



INDIGENOUS AMBASSADOR

"This is a great opportunity to act as a role model for the next generation."

Donna Corrie, Blue Care **PAGE 6**



DEMONISING INDONESIA

"The way forward is through respectful engagement."

John Barr, UnitingWorld **PAGE 10**

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IN PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

By Mardi Lumsden

THERE'S NOTHING new about the pursuit of happiness.

ABC Science writer Judy Skatssoon said in her article *Hunting for happiness*, "We've been doing it ever since we started looking for a dry cave and something good to put in our stomachs."

"The ancient Greeks turned happiness into a lifestyle philosophy, with the Epicurean school advocating a simple life and simple pleasures as the key to happiness."

As Ms Skatssoon said, no matter how we look at it, happiness is serious business.

Governments all over the world are now looking beyond the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to discover the true health of their nations.

The Australian National Development Index (ANDI) project was a resolution of the 2020 Summit in 2008.

The project aims to develop a wellbeing index for Australia that will sit beside the GDP to determine Australia's health.

UnitingJustice National Director, Rev Elenie Poulos, said the Uniting Church has been part of the project from its very beginning.

"It does what the GDP was never designed to do, and that is to measure our progress in terms of the wellbeing of the nation: how are our health and relationships, how resilient are our communities?"

"We think as long as GDP is going up, then our health and wellbeing are going up, but of course that is not how human societies work."

The Uniting Church got involved after the release of the *Economy of Life* statement endorsed by the 12th Assembly.

One of the resolutions from that was that the Uniting Church would support the development of a national wellbeing index.

Ms Poulos is also on the National Interim Steering Committee and the Church has been involved in getting the project running including an Assembly contribution.

"It is a community led project, so what counts towards a measurement of wellbeing will develop out of national conversations."

The project will use current community networks to ask the right questions about what is important to people.

They will then come up with a series of domains (e.g. health care), then break each domain down into sections that people have said are important.

"In the long run we hope it will become an advocacy tool for improving public policy," said Ms Poulos.

"Normally we are responding to public policy that runs on media cycles and three-year electoral cycles."

"This is a project that can make a difference that I believe will eventually embed itself in our communal way of seeing our world."

She said the Church's intention was to make faith and spirituality an integral part of the ANDI project.

Continued P.8



Churches call for peace in Sudan

By Emma Halgren

ESCALATING VIOLENCE against civilians in Sudan's disputed South Kordofan state is leading to a major humanitarian catastrophe and in June threatened to return war to Sudan just weeks before the independence of South Sudan.

Several eye-witness accounts indicate that government troops are carrying out "house-to-house" searches in the towns, pulling out suspected opposition sympathisers and in some cases killing them on the spot.

Act for Peace, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia, has received numerous reports from project partners in Sudan that survivors have locked themselves into their homes, without food or water, for fear of being killed.

Others have fled to the Nuba Mountains where they are being pursued by helicopter gunships.

More than 60 000 people have fled recent fighting between Sudanese government troops and members of the former southern rebel group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), in Kadugli, the capital of South

Kordofan, according to the United Nations.

Act for Peace's project partner, the Sudan Council of Churches, reports of violence and mass atrocities against civilians by both government troops and the SPLA, including bombing of villages, killings, looting and burning of property.

The Sudan Ecumenical Forum, a peace network of Christian churches that has worked in Sudan for nearly two decades, said the international community must pressure both warring parties to fulfil their obligation to protect civilians.

"A humanitarian crisis on an enormous scale is unfolding in South Kordofan state. We appeal to world leaders and governments to pay attention to this situation and urgently protect people," said its co-chair Eberhard Hitzler.

Food and fuel are increasingly scarce and humanitarian assistance is urgently needed, but efforts to bring aid to those affected are being severely hampered by the fighting and the presence of troops.

Act for Peace Executive Director, Alistair Gee, said, "The international community



Sudanese women waiting to vote in the January 2011 referendum in the southern capital of Juba. Photo by Nils Carstensen/ACT

must act urgently, calling for an immediate ceasefire, declaring South Kordofan a no-fly zone and enabling emergency workers to deliver relief."

Act for Peace has supported its project partners in impressive conflict reduction and peace building work in South Sudan.

One Act for Peace partner has been clearing remnants of war including landmines and small arms ammunition since 2004.

In the lead-up to the January 2011 referendum the Sudan Council of Churches conducted peace assessments and delivered training and civic education to

ensure elections were peaceful and fair.

"This violence, just weeks before South Sudan gains its hard-won independence on 9 July, threatens to unravel the whole peace process to which so many people have dedicated themselves," said Mr Gee.

Compassion at the heart of World Refugee Day

By Amy Goodhew

THE UNITING Church called for compassion and a renewed commitment to our international obligations on World Refugee Day, Monday 20 June.

Uniting Church President, Rev Alistair Macrae, said it was important to remember this is not a new issue.

"This year we rightly celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and 57 years since Australia became a signatory.

"Until recently Australia has had a proud history of upholding our international obligations under the Convention," he said.

"We have been generous and compassionate as we welcomed asylum seekers and refugees to a

safe life in our country.

"This year however the celebration is accompanied by profound lament - Australia has turned its back on the spirit of the Convention.

"Asylum seekers fleeing situations of violence and persecution arrive, as they are entitled to do under the Refugee Convention, to find themselves being used like political footballs.

"Our political leaders have embarked on a race to the bottom, with the prize being awarded to the party which can deliver the harshest penalties."

Mr Macrae said Australia should be a model country in demonstrating compassion to all people in need.

"Instead, in the face of just a few thousand people arriving

by boat, we have hardened our hearts.

"Now we risk losing any moral authority to encourage other countries to better protect the rights and dignity of all people and uphold their own commitments to human rights," he said.

"The Uniting Church in Australia has long called for compassion and moral leadership in Australia's treatment of vulnerable people, including asylum seekers.

"It is our firm view that as a nation we must live up to our international obligations and display the generosity we would wish to be known by.

"The proposed plan to 'swap' people with Malaysia is an abrogation of our moral responsibility as a stable



A Malaysian immigration detention camp. Photo by refugee expert Dr Graham Thom from a 2009 research trip and courtesy of Amnesty International

and wealthy nation and our responsibilities under the 60-year-old Convention," said Mr Macrae.

"Malaysia is not a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention and has a record of human rights

abuses against asylum seekers and refugees.

"Our God calls us to welcome the stranger, care for the neighbour in need and treat others as we ourselves would want to be treated," he said.



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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:

Where is the joy in church?

I FEEL sorry for our minister. She's a happy person, and certainly reflects a lot of joy whenever I speak with her.

She asked me to help one Sunday morning by leading the congregation in our prayers of thanksgiving. I must say I was thrilled to be involved in that way and I arrived at the service quite excited.

Perhaps I was paying more attention than usual, but I began to notice something during the call to worship. The Bible reader turned a joyful psalm that spoke of rejoicing in the Lord and coming to his house with thanksgiving and praise ... into a monotone recitation.

I wasn't expecting cries of, "Praise God!" or "Hallelujah". (I sneak away to a charismatic church some evenings for that.)

Then again, I wasn't expecting what I saw when I went up to pray. There were rows of deadpan faces.

The reflected joy of the Lord would have been great. I would have been satisfied with a little happiness shown here and there. How about a smile, folks?

What must it be like to stand up there and see that every Sunday morning?

I went home pondering about the joy of the Lord that is our strength.

Not the bank balance or the volunteerism, not the committees or the councils, but the joy of the Lord as something that strengthens us.

The New International Version mentions joy 244 times. I'm not proof texting, I'm simply adding up.

What doesn't add up is our lack of emotion, whether happy or sad.

We're good at the head stuff in the Uniting Church. We think about God. We have a rather intelligent faith and our clergy emphasise "good theology".

So they should.

We're not so good with the heart stuff. We rarely express how we feel in the presence of God. Unless of course we feel nothing as we sit there and nod from time to time.

Learning isn't hard for most of us; spiritual vitality is.

Perhaps our spirits are more closely connected to our emotions than our intellect.

Education, from sermons and books, can be measured and assessed, but we feel our way as we develop a trusting relationship with God.

In my experience of relationships, sometimes I smile and sometimes I cry when I'm with the one I love. I never sit with a blank stare.

Joyful faith is like the smiles missing from our faces: "a hope in things unseen!"

The art of belonging

By Jane Moad

BUDDING AND established young artists are invited to enter the 2012 Calendar Art Competition.

Thirteen artworks will be chosen to create a calendar that showcases and celebrates the life of the Uniting Church across the whole of Queensland.

Young people between the ages of five and 17 can submit

their original paintings, drawings, photography, collage or digital design based on the theme "Belonging, together as church".

Throughout the *Together on the way, enriching community* journey, congregations and activities of the Church have been encouraged to think about how the 2020 Vision could be lived out in their community.

This is a chance for creative young people to show what it

means for them to be part of the Church by answering the question: What does belonging as part of the Uniting Church mean to you?

All artworks submitted will be featured online, while winning entries will be featured in the calendar to be distributed across Queensland.

Winning artists also have the opportunity to make a difference to their nominated charity or activity; for each winning entry, the Queensland Synod will donate \$100 towards helping the community.

The competition runs from 1-31 August 2011. Winning entries will be announced at the 29th Synod meeting on the Sunshine Coast in October.

Congregations, schools and activities of the Uniting Church are encouraged to invite their young people to enter the competition. Invitation kits will be posted during July. Calendars will be available from late November 2011.

For more information visit www.together.ucaqld.com.au/artcompetition



Andrew Williams with his winning artwork for the 2008 U.C.I.S. calendar. Photo courtesy of Jane Moad

Promoting prayer in Queensland

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, five areas of priority for the next two years have been identified.

Focus Group B is working on promoting prayer and spirituality in the Uniting Church throughout Queensland.

