of the Church to be familiar with the language of the Call, Vision and Gospel Values and how that relates to their own situation.

“Focus Group A is looking at how to assist people in locating and identifying with the Call and Vision in their part of the world, so it can then be shared, owned and lived,” said Ms Hanson, a Pomona Uniting Church member.

“The goal of Focus Group A is to help us see that we are all on

the same page and heading in the same direction.”

“We need to know that this is our Vision, so we can support it, live it and reach it.

“The role of Focus Group A is to ensure we all speak the same language as we travel on different paths on the journey together.

“How we go about responding to the Call of Christ won’t be the same, but the outcome will be.”

Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson is also a member of Focus Group A.

“When I was a student Professor Rolie Busch used to say individualism will destroy the

Church,” said Mr Johnson.

“History has shown us that when we are fragmented, and only concerned with our own patch of the church, we crumble.

“The function of Focus Group A is to seek to engage all parts of the Uniting Church in Queensland to participate in this *Together on the way, enriching community* process so we can support, encourage and challenge each other to be more faithfully the body of Christ together.”

To see the 2020 Vision or for more information visit <http://together.ucaqld.com.au>

Retreat to aid recovery

IN RESPONSE to the large numbers of Uniting Church people actively assisting their local communities to recover after floods Moderator, Rev Bruce Johnson, has initiated a Community Recovery Retreat for ministers and lay leaders.

The retreat will be held from 20-23 June at Mercy Place in Bardon, Brisbane.

Mr Johnson said the purpose of the retreat is to allow people who have been heavily involved in community recovery to “come aside” for a couple of days and

find renewal and refreshment so they can return to their vital ministry in their communities.

“If we are to be alongside our community for the long haul we need to be sustained ourselves,” he said.

“Retreat leader, Rev Dr Ross Kingham, lost his house in a Canberra bushfire some years ago so knows from personal experience what such an experience can do to people.

“Ross will provide us with the opportunity to reflect upon our experience in the light of the

Scriptures and to pray with the hope that through this we find the refreshment of God’s Spirit.”

The Synod Disaster Relief Fund has provided a subsidy for this retreat. All participants are asked to contribute \$200 towards the costs and the Disaster Relief Fund will cover the rest.

Those who have to travel to Brisbane can be reimbursed for travel costs and day participation is encouraged by locals.

For more information email ana.mila@ucaqld.com.au



Oxley Uniting Church members and ncyc11 volunteers distribute bread and ice during the floods. Photo by David MacGregor



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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 Nova B Lever asks:

How do small churches celebrate communion?

MY SON and I were driving home from a visit up north and stayed overnight in a small town where we went to worship on Sunday morning. We're still new to attending church and don't want to get out of the routine.

We enjoyed a warm welcome from the congregation of 15 people who seemed to enjoy a lively fellowship.

They also welcomed a visiting minister that Sunday. The worship leader explained how rare it was for them to be able to celebrate Holy Communion.

I hadn't thought about this, taking for granted the way we celebrate the Eucharist in my congregation.

Until that moment I had never questioned why we break the bread and share the 'wine' so rarely or why only the ordained minister recites the form-of-words.

We belong to a sacramental church.

An appendix to the *Basis of Union* says, "In normal circumstances a minister of the Word will preside at celebrations of the sacrament of Holy Communion."

There must be a growing number of churches whose "normal circumstances" don't include an ordained minister.

How do those small worshipping communities obey Jesus' words to share the sacrament and remember him?

Even in a large, well staffed congregation, "coming to the Lord's Table" is the high point of worship for me.

It's the ultimate expression of belonging together and to him, dining with him and sharing in him. A family at the table; it's the lifeblood of gathered believers.

So why do Uniting Church members only celebrate the Lord's Supper at occasional Sunday services with an ordained minister presiding?

Has Holy Communion become the peculiar ceremony we have evolved over the centuries?

If doing whatever "this" was (in remembrance of Jesus) is the preserve of priests and pastors many congregations in many denominations must be facing the same issue we saw in that little country church.

Not breaking bread and sharing the cup leaves a family hungry.

Oh, and don't get me started on the fruit juice and red cordial!

Released for mission

By Jane Moad

ST LUCIA Uniting Church, Brisbane, was a congregation that was down and almost—but not quite—out.

Feeling injured and hurt after a turbulent period where half its members left, the congregation could have retreated.

But it was from this position that the congregation responded by gifting beneficial use of three properties to the Synod office.

After strategic planning and an intentional stewardship campaign, the congregation has emerged with a renewed missional focus and confidence that they can financially support their immediate future.

The congregation has even started to grow slowly; according to Interim Minister Rev Maxwell Vines, it's because things are changing.

"In hindsight, shedding the properties was not just releasing us, but committing us to a more serious sense of the Church's mission," said Mr Vines.

Treasurer Ms Robyn Cupit admitted the congregation was angry when they first learned of the Synod office's financial position.

"There was a great deal of mistrust of what was happening within Presbytery and Synod," she said. "But we got over our anger and started thinking about what it meant for the Church as a whole—we stopped thinking about ourselves as victims but rather people who had something



St Lucia Uniting Church leadership team: Treasurer Robyn Cupit, Interim Minister Rev Maxwell Vines and Chairperson Dr Marilyn Healy look to the congregation's future. Photo by Holly Jewell

they could give.

"We got some facts on the financial position and also confirmation that we were not up to scratch when it came to the concept of underutilised property.

"Maybe some of us didn't feel a need to give very much because we had developed a reliance on the income from the properties and we didn't need to think about it."

As part of St Lucia's strategic planning and stewardship campaign, the congregation considered what it meant to give up beneficial use and the rental income from the properties.

Ms Cupit developed projections of the giving needed to support various levels of ministry appointments to the congregation and when the congregation considered the

time, energy and expenditure that went into maintaining the properties, they were even more compelled to 'gift' the properties.

"The bottom line is that the effective stewardship of property is a time consuming activity which had become beyond the capacity of this congregation," said Ms Cupit.

The congregation will receive a portion of the proceeds from the sale of three properties, while the Synod office will receive \$1 million.

"We now have a great responsibility to use that money in the most wise and stewardship-minded way and can now look at new ways to develop our mission in the community," said Ms Cupit.

The Synod office will apply the proceeds to reducing its reliance on bank debt to fund activities of the Church.

Four awards in one congregation

FOUR MEMBERS of Burleigh Heads Uniting Church on the Gold Coast (and in the Federal electorate of McPherson) received awards for their outstanding contribution to their local community in the inaugural McPherson Awards.

Rev Colin Batt received an award for his services to the Robina Soccer Club where he is president to a club of over 300 members.

Bobbie Matheson received her award for services to the Elanora community through her constant watch on local graffiti and assisting in its eradication.

Neville and Dulcie Free have contributed over 40 years of community service, having



Rev Collin Batt, Dulcie and Neville Free, Bobbie Matheson and Karen Andrews MP. Photo by Barbra Fullham

recently established the Never Alone Friendship Centre at the church, meeting the needs of lonely and isolated people in the community.

The awards were established by the Federal MP, Karen Andrews, and were presented to the recipients at the Currumbin RSL club in April.



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Ian Woodward, Darren King, Jenny Brown and Anne Kent are looking forward to working to rebuild runways again.
Photo by Christine Bowden

Nambour revisits flying mission

By Phil Smith

NAMBOUR UNITING Church has relaunched its outreach Mission Possible.

In 2009 the congregation combined with local community groups to send a convoy to central western Queensland to refurbish station runways.

Approximately 30 volunteers, have signed up again this year, working for two weeks from 24 June to bring

runways back up to Royal Flying Doctor standards.

It is vital work according to the McKay Patrol flying minister, Rev Garry Hardingham, who will connect the workers with properties in his enormous 'parish'.

Nambour Uniting Church minister Rev Darren King said work parties will work hard painting runway markers and grading strips.

"The last time we ventured west our strips saved two lives – a young lad who had been bitten by a snake and an older bloke who had a heart attack," he said.

This year four ministers are going on the trip to support Mr Hardingham. Darren King, Peter Overton, Bruce Dingle and Tim Griggs will get a taste of bush ministry and, perhaps, a taste for it.

Laidley church supports flood recovery

By Matt Gees

THE LOCKYER Valley town of Laidley was one of many communities across Queensland hit by the January floods.

But amidst the rebuilding and emotions that the town's people are still experiencing, the local Uniting Church has resolved to help the community by opening a drop-in centre.

The idea stemmed from a post-flood seminar in Gatton that looked at the stages of grief following a disaster.

Laidley Uniting Church's Graham Welden and drop-in centre coordinator Gail Taylor

run the shopfront (aptly named Bouncing Back) every Friday, along with helpers from other churches in the town.

"The floods have had a big impact on this town," said Ms Taylor. "The water came very fast and brought with it a large amount of mud that got into the shops and walls making it really hard to clean."

She said some shops in the main street have only recently re-opened, whilst others may not even attempt to.

The Uniting Church set up a stall in the Laidley Mall where Mr Welden tells people about the drop-in centre, while volunteers

make the place feel as homely as possible.

"Sometimes people need someone to talk to, sometimes they need counselling or other professional assistance and that's when we can refer them" said Ms Taylor.

She said Lifeline helped train volunteers and the Salvos had also been helpful.

"We're not just here for flood victims. We're building relationships, providing community information and loving people as Christ loves us," she said. "Wherever this takes us, we're open to whatever God wants this place to be."



