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VOICES FOR JUSTICE PAGE 5

"Voices for Justice is unique in gathering ordinary Christians together in Canberra to share their heart for the poor with our political leaders." **Andrew Johnson**

EAST AFRICA IN CRISIS

"This is the place the world forgot and collectively hoped would sort itself out."
Andrew Juma

PAGE 10

FAREWELL FROM THE MODERATOR - P2

POVERTY INSPIRES JUSTICE - P9

YOUNG ADULT THEOLOGY - P11

INSPIRED THINKING

By Mardi Lumsden

HISTORY BOOKS are full of inspired people who have shaped our world. Explorers, inventors, scientists, artists, theologians and so many others have spent countless hours growing the seeds of ideas into tangible realities.

Even today the way we communicate, socialise, even the food we eat is evolving. This is not necessarily always a good thing, but one thing is for sure, it is unstoppable.

The Australian Government's Department of Innovation, Industry,

Science and Research strives to "encourage the sustainable growth of Australian industries by developing a national innovation system that drives knowledge creation, cutting edge science and research, international competitiveness and greater productivity".

In September Innovation Minister, the Hon Kim Carr, told *The Australian Financial Review* that Australia is facing a historic shift "the like of which we have not seen in two generations".

"We need to change the way we do business by putting innovation at the

heart of every firm," he said.

But is the church getting left behind? According to the National Church Life Survey (NCLS), frequent church attendance in Australia has declined from 44 per cent in 1950 to 17 per cent in 2007.

NCLS Director, Ruth Powell, said, "Over the next few decades, many churches will face the loss of a sector of committed and loyal attenders who carry knowledge and experience."

She said the implications of this were far-reaching and churches needed to prepare for a shift in constituency.

"There are too many churches that are losing touch with those beyond church life or with a new generation of church attenders.

"While the Christian message remains unchanged, an openness to change and a spirit of innovation are part of what is needed to reverse these trends."

Fresh Expressions and Evangelism Officer for the Uniting Church, South Australia, Rev Ruthmary Bond, said as Australia becomes less of a Christian country, the church needed to look outside the box of conventional church.

"Our society has changed and we are now in a situation where people don't go to church as a matter of course," she said.

"People are looking to explore faith, they may acknowledge that there is a God but they have no concept of that God being a God of love and many only comprehend Jesus as a good guy like Gandhi.

"Changing the way we do church to be inclusive to those people in our community simply opens the door for faith exploration.

"How we do church is not important. What is important is that we are following the commands of Jesus and worshipping God."



Moderator's farewell

AS I REFLECT on my three years as Moderator, my wife suggested that three words which would be a good summary of my time in the role would be debt, disaster and discipleship.

Debt

When the Synod meeting in November 2008 was told that our investments had lost millions of dollars and that the decision had been made to no longer fund most of our Synod's missional staff, the response was astonishing.

Rather than being angry and trying to find someone to blame for our financial losses, the Synod accepted the reality of the situation and began asking, "What is God teaching us through this experience?"

This was an amazing example of Christian maturity.

So we began a journey of discernment that we have called *Together on the way, enriching community*.

Through prayer, study and listening to one another we have tried to re-shape our common life that we might be empowered for mission.

How can we be one body in Christ and free each other for faithful service?

This Synod in session will be challenged to make some major changes in the way we live and engage in mission together.

More importantly we will be asked to renew our commitment to the mission of Christ in the context in which we live and serve as followers of Jesus.

The debt crisis has become an opportunity for renewal.

Disaster

This has been an astonishing year for the whole of Queensland: floods, an inland tsunami, cyclones, and, more recently, the horrific house fire in Slacks Creek.

Then there have been the earthquakes in Christchurch, the earthquake and tsunami in Japan and many less publicised disasters and conflicts worldwide.

Generally, our Church has responded well.

Our UnitingCare Agencies, especially UnitingCare Community through Lifeline,

We don't grow accidentally or in isolation; we must link arms as individuals, congregations, presbyteries and synods.

was on the front line providing immediate pastoral support to individuals and communities.

Lifeline Community Care Queensland (now known as UnitingCare Community) helped facilitate the Uniting Church's National Flood Appeal as well as running their own appeal.

Many congregations in disaster-affected areas were marvellous in their response in the community.

Many connected with strangers in the community in ways they never had before.

One congregation in the

cyclone area made a list of those they saw most affected and gave personalised cards and gifts to them to say they cared.

They also ran an Alpha course, especially inviting people with whom they had found themselves in faith conversations.