Focus Group B convener and Moderator-elect, Rev Kaye Ronalds, said the Uniting Church is a "prayerful, listening church" but prayer could have a higher priority in the life of the Church. "Prayer could get more airplay," said Ms Ronalds.

"As the group began to explore promoting prayer we realised that there are all kinds of prayer happening across the state.

"But we could be doing better at prayer and at both learning about and practising Christian spirituality in its many styles."

Focus Group B saw that across

Queensland most congregations have a prayer group that meets to pray about the life of the congregation and community.

Jane Bell has participated in a prayer group at Trinity Wellington Point Uniting Church for more than 20 years.

"Though the time of week has changed, the purpose remains the same - to pray for our congregation, for the wider church and its leaders, and for our Redlands community and leaders in Government both local and federal," she said.

"Praying together and hearing how God has answered our prayer or produced changes in situations we couldn't control encourages our faith."

Ms Ronalds said the group had heard of exciting prayer groups, seminars and retreats around the state and were interested to hear more.

"Perhaps there are some meeting in hospitals or chapels at aged-care facilities?" said Ms Ronalds.

"I hope that we can have a

prayer roster for the week of Synod again this time. I would certainly value the prayers of the Uniting Church.

"We wonder what it might look like to be United in Christ in Prayer?"

To be part of the Focus Group B reference group email kaye.ronalds@ucaqld.com.au.

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



Rev Kaye Ronalds. Photo by Osker Lau

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Mercy on the high seas

By Matt Gees

IMAGINE GIVING up a comfortable job as a nurse in a regional hospital to work for a charity, on a boat, for no pay.

Bundaberg Uniting Church member, Ellen Venz, has done just that when, in June, she began a four month placement on Mercy Ships International Hospital flagship *Africa Mercy*.

Ms Venz said she was excited to volunteer on board the world's largest charity hospital ship which includes six operating rooms, intensive care and ward bed space for up to 78 patients. It

has a volunteer crew from more than 30 nations onboard.

"I've always had itchy feet and love travelling and meeting people," said Ms Venz. "Lately I've had a strong feeling that ... I would really like to give something back next time I go."

After seeing a Mercy Ships volunteering brochure that said "best job in the world – worst pay in the world", Ms Venz felt it was a nudge from God.

Mercy Ships is an international Christian charity described as a global charity that has operated hospital ships in developing countries since 1978.

Ms Venz is an intensive care nurse with nearly 10 years of nursing experience under her belt. She said one of the things that attracted her to Mercy Ships was the familiar environment of working in an intensive care nursing team in a hospital.

"This group in particular needed intensive care nurses, whereas other areas have more of a need for community nurses or midwives," she said.

Ms Venz is grateful to a number of people for helping her on this mission trip, having to raise the money to fund her placement on the ship.



Bundaberg Uniting Church member Ellen Venz onboard *Africa Mercy*. Photo by crew

"I've relied a lot on the generosity of others," she said. "I've been living with my parents which I am extremely grateful for."

"Friends and family members have also donated and I've given

talks in the community to Rotary and CWA who have been very supportive financially."

For more information visit www.mercyships.org

Sustaining the Stanley River Covenant

By Della Lopez

ON 1 June 2001 a Local Covenant was signed between the Anglican Parish of Kilcoy, the Lutheran Redeemer Church, Woodford, the Stanley River Catholic Parish and the Kilcoy Uniting Church Congregation.

The Covenant committed the four churches to work together in love, to pray and care for one another and to live together in fellowship to the greater glory of God.

Over the last fourteen years the Covenant partners have

lived up to this commitment and have reached out to the local community together by providing breakfasts and cooperative Religious Education in the state schools, fellowship at E-Cafe, reaching out to the needy and in many other ways.

On 28 May 2011 Archbishop John Bathersby, Canon Richard Tutin (Anglican), Rev Vince Gerhardt (Lutheran) and Rev Andrew Gunton (Moreton Rivers Presbytery, Presbytery Minister, Uniting Church) joined in the celebrations at St Mary's Catholic Church Woodford to give thanks

for the blessings received over the past years and to look forward to the challenges of the future with a renewed spirit of cooperation and enthusiasm.

Church leaders were united in their praise of the efforts of the faith communities in their resolve to work together and expressed the hope that the example set would be replicated across Australia.

In so many ways the ecumenical community has given witness of their shared Christian experience.

There have been challenges, in



Clergy share a laugh at the celebration service on 28 May. Photo courtesy of Della Lopez

particular the inability to share Eucharist. In the meantime there

is great resolve to continue the good work in the community.

Faith and hope in the Lockyer Valley

TWO RETIRED ministers in the Lockyer Valley are tackling the Synod's call to assist in sustaining communities which have faced the trauma of devastating floods.

With support from the Synod's Disaster Relief Funds, the congregations of Gatton and Laidley / Hatton Vale have commissioned Rev Geoff Pankhurst and Rev Bob Heathwood to exercise this

important recovery ministry.

Soon after the floods swept through the region retired minister, Rev Bev Ham, and Frontier Services Patrol Padre in Charleville, Rev John Case, arrived to assist.

Now, different needs are surfacing which are causing anxieties in the communities so Mr Pankhurst and Mr Heathwood will attempt to meet those needs.

Mr Heathwood said he has already discovered how receptive people are to this initiative.

One business in Laidley was ruined by the January flood. The owner despaired of not being able to pay her bills and survive.

She shared a story with Mr Heathwood. She prayed for a miracle: for an angel to help her.

A friend, another business owner, came to her with an offer

to help begin again. Now she has begun growing her business again and thanks God for this blessing.

In Grantham, Mr Pankhurst has discovered how much people want to talk to try and make sense of the events and to be encouraged to move on with hope.

Due to the generosity of others, he was able to get a replacement piano to a girl whose piano was destroyed in the flood.

A generous man at Sandgate donated it and a kind Hatton Vale removalist delivered it for free.



Rev Bob Heathwood and Rev Geoff Pankhurst. Photo courtesy of Bob Heathwood

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For more information contact Grahame Tainton – Hon Sec Q S L P A – 3279 0185 gwtandwt@bigpond.net.au

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Call 1300 787 247 and ask for Jacqueline to register your event or go to our website, www.frontierservices.org and look for the **Great Outback BBQ** logo to download your registration form.

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Ambassador in Blue Care ranks

BLUE CARE Indigenous Co-ordinator in Far North Queensland, Donna Corrie, has been appointed as an Ambassador with the Australian Government's Indigenous Education Ambassadors program.

Ms Corrie, a Torres Strait Islander based in Cairns, said she was overwhelmed when she received the letter from the Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth, the Hon Peter Garrett MP, confirming her appointment.

"It was a wonderful moment," she said. "It is such an honour to be part of a program that includes so many Indigenous leaders of high calibre such as the Rev Shayne Blackman, who is also an Ambassador."

"I feel this is a great opportunity to act as a role model for the next generation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders."

The Indigenous Education Ambassadors Program provides for successful Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to

visit educational settings all over Australia to help promote achievement in education to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

At Blue Care, Ms Corrie's work includes working with and recruiting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees to Blue Care's Indigenous Employment Program, promoting cultural awareness and improving access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to Blue Care's services.



Indigenous Education Ambassador Donna Corrie. Photo by Wendy McDougall www.wendymcdougall.com.au

"The program is vital in leading the way for Indigenous employment and closing the gap for people in our communities."

Ms Corrie will also speak at the four-day National Network of Indigenous Leaders Leadership Plus conference in July. She will

be one of three Alumni members talking about their success stories.

"I see this as a fantastic professional development opportunity and progression towards strengthening Blue Care's already successful Indigenous Care and Employment Strategy," she said.

Great Outback BBQ serves the frontier

By Rebecca Beisler

THIS SEPTEMBER Frontier Services will launch its new fundraiser, the Great Outback BBQ.

The call is for people across Australia to host their own Great Outback BBQ event to raise money to support the work of Frontier Services in the Outback.

The Ladies' Day Fellowship from The Gap Uniting Church was one of the first groups in Queensland to register their event, to be held at the church on Saturday, 17 September.

Fellowship secretary Jenna Edwinsmith said The Gap Uniting

Church had a strong affiliation with those living in remote and isolated parts of Australia.

"One of our members was a nurse with the (Australian) Inland Mission many years ago and we have just carried on the support," she said.

The Fellowship gives a regular donation to the Burke and Wills Patrol in central Queensland while three of their members attend the Frontier Services Auxiliary Queensland meetings.

Members of Middle Ridge Uniting Church in Toowoomba are also busy planning a Great Outback BBQ event.

Church Administrator Marga-

ret Spinks said the congregation felt a connection with Frontier Services and wanted to be part of the event.

Its Adult Fellowship group is a regular supporter of the organisation while some church members have travelled to Birdsville for the annual races to assist with Frontier Services fundraising activities there.

Hosts choose when, where and how they put their event together and will be sent a BBQ Host Pack.

For more information or to register call 1300 787 247 and ask for Jacqueline or go to www.frontierservices.org



Former Inland Mission nurse Marjorie Longton (front right) celebrates her 90th birthday with members of The Gap Uniting Church Ladies' Day Fellowship (from left) Lyn Orchard, Flo Holdway, Mavis Algate, Alma Davie, Marjorie Longton, and Janice Harris. Photo by Jenna Edwinsmith

New need for emergency relief

By Ben Pennings

TENS OF thousands of Brisbane residents felt the financial impact of the Global Financial Crisis and January's floods but for the poorest citizens these events have left them in dire need of help to survive.

Wesley Mission Brisbane's (WMB) Emergency Relief services

provide food parcels, household items and basic financial help to those most in need.

Emergency Relief Services manager, David Baker, has a unique perspective.

"With the GFC we started to see more people who were working and comfortable, and had no idea they would ever have to access a service like ours.

"We saw people affected by the floods who lost everything."

The majority of WMB's Emergency Relief recipients are under 35 years old and on a Disability Support Pension, mainly due to mental illness; many are homeless. But this demographic is changing.