Gail Taylor at the drop-in centre. Photo by Matt Gees



Lindsay Jones and Iain Watt.
Photo courtesy of Elaine Rae

Emmaus walk heads to Fiji

A SPECIAL Emmaus Walk took volunteers from throughout Queensland and New South Wales to Fiji in early May.

Jasper Williams School in Lautoka, Fiji, played host to the Australian team as they assisted the local community in the organisation (including permits) of two Emmaus Walks.

Bayside Uniting Church's Elaine Rae took on the role of logistics and IT provider, battling pot-holed roads, blown tyres and

torrential rain as 30 local women and 23 local men shared the life-changing Emmaus Weekend.

Rev Iain Watt (Gympie Uniting Church), Greg and Jennifer Shea (Sunnybank Uniting Church), Rev Louise Edwards (Broadwater Road Uniting Church) and Ms Rae's husband John Rae (Bayside Uniting Church) were also among the small group who joined the Fiji community in worship, and to discuss and share their Christian journeys.

Ms Rae said the presence of God and the power of prayer was clearly evident.

"One of the most inspiring elements was seeing people from five denominations and four ethnic groups enjoying one another's fellowship and worshipping together," she said.

Many of the pilgrims hold influential roles within their local churches, pointing toward a big future for Emmaus community activities.

The Walk to Emmaus is a spiritual renewal program

intended to strengthen the local church through the development of Christian disciples and leaders.

It was introduced to Australia in 1984 and in 1985 the Uniting Church Board of Mission (NSW) became the movement's official sponsor.

Prayer support teams for the Fiji walks were oversubscribed as local churches blessed the pilgrims with total support.

The course is wrapped in prayer and meditation, special times of worship and daily celebration of Holy Communion.

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2011 MODERATOR'S COMMUNITY SERVICE MEDAL



Do you know a volunteer who has contributed in an outstanding way to the Church's mission in community service in Queensland? The Moderator's Medal is one way to honour them. This year we are looking for nominations that truly reflect the UnitingCare Queensland Mission statement:

As part of The Uniting Church, the mission of UnitingCare Queensland is to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities as we: Reach out to people in need; Speak out for fairness and justice; Care with compassion, innovation and wisdom.

Nominees must:

- be a volunteer, past or present
- have exhibited outstanding service over a number of years
- be involved in community service work other than congregational work (e.g. Blue Care, Lifeline Community Care Queensland, UnitingCare Queensland hospitals, Wesley Mission Brisbane or community service agencies outside the Uniting Church)
- were/are not in paid employment connected to their volunteer work

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

NOMINATIONS CLOSE COB Friday 19 August 2011

At-risk youth finds new goal

By Ben Pennings

AFTER GROWING up in a violent family and moving in and out of foster care, at the age of 14 all Tina (not her real name) wanted was a house to live in with her brother and sister. Now, she has her sights set on bigger things. She wants to work with at-risk youth.

"I'm doing my diploma in youth work and then I'll do a degree in human services," she said. "I'd like to be a youth worker in a residential setting before applying for the police and getting into crime prevention.

"If you're going to whinge about a system then you need to go in and change it," she said.

Through Logan Youth Foyer, a service of Wesley Mission Bris-

bane, Tina was able to access support and stable accommodation provided for homeless or at risk of homelessness youth, where homelessness is compromising education or training.

"I want to work in residential because of my experiences with Logan Youth Foyer.

"It kind of gets people who fall through the cracks," she said.

She said meeting police who dealt well with youth inspired her.

"Instead of looking at a behaviour and giving a consequence they looked behind the behaviour at what's affecting people and what to do to change it.

"Some of my youth workers have been great role models and never gave up on me. It made me feel I shouldn't give up either."



Tina sets her sights on new goals. Photo by Scott Mackinnon

Moderator's Medals recognise community service

By Dot King

SINCE 1999, the Queensland Synod has recognised the wonderful work of volunteers through the Moderator's Community Service Medal.

The Moderator's Medal is presented to individuals who have contributed in an outstanding way to the Uniting Church's mission in community services.

The search is now on for nominations for the 2011 Moderator's Community Service Medal.

Nominees must be volunteers, past or present, and have exhibited outstanding service over a number of years.

They need to have been involved in community service

work other than congregational work (e.g. for one of UnitingCare Queensland's service agencies or with community service agencies outside the Uniting Church) and must not be in paid employment connected to their volunteer work.

UnitingCare Queensland CEO, Anne Cross, said the Medal is an excellent way of recognising the huge contribution volunteers make to the Queensland community.

"It is also a demonstration of the importance that the Uniting Church places on being active in the community and reaching out to people in need," she said.

Last year, out of a field of 27, Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson awarded 14 medals to 13

individuals and one couple.

Anne and Andrew Jeays were jointly awarded a Moderator's Community Service Medal for their many years of service to the Mt Mee Community.

Their daughter Kathie, who nominated her parents, said that as Secretary and Treasurer of the Mt Mee Community Church her parents maintained the heritage-listed Church and grounds for 20 years.

"Anne and Andrew have also worked as collectors for Blue Care and Lifeline appeals and Anne volunteered for many years with Meals on Wheels," she said.

Successful nominees will have the opportunity to be presented during the 29th Synod meeting at Alexandra Park Conference



Anne and Andrew Jeays receive their award from Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson at the 28th Synod. Photo by Osker Lau

Centre, held from 7-11 October, by the Moderator-elect Rev Kaye Ronalds.

To nominate a volunteer visit www.ucareqld.com.au. Nominations close Friday 19 August 2011

Hospital gives back

SOVANNA KAK, a 15-year-old Cambodian girl, faced a life of pain caused by a large tumour on the right side of her jaw until the Royal Oceanic Medical Aid for Children (ROMAC) asked The Wesley Hospital in Brisbane for assistance.

In March the hospital's Maxiofacial Surgeon, Dr John Arvier, removed a large benign tumour from Ms Kak's jaw which was not only causing her severe

pain, but also eating away her jaw bone.

The three hour surgery to remove the tumour and insert a titanium plate went smoothly and Ms Kak is recovering well.

Accompanying her to Australia were her mother, Kieng, and Cambodian doctors, Dr Someth Hong and Dr Sandeth Phan, who came to Australia to observe this procedure so they could help others in Cambodia.

The two Cambodian doctors also visited other hospitals to observe procedures and attended scientific sessions and social functions at the National Dental Conference during their week in Brisbane.

The Wesley Hospital and its partners have been involved with several ROMAC cases.

ROMAC performs a vital role in assisting children from countries across the Pacific and Asia where the facilities and skills are not available for such operations.



Belinda Condon, Sovanna Kak, Dr John Arvier, Saija Festa, Dianne Jesser, and Kieng Kak. Photo courtesy of Emily Bonney, The Wesley Hospital Communications Officer

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Foundation ready for mission

ROCHELLE NOLAN has begun work to re-position the Uniting Church Foundation (UCF) to establish new and fulfilling ways Uniting Church members can contribute to important mission activities and see the tangible impact of their involvement.

As Foundation Manager, Ms Nolan is passionate about people being able to make a meaningful contribution.

"It is about fundraising in the context of a reciprocal

relationship," she said. "I see the Foundation as a connector between our donors and the outcomes they effect.

"It's about facilitating people giving to people, and being really clear about the huge difference a donation makes."

The Synod Leadership Team and the Foundation collaboratively decided that one way the Foundation could have a positive impact on Church mission would be by forming

a strategic partnership with a 'partner project' over a period of three years.

"This means the Foundation can focus half its efforts on creating sustainable funding for mission," said Ms Nolan.

The Foundation's first partner will be the Chaplaincy Commission.

"Over the next few years the Foundation will be working with the Chaplaincy Commission to help congregations have a deeper

understanding of this outreach and to fund new expressions of chaplaincy in areas which desperately need it.

"We believe it's important that the Foundation be built on strong relationships and be committed to clearly communicating the impact of every single donation," she said.

Ms Nolan's hope for the future of the Foundation is simple.

"My hope for the Foundation is this: that it will contribute to a church inspired by, involved in and mobilised for mission."

Contact Ms Nolan on rochelle.nolan@ucaqld.com.au



Foundation Manager Rochelle Nolan. Photo by Holly Jewell

Reuniting scholars

By Sue Fairley

ON SATURDAY 21 May over 100 former residents of the Methodist Training College (MTC) held a reunion at Grace College (University of Queensland) in Brisbane.

People came from all over Australia and even Singapore to catch up with friends from over 40 years ago and give thanks to God for the amazing contribution the College has made to the life

of the Methodist and Uniting Church.

Most of those present attended MTC during the 1960s and many of them became deaconesses and ministers and many others have been committed lay people serving in a variety of ministries.

The College opened in 1960 in the old Kings College and the first Principal was Rev Cyril Alcorn whose brother Ivan was the visionary who saw the need for a lay training college.

Former Principals and Vice Principals were present including Rev Dr Clive Krohn and Judy and Rev Dr Ian Mavor as well as the Director of the Department of Christian Education Rev Dr Lew Born and Betty.

People shared memories of Weekends of Witness when groups of students visited rural congregations.

Others spoke about the Whitsuntide celebrations in the big tent, going out two by two to invite people in Fortitude Valley to come to worship.

Special guests included Ian Alcorn and his sister Ruth Bott



Just some of the former Alcorn students who became ordained ministers or lay pastors. Photo by Sue Fairley

who spoke enthusiastically about growing up in the college and Merlene Wilson and Marion Baker shared a written history of the College.

The next reunion is already been planned for the 2012 June long weekend. For information contact Adrian Burton on adrian.burton@interfurn.com.au



Children get ready for the kite competition. Photo by Clive Finter

Families continue faith venture

GLENGARRY EDUCATION Centre in the Lockyer Valley once again hosted the Easter Family Venture Camp over the Easter long weekend.