One woman said that as she offered the gifts people would say things like, "I have never really thought about God or was not sure if I believed in God, but I was really praying last night as that cyclone began to tear this town apart".

As I travelled around I began to ask myself, why is it that we know how to be the Body of Christ in a crisis, but seem so powerless and timid when things are going well?

We need to take what we have learned in disaster times and apply it to the rest of our experience as a Church.

God is there for all our living, not just when things go wrong.

Discipleship

In the past the church has thought that by being strong and immovable we could be a source of strength and stability to the communities around us.

Our gift to the community was to be there for them at points of crisis and transition. Thus, the world looked to us for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Pastoral care was our strength. Now there are all sorts of other supports.

People pay civil celebrants hundreds of dollars to preside at

Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



naming ceremonies, weddings and funerals.

You can get pastoral care without religion from doctors, counsellors and life coaches, so why come to the church?

However the task given by God of joining in the work of Christ in reconciling the world to God requires more than pastoral carers, but mature disciples in Christ.

We should not be teaching people to be better members of the church.

We should be equipping missionaries who can serve the community confidently and faithfully.

This means a call to discipleship, not just membership. Discipleship also means discipline.

We don't grow accidentally or in isolation; we must link arms

as individuals, congregations, presbyteries and synods.

We need to unite together with our schools, chaplains, UnitingCare staff and clients and all who participate in our life together.

We must stand and live together if we are to be the powerful presence of the body of Christ.

As I conclude as Moderator I thank all those in the Church who have shared this journey with me.

Thanks for welcoming me into your lives and for the love and prayers along the way.

I am sorry for the times I have failed you and I ask for your forgiveness.

Rev Kaye Ronalds will take up this role on 7 October.

Please pray for her and her family, Owen, Ellen and Naomi.

Sign of the times



IN SEPTEMBER Beenleigh Uniting Church welcomed Rev Chuchu Bromley who has joined their ministry team from the Solomon Islands for two months. Rev Bromley is Superintendent Minister of the United Church in Solomon Islands Guadalcanal Circuit which is partnering with Beenleigh through the UnitingWorld church partnership program.

Guadalcanal Circuit comprises 11 mostly isolated mountain congregations nine, of which are accessible only on foot and one of them two days walk from the nearest transport. What a way to welcome him to the community! Thanks to Bruce Mullan for sending this in.



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

Desperately seeking inspiration

LATELY I have been asking a lot of people what inspires them. Aside from helping me with story ideas for this edition of *Journey*, it is a really great question.

It starts some fabulous discussions and the conversation ends with everyone involved feeling invigorated and with a long list of things to research.

I've also appreciated reflecting on the things that really inspire me. Not just the things I like, but the really innovative things happening around the world and in my own community.

Nothing can beat the mesmerising feeling I get when I see a band I love play live.

I will also never forget the day the Olympic Torch relay went past my gymnastics hall on the way to the Sydney Olympics.

We paused our training to get a glimpse of it and boy did we train hard for the rest of the day, inspired by all the athletes who had gone before us and worked so hard to achieve their goals.

Even watching English chef Heston Blumenthal scientifically dissecting the art of cooking is inspirational to me.

But the thing that inspires me the most is when ordinary people put their minds and hearts together and create something beautiful, amazing or just plain brilliant that someone will use in everyday life.

We may have thought Maxwell Smart's shoe phone in the iconic 1960s series *Get Smart* was a crazy idea but imagine leaving the house without a mobile phone now!

Imagine the thought of

getting on a big metal bird and flying across the world in a matter of hours. Sometimes it takes people with unbelievable ideas to inspire those who can make it happen.

If you are in need of inspiration, other than asking those around you what inspires them, try www.ted.com.

TED is a non-profit organisation which started in 1984 and an online community devoted to spreading new ideas in technology, entertainment, design and more.

On their website you will find more than 900 videos of TEDTalks and sharing them, under their creative commons licence, is encouraged. Let us know which ones inspire you!

Mardi Lumsden
Editor

Call to action on poker machines

By Judith Tokley

CHAIR OF the Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce, Rev Tim Costello, urges Queenslanders to speak out for a safer community as Clubs Australia brings its deceptive anti poker machine reform campaign to marginal Queensland seats.

"Clubs Australia has led an aggressive, misleading campaign in NSW over the past two months aimed at protecting profits and is planning a similar campaign in Queensland from early October," Mr Costello said.