"We are seeing more aged pensioners which is significant as that age group is traditionally reluctant to seek financial support

and have much more experience in managing with less," he said.

"We are also seeing more people for the first time or who haven't seen us for years."

The Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS) has released a series of reports on the cost of living for Queenslanders.

QCOSS president, Karyn Walsh, said, "A basic standard of living is simply unreachable for many Queenslanders."

Services are also at risk. Extra funding Emergency Relief services received because of the GFC is going to be reduced.

Consequently they are looking for donors, corporate partners and volunteers to serve the 10000 people they assist each year.

For more information contact David Baker on d.baker@wmb.org.au or 3221 6309

Calendar art competition

What does belonging mean to you?

Young people aged five to 17 are invited to creatively express their ideas on the theme *Belonging, together as church* for the 2012 Calendar Art Competition.

Entries close 31 August 2011.

For more information and guidelines for entry, visit www.together.ucaqld.com.au/artcompetition

The Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod

together on the way enriching community

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.ucaqld.com.au>

NOMINATIONS CLOSE COB Friday 19 August 2011

Laughing with the divine

By Mardi Lumsden

LOUISE TOWLER is a Christian comedian based in Perth.

When she first came to Australia from the UK the mother of four lived next to a young woman with depression.

"I used to sit with her to try to make her laugh."

One of these stories became her show *Big Purple Undies* which she wrote about a lady she used to teach Sunday School with.

"She really wanted a husband.

"We joked that 'when you get to my age' you're desperate.

"The next week she came to Sunday School really hyper and when I asked her what was the matter, she opened her handbag and got out this pair of purple underpants.

"She said 'I've got to show my faith, I'm going to hang this on my bedpost and pray that God is going to bring me a man'.

"I'm laughing my head off, absolutely in stitches.

"Six weeks later she got a man and got married."

Ms Towler said a lot of her stories come from church.

"You can write a million stories about church – it's the most hysterical place!"

Ms Towler's stories were a hit with the Red Hat Society in America, "an over fifties fun club with lots of Christian ladies".

After more than 300 shows in America, the family returned home and Ms Towler's husband was diagnosed with cancer.

"I think laughter is the best medicine.

"I definitely think it's a part of healing, even when my husband was in a coma and they told me that he wouldn't make it.

"When he woke up the first thing I said to him was 'I bought these sandals while you were in a coma, do you like them?' He laughed and said 'you're still spending my money even when I was asleep!'"

"The first thing he did when he woke up was laugh."

Ms Towler closes her show with some advice for the future.

"In a hundred years time it isn't going to matter; God is big enough to deal with everything you're worrying about."

One of her biggest hindrances



Comedian Louise Towler said church is a hysterical place. Photo courtesy of Louise Towler



Chris Chapman (centre) and Sue Chapman (right) performing at the 11th Assembly celebration service in Brisbane in 2006. They lamented that the arts do not have a high profile in church life.

Photo by Kim Cain

has been being classed as a comedian.

"They think that you're going to be vulgar," she said.

"Christians can get a bit scared; *'Big Purple Undies!'* What's she going to talk about?"

Her message to church people is to enjoy life.

"I think a lot more people would come to church if you're laughing than if you're telling them what they're not supposed to do," she said.

Burdekin Uniting Church minister Rev Paul Clark would agree.

"Comedy and laughter are gifts from God," he said.

"We seem to approach our faith with only reverence, seriousness and intellectual curiosity.

"God commands we worship him with our whole selves.

"Shouldn't we approach faith with playfulness and reverence, fun and seriousness, our heads and our hearts?"

Youth ministry veterans and co-authors of four books of dramas designed to provoke thought and communicate the Gospel, Chris and Sue Chapman, have been writing and performing comedy for 30 years and spent 10 of that as YAF drama convenors.

"Humour is a great teaching tool, it entertains and opens our defences," said Ms Chapman.

"It can be the iron fist in the velvet glove – even quite hard

hitting points or criticism can be taken on board if delivered with humour.

"It provides us with an opportunity to laugh at ourselves.

"And it helps to blow apart the stereotype of Christians as dry humourless creeps."

After the heyday of YAF rallies, these days the Chapmans' drama ministry is not in high demand.

"Unfortunately, the church isn't big on the uptake with the arts. It's a bit lower down on the holiness scale.

"It's incredibly frustrating to want to offer gifts to be used but to find no one is interested in using them.

"We even have to get our stuff published in the USA because no one is interested in publishing it in Australia," they said.

The Oxley Uniting Church members are also part of Kenmore Baptist's drama group Logos.

"The Logos group takes four topics a year to research in great depth and make a presentation in church which includes our drama.

"This is a fantastic group, so rewarding, with some amazing minds – don't know how we got to be in the group!" they laughed.

"Like it or not we live in an entertainment age where we need to be interesting to communicate because people are just not interested in content by itself," said Ms Chapman.

Both Chris and Sue are teachers and Ms Chapman also does a stand-up comedy routine to talk to Year 11 and 12 students about sex and relationships.

"Over the years I've had so many teenagers and adults thank me for being open and using humour in those sessions, but I believe with the current educational/political climate sessions like this will become a thing of the past – seen as not "G" rated and therefore inappropriate."

And not everyone has enjoyed the Chapmans' sense of humour.

"Many people will be blessed and will openly thank you for laughter and insights.

"But others, for whom this expression is not one of their own gifts and who are a little low on grace, will take it upon themselves to criticise and ridicule your ministry in no uncertain terms."

But for the Chapmans, drama is a tool to share the gospel with as many people as possible and takes serious preparation.

"Keep it fresh, new and edgy, like Jesus.

"He wasn't tame, cheesy or mild. Mild is for cheese.

"Then you need to research, grab a concordance, a bible, other relevant books, join study groups, play 'devil's advocate', ask questions, interview people, make sure that you seek to love God with heart, soul and mind – don't leave your brain at the door."



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Defying the dark night of the soul

By Mardi Lumsden

STANDING IN a worship service, surrounded by people singing joyful songs to the Lord while feeling like you are in a pit of despair is not an uncommon feeling amongst our congregation members.

For June Wood, and many others, it threw her faith and understanding of God into disarray.

Diagnosed with depression 20 years ago, Ms Wood's long journey has taken many turns.

"It was extremely hard to sit through a worship service of happy words and songs when I was feeling so miserable and down," she said.

"Church had always been food for the spirit for me. I felt hurt, angry and cheated.

"When I prayed for healing and nothing seemed to change I doubted my faith in God.

"When it was suggested I pull my socks up, or was asked 'where is my faith?', or just told to get on with life, I doubted my very existence."

Thanks to a friend Ms Wood eventually began to get better.

"I believe that friends are God's gift to each of us."

Ms Wood's congregation knew of her depression. Dealing with that was a painful learning curve for them also.

"I feel mental health is still an area that is not given equal measure with other medical conditions in church communities."

For Lea (not her real name) her church community was, and mostly still are, unaware that she suffers from depression.

Church was a safe haven from a world she was not coping with.

"I kept doing all of the church activities, whereas a lot of other things outside the church I let go.

"It was a case of making the church activities a priority that I could cope with and trying to reduce them to a level where I felt I was coping adequately," she said.

The result of workplace stress,



Stock photo. For more information on depression or to speak to someone contact Lifeline on 13 11 14 or www.lifeline.org.au

it was one of Lea's colleagues who first suggested she tell her doctor about her symptoms.

"I told the doctor and she said that I had major clinical depression. It was like pulling the carpet out from underneath my feet. I didn't think there was much wrong with me."

"Then to be suddenly taken out of work, I thought, what will I do with myself?"

Once medicated Lea's anxiety simmered down and she was able to start slowly rebuilding her life.

Lea's faith continues to help her maintain her health.

"I was always conscious of Jesus being there beside me," she said. "He has always been a constant in my life. I didn't have any reason to think that he'd moved away."

Both Lea and Ms Wood found solace in a Nouwen Network, a group of people, supported by Lifeline chaplains, with a community-based approach to

support those whose lives are affected by mental illness.

Through working with councillors, GPs, friends and fellow travellers both Lea and Ms Wood were able to get their lives back, but depression can be an ongoing illness.

Lea said the stigma against people who need medication is unhelpful.

"There shouldn't be a stigma attached to someone who has to have medication to get themselves past that hump," she said.

"They are working towards getting well again and you can say 'good on you for recognising that you had a need, sought out help and accepted the help of councillors to become well again'."

She said understanding and patience are the gifts congregations needed to help those in their midst with mental illness.

"Be empathetic. Don't exclude somebody because they are not as

bright and happy as what you are, but do not steamroll over them," she said. "That person is just as valuable as the cheery person is."

"Depression is a lot more wide spread than people think."

In Cairns in May the Australian Medical Association (AMA) launched *See the Signs*, a state-wide mental health public awareness campaign.

AMA Queensland President, Dr Gino Pecoraro, said the initiative was in response to alarming research.

"A recent AMA Queensland survey of 400 Queenslanders found 24 per cent were very concerned about the mental health of family and friends and a further 11 per cent were extremely concerned following the natural disasters of the past six months," Dr Pecoraro said.

"23 per cent said if they felt they weren't coping they'd battle on and keep it to themselves.

"This is the worst possible course of action a person with a mental illness can take."

Ms Wood said the first step is to help church communities recognise mental health as a medical condition.

"Encourage people to include prayers for those dealing with mental health issues in each worship service.

"Create a safe space for people if they want to talk.

"Without being intrusive, keep contact with someone who is missing from church for a few weeks.

"You need to know that you have not been forgotten, or that you are not a failure."

Ms Wood said it was important to be understanding in all aspects of congregational life.

"The most important support for me is a reminder every day that there is always hope."

IN PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

From P.1

"We've spoken a lot with our partner organisations, key academics and the ABS about spiritual wellbeing and how important that is. The questions are about how we measure that."