The camp celebrated its 43rd anniversary this year and Clive Finter, one of the camp organisers, said more people than usual were able to arrive on Maundy Thursday and to join in the camp theme "The Chemistry of Christ".

"Our Chaplain, Rev Len Forrest, conducted a very moving Maundy Thursday Communion service," said Mr Finter.

Rev John Woodley conducted the Good Friday morning service and led communion on Easter Sunday.

"By the time camp officially began with 'Rally! Rally!' on Friday afternoon, nearly all our full complement of 100 campers were present (ranging from just over 12 months to a grand lady Ruth at 93 years young)," said Mr Finter.

Familiar faces and new faces joined in the games, activities and thought-provoking devotions (led by Alan and Leanne Purvis).

"Saturday saw people indulging in a range of activities around camp including canoeing, bike riding, chatting and the inevitable cuppas."

Kite making was also on the activities list with families preparing for Monday's kite

competition. "The skies over the camp filled with kites on many occasions as families tested the masterpieces," said Mr Finter.

"People's talents were on show at the traditional Saturday night camp fire and we finished with devotions led by the Sheppard family."

Easter Sunday was celebrated with a morning service, an Easter egg hunt (organised by the Preston family) rocket making and Rev Len Forrest led Sunday night worship on the first Easter resurrection experience.

The camp concluded on Easter Monday with a short AGM, the kite flying competition, devotions and lunch.

Update your Find a Church listing

Visit the Find a Church section of www.ucaqld.com.au to modify your congregation's details



OFFICE COORDINATOR

Emmanuel Uniting Church is seeking an experienced administrative officer to work 20 hours per week.

Applicants must have administrative experience, good interpersonal skills and be prepared to work within the context of a Uniting Church congregation.

For a position description please contact the office on 07 3355 2162 or email emmanueluca@bigpond.com.

Applications close 22 June 2011.



Expressions of interest are invited for the position of

Executive Director, Uniting Mission & Education

The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of NSW and the ACT

The Uniting Church, multicultural and inclusive, has as the centre of our faith to confess Jesus as Lord and to know that our relation to God depends on the grace of God.

'Moving with God transforming communities' is the Synod's vision to be achieved by being courageous, inclusive and generous. Currently, the Synod is exploring ways of transforming its structures to enable the best use of resources to do so.

Uniting Mission & Education (UME) is taking shape as the division of the Synod empowered to give focus to mission and education strategies that grow discipleship, leadership and engage communities in mission.

With its history in separate Boards of Mission and of Education, UME has sound foundations while embracing the opportunity to guide and equip the Church for mission and education in a creative and pioneering spirit appropriate to the modern Australian context.

The position of Executive Director, UME, is a new position formed out of this endeavour and expressions of interest by ordained and lay people are invited.

Further details including Position Description outlining competencies, qualifications and experience required may be found at <http://www.insights.uca.org.au/jobs/listing/executive-director-ume> or by contacting Rowena Tagalao at rowenat@nsw.uca.org.au.

Closing date for applications is August 12, 2011.

Engaging a sustainable spirit

By Peter Robinson

THERE ARE both practical and spiritual dimensions to the way we relate to the world of nature, but is there an overriding philosophy that guides our personal theology and action?

In the West, Christian scriptures have deeply influenced people's ways of thinking about the environment. But people draw different interpretations. These range from the idea of human dominion, to that of human responsibility, to the idea humans share no special place in nature.



WEB

UnitingJustice World Environment Day (5 June) resources.

www.unitingjustice.org.au

Lynn White, in his 1967 essay, argued that Christianity is highly anthropocentric (more so than other religions), and creates a dualism (separation) of humankind and nature.

He links Christianity to exploitation (Genesis 1:26, 28) and environmental degradation.

Some theologians are critical of classical Christian dualism and propose a return to the idea of mankind in unity with nature.

Others point to the idea of stewardship, drawing on Genesis 2:15 and passages in Leviticus and Exodus, as an expression of the call to social justice.

We find Christian outlooks anchored firmly on both sides of the debate.

There is the Evangelical Environmental Movement that in 2002 sponsored the slogan "What would Jesus drive?"

At the other extreme, Millenarianists are convinced the 'Last

Days' are nigh and environmental concern is not on their agenda.

Some suggest Judaism originated the idea of separation of humankind and environment, in rejecting older animist religions that worshipped the cycles of nature. However, Judaism has always been grounded in the rhythms of life, land and harvest.

Judaic scholars see God as both creator and sustainer, and often argue 'dominion' implies 'stewardship'.

Islam also places humankind at the head of nature, but with an obligation to care for the environment.

In Hinduism and related Jainism the idea of stages of reincarnation is a powerful connector of human and all other forms of life.

Buddhism has a view of interconnectedness, where health of the whole depends on health of the parts.



READ

Green Church News
www.greenchurch.ucaql.com.au



WATCH

Throw the Environment a Lifeline – Documentary
<http://vimeo.com/5975773>



Peter Robinson in Uzbekistan

The so-called Eastern religions tend to support a sustainable non-materialist lifestyle.

Influential Islamic scholar Kabir Helminski suggests both

Islam and the West need to share a return to voluntary simplicity and humane values. In all cases, sustainability requires full engagement of the human spirit.

Growing family values

By Mardi Lumsden

IN THE quiet suburb of Sherwood, in Brisbane's inner south-west, the Cullen-Erickson

family are your average family.

Margaret and Grant, and their children, James (16) and Alexander (12), lead busy lives and are active members of Sherwood

Uniting Church, a congregation known for their focus on justice and sustainability.

The family have also made a commitment to lessen their impact on the earth although Margaret said that commitment varies amongst them.

"We are only a very small way along the way of a more sustainable lifestyle," she insisted.

They have installed a water tank for flushing toilets, running the washing machine and watering plants.

Only the edible plants tend to get watered but the veggie patch includes herbs and fruit trees.

Their chickens are a hit with the neighbourhood children.

"We were delighted to be able to get a larger recycling bin from our local council last year which means more is recycled and less

goes to landfill, although ideally we would be purchasing less packaging that needed to be put in it in the first place," said Ms Cullen-Erickson.

"And there is much that can be passed along to others who might use it when we no longer need it."

16-year-old James has been vegetarian since he was seven.

"When he was seven he talked a lot about not wanting to hurt animals and that being part of his reason," said his mum, who also suspects he didn't like the texture of meat.

"Now his main comment is that he thinks eating meat is gross."

Ms Cullen-Erickson said a growing awareness of the importance of sustainability through the local council and church prompted some of their changes.

"Being raised by parents who were used to making do and living with very little has no doubt

influenced our thinking."

Ms Cullen-Erickson has always enjoyed the challenge of finding new purposes for old items, making homemade gifts, restoring old furniture, and cooking with ingredients from her own garden using water from their tanks.

"It's really about ensuring that we are better stewards of the world we live in, and about not wasting what we have."

She said faith plays a part in the decision but external factors like increased community awareness, the creative challenge, and family also played a big part.

"Economically it makes sense as well," she said. "There are many small and large changes that we can all make to our lives."

"We can continue to let our politicians know that we want to live in a more sustainable way."

"We make choices every day that can influence how much we impact on our world."



Alexander, Margaret, Grant, and James Cullen-Erickson are making small steps to a sustainable future. Photo by Osker Lau

SUSTAINING CREATION

From P.1

Dr Ayre will be one of the Uniting Church members attending and is the editor of one of 12 working groups' papers.

"The purpose of this project is to consolidate and assess the insights gained thus far and determine a sense of direction for this on-going task," said Dr Ayre.

"The focus of the project is not on environmental ethics or on praxis but on the content of the Christian faith."

The National Council of Churches in Australia has formed an eco-mission project to gain national ecumenical cohesion on the issue and this year, for the first time, the National

Church Life Survey will include questions on sustainability and the environment.

In February multi-faith group the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) launched its blueprint to curb climate change.

Developed through consultation with local faith communities President, Thea Ormerod, said the paper presents ARRCC's positions on the Government's climate change policies.

"ARRCC has drawn on the values held dear by many people of

faith, from a range of traditions, including compassion for the poor, living simply, truth-telling and respect for life," he said.



The report says that climate change is a "profoundly moral issue".

"We have a responsibility to care for the ecosystems on which life depends, particularly for (a) people in developing countries who are bearing the negative impacts of climate change earliest and hardest, (b) future generations, and (c) other species with which we share the Earth," it states. "Economies need to be redirected away from the pursuit of unlimited economic 'growth' and towards new understandings of prosperity."

Lifeline Community Care Queensland suggested one way to do that is by cutting down

on purchasing new products.

In their *Throw the Environment a Lifeline* fact sheet they quote the Australian Conservation Foundation's (ACF) *Conservation Atlas* saying that by making more informed choices about what we consume we can dramatically lower our environmental impact.

"By choosing products that demand the least resources, package and transport, your impact is felt in the reduction of greenhouse pollution," it states.

Dr Ayre said, "Even if you feel conscience bound to deny climate change it is difficult to deny the theological imperative to care for creation."

"We need to engage the political processes. Not just in a partisan way but as advocates in the same way the Church needs to speak for those who don't have a voice otherwise."

Communities commit to care for creation

By Mardi Lumsden

THERE IS a global growing awareness of the developed world's reliance on oil – a finite resource that many scientists say is running out.

The Transition Network is a UK based initiative that helps communities “deal with climate change and shrinking supplies of cheap energy (peak oil)”.