"We're not the only faith-based organisation involved. So the aspect of spiritual wellbeing and other things that are priorities for faith communities (how we treat the most vulnerable people in our communities), we will

have a great opportunity to make those things a part of the index.

"ANDI is not going to be economics free either because the economy is really important to our wellbeing. There's a lot more about how our economy functions that we need to take account of."

The ANDI project is based on the Canadian index which has been going for 9 years.

"I have described ANDI as a legacy project for the Uniting Church. The fact that we are in on the ground floor of something that has so much potential to make a long-term difference is a really encouraging thing."

Griffith University Associate Professor Geoff Woolcock is involved in the Griffith University Urban Research Program looking into the development of *Community Indicators Queensland (CIQ)* for improved wellbeing.

In an opinion piece for *The Good Life Conference* in 2009, he reminded people

that the church plays an important role.

"Uniting Church President Rev Gregor Henderson preaching at a service to mark opening of Parliament urged federal parliamentarians to broaden Australia's fundamental national goals beyond that of economic growth – 'It is but one part of what leads to human happiness – other components are the quality of our relationships, the beauty of our environment, the pursuit of justice and equity, enjoyment of the arts, realisation of our individual

giftedness, and of course our spiritual wellbeing,'" said Mr Woolcock.



WEB

Ron Gutman on the hidden power of smiling
www.ted.com



READ

The Jesus I never knew
by Phillip Yancey



The Transformers choir performs with Deborah Conway at the Happiness and its Causes conference in Brisbane in June. Photo by Brendan Read

Singing puts a smile on the dial

By Mardi Lumsden

FOR MANY people music has the power to transform their mood, remind them of special events and even uplift their soul.

Dr Felicity Baker, Director of Research of the School of Music at The University of Queensland, said there is clinical proof that music can make you happy and improve wellbeing.

A music therapist, Dr Baker has spent 20 years working with people with brain injuries and using music to improve their health and wellbeing.

She told people at the *Happiness and its Causes* conference about some exciting research released in Finland last year.

"There is a fantastic study that shows that patients who have had strokes and have damaged parts of their brain, just actively listening to music improves their cognition and their ability to think."

Dr Baker has an interest in the therapeutic value of song writing and has used it in her work.

"As people tell their stories through music they are able to process different aspects of grief that they might be experiencing as well as joy."

Ben Pennings also experiences this first-hand.

The Community Development Coordinator for Reclink Australia and founder and manager of the Transformers Choir (Brisbane's Choir of Hard Knocks) knows the power of music.

"Our aim isn't happiness, our aim is to come together," he said.

The choir is mostly made up of people with mental health issues, people experiencing marginalisation and their carers.

"It is about supporting people through all the different stages of their life," he told conference attendees. "We want to give the gift of music."

"We're not the Tabernacle Choir but what we can give is energy and love and show happiness and enjoyment of the opportunities we have been given."

Lifeline's Brian Procopis is the group's master songwriter and works with choir members to develop original songs from their experiences.

"Often it turns out to be the most extraordinary song," said Mr Pennings.

Adrienne Dempster leads the choir at Blue Care's Erowal Aged Care Facility in Maleny.

Residents, staff, volunteers and family members come together once a week to sing as a choir.

"The intention was not just to have a sing-along, but to enjoy singing with the slightly added challenge and gentle discipline of simple choral work," she said.

Since its beginning in October 2010, the choir now has three

accompanists and use of a pianola (a gift to the facility by a Maleny resident). Singers consist of up to 21 residents, four staff members, nine volunteers and three family members.

"It's not unlike a wheel-chair relay as the volunteers and staff bring the singers in from all directions," said Ms Dempster.

A retired Uniting Church minister, Ms Dempster said she and her husband, Chaplain at Erowal, felt the choir was a very special activity.

"I am blessed to be able to attend to the nurture of the whole person and this extended way," she said.

"I am convinced of the therapeutic efficacy of singing in a group such as this.

"We laugh a lot.

"We find residents singing along the corridors as they return to their rooms after choir.

"Last Tuesday, a 98-year-

old resident seemed somewhat disengaged but then tuned in to sing all of 'Wouldn't it be Lovely' and 'Maori Farewell'.

"Two stroke sufferers, who can barely speak, sing regularly and one of them has taken to conducting, keeping very good time as well.

"One new member comes complete with oxygen tank between his knees."

In March the choir put on their first recital.

"It was a marathon effort for staff to get many of the residents ready, but we did it.

"There were special moments seeing the residents' delight at the applause their singing generated (and deserved)."

The choir is now working towards repertoire for another recital in October.

Read about Transformers at www.journeyonline.com.au

Time for Methodists to dance

By Phil Smith

IS SIMPLY being happy too much to ask?

There are plenty of preachers who tell me it's not enough, but that's not the question.

Happiness is a big deal. It's the subject of innumerable clichés, jokes, books and grandmotherly pieces of advice.

When my career bores me, when my marriage is hard work, when I need one day off to myself, I don't need professional development, a perfect relationship or the adventure of a lifetime.

I'd be satisfied with simply being happy for while.

Happiness and its Causes was the name of a major international

conference in Brisbane during June.

Forty speakers and over 2000 delegates tried to get their heads and hearts around the topic.

Speakers included the Dalai Lama, celebrity chefs, ABC radio announcers, a sex therapist, *Courier-Mail* writers, psychologists, musicians, and the author of *The Happiness Diet* from the Sydney Happiness Institute.

Christianity didn't really rate a mention. None of our clergy was considered to have anything to contribute, yet Uniting Church members were part of it through their day-to-day work.

Here's a possibility: Christians don't find happiness in their faith

and fellowship that they can apply throughout their lives.

In some strange, disintegrated way, do we look for happiness in dance, music, and food, but never expect to find it in our worship?

Happy pursuits belong on Monday to Saturday, while serious godly things happen for an hour on Sunday inside our church buildings.

It's the old joke about why Methodists didn't dance!

For a way of life that supposedly frees us from guilt and shame, offers us grace and freedom and calls us to rejoice in a divine love whose depth and breadth and height we cannot measure, the way no longer seems to speak of joy to the church or the wider

community. People are searching the one-liners of Oprah Winfrey for happiness.

Why isn't the Word of God considered an option?

Philip Yancey once asked how the God who offers us the world in all its beauty has become known as a killjoy by the behaviour of Christians.

Jesus had lips that kissed and tasted wine, hands that healed and pulled in fish, and eyes that delighted in birds, flowers and children.

I know I must take up my cross to follow Jesus. I also know that beyond the cross comes the resurrection.

I smile on Easter Sunday morning when someone says, "He is risen!" It makes me happy to call back, "He is risen indeed!"

If you missed the *Happiness and its Causes* conference you

didn't really miss "the world's most important forum on human happiness".

That forum is your local community. Your local church is part of that community.

Next time you worship, please bring a smile.



Phil Smith. Photo by Osker Lau

School bails out chaplaincy program



By Matt Gees

WELLERS HILL State School Deputy Principal, Jack White (left), spent the major part of SU QLD's Chaplaincy Week, 15-22 May, cooped up in a makeshift jail cell in the middle of his school playground to raise money for the school chaplain.

Mr White said the unique idea was something their school community came up with to raise money to help

continue the work of their chaplain, Stephanie Kennedy, a member of Wellers Hill – Tarragindi Uniting Church.

“He went into his ‘jail’ before school, after school and in the breaks, and the idea was that you had to donate money to bail him out or keep him in!” laughed Ms Kennedy.

“His cage was surrounded by kids every day, and he is great at playing to the crowd.

It captured the interest of parents and staff too, and he even slept at the school every night.”

Thanks to Mr White's efforts, the school raised \$8000 for School Chaplaincy.

He said the response from everyone in the school affirms the value that the whole school community places on the chaplaincy program.

UnitingCare staff piece together reconciliation

By Dot King

STAFF AT UnitingCare Queensland Corporate Office and UnitingCare Health in Brisbane shared their thoughts on what reconciliation means to them at a morning tea on 30 May held to celebrate National Reconciliation Week.

Some staff brought giant puzzle pieces they had been given on Close the Gap Day and which they had decorated to illustrate their commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

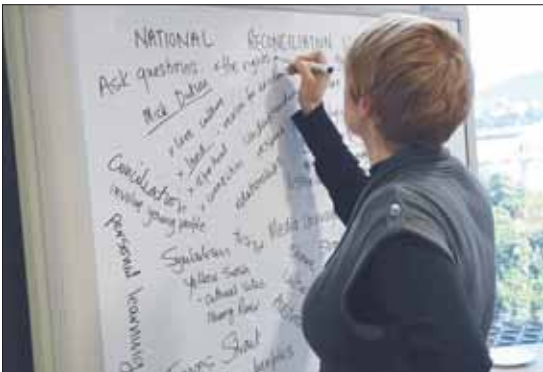
As each piece of the reconciliation puzzle was joined together, the group of people who made it briefly shared the meaning of their puzzle piece.

Their comments and feelings were recorded and placed on the Pledge Wall at the State Library, which was set up to receive pledges to ensure reconciliation continues to be an important part

of bridging the gap in Australia.

Staff awareness around the need for taking proactive steps to reconciliation has been heightened since the launch of UnitingCare Queensland's *Statement of Commitment for a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP)* on 1 February 2011.

A RAP working group is now well on the way towards the development of a Reconciliation Action Plan for UnitingCare Queensland.



Tilly Jarvis from the UnitingCare Centre for Social Justice adds her comments for the Pledge Wall. Photo courtesy of Dot King



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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, UNITING MISSION & EDUCATION

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 applications by ordained and lay people are invited. We are seeking someone who can work collaboratively, is a prophetic, visionary and creative leader, a team builder; good at planning and problem-solving, with financial acumen, good computer skills, able to reflect theologically, is flexible and a member of the UCA or partner church who is willing to become a member of the UCA and is prepared to work within the polity and ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia as described in *the Basis of Union*.

Further details including Position Description outlining competencies, qualifications and experience required may be found at www.insights.uca.org.au/jobs/listing/executive-director-ume or by contacting Rowena Tagaloo at RowenaT@nsw.uca.org.au. Closing date for applications is 12 August 2011.

Don't demonise Indonesia

By John Barr

“A BLOODY Business” is a rather emotive title for a television report – and such a title is guaranteed to create a lot of interest.

The ABC TV program, *Four Corners*, (6 June 2011) documented horrific scenes from a number of Indonesian abattoirs where cattle from Australia were brutally treated during the slaughter process.

Viewers were understandably horrified and it provoked strong reactions across the country concerning the humane treatment of livestock.

The Australian Government responded to these outcries by suspending the export of all live cattle to our near neighbour.

A lot is being said on this issue. Animal welfare and the humane slaughter of livestock is a practice most Australians hold to without question. Sadly, Indonesia is being singled out as being a rogue nation.

Indonesia is a predominantly Muslim country. Islamic practices require animals to be slaughtered according to the principle of “Halal” and this involves a swift, deep incision to the animal by cutting the jugular and carotid arteries while leaving the spinal chord intact. During this action the name of Allah is recited. Muslims claim this is a humane method of slaughter.

Indonesia's Muslim leaders



John Barr, centre, with Indonesian church partners. Photo courtesy of UnitingWorld

state that the scenario presented in the recent *Four Corners* program does not adhere to Muslim practices concerning the slaughter of animals.

Indonesian law stipulates the humane treatment of animals.

Clearly, the horrific methods documented by the *Four Corners* program identify activities in abattoirs that do not meet Indonesian Government regulations and do not conform to Islamic law.

Australians are often quick to criticise Indonesia. We fall into the trap of engaging in megaphone diplomacy where problems are highlighted and judgments are made, often without much thought or consideration.

Indonesians are very much aware of this situation and are keen to overcome the gaps, pull

down the fences and to deal with the stereotypes.

A recent press release from the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra referring to the *Four Corners* program said, “Indonesians themselves are appalled at these findings, especially considering that the widely accepted convention in preparing Halal food stipulates the humane killing of livestock with proper Islamic prayers beforehand.”

It is wrong to demonise Indonesia. The way forward is through respectful engagement.

Our relationship with our Asian neighbour has to be grounded on constructive collaboration and effective cooperation.

John Barr is UnitingWorld's Associate Director, Church Solidarity – Asia

Living like Luke

By Sue Hutchinson

A NEW program called *Luke14* was launched on 29 June in Brisbane and 30 June on the Gold Coast to encourage and enable churches to welcome and include people with a disability.

An initiative of CBM Australia, keynote speakers at the launch, Jim Stallard, Mike Duggan and Dave Andrews, shared their experiences and wisdom and encouraged people to be truly inclusive of people with disability in their communities.

In Luke's gospel, Jesus gives us a clear command to extend

the welcome of God to people living with disabilities and other marginalised people.

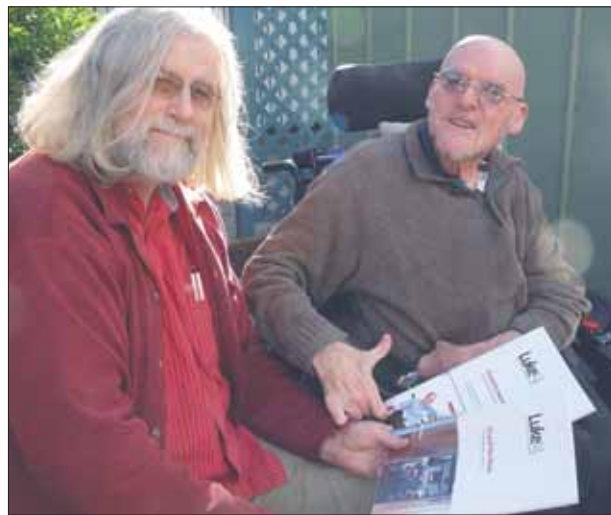
With a focus on the gospel, *Luke14* is a well designed program which will better equip your church to meet the needs of your community.

In May 2010 members of the 28th Synod passed a resolution establishing the Synod Advisory Group for Relating to People Experiencing Marginalisation (sagRpem). The committee's role includes assisting congregations and presbyteries with their engagement with people experiencing marginalisation,

including people with a disability, in ways that are consistent with the paper presented during the Synod meeting entitled *Theology and Foundational Principles for Relating to People Experiencing Marginalisation*.

The committee plans to work with interested congregations and presbyteries to use the *Luke14* program in their communities.

For more information contact Greg Mackay, UnitingCare Centre for Social Justice Director, on 3025 2012 or Greg.Mackay@ucareqld.com.au



Dave Andrews (left) and Mike Duggan were keynote speakers at the Brisbane *Luke14* launch. Photo by Sue Hutchinson



Colette Crossley accepts her award from Steve Griffiths (left) (BCC Moorooka Ward) and the Lord Mayor's representative. Photo by John Crossley

Community service recognised in Rocklea

UNITING CHURCH members continue to be awarded for their efforts in flood-affected communities.

Colette Crossley, a member of Vineyard Community of Faith and Knox Uniting Church in Moorooka, accepted an award for her work with the Acacia Ridge Community Support Incorporated (ARCSI) celebrating their work co-ordinating and providing ongoing support to the

Rocklea community on behalf of various levels of the government and the local community.

ARCSI is working with Lions, Rotary, Micah, Lifeline and other community groups, as well as government departments.

After she and husband John joined the Rocklea Flood Relief Committee, Ms Crossley was asked to join ARCSI.

Teaching RE at Rocklea State School for 25 years means this is

a job close to Ms Crossley's heart.

She is currently funded at ARCSI by a grant from the Uniting Church Assembly flood relief appeal.

"We are continuing to find people in need ... people who still can not face coming near their houses," said Ms Crossley.

"Contrary to what most Brisbanites think, the floods are not over and people still need all sorts of help."

Financial update June 2011

Since the update in the April edition of Journey, market conditions have not significantly improved; the sales of equities and commercial properties have been affected by this volatility.

This update does not reflect financial year end information of the Synod; full unaudited accounts will be available for perusal at the Synod in Session meeting in October 2011, and the audited accounts presented to the Finance, Investment & Property Board at their October meeting.

Investments

The Synod Office has continued with the sale of investments to reduce outstanding debt and to release resources for mission. Progress has been made in the following areas:

- **commercial property**—market conditions remain flat, however the sale of one property has been successfully negotiated (due for completion 30 June 2011)
- **impaired loans**—an estimated \$35 million is still to be recovered (down from \$50 million), representing significant underlying assets for only two of the original eight impaired loans not earning interest for the Synod
- **equities**—the sale of remaining equities is being processed; continued market volatility will see some gains and some losses on the original value of these investments. The proceeds will be applied to longer term cash deposits at a competitive rate.

Outstanding debt

Debt outstanding to ANZ has reduced further from \$62 million during March to \$24 million in June.

The need for the debt facility continues, as the amount of debt drawn down is expected to increase substantially in the next six months. In particular, funding is needed for the next stages of UnitingCare and Wesley Mission Brisbane development programs.

Further actions

Optimising property use

The value of underutilised properties pledged to the Synod Office by congregations, presbyteries and agencies remains at approximately \$10 million. The value of each property is only realised subject to the condition of the property, the local market and a best use analysis.

A Property Reference Group has been formed to assess one or two options for each property to achieve the optimum return. The reference group is composed of experts in the fields of town planning, architecture, legal, project management, valuation and market research.

Presbyteries are reviewing the information presented in the property evaluation tool to identify other underutilised properties; funds realised through property will enable the Church to more effectively respond to new mission opportunities.

Work being done by Focus Group C of the *Together on the way, enriching community* journey will further inform how the Synod can enhance its capacity to release resources and to be a sustainable, mission oriented organisation.

For more information on this financial update, please contact Finance & Property Services on 1300 UCAQLD, finprop@ucaqld.com.au or visit www.faps.ucaqld.com.au.



The Uniting Church in Australia
Queensland Synod

July 9, 9am-7pm.

Round-About Arts and Crafts Show

Bulimba Uniting Church, Oxford St, Bulimba, Brisbane.



Don't miss this great family day out and support the fundraising efforts of the Bulimba Uniting Church in keeping this beautiful building in all her glory.

Eat great food put on by the Norman Park C&K, great coffee and let the children jump on the jumping castle. Contact Storme Vunderink on 0411339772 or vunderink@optusnet.com.au

July 3-10. NAIDOC Week. NAIDOC stands for the National Aboriginals and Islanders Day Observance Committee. NAIDOC is a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and an opportunity to recognise the contributions of Indigenous Australians in various fields. Activities take place across the nation. All Australians are encouraged to participate. For more information visit www.aidoc.org.au.

July 3, 2pm. Mueller International String Orchestra at St. Patrick's Catholic Church, Gympie. Be transported as soloist, Atilla Sautov, plays some of the most powerful and colourful music in the solo violin repertoire. For more information visit www.trybooking.com or contact Charlie on 0424 253 539 or micomanagement@gmail.com.

July 5, 7.30pm. Mueller International String Orchestra at St Paul's Anglican Church, Ipswich. For more information visit www.trybooking.com.

July 6, 7.30pm. Mueller International String Orchestra at Graceville Uniting Church. For more information visit www.trybooking.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.

July 16, 1-10pm. Redcliffe City Choir Concert. A concert of light music to get your feet tapping along to many songs from popular shows. Afternoon tea stall. Adults \$10 school-aged children free. Tickets at the door. Contact Marilyn Linnett on 3269 3282 or mardoug3@bigpond.com.

July 16, 7am-12pm. Brookfield Uniting Church Car Boot Sale. \$15 a site in our beautiful grounds. Your "trash" could be someone else's treasure. For enquiries and bookings phone 3374 3835.