The network has now reached Australia and members of the Kenmore Uniting Church, in Brisbane's west, are eager supporters.

Congregation members Brenda and Ted Whybrow are active participants in their local Transition Town network.

“Ted and I responded to a story in the local paper which called for community members interested in taking responsibility for creating a more sustainable suburb,” said Ms Whybrow.

The group met in the congregation's community centre for two years before becoming part of the new Transition Town movement.

“The challenge is for people to feel empowered to take initiatives

themselves,” she said.

One of the key focuses for the Kenmore group is to support a shift to sustainable community practices in the face of peak oil and climate change.

“There is community backlash to both those issues so it is about reframing Transition Towns somewhat and saying something like ‘supporting sustainable communities’.

“To this date this has been done through education/ information evenings, meetings and presentations to local groups, outreach stalls at community functions, liaising with local politicians, and re-skilling workshops.”

Ms Whybrow said as Christians made in God's image, we have the responsibility to care for God's creation.

“The passion in our lives is caring for the earth and so in our retirement years, gardening – of the organic, edible kind – takes up much of our lives.

“The efforts, joys and heartbreaks of this godly activity are shared with neighbours and friends.

“Any excess produce is sold on the Backyard Farmers stall at the

local Farmer's Market under the Transition Town banner.”

She said they were excited to hear of the work of the Synod's Green Church Advocates (Rev Dr Clive Ayre and Rev Judith Dalton) who volunteer their time.

Dr Ayre said the Church needs a “deeply committed rationale” for being more sustainable.

“It's got to be an intentional aspect of our mission,” he said.

“Little things are important, but my big question is what does a sustainable community look like?

“Even looking at it at its most pragmatic level the Church needs to be acting on this matter,” he said.

“The implications for the way we educate the church, the way we train our ministers, indeed the way we run our Synod all involve those aspects.”

Ms Dalton said a sustainable community meets the needs of both human and non-human.

“Theologically, God's economy of salvation is cosmic in scope, not just human-centred,” she said.

“Classical economics is founded on self-interest and greed. Ecological economics seeks motivation to change our



Synod Green Church advocates Rev Dr Clive Ayre and Rev Judith Dalton volunteer their time for the Church.

Photo by Osker Lau

ways, an ecological conversion, for the well-being of the whole community.

“I would like the Church to be a leader in caring for the Earth, but feel we have already lost much of our credibility in environmental circles where ‘dominion’ has been misunderstood.

“Response to the eco-crisis requires a broader spiritual perspective or conversion. We can join with people of other faiths, and of no faith, hopefully enriching our communities as a result of our faith in action.

“In Leonardo Boff's words, the cry of the Earth is intimately associated with the cry of the poor.

“For our own sake, and very survival, we should be caring for the Earth and all God's creatures.

“But it should not be just a

selfish or fearful motivation, but a response to God's goodness and will for justice for all.

“Caring for the Earth is an integral part of Christian discipleship and the Church's mission. Proclaim the Good News to all Creation (Mark 16:15). St Francis would add: Use words only if necessary.”



LISTEN

Australian Association of Mission Studies Conference – *Mission in a Globalised World: A New Vision for Christian Discipleship*. 22-25 September 2011, Mary MacKillop Centre, North Sydney.

Sowing the field for future generations

By Mardi Lumsden

FARMING HAS come a long way in the last hundred years.

Technology has provided us with new ways to produce food but these have not always been kind to the earth.

Synod Green Church advocate, Rev Judith Dalton, is keen to get rid of the idea that rural communities are ‘anti-green’.

“Many farmers are deeply connected to their land and are developing more sustainable practices for soil and biodiversity conservation,” she said.

“In general I think we [in the city] have lost our sense of

connection to and dependence on the land.

“Nor do we appreciate the patient waiting and perseverance of people living on the land.”

Roger and Carolyn Lee, with their adult son Andrew, breed and fatten organic beef cattle on their 800 hectare property, ‘Caroa’, in Emerald.

“I think a lot of people may have considered the advantages of pesticide-free food but most people put it in the too hard basket,” Roger Lee said of when they began farming organically.

“We'd come to the firm belief that the environment was being affected by pesticides.

“We were doing most things required for an organic certification already so we thought the sensible thing to do was to become fully certified.”

The three-year process gave the Lee's organic certification in 2003.

The Emerald Uniting Church members said their faith played a part in their decision to become organic producers.

“I think people who adhere to a Christian faith naturally look for the better way; they are forward looking.

“The whole organic venture has been very successful commercially, environmentally

and from an aesthetic point of view.

“It has in no way impacted on productivity, in fact in some ways it makes life simpler – we can't use pesticides so we don't have to worry about whether we should.

“Our animal health status is excellent. We love it on the land and we enjoy what we are doing,” he said.

Clermont-Capella Uniting Church minister and Central Queensland Presbytery Mining Impact Task Group member, Rev Dr David Ferguson, said the relationship between farmers and the environment starts with Genesis 1.

“The name Adam in Hebrew is linguistically related with concepts of humanity and the soil and the Earth,” he said.

“In the narrative, humanity is seen as part of creation and dependent on creation, but was also given responsibility for and authority over creation.”

He said as a minister in a rural area he meets a large number of horticulturalists and graziers.

“These people are concerned deeply at the intrusion of legislation into their agricultural practices,” he said.

The Lee's are currently struggling with this very issue as mining companies drill their land with government approval.

“There surely is no other area of the economy where legislation can directly damage the efficiency of a business sector to critical acclaim while providing no compensation to the effected industry,” said Dr Ferguson.

Other examples include land clearing legislation, which Dr Ferguson said can damage erosion preventing grass coverage.

“Unfortunately the eroded soil passing into runoff puts damaging sediment on the Great Barrier Reef and the graziers are being required to submit plans to stop the flow of sediment from their properties (at their own expense).

“To consider these impacts individually is obviously a simplistic response to a complex issue where the locals hold valuable information.

“Our discussions regarding farming practice need to move beyond this us/them understanding ... where farmers are seen as potential environmental vandals, and move to a model where partnerships are made to encourage best practises.”

Dr Ferguson said we, as consumers, needed to be accountable for our own choices and the consequent environmental impacts.

“It is one thing to expect best practice and another to be willing to pay for it.”



Andrew Lee on his family's organic farm, ‘Caroa’, Emerald. Photo by Red Earth Films



Oh, Sleeper singer Micah Kinard performs at Easterfest 2011. Photo by Madison Paige/Collections Imagery

Rain doesn't dampen spirits

By Tara Burton

TWENTY THOUSAND people including volunteers, organisers and guests were evacuated from Easterfest when Queens Park flooded on Easter Saturday evening.

The evacuation followed after the main tent partially collapsed during a torrential downfall.

Easterfest CEO Isaac Moody said he is appreciative of the "amazing crew and volunteers" during this unexpected event.

"These situations are never easy. It was pouring rain and people got very wet but they were

safe and we are very thankful for people's graciousness as we had to evacuate them in the pouring rain," he said.

"From a Christian perspective I think we understand that all things work together for the greater good and good things come from difficult situations.

"We were able to move the festival into the city centre in a way that had never been done before."

There were 28 different welfare centres, church halls and places in the community where campers could take refuge for the night.

There has been minor criticism

for organisers not announcing the main tent collapse during the headlining concert at the main outdoor stage.

While this decision may have avoided unnecessary panic, it meant that people at the main stage were unaware of the event or the possibility of evacuating tents or leaving the site.

Andrew Morcom from Kawana Waters Uniting Church said that didn't bother him or his family.

"Apart from getting wet feet it really wasn't that bad where we were. My eldest daughter and her friends had a fantastic

time dancing in the rain and she said that it was probably the best concert she had been to".

Easterfest chaplaincy coordinator and member of St Marks Uniting Church, Mount Gravatt, Leanne Hutton, said the ferocity of the rain during the evacuation was unsettling but the regular updates, music and prayers contributed to the relatively calm atmosphere.

"For me it was one of those times when I absolutely knew I was in the right place with the right people at the right time.

"The chaplaincy team approach we adopted this year

was well prepared and we were able to assist and fill gaps in many areas we never discussed in our initial planning."

Ms Hutton has been greatly encouraged by the positive attitude displayed by the young people with many declaring that it was the best Easterfest ever.

Mr Moody said Easterfest will be held at Queens Park in 2012, however improvements will be made to the venue.

"There is a record interest in next year's festival," he said.

"It's quite genuinely going to be much bigger than this year's festival as a result of the flood."

Easterfest unites Christians

By Tara Burton

TENS OF thousands of Christians united in Toowoomba over the Easter weekend to worship and celebrate at Easterfest.

After 13 years the annual event, held at Toowoomba's Queens Park, remains the largest drug and alcohol free festival in Australia.

Fans were eager to see

headlining bands Switchfoot, Naturally Seven and Newworldson as well as Australian Christian music favourites the Paul Coleman Trio.

Emerging local band Igniting

Sky was excited to be part of Easterfest for the first time.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to meet other like-minded artists and gain inspiration to write new music," said band members Vincent McGovern and Charles McGovern.

Andrew Morcom from Kawana Waters Uniting Church

on the Sunshine Coast said it was the great family environment that has kept him coming back for six consecutive years.

"It's an event where you feel safe," he said.

"From a security point of view we feel safe for our kids to be walking around and having a look at the bands and stalls. It's just a fantastic time for the whole family".

Sebastian Pop is one of the record breaking 1100 volunteers who gave up their Easter break to ensure that the not-for-profit event ran smoothly.

The Brisbane resident was excited to be volunteering for the first time and he found the whole experience to be very rewarding.

"I like encouraging people and helping people out. I want to make a difference in someone else's life," he said.

Seventeen-year-old Luke Poulsen from Ormeau on the Gold Coast said he looks forward to Easterfest every year.

"Easterfest is so awesome.

"It's not just because it has such great live music, you can just feel the spirit of God here.

"It's really amazing!"



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

CENTRE FOR THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT

Uniting Church Theological College Melbourne

The appointee will teach in the field of Old Testament Studies, enabling students of the Theological College and the United Faculty of Theology (an ecumenical Recognised Teaching Institution of the Melbourne College of Divinity) to explore the Old Testament, develop their knowledge and skill for interpreting its texts and to integrate their learning into their theology, preaching, teaching and practice of ministry.

The appointee will participate in the preparation and formation of candidates for the Uniting Church Ministries and resource the wider Uniting Church in understanding the Old Testament.

Appointment effective from 1 January 2012 for a period of 7 years

Closing date: 15 July 2011

Contact for application information and position description: heather.cameron@ctm.uca.edu.au

Applications should be addressed to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee, Centre for Theology and Ministry, 29 College Crescent, Parkville 3052



Centre for Theology & Ministry



Andrew Morcom.
Photo by Tara Burton

Justice finds a voice

By Mardi Lumsden

AROUND THREE hundred Christians from Australia, the Pacific, South East Asia and Africa will gather in Canberra from 17-20 September for the annual Voices for Justice (VFJ) conference.

Organised by Micah Challenge, a coalition of over 30 aid and development agencies including UnitingWorld, participants spend the weekend worshipping and training before meeting with politicians to ask for better aid and action on climate change and to advocate for those in extreme poverty.

World Vision Australia Church Partnerships Manager and Micah Challenge member David Martin said registrations open in mid June and encouraged people with a desire to make a difference for poverty stricken people in developing nations and those interested in grass-roots political change to apply.

"Commonly, this is the type of person who has empathy with the plight of people caught up in poverty, and they would be supportive of missional efforts to help relieve poverty," he said.

"These are people open to

the idea of giving their time and energy to engaging our political leaders to ask for ongoing support of Australia's Foreign Aid Giving."

The conference is open to people as young as 16 and delegates are chosen via a ballot which enables representation from as many different electorates as possible.

"The electorates are chosen on two factors – the significance of the incumbents and the marginality of the electorate," said Mr Martin.

"Politicians in more marginal electorates are more open to listening to people from their electorates."

The Gap Uniting Church Families and Community Worker Rev Richard Cassidy first attended VJF three years ago. He said he was initially reluctant to attend because he thought he had little to offer.

"Looking back it was perhaps the most significant decision I have made in a while in terms of equipping myself for intensive faith formation," he said.

"I say this because of the robust and supportive process that was employed to equip many ordinary people not only in one voice, but with skills and a united platform.

"We had some immediate results for our efforts and that was exhilarating."

Following VFJ 2009 the Senate passed a motion calling on the Australian Government to "further intensify its efforts and actions towards alleviating global poverty, in line with the ideals and aspirations at the heart of the Millennium Development Goals".

"In Australia we are a truly blessed nation, given that half the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day," said Mr Cassidy.

"I saw that as a nation we could remind the U.N. of their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

"One of the by-products is the insights into our political process, its mechanics and how accessible and approachable our politicians are while in Canberra and in the electorate.

"As an Indigenous person I was keen to get a few more of my people involved in the process.

"In my second year there were a number of Indigenous lay people attending.

"One in particular was Eddie Turpin from Cairns who was really apprehensive about his group meeting with larger-than-life politician Mr Bob Katter.



Rev Richard Cassidy speaks with the then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, during the 2009 Voices for Justice conference. Photo courtesy of Theo Masselos and World Vision Australia

"I asked how he went later and he said he had a ball and the most amazing 'by the side' conversation because he was part of Mr Katter's electorate. And so plans were made to link up back at the local scene"

Mr Cassidy said that while the advocacy for the world's poor is the key goal, equipping the people in the pews for the call to advocacy "is an outstanding by-product".

Mr Martin said the conference achieves three things.

"Firstly, it brings 300 Christians from across Australia into federal parliament to engage as many politicians as is possible. Over

the last two years VFJ has met with 136 of 250 sitting politicians on each occasion, which has a huge impact on parliament. "Secondly, it serves to train and motivate people around the issues of poverty, the MDGs, and help them engage in effective non-partisan political action. "And thirdly, anyone who goes to VFJ learns the key things needed to engage in effective political action on any issue that they may be personally passionate about," said Mr Martin.

Registrations open 14 June.

For more information visit www.micahchallenge.org.au

Room in the hall for soaked youth

By Matt Gees

NEARLY 70 young people from the Uniting Church congregations

of Glebe Road, Oxley, Centenary, Karana Downs, Forest Lake and Indooroopilly were camped at Easterfest this year and all were



Bremer Brisbane Presbytery youth camp out in the St Stephen's Uniting Church, Toowoomba, hall after getting flooded out of the Easterfest campsite. Photo by Lissa Foley

caught up in the chaos of the Saturday night flooding.

Indooroopilly youth minister, Rev Josie Nottle, was responsible for 40 young people when the plans for the weekend changed due to a torrential downpour.

"The original plan was to camp out the entire weekend, have a relaxing time and, on Resurrection Sunday, share together in a fairly short and fairly contemporary communion service," said Ms Nottle.

"As the rain came down and we saw that at least one of our tents was not going to survive and that our campsite was in a fairly high flow zone for the water, a few of us

made the decision to find a warm dry place to spend the night."

Thanks to UConnect, the Synod online directory, Ms Nottle contacted Rev Andrew Gillies, minister of St Stephen's Uniting Church, Toowoomba, (the closest Uniting Church to Queens Park) who was happy to accommodate them in the church hall.

Ms Nottle said the main feeling amongst the group was one of relief.

"There was a sense of disappointment, especially about missing Switchfoot, but once they knew their friends were safe, there was excitement as things had changed and, being in a

small space with about 40 people, community is kind of thrust upon you," she said.

A spokesperson from the St Stephen's congregation said there were no negative comments from the predominantly older congregation about the 40 young people sleeping in their hall.

"They attended worship on Sunday morning and were very nice and polite and thanked us for our hospitality," she said.

"They were grateful for a warm and dry place to sleep and especially for real toilets.

"We were very pleased Andrew was able to help them; they would be welcome here anytime."

National Director

OM Australia Transforming Lives and Communities

Operation Mobilisation Australia (OMA) is seeking a new leader to serve in the role of National Director. We are a global, evangelical faith mission movement of over 6000 people, called by God, serving in 113 countries. Our purpose is to recruit, equip and send God's people, in partnership with the Church, to proclaim Christ to the Nations.

OMA is an exciting, action-oriented, entrepreneurial mission who has seen God graciously grow our ministry by greatly increasing the number of workers sent around the world in the last decade. We are seeking an exceptional Christian leader who has a mature relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ demonstrated by a life of applying God's Word, living prayerfully, obediently and humbly dependent on God.

Our new National Director will be a proven experienced leader who has successfully developed and implemented strategy, understands 21st century cross-cultural mission, demonstrates superior communication and people management skills, has a track record of financial management, and whose management style fosters organisational health and growth.

The successful applicant will lead the team from the Melbourne office beginning early in 2012. If you believe God may be calling you to this position please contact chairman.au@om.org for information or application forms. Applications close July 31st.



June 11-14

Lifeline Bookfest, Brisbane

Brisbane Exhibition and Convention Centre,
South Brisbane.

The world's biggest book sale is on again! Millions of books, vinyls, CDs, DVDs, puzzles and board games available. Rare and collectable items for sale too.

For more information visit
www.lifelinebookfest.com.



June 1, 6.30-8.30pm. Queensland Churches Together Annual Service of Reconciliation at the Cathedral of St Stephen, 249 Elizabeth St, Brisbane. The service will be followed by supper. Contact Jela Virzi on 03369 6792 or admin@gct.org.au.

June 3, 7-9pm. Brookfield Uniting Church Melodies in the Field, 2 Upper Brookfield Rd. Rhonda Davidson Irwin conducts Viva la Musica and the Red Hill and Brookfield choirs in a concert featuring music from Bach to The Beatles. Adults \$20, Seniors \$15, Family \$35 Children \$5 and under 5 free. For tickets phone 3378 8369 or contact George Barnes on geobarn39@hotmail.com.

June 4, 9.30am-4pm. Cry of the Earth Eco-Conference at West End Uniting Church, Brisbane. For Christians wanting to integrate faith with environmental concern and action. What indigenous spirituality can teach Christians (Joe Kirk); Loving God, Loving Earth (Judith Dalton); Moving from Concern to Action (Dave Andrews). For more information visit www.tendashoot.net.au.

June 5, 2.30-4.30pm. Official Opening of the H. M. Begbie Building at Cromwell College (UQ). Cromwell College, UQ. Ceremony followed by afternoon tea. Contact Anna East on 3377 1232 or a.east@cromwell.uq.edu.au.

June 13, 7am- 1pm. Boonah Chappy Challenge. Boonah cnr Dover and Macquarie St. 5, 10, 30 or 60 km cycle; 1.5, 5 or 10km run/walk. Events for all ages. www.chappychallenge.com.au. Contact Bruce on 0417 530 696 or b.bartleet@bigpond.com.