July 18, 9.30am-1pm. Moreton Rivers Presbytery Adult Fellowship Day. Guest speaker Dr Kerry Enright, Director of UnitingWorld. Offering and stalls to support eyesight programs in Fiji and Vanuata. Morning Tea and Soup & Crusty Luncheon (gold coin) provided. Contact Margaret George on 3885 8062 or macgeorge@optusnet.com.au.

July 23, 6am-12pm. Garage Sale at Trinity, Wellington Point Uniting Church. Furniture, general household goods, books, plants, clothes, etc. Contact Heather Proellocks on 3822 1565 or ih.proellocks1@bigpond.com.

July 27, 10am-12.30pm. Bald Hills Uniting Church Annual Musical Luncheon, Memorial Hall, Gympie Rd, Bald Hills. Hosted by the Ladies Fellowship with music by "Shades of Dawn". \$10 includes lunch. RSVP to Lesley on 3261 1997 or lesleyfenny@gmail.com.

August 6, 9am-4pm. Engaging with the Divine in the 21st Century. Hear Dr Val Webb presenting on her new book *Stepping out with the Sacred* and discuss questions it raises. Share ideas and interests in furthering progressive spirituality in Queensland. \$35 including morning tea and lunch. Contact Ross Garnett on 0409498402 or drgarn@bigpond.net.au.

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

St Andrew's star cardiologists

TWO QUEENSLAND cardiologists were awarded Fellowships by the international Heart Rhythm Society (HRS), the most pre-eminent cardiology and electrophysiological organisation in the world, at the Society's 32nd Annual Scientific Meeting in San Francisco in May.

Based at Brisbane's St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, Dr Wayne Stafford and Dr John Hayes were awarded Fellowships as a result of their efforts spanning 20 years in the field of cardiology and cardiac research.

St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital is one of five hospitals operated by UnitingCare Health in Queensland.



Dr Wayne Stafford and Dr John Hayes. Photo by Susan Walsh

Church honours on Queen's birthday

JOURNEY WAS alerted that 16 Uniting Church members from around the country were awarded the Medal (OAM) of The Order Of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours.

Among the list was Nundah resident Elizabeth Grace, an Elder at the Clayfield/Hamilton Uniting Church since 1988, who received her award for service to the Nundah community.

We also congratulate others associated with the Church who received awards but did not appear on the Uniting Church list.

To see the list visit www.itsanhonour.gov.au

Vale Grace Deoki

GRACE DEOKI passed away on 20 March this year. Mrs Deoki and her husband, Rev Ramsey Deoki, the first Fiji-born Indian to be ordained in the Methodist Church in Fiji, served the Fijian community for many years.

When Mr Deoki passed away in 1964, Mrs Deoki dedicated her life to serving the community. This work was recognised when she was awarded the Order of the British Empire.

Mrs Deoki moved to Australia where four of her children had settled and took a keen interest in the Uniting Church. She attended Ipswich, Chapel Hill and Centenary Uniting Churches and always looked forward to the get-togethers of retired ministers and their wives, widows and widowers. She was also a member of Hindi Speaking Christian Fellowship of Brisbane.



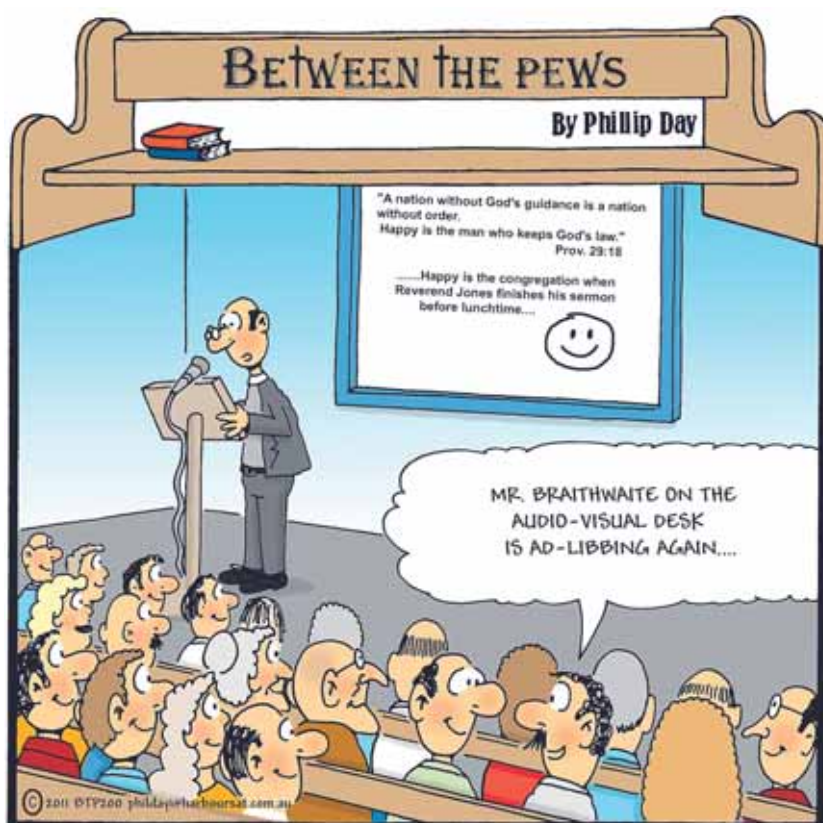
Grace Deoki

Christmas in July

KEEP AN eye out during July for the launch of the 2011 Christmas Postcard campaign.

Registrations will be open by the end of July. All the information will be available on www.ucaqld.com.au.

For more information email tara.burton@ucaqld.com.au



Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word

Canadian Edition 2010 Archdiocese of Chicago/Concacan Inc., Mary A. Ehle, PhD & Margaret Nutting Ralph, PhD, CCCB Publications, 2010, RRP \$21.95

Reviewed by Alan Renton, who, after 60 years of preaching, read this book and tried something new.

THE FIRST nine pages of this book should be compulsory reading for all who take part in leading church services. The other 294 pages have a more limited use in our Protestant churches.

The first nine pages have completely changed my own approach to Bible reading in church and in leading worship. I wonder if they herald a new Reformation led by the Roman Catholic Church.

Here are a few thoughts from these pages.

The whole church service is the public prayer of the Church (A two-way relationship between God and his people).

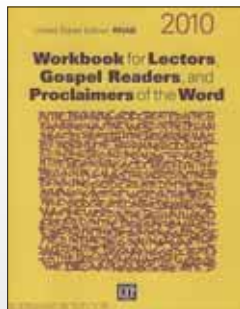
The reading of the Word is as important as the Lord's Supper. In reading well you feed the church with the bread of life, fostering a deepened relationship with God and facilitating dialogue between God and his Church.

A Bible reader's ministry helps facilitate the public prayer of the church. It is a tremendous responsibility shared with the other worship leaders.

As a Bible reader we need to continue to grow in our own relationship with God.

Preparation to read in church should involve leading a Christian life so that our entire life shows forth the presence of God.

It means understanding



the historical and critical background and the meaning of the passage both originally and for our world today.

Commentaries help us understand. We need to prepare spiritually with prayer and reflection.

There are many useful tips including preparation, which should start at least a week beforehand, presentation and evaluating feedback.

When the Bible is read as good news, in today's language and with conviction the congregation comes alive.

To exaggerate slightly, the Bible has its own power – you hardly need to preach!

Loving Creation: Christian Spirituality, Earth-Centered and Just

By Kathleen Fischer, Paulist Press, 2009, RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by John Ruhle.

IN AN EASY to read manner the author seeks to entwine the spiritual practices of prayer, *lectio divina*, contemplation and asceticism, amongst others, with an ecological, earthy awareness.

Ms Fischer belongs to the Catholic tradition and the language and examples within the book come from this perspective.

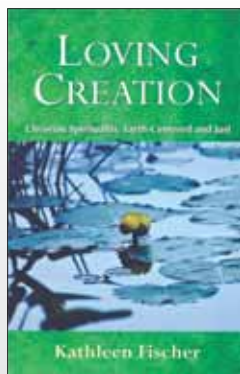
Starting with the persons, nature and relationships of the Trinity a model is presented of how the world is created and how we are to live in

relationship and harmony as people and creation just as the three persons of the Trinity are in relationship.

A further image of the 'body' found in Corinthians is used to help suggest that all of creation is 'the body' and as the head cannot say, "I don't need you" to the eye so the ants cannot say to the echidna, "I don't need you".

Similarly humans cannot say to creation, "I don't need you" because all of creation is connected and needed.

Loving Creation is helpful in developing a theological rational



for caring for creation and also for providing practical spiritual disciplines that will lead us further into a life of loving creation.

Cross-Cultural Partnerships

By Mary Lederleitner, IVP, 2010, RRP \$22.95

Reviewed by Rev Brian Hoole, minister in Hervey Bay and a former teacher with World Mission (now Uniting World) in Vanuatu for 4 years. The Hervey Bay Congregation is currently building a cross-cultural partnership with the community of Tautu, in Northern Malekula, Vanuatu.



MARY LEDERLEITNER brings a wealth of experience to this book that seeks to explain, and unpack some of the difficulties and pitfalls that we can experience as we seek to enter into cross-cultural partnerships both as individuals and as churches.

Focusing on partnering with churches overseas, many of the issues raised are equally relevant for cross-cultural ministries within Australia.

Using a multitude of stories Ms Lederleitner unpacks many issues that can derail effective and life-giving partnerships.

Starting by exploring cultural differences and differing worldviews

between many in the third world and those in our world, she then tackles some of the preconceptions and misconceptions from both sides of the fence

that lead to unintentional misunderstandings and problems.

Helping us move past the traditional idea of donor and recipient to one of respecting each other's dignity, integrity and developing mutual accountability, Ms Lederleitner's proposals and ideas resonate with my own experience.

Finally, Ms Lederleitner tackles the issue of conflict and how to resolve issues.

Each section explains the differences that varying worldviews can have on how to approach the issues and seeks to show the strengths and weaknesses of each.