June 18, 3-6.30pm. Marriage Enrichment Workshop and Dinner at Indooroopilly Uniting Church, 74 Station Street. Guest speaker, Pat Noller is Emeritus Professor in the School of Psychology at UQ. \$20/couple, childminding available \$5/child over the age of two, including a meal. Contact Penny Foley 3379 4875 or foleypen@gmail.com.

June 18, 10.30am-4pm. Retreat Day. Sessions for guided prayer and meditation. Brookfield Centre for Spirituality, 139 Brookfield Rd, Kenmore Hills, Brisbane. BYO Bible and lunch. Contact Geraldine Wheeler on 34378743 or gwheeler25@bigpond.com.

June 21, 9.30am-12.30pm. UnitingWorld Synod Support Group Qld. Wesley House, 140 Ann St, Brisbane City. Congregations are invited to send representatives. Contact Judith Finau on 3711 4622 or email ljinlau@gmail.com.

June 23, 10.30am- 12.30pm. Annual Mission Thanksgiving Service. St. Andrew's Uniting Church Ann Street Brisbane. Speaker: Caleb Saiqoro former Youth Director for the United Church in the Solomon Islands now studying in Queensland. Bring lunch and enjoy fellowship after the Service. Contact Judith Finau on 3711 4622 or ljinlau@gmail.com.

July 9, 9am-1pm. Geoff Bullock seminar - Grace and Worship: an encounter with the love of God at Elanora Uniting Church. Adults \$20, concessions \$15 or send a group for \$100. Morning tea included. Contact Janine Kinnear on 5534 5817 or church@elanorauniting.com.au.

July 9, 7.30-9.30pm. Geoff Bullock in Concert at Elanora Uniting Church. Spend an evening with the famous Australian songwriter and composer Geoff Bullock. Bring the whole family for \$40. Adults \$20, concession \$10. Supper included. Contact Janine Kinnear on 5534 5817 or church@elanorauniting.com.au.

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



The highlight of the annual Easter program at the Park Church Tongan Congregation at Highgate Hill, Brisbane, was the confirmation of fourteen young members of the congregation on Easter Sunday morning. Rev Murray Fysh and mentors from the Moreton Rivers Presbytery and Park Church met with these young people for months to prepare them for membership of the Uniting Church. Photo by Helen Tualau.

Lay life skills

DR DENNIS Shanks is one of sixteen lay preachers commissioned in the Moreton Rivers presbytery in recent months.

Dr Shanks, a retired U.S. military officer, represents the variety of people engaged in the lay preachers' course.

Presbytery Education Officer, Dr Aaron Ghiloni, said candidate numbers have surged.

"At present we have approximately 50 women and men," he said. "They came from Tongan, Indigenous, Anglo, and Rotuman backgrounds to take part in the *Learning for Living* program."

Dr Shanks said his journey to being a lay preacher was a long one.

After two years of study, he is now equipped and accredited to lead worship at Emmanuel Uniting Church and other congregations that might invite him to preach.

Dr Shanks said he was well aware of many small congregations that cannot



Dr Dennis Shanks receives his accreditation from Dr Aaron Ghiloni.
Photo by Lulu Shanks

support a pastor or minister of the Word, and the scope for trained lay people to take leadership in worship.

Dr Ghiloni said the Presbytery was making good use of its lay preachers, serving rural congregations, providing lunch-time services in Brisbane's CBD and maintaining weekly worship for a small church planted in suburban Bay Park.

Murgon revisited

IN APRIL Alf Chowns, Trinity Wilston Uniting Church member, travelled from Brisbane to Murgon to celebrate his father's, Rev Francis Chowns, first appointment after his ordination in 1921.

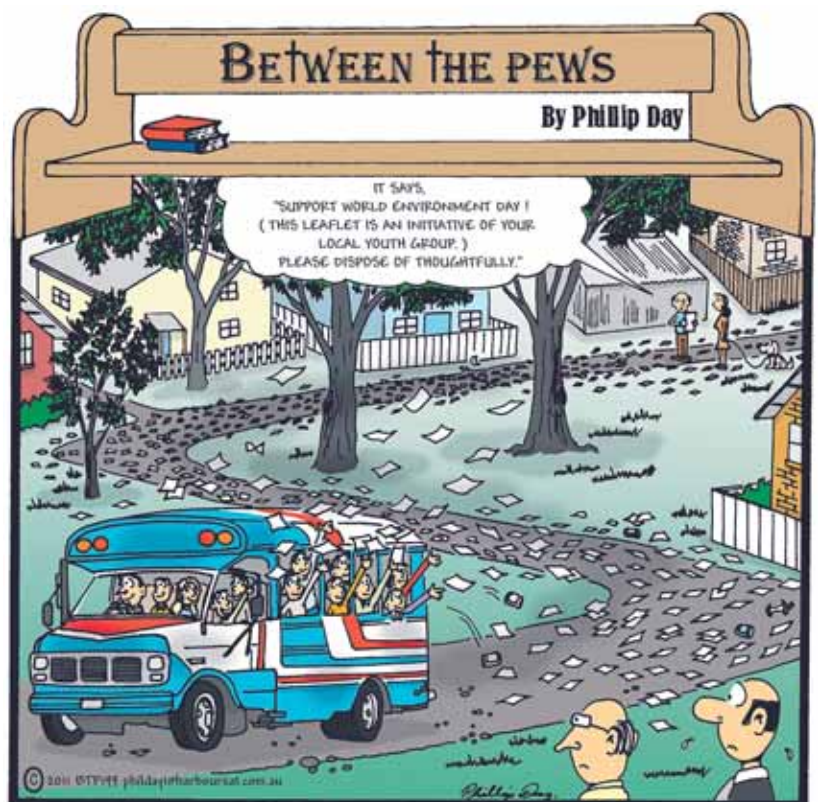
Francis Chowns was the first married minister in Murgon and was also President of the Queensland Methodist Conference (1951-52).

"Dad's only form of transport was by horse and sulky and the rail," he said. "As he had 14 preaching places to fill he was often away from Murgon from Monday until Friday some weeks."

During a special service in Murgon Mr Chowns shared some of the memories his Dad had of his time there.

"My wife Pam recited a poem and Rev Dr Lew Born delivered the sermon."

"Lew paid tribute to my Dad's influence on his life in the Nambour days, encouraging him to pursue his calling for the ministry."



Life Swap: Finding the life you always wanted

By Krish Kandiah, Monarch Books U.K., 2008, RRP \$16.95

Reviewed by Con Graves who, after a fast-paced corporate lifestyle, switched to a life of voluntary simplicity aimed at reducing his impact on the earth and reducing stress in his own life and the lives of those around him. He worships at Newlife Uniting Church on the Gold Coast.

LIFE SWAP introduces the reader to some alternate ways of viewing life through the message of Christ and his ministry.

The author reflects on seven people re-examining or re-evaluating their existence and calling into question how their life choices led them to the point they find themselves at.

Each chapter begins with a window into the life of the character being challenged.

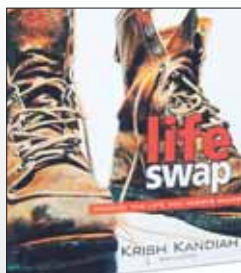
Whether it is Alfred Nobel, who had the opportunity to read his own public obituary

through a mistaken identity, or a young woman living her life in an online fantasy, each character is thrown into questioning their choices.

Each person is then compared with a character in the Bible facing the same philosophical struggles or questions and how their questions and exposure to Jesus helped them positively resolve their choice.

The chapter concludes with a "Lifeswap – aftermath" where the threads are drawn together to shine a light of understanding.

This book would be most



useful to those wrestling with their life direction or challenging the choices they have made.

Life Swap provides good connection with scriptures and the positive example of Christ's life which may help and guide thinking.

Life Swap is written in a light and easily readable style, with many examples of scripture and quotable quotes.

It could benefit from a deeper reflection on the characters' dilemmas, but overall a very readable book.

Faith in Politics: Rediscovering the Christian roots of our political values

By Richard Harries, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2010, RRP \$36.95

Reviewed by Karyl Davison.

DO WE WANT to leave politics to the politicians? It seems that in recent years the predominant answer would be "Yes".

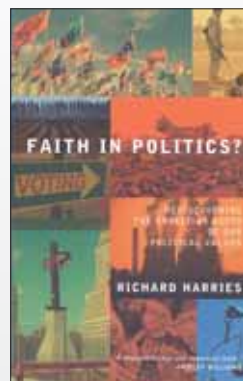
The general public seems to be increasingly disengaged from the political process and increasingly disillusioned with the motives of our political leaders.

Yet, as Mr Harries reminds us, there have been those in all parties (he is referring to the British political system) who were inspired to work for them with altruistic motives.

Faith in Politics? arises out of a conviction that the political framework, institutions, ideas and values, which we enjoy at the same time as taking them for granted and being sceptical about, matter very much.

Mr Harries, Gresham Professor of Divinity, argues that the leading political notions of our time derive not from the Enlightenment, but from a Christian understanding of what it is to be a human being in society.

While there are some in the Christian church who argue that politics is no place for Christian involvement, Mr Harries asks, "How can we love



our neighbour without being concerned about public policy that affects our neighbours?"

The first chapter examines the basis on which the Church might claim to speak in and to the political arena.

It maps the progress from the early church when people simply wanted to be left alone to worship God, to the powerful relationship of church and state under Constantine to our time, when the State now dominates the provision of education, social welfare, and health.

Fascinating too, given the ever present idealisation of democracy, is Mr Harries' discussion around the question, "What makes us think God wants democracy?"

This book is an incisive and compelling reminder that we must engage with the debate.

One Generation from Extinction: How the church connects with the unchurched child

By Mark Griffiths, Monarch, 2009, RRP \$29.99

Reviewed by Paul Clark.

ORIGINALLY WRITTEN as a doctoral thesis, *One Generation from Extinction* is the study of child evangelism, comparing the original Sunday School model with large children's outreach programs of the UK today.

This is a seminal work: one that speaks with authority to the church's precarious position in Western society.

It can be a little laborious at times as you wade through the data and its scope of studying only the larger children's programs was also a little disappointing, but the

author sees past this bias naming principles that can be put into practice in large or small groups.

Mr Griffiths offers ways forward to reach and retain new generations.

He argues that the original Sunday School had outreach and transformation as its aim; its success leading to the revival of Christianity in the 19th century.

As these aims turned inward to indoctrination of member's children, Sunday School waned and so did the church.

He posits that the ailing and ageing church must rediscover, not only the original aims and



practices, but also God's passion and heart to reach unchurched families.

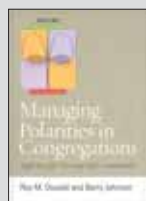
There are no easy answers in this book, only a clarion call to resolute missionary endeavour!

One Generation from Extinction is a book any church serious about having a future – and if there are no children in your midst, your congregation doesn't have a future – should study.

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

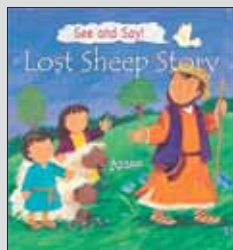
Managing Polarities in Congregations: Eight Keys for Thriving Faith Communities

By Roy M. Oswald and Barry Johnson, The Alban Institute, 2010, RRP \$25



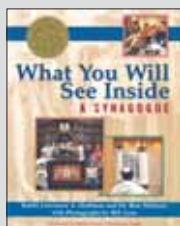
See and Say: Lost Sheep Story

Written by Christina Gooding, Illustrated by Melanie Mitchell, Lion Hudson, 2010, RRP \$6.99



What You Will See Inside a Synagogue

By Rabbi Lawrence A. Hoffman and Dr. Ron Wolfson, Photographs by Bill Aron, Skylight Paths Publishing, Vermont, USA, 2008, RRP \$16.95



Bright Lights, Dark Nights: The enduring faith of 13 remarkable Australians

By Simon Smart, Blue Bottle Books, 2008, RRP \$19.95

Reviewed by Annet Maurer, a biography lover and a member of Hervey Bay Uniting Church.

BRIGHT LIGHTS, Dark Nights follows a common format of short biographies of 13 Christian Australians, some of whom are known to many (Tim Costello and cricketer Justin Langer) and some known only in their community, such as foster mother Carolyn Stedman.

The author has interviewed each of them and written about their backgrounds, how they came to find Christ and how they practise their faith in their workplaces and day-to-day lives.

Their stories aren't tied together, except through their faith, yet overall the stories provide inspiration that Christian living in a modern world is not only possible, but highly relevant and can provide a guidepost in a troubled world.

Each story is well written and sometimes left me wishing



for more about this person's journey – the life was so full, an entire book could be written about their experiences and journey.

However, in the short space of each section, the author clearly articulated what faith meant to the person and how it impacted decisions they had made.

Overall *Bright Lights, Dark Nights* was an easy read with interesting insight into faith in modern, busy Australia.

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 or <http://rainbowbooks.com.au>.

Radio stations join fight against child mortality

By Matt Gees

AROUND FORTY family radio stations from across the nation spoke out on behalf of women and children living in extreme poverty on 12 May in support of Compassion Day.

Established by child advocacy and development agency Compassion Australia, radio stations dedicate their broadcast to raising funds for the work of

Compassion one day each year.

Compassion Australia CEO, Dr Tim Hanna, is encouraged by the overwhelming response.

"We have the resources and knowledge to end poverty in our lifetime—what we have lacked so far is the collective will to make it happen," he said.

"It's exciting to see Australians coming together as one united force to stand for a future where all children are free to live lives rich in opportunity and wellbeing," Dr Hanna said.

Around the world a child dies every four seconds, mostly from preventable causes.

For more information visit www.compassionday.com.au



One of the Vision Radio teams on Compassion Day. Photo courtesy of Matt Gees

Views from Glasshouse to PNG

HAPPINESS, JOY and new friendships abounded in the Glasshouse Country Uniting Church congregation on the Sunshine Coast during April.

Congregation members hosted 21 visitors from Gabagaba United Church in Papua New Guinea, under the leadership of Rev Malaga Bou,

The guests shared in the

congregation's activities and visited local nursing homes bringing the groups alive with harmonious singing and dancing.

Glasshouse Country Uniting Church member Chris Bell said there were some minor cultural differences.

"They were amazed that our men did the washing up after functions and that only two

people lived in our homes (they take care of their ageing parents in their own homes)," she said.

"They were also interested in seeing the Glebe Aged Care accommodation in Caloundra after cheering up the residents with their cheerful interaction and singing."

Ms Bell said the Glasshouse congregation is mainly an older

congregation, but everyone pitched in to make the visit run smoothly.

For more information visit www.glasshousecountry.ucaweb.com.au

On Sunday 12 June please pray for the McKay Patrol

THE MCKAY Patrol covers the vast north west of Queensland and provides pastoral care to geographically one third of the state as well as parts of the Northern Territory.

Please pray for patrol padre Garry Hardingham and his family as he flies around this vast patch of the Australian outback and for the ongoing funding of the Patrol.

With limited Synod resourcing, Mr Hardingham fundraises the total cost of keeping the aircraft in the air

and well maintained.

Please pray for:

- the communities in the channel country, some of which are still isolated by the slow moving waters of the Georgina and Diamantina River systems
- the congregations of Cloncurry, Julia Creek, McKinlay, Dajarra, Boulia and Karumba as they struggle to witness to the surrounding communities
- the School of the Air kids, families, governesses, and staff as they strive to educate remote area children in situations far

removed from most people's experiences

- the young people from Nambour and surrounds who will be travelling up during the June/July holidays to fix airstrips on remote properties. Bless their labours and pray for their travelling safety

Finally, give thanks for the three good seasons of rain that have renewed the spirits of the people after the preceding years of drought.



The PNG visitors enjoyed dropping in on play group. Photo by Chris Bell

On Sunday 19 June please pray for the Annual Mission Thanksgiving Service

THE ANNUAL Mission Thanksgiving Service is a joint venture between Frontier Services and UnitingWorld Synod Support Group (QLD) and will be held at St. Andrew's Uniting Church in Brisbane City at 10.30am on Thursday 23 June. Please join us if you are in Brisbane.

This year the service will be led by UnitingWorld and the speaker is Caleb Saiqoro, former Youth Director for the Uniting Church in the Solomon Islands.

UnitingWorld maintains contact with and supports people in our Partner Churches as well as supporting projects and programs in those same Partner Churches.

UnitingWorld volunteers are placed in the Asia/Pacific Region, India and the African continent working in theological education, medical and health related positions, rural development, child development, IT and administration.

Almost 100 years ago Rev John Flynn began medical services and other programs to support people living in Outback Australia.

Frontier Services continues that work and is a major provider of aged care, health and community services, and pastoral care for the people in outback Australia.

Please pray for:

- the National Director and all personnel at UnitingWorld Head Office

• Synod UnitingWorld Support Groups who keep in touch with volunteers working with our Partner Churches

• UnitingWorld volunteers working in our partner churches, especially those from the Queensland Synod at present working in the Asia/Pacific Region

• our Partner Churches in Asia and the Pacific, India and the African continent

• national and state personnel working with Frontier Services

• ministers, health workers and educators working in outback patrols providing much needed support and care for people in the Outback regions of Australia.

On Sunday 26 June please pray for Northside and Seaforth Uniting Churches

A NUMBER of years ago Northside (Mackay) and Seaforth Uniting Churches formed a cluster – Seaforth being a seaside town 45kms north of Mackay and embracing Ball Bay and Cape Hillsborough communities.

The Northside Worship Centre, opened in 1994, is in the ever growing areas of Andergrove and Eaglemount Heights through to what is known as the Northern Beaches.

Services are held regularly at Seaforth where the average attendance is 16 and a team of five lay people from Northside work with our minister, Rev Peter Aay, to allow him to lead the Communion Service each month in Seaforth and cover Northside in his absence.

Sunday 22 May saw Seaforth celebrate their 50 year anniversary.

Long-time member and elder, Marie DesBois, provided historical information for the

preparation of a memorial booklet, which is available to those interested.

Five young people and two adults have recently been confirmed. Pray that this time in the lives of these precious folk will allow them the grace of understanding just how much God loves them.

We also pray for the families of children brought to the Northside congregation for Baptism. May they recognise the importance of maintaining a close connection with their church family.

Please pray for our various groups who meet during the week.

May the life of our congregations be Spirit-filled at all times enabling all to pray and work together "as the family of God's people, proclaiming Jesus Christ as Lord and seeking every opportunity to lead people into a life saving relationship with him".

Climate cause misses point

I WAS interested to read, but rather disturbed by the letters in the *May Journey* against the UnitingCare support for carbon pricing.

Whether one believes in a human cause of climate change or natural climate change is not the point.

There is observable evidence of a changing climate.

The issue for me is that if our current lifestyle and use of natural resources will significantly disadvantage future generations, then we are compromising the high standards of "love your neighbour" and fair social justice.

We pay for use of resources according to our measured use, including effluent and waste disposal. Surely paying

for our disposal of CO₂ into the atmosphere is quite appropriate and will lead to a more considered approach to use of resources.