This is a must read for churches involved in cross-cultural ministry (either within Australia or overseas) and one of the most practical books I have read on the subject.

The Art of Dying: Living fully into the life to come

By Rob Moll, IVP Books, 2010, RRP \$21.95

Reviewed by Rev Brian Lee.

THE 20TH century saw a move in the western world to make death normally a hospital experience where the dying person was often lonely and sometimes unwillingly kept alive because of access to high levels of medical care.

Now in the 21st century it seems more people are dying at home especially in the cities where palliative care can be provided.

Rob Moll, journalist and editor-at-large for *Christianity Today* and a hospice volunteer, writes of the role of the Christian family, of the faith community and of the individual in the whole process of death.

He points out too that "never before has an entire population expected to become old and to live for decades as an 'old person'. So gradual dying will be an earmark of these upcoming generations."

Since human death is the subject of this book (something



we all have to face), it is not an easy read though the language of it is simple and direct.

It is both challenging and helpful, especially for those with pastoral responsibilities and also for Christians wanting to take life and death seriously for themselves and for their worshipping community.

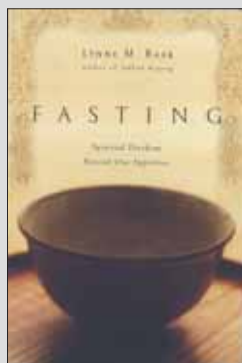
The author uses many personal stories from his reading and personal experience to illustrate the points he makes and generally manages to avoid over-sentimentality in the telling of them.

While the setting is the USA it is not too far distant from the Australian context.

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

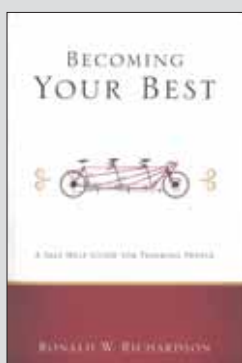
Fasting: Spiritual freedom beyond our appetites

By Lynne M. Baab, InterVarsity Press, 2006, RRP \$21.99



Becoming Your Best: A self-help guide for thinking people

By Ronald W. Richardson, Augsburg Books, 2008, RRP \$29.95



Watching for the Kingfisher: Poems and prayers

By Ann Lewin, Canterbury Press, 2009, RRP \$27.95



Books available from ...

Many of the titles reviewed in *Journey* are available from St Paul's Bookstore in Brisbane city or Christian Supplies in Paddington. 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>.

Coorparoo church celebrates 125 years

By Des Hall

ON PENTECOST Sunday, 12 June, Coorparoo Uniting Church celebrated 125 years of serving the community.

Coincidentally when the former Methodist Church was opened on 13 June 1886, it was also Pentecost Sunday.

The timing of the congregation's birthday celebrations could not have been more perfect.

To mark the anniversary, Coorparoo Uniting Church hosted a special combined service on Sunday 12 June with members from Coorparoo's cluster partners in the South East Uniting Community (Morningside and

Eastside) also attending.

Queensland Synod Moderator, Rev Bruce Johnson, and General Secretary, Dr Shirley Coulson, together with State Government Minister for Education, Cameron Dick, and local Councillor, Ian McKenzie, were also on hand to share in the celebrations.

Coorparoo Minister, Rev Yvonne McRostie said the day was a very special one and not just because it was it's the church's birthday.

"For Christians, Pentecost Sunday is a day to celebrate hope," she said.

"Pentecost is widely regarded as the birthday of the Christian church as

it commemorates the day when Christ's disciples, filled with the Holy Spirit, first began to take his teachings to the world," she said.

The celebration was shared with many group from the congregation participating including music from the youth choir and the children enjoying the Pentecost theme.

Coorparoo Uniting Church is by far the oldest church in the inner Brisbane suburb. It was opened some 27 years before the Roman Catholic Church and 36 years before the Anglican Church.

The Church as it stands today was completed and opened in 1959.



Children enjoy the Coorparoo Uniting Church 125th birthday celebrations. Photo courtesy of Des Hall

On Sunday 24 July please pray for Ipswich City Uniting Church

IPSWICH CITY Uniting Church has a wonderful and long history with Methodist worship dating back to 1848 and our worship centre being "the oldest church building in Queensland still in continuous use".

It is a privilege to be the custodians of this piece of Queensland's history; but it also comes with the responsibility of maintaining a heritage listed building.

Ipswich City Uniting Church has been going through a major transition over the past four years with the closure of Wesley Mission Ipswich. The work of Lifeline and Blue Care continue in Ipswich; but now they are regionally managed.

The process of seeking "a new story" is continuing as the minister, Rev Peter Woodward, is retiring and the congregation, together with their linked congregation, Leichhardt Uniting Church, is gearing up for the calling of a new minister and of discerning new directions for the two

congregations.

Please pray for:

- the needed wisdom and discernment for calling a new minister,
- the vision and commitment that new directions require
- the ministries to people through baptisms, funerals and to "street people"
- those members of the congregation for whom age means a diminished capacity to contribute
- the combined witness and cooperation between the six Uniting Church congregations in Ipswich
- Rev Peter Woodward and his wife, Joan, as they prepare for retirement
- the continuing ministries of Blue Care and Lifeline in Ipswich and the region
- the community of Ipswich as "flood survivors" continue to "put their lives back together again" and
- the churches in Ipswich as together and separately they proclaim the gospel.

On Sunday 10 July please pray for Banora Point Uniting Church

BANORA POINT is the only congregation in the Queensland Synod not actually in Queensland.

Just over the New South Wales border, the congregation was planned in the new coastal retirement suburb 17 years ago and is centrally situated in the heart of the Banora Point community right next to the shopping centre.

We seek to love God and love our neighbour sustained by Christ, demonstrated in practical care and encouraged by worship and learning

for God's word. Our activities include Sunday morning worship, fellowship groups, prayer groups and bible studies and Play Tots.

During the week the church and hall are a hub of community activity with a number of groups using our facilities.

Together with the Kingscliff and Twin Towns congregations we have developed and are committed to the Blair Athol Accommodation and Support Programme which provides for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in our region.

There are over 25 staff and

volunteers, facilities at Bilinga Beach and Labrador and a number of houses.

We would particularly like people to pray for our congregation's leadership as we transition to a new team and for the Lord's guidance as we seek to revitalise our ministry with young people and families.

We are also saying farewell to a bargain shop which has supported our homeless mission and enabled it to grow into the impressive organisation it is today.

On Sunday 17 July please pray for Brisbane Valley Uniting Church

THE PEOPLE of the Upper Brisbane Valley (Esk, Toogoolawah, Harlin, Moore and Linville, a total population of around 5000) are no strangers to flooding, power cuts and isolation, but the events of early January 2011 took everyone by surprise.

Toogoolawah (population 1200) had over 200 stranded motorists to care for during its week-long isolation and Blue Care's Alkira Aged Care Hostel functioned with skeletal local staffing for weeks.

Parts of Esk (population 1300) that had never seen flooding before were inundated. Folk in Moore, Linville and Harlin were

isolated and without electricity for a considerable period of time.

There were 92 homes in these small communities flooded and much damage to farmland, roads, bridges, etc.

Many people had no insurance, or have not received help to rebuild because of the definition of flood by some insurance companies.

In the Somerset Regional Council area (Brisbane Valley Uniting Church Parish covers its northwest), 840 people out of a total population of 8000 are still unhoused.

Please thank God for protection for those whose lives were endangered during the deluge and for the strong

community spirit that has sustained us.

Please pray for:

- these communities, for healing following such traumatic events, and for the Mayor, Councillors and staff of the Somerset region working towards its recovery
- the release of finance to rebuild houses, businesses, and lives, and to continue the work of the Council's Flood Recovery Centre.
- the Christians who have been involved in many ways in helping others to recover
- the Brisbane Valley Uniting Church as it undergoes restructuring, looking for new ways to touch the community.

On 31 July please pray for Hervey Bay Uniting Churches

THE HERVEY Bay Uniting Churches are made up of the churches of Hervey Bay, Burrum Heads, Howard and Torbanlea.

This year, on Sunday 7 August, Hervey Bay celebrates 25 years of the churches of the town combining on the Torquay site.

Later on 6 November the Burrum Heads church celebrates 20 years of existence, so as you can see there is much happening this year.

The church has an active ministry in the community working in the many aged-care facilities as well as with chaplains in the hospital, schools, prison and with police.

Our ministry continues with young people with an active play group, youth group and Sunday School.

As a church we are involved in starting a men's shed and looking to it expanding

this year as it captures the imagination of our community.

We have been active in building relationships with two overseas churches: the church in Hapai in the Solomon Islands and the Presbyterian Church in Tautu, Vanuatu.

Please pray that these relationships may continue to grow and bear fruit for all churches involved.

UnitingCare has received funding for a major hospital development in Hervey Bay and an e-health initiative. It is important that the local congregation continues to be a part of ministry with the UnitingCare Health operated St Stephens Hospital in Hervey Bay as well as with Blue Care and Lifeline.

Church members are active in many schools teaching RE.

Please also pray for our bible study and other small groups.

Practical environmentalism

IN RESPONSE to the June 2011 issue of *Journey* with its strong theme on environment, here are some things that I do to benefit my family, my environment and the wild creatures that I share my place of living with.

Virtually all my cleaning (that is bath tub, basin, toilet, shower, kitchen sink, walls, stove and saucepans) I do with bicarbonate of soda.

I have easily removed wood stains from metal surfaces with a wet rag dipped in bicarbonate.

For the stove top and oven mix your bicarb with a little water into a paste and leave on the surface for about an hour or as long as you like and then rub off with a soft moist cloth or light scourer depending on the surface you are cleaning.

Bicarbonate of soda is also an effective deodorant used as a powder under the arms (a pinch will do). It also may be mixed 50/50 with talcum powder for this purpose.

Women before the turn of the 20th century used this method of deodorising their underarms.