If we are in any doubt about how we might use resources in a socially and morally equitable manner then www.fairshareinternational.org has some good guidelines.

Instead of continuously debating whether CO₂ is a cause of changing or variable climate, the church needs to grab the opportunity that comes with a potentially changing climate whether it is more extreme events as we have seen this year or a gradual change, and work out an appropriate response and message for people.

Some churches were very responsive to the floods with variable success, but a big picture

view is needed.

I seriously despair for the future of the established church if we cannot address a changing climate with a meaningful story and response that is seen to be relevant and meaningful by the non-churched and the church alumni.

The evidence is that we will leave it too late because of our narrow and blinding ideologies.

The Michael Hulme book *Why we disagree* about climate change: understanding controversy, inaction and opportunity, is well worth reading about how to see an opportunity and respond to it.

Roger Shaw
Graceville



Lost Liberation? Not in Australia.

I APPLAUD the success of the women's movement over the past 100 years or so here and overseas.

There is no doubt that the rights of women need to be high on the agenda for creating a just society, particularly where there are cases or cultures that discriminate based on gender.

But why is success in women's liberation (in the West) always defined by work

and education?

Surely a definition for liberation should include freedom from oppressive stereotypes, or self-loathing or lack of self-worth.

I don't see this liberty as the result of better jobs, promotions or pay.

Liberty for the church is about freedom to love and be loved. It is defined by God's grace, not employment statistics.

Mental health statistics must

back me up here. High stress jobs, pressure to succeed; are these not a type of anti-liberation that just might imprison women again to an unjust stereotype?

I say rise up women, find your own liberation and be not shackled by the definitions of liberty imposed by an income success driven world.

Craig Mischewski
Townsville



Warming assumptions revisited

OF LATE, a friend of mine, feeling unwell, went into details about his physical symptoms.

Now I am somewhat of an expert, be it quantum physics or chaos theory with medical expertise being my forte having studied web sites, read blogs and dipped into a book or two.

I told him his condition was trivial and to do nothing.

Three medical experts told him differently; in fact, he had contracted a serious illness. Chastened, I now

hesitate to make 'knowledgeable' pronouncements about matters outside my professional field.

As for global warming and CO₂ emissions, I now tend to give credence to the agreed upon, peer examined evidence of the majority of scientists world-wide who have worked for decades in this field with published articles in, for example, *Nature*, the international weekly journal of science.

I question the credentials of the naysayers, their expertise,

objectivity and superficial glib denials.

I question their almost mantra-like explanations, quite often borrowed, of complex issues not studied in depth but reacted to emotionally.

I endorse the stand taken by UnitingCare regarding a carbon price, do not view it as an endorsement of political tax propaganda but rather as a considered attempt to safeguard the world created for us.

John Broere
Kuluin



Theory, not fact

MAURICE HERRON and A.W. Ken Cutmore (letters, *May Journey*) are right to be upset by the intimations that the Uniting Church as a whole or UnitingCare "welcomes Carbon price".

This is a party political policy with little justification in fact.

To be fair to UnitingCare, UnitingCare NSW.ACT published a discussion paper relating to theological justification for governments to "aim at a zero greenhouse gas emissions level by 2020" and "invest in renewable energy that ultimately replaces fossil fuel energy sources within the next 10 years."

UnitingCare NSW.ACT requested comments on the discussion paper.

I intended to comment but when I read the paper I found it so blatantly one-sided that I realised all comments, other than those supportive of the "Anthropogenic Global Warming" (AGW) supposition, would be ignored. Apologies if I was wrong.

It was not a discussion paper on the possibility of AGW, but one that completely accepted AGW as a given, even quoting Professor Garnaut on the "high risks of dangerous climate change".

Some people refer to the "consensus of science" on AGW. Bluntly, there was a consensus of scientists 600 years ago that the sun went round the earth.

Two hundred years ago there was a consensus that the earth was rather less than 10000 years old, and even in the 1950s "continental drift" was dismissed as a crackpot theory. So a consensus is worthless.

Suggested reading for those interested is: *Heaven + Earth* by Ian Plimer, *Climate: the Counter Consensus* by Robert Carter and *The Hockey Stick Illusion: Climategate and the Corruption of Science* by Andrew Mountford.

Dudley Horscroft
Banora Point



On women and climate

I FIRMLY agree with Mardi Lumsden's article on women's rights (*May Journey*).

As a chinese leader said recently, women hold up half the sky. It is about time this was acknowledged by the male portion of the community.

Some form of quotas for women appears to me be the only way this will happen; well said Mardi.

The two anti climate changers letters dismay me.

As the United Nations says the science is sound and robust and 97 per cent of the scientific community agree.

If we do not take action to reduce our carbon dependency we doom the fate of future generations. The Uniting Church is correct in urging action; it is the Christian thing to do.

Keith Bedford
Moggill



No new carbon

"THE POLITICS of Food" (*April Journey*) refers to meat production and states that "nearly one-fifth of greenhouse gas is generated by livestock production". A basic truth in chemistry is that matter cannot be destroyed.

A molecule of carbon remains a molecule of carbon.

In livestock production in Australia, the major diet for cattle is grass.

Growing grass involves photosynthesis where the grass plant absorbs carbon dioxide (CO₂).

The plant keeps the carbon to grow plant cells and sets the oxygen free.

The livestock eat the plant and use some carbon to grow muscle tissue while some combines through the chemistry of the digestive system to become gasses that they belch etc.

Much of this gas is carbon dioxide so we have the classic recycle where a molecule of carbon comes from the

atmosphere, through a plant then into an animal then back into the atmosphere.

Whatever is not used for growth becomes CO₂ again.

Livestock do not produce new carbon; they simply recycle what is already in the atmosphere.

We should not compare transport emissions from fossil fuels with livestock production.

Fossil fuels introduce carbon that has been locked out of the atmosphere for millions of years. That is 'new' carbon.

Australia has a massive grass resource that livestock use to produce clean, high quality, protein rich food.

Our plant industries rely heavily on petrochemical industries for fuel, fertiliser and chemical sprays.

I produce clean grass fed livestock so I have a vested interest. But I am pleased to do so and contribute to the effort to feed the world.

Rod Barrett
Bowen



Is Zachary Gees our youngest reader? Thanks to dad, Matt, for sending this in.

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.

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How are you called to care for creation?

Alistair Macrae

IT ISN'T listed in the traditional lists of Christian virtues but in formulating a contemporary list a strong biblical and theological case could be made for living sustainably.

The developed world's greed (one of the seven deadly sins) is placing the planet in peril through massive over-consumption by the rich.

The gap between rich and poor is increasing, species are disappearing due to habitat decimation, the world's climate is changing ... we know all this.

God's command to humans to be stewards of the earth is coming into new prominence.

Decisions as basic as what to eat (less meat? fewer food miles?), how we travel (ouch, I fly a lot), what we wear, how we use water and energy; and renewed attention

to the difference between needing and wanting, have become discipleship questions.

Since our family has started paying attention to this we have gone solar, installed a water tank, tried to reduce car use, simplified our lives generally, planted vegies and changed our diet.

I find the phrase 'reducing our footprint' a useful one to guide me as I seek better to love God and my neighbour, understanding

that 'neighbour' includes my neighbours not yet born as well as our non-human neighbours, other creatures of God with whom we share life on this beautiful yet fragile earth.

Rev Alistair Macrae is President of The Uniting Church in Australia.

Suzie Castle

MY CALL to care for creation is based in scripture and woven into my call to discipleship.

As discipleship is expressed through stewardship, I am accountable and responsible for how my imprint impacts creation and calls me to seek actions that glorify God.

The stewardship mandate to care for, or serve, God's creation (Gen 2:15), motivates me to tread lightly upon this earth.

And the knowledge that Jesus died to reconcile all of creation to God, motivates me to live green and create awareness of the impact the world faces due to global warming.

A few changes I made toward sustainable living are to use biodegradable cleaners, recycle properly and car pool to the farmers' market once a week.

While science might not convince everyone that global warming is a reality, people's stories convince me.

I create awareness of the impact global warming has upon the developing world as well as our neighbours in the Pacific Islands.

It is the poorer countries who report reduced rainfall, increased severity in cyclones and sea level rises.

The king tides have increased to an extent that fresh water wells are filled with sea water which has impacted on the community's ability to grow food.

When there is no food and no money to fly in fresh water, there is poverty.

Following Jesus means engaging life in a way that makes a difference and being aware of the balance between my needs and the needs of others.

Caring for creation is that process of facing the present with the future clearly in mind.

Rev Suzie Castle is minister with The Hills Uniting Church in Brisbane.

Ryan Drake

BRISBANE BOYS' College Sustainability Group was established in 2010 to address the growing concern amongst some students as to the school's response to issues revolving around climate change.

There is an increasingly growing movement of youth today who are called to be stewards for the environment and protect God's creation for future generations to enjoy.

In Deuteronomy we learn that "Heaven and the heaven of heavens belong to the LORD your God, the earth with all that is in it", and so as we are only here on Earth for a short amount of time, we have a responsibility to uphold the great nature of this planet for others to enjoy once we leave to go home.

In the past year the sustainability group has completed a number of projects to reduce the school's overall environmental impact.

We have developed a paper waste recycling scheme to reduce the amount of paper being thrown out each year and have strategically planted herb gardens in high traffic areas, encouraging both teachers and parents to openly collect herbs and take them home at the end of the day!

In the future, school camps will be more sustainably managed by means of rethinking how we dispose of food and other wastes whilst away from school.

Ryan Drake is the Vice Captain of Brisbane Boys' College.






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.

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