Other uses of bicarbonate is in the washing machine. A handful of soda added to the washing water reduces the amount of washing powder/liquid necessary by a half or even more, you can experiment to see what suits you.

A small amount of white vinegar added to the rinse water helps with the fluff problem on your clothes.

You might say that I use a great deal of bicarbonate and it's not as cheap as it once was.

I buy my bicarb in bulk at the stock feed shed. This quantity

lasts me a long time.

For clothes washing liquid I use an orange based, all natural dish wash and all purpose liquid from a commercial cleaning product outlet.

I buy the 5 litre container which is not cheap but lasts a long time.

As I have already said adding the bicarbonate to the washing load reduces the amount of washing liquid needed.

The washing water is a lot better for using on the garden and lawn and for the sake of the small wildlife in my little corner of the world.

Go for the environment everyone!

Lois Wilson
Gracemere



Children learn through making

I WOULD like to tell what the children at Ipswich North Uniting Church have been doing in their activity time during the service.

On 29 May the message for the day was that Jesus would send a comforter.

The children's story was about things that children had as comforters but would not last but if we have Jesus in our lives he is with us always.

Our church had been asked to give warm clothing, blankets etc to families affected by the floods in the Fernvale area.

For the activity the children started to put together a "No Sew Blanket" to be given to a family in that area.

With great gusto we began

tying knots joining the squares together.

The next Sunday (5 June) the story was how one could make a difference to the whole if we all join together.

The children saw last week (12 June) we had many squares but joined together they made one blanket to bring warmth and comfort to someone.

We gave the blanket to Rev Peter Blauw for a family in the area, showing it is more blessed to give than to receive.

Dorothy
Graham-Wilson
Ipswich North
Uniting Church
Children's Ministry



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.

Photographic thank you

THANK YOU for the recent photographic competition.

It was a great opportunity to explore a little bit differently some of the themes that we are currently dealing with

as part of our journey as a Uniting Church in Queensland.

I was excited and humbled to be named the winner of the competition and thank the judges for awarding me first place.

To the other entrants in the competition, thank you, I have been inspired by your photos and commend the gallery on the website to all readers of this publication.

Matt Gees
Sunnybank



Puppets spread the word

PEOPLE TRAVELLED from Townsville to be part of the Burdekin Uniting Church's puppet making workshop over the Queen's Birthday long weekend in June, where nine new puppets were 'born'.

Burdekin minister Rev Paul Clark and his wife Rebecca have run these workshops from Mackay to Cairns and have now helped "give birth" to over 70 puppets.

"It's wonderful seeing the people's faces light up as pieces of fabric and foam are slowly transformed into creatures that come alive," said Ms Clark.

Mr Clark said the workshops have created a new ministry for some congregations.

"We've had feedback from past participants that our workshop created a whole puppet team with children staying back after church to be involved," he said.

"We're not real grandparents yet, but we feel like grandparents to a whole multitude of puppets!"

Mr Clark uses puppets in his work with everyone from little children to people in nursing homes.

"Now when I go to a speaking engagement people are disappointed if I haven't brought one of my puppets," he said.

"With a puppet on my arm I can safely have a conversation with myself and no-one calls me crazy."

The Clarks also plan to have a workshop in Cairns in late July.

One of Mr Clark's other projects, the *Car Park Parables* book and DVD series, is also gaining popularity.

The *Car Park Parables* jigsaw puzzle is launched this month and is available online from Mosaic Resources.



Proud new puppet parents after the Burdekin workshop.
Photo by Paul Clark

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

Best Christian books celebrated

THE FOLLOWING books have been short-listed for the 2011 Australian Christian Book of the Year Award:

Bible bites: 365 devotions for Aussie families, by Ladeane Lindsay, Anglican Youthworks.

Christianity alongside Islam, by John Wilson, Acorn Press.

Economics for life: An economist reflects on the meaning of life, money and what really matters, by Ian Harper, Acorn Press.

Hot rock dreaming: A Johnny Ravine Mystery, by Martin Roth, Ark House Press.

Isaiah: Surprising salvation, by Kirk Patston, Aquila.

Judgment day: The struggle

for life on earth, by Paul Collins, UNSW Press.

The rag doll, by Stephanie Carmichael & Jessica Green, Matthias Media.

The 2011 Australian Christian Book of the Year will be announced and prizes awarded at St Alfred's Anglican Church, Blackburn North, Victoria, on Thursday 18 August.

Visit www.journeyonline.com.au to read reviews for many of these titles.

For more information on the Australian Christian Book of the Year Award visit www.spcak.org.au

Developing effective leaders for a healthy, missional church

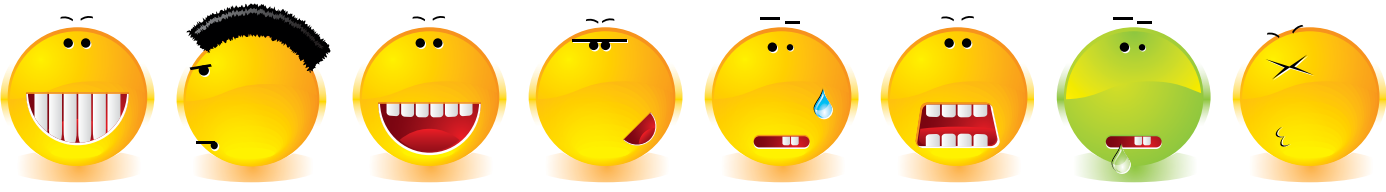
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Does God have a sense of humour?



Mark Gladman

YOU HAVE to admit, God has a sense of humour.

He smote an enemy nation with haemorrhoids. (What do you think this means? Perhaps it means what haemorrhoids are to us, we're being to him?)

And he brought the Saviour into the world through a 13-16-year-old girl becoming pregnant when she was only betrothed to a guy who's not the father in an age when such an action would result in a stoning.

If you don't believe me, go to my website.

See the guys in those pictures? God made that!

Still don't believe me? Look at the person sitting next to you right now. Still not laughing?

When you get home tonight, look in the mirror.

Seriously though, the very fact that we laugh and are made in his image means that he must laugh also.

Because I'm a comedian, I am consistently asked who my favourite comedian is and I always respond: Jesus.

People always look quite bemused. I thought the answer was obvious.

In the context of his day, Jesus was hilarious.

Because we are so far removed from 1st Century Jewish culture though, we miss it.

Jesus used jokes, street theatre, mimicry, hilarious stories and so on to lampoon the religious people, the Roman occupation, Caesar and the ridiculous laws that people were being oppressed under.

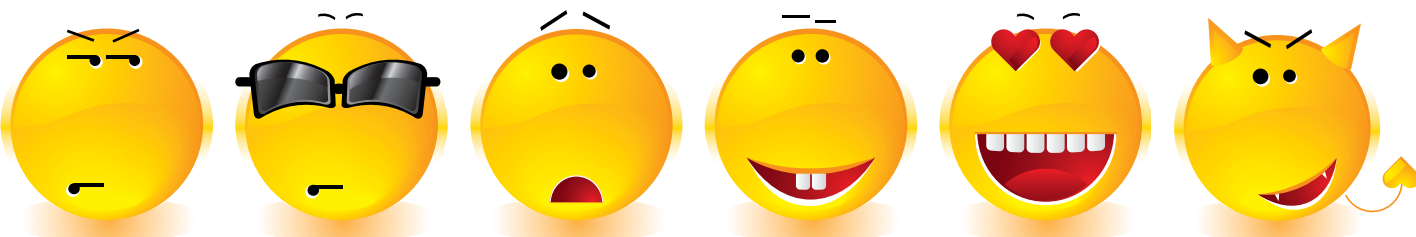
In fact, so biting is his critique, not only would people have laughed, but they also would have oooh'd as they realised that what he was saying, while true and funny was likely to get him into big trouble.

And it did!

Jesus had this amazing way of making people laugh and getting the message inside them using humour.

If we took ourselves less seriously but took God seriously, maybe the Gospel would be spreading quicker than we could imagine.

Mark Gladman is a comedian, speaker, author and a radio presenter on 92.9VoiceFM in the Toowoomba Region. For information about his book *17 Irritating Laws of Fellowship* or live CD *Live and Contagious* visit www.markgladman.com.



Paul Clark

WHEN I was a youth worker I had a youth group of fifty young people.

Many of them were males with no church affiliation, who used to spend time wandering the town in groups.

One night, after we had wandered around town and nearly got in a fight, I sat them down in my lounge room and read them some of the Sermon on the Mount.

When I get to the bit about turning the other cheek and loving your enemies these teens quite literally laughed out loud!

There's something refreshingly disarming about an innocent, first-time

hearing of the gospel. This stuff was laughable!

We approach Jesus and the Scriptures with such piety and seriousness we don't see its ridiculousness.

I can imagine a Sermon on the Mount where Jesus with passion and vigour delivers the lines to raucous laughter.

"The meek shall inherit the earth, tell us another one!"

Yet mid-way through its delivery the crowd realise Jesus is speaking truth.

I wrote my drama book *The Sermon on the Mt Morgan Pub Verandah* to try to get this idea across.

The book of Genesis is full of ironic and delightful humour; the word play around Jacob 'pull the other one' and his deceptive ways; Abram the old man who is told to change his name to 'father of many' and then to take a knife to his nether regions (that doesn't sound like a good idea), who chortles when told he will have a son and then is told to call his son Isaac all to show that the one who was the laughing stock, is now hot stock because he put his life in God's hands.

The humour is not simple ha-ha jokes.

It is the delightfully, delicious humour found in a great novel that stirs every

emotion and that should be found in a full and abundant life; the humour of the ironic twist, the unexpected ending, and the servant who finds himself king.

Rev Paul Clark is minister with Burdekin Uniting Church in North Queensland. He is a puppet maker and author of several children's books, DVDs and resources including *Car Park Parables* and, with Russell Reynoldson, *Sermon On The Mt Morgan Pub Verandah: And other twisted tales from the life of Jesus*.



Hi my name is Alex Gow!

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