"The impact in NSW has been significant with some Federal Members feeling the heat and questioning publicly the value of mandatory pre commitment technology, opting instead

to support Clubs Australia's preference for voluntary measures.

"I urge Federal Members in marginal seats to hold their ground, especially in the face of a number of polls and research that show three quarters of Australians support the Government's proposed mandatory pre commitment measures which promise to limit the damage caused by problem gambling on poker machines.

"Under the reforms all poker machine players will have to decide ahead of time how much they are willing to lose in any gambling session.

"These limits can be as high or as low as the player likes.

"No one is telling them how much they can or can't spend.

But once 'in the zone', problem gamblers say they can't make safe choices."

Mr Costello said with 197 000 machines nationally, Australia has the highest number of poker machines per head in the world.

"Australians spend twelve billion dollars a year on pokies.

"Only 600 000 Australians play poker machines. Of those, 95 000 are problem gamblers who lose on average up to \$21 000 a year.

"The social costs are high, including relationship breakdown, mental health issues, unemployment, debt, financial hardship, theft and other crime, social isolation and all too often, suicide, at a cost of around \$4.7 billion annually.

"It's mandatory to wear a seatbelt, to wear a helmet on a

bike. It's illegal to serve alcohol to someone who is already drunk and there are limits on where people can smoke.

"As part of a raft of measures, mandatory pre commitment measures will help gamblers who are ready to help themselves and help protect a lot of people who are at risk of becoming problem gamblers."

UnitingCare Australia provides support to the Taskforce, which includes the heads of Australian Christian Churches, including Uniting Church President, Rev Alistair Macrae, and the heads of their social services agencies.

The Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce urges church members to take action by reading the material and voicing their concerns with local Federal



Rev Tim Costello. Photo by World Vision Australia

Members and local media by calling radio stations, writing letters to the editor, or attending rallies.

For more information visit www.gamblingreform.org

Fiji Government muscles Methodists

By Alison Williams and Mardi Lumsden

NOT CONTENT to confine its muscle to the field it knows best, the Fiji military moved in on the Methodist Church, attempting to influence Church leadership decisions and interfering in the life of the Church.

A recent showdown over the Methodist Church Annual Conference ended with the Military Government cancelling the Conference for the third year in a row, banning all meetings

and preventing all Methodist ministers from travelling overseas.

The latest written Police directive also bans all Church bazaars, fundraising, rallies, camping, open air meetings, and sports days.

The only services now permitted are regular Sunday services.

Church leaders expressed deep concern about the Fiji military interference in church decisions.

UnitingWorld National Director Rev Dr Kerry Enright

said the Government must not decide who will lead the Church.

"That role belongs to the Church alone. The Government needs to carry out its appointed role, and allow the Church to do the same."

Conflict flared when the Government demanded that Methodist Church President, Rev Ame Tugae, and General Secretary, Rev Tuikilakila Waqairatu, refrain from taking part in the Conference.

The pair had been charged by the Military Government in 2009

with organising an unauthorised meeting.

Fiji Land Force Commander, Colonel Mosese Tikoitoga, said Mr Tugae and Mr Waqairatu should have stepped down from their leadership positions until the investigations were complete.

Dr Enright said the Church had bent over backwards to be conciliatory towards the Government, submitting its agenda for approval prior to the Conference.

"This latest move on the part of the Government represents unacceptable interference from the State in the life of the Church," he said.

"It is a clear violation of the fundamental human right to religious freedom at a time when the Church has been working hard to stabilise the relationship with the Government"

Around 1000 church members who gathered in Suva for the 2011 Annual Conference were left stranded when permission to meet was withdrawn at the eleventh hour.

Bruce Mullan, UnitingWorld Associate Director Church Solidarity (Pacific), was the only foreign observer present to attend the meetings.

He said frustrations ran high as many had made long and expensive journeys to be part of the conference.

"The disillusionment was

clear," he said. "Some, whose congregations had fundraised to pay their expensive airfares from the outer islands, were in tears.

Mr Mullan said it was also obvious that the spirit of this church had not been broken.

"There was no overt anger and the talk was the kind of faith conversation one might expect from a persecuted church," he said.

"I heard statements of faith, endurance, patience, temperance and courage.

"They were still the church, standing firm in resolute commitment to hold to their proud heritage and Christian faith.

"The Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma will not be beaten by a repressive government nor broken by its unjust demands."

Methodists represent one third of the population of Fiji and Rotuma.

In spite of the challenges the Fiji Methodist Church remains determined to find a way to work with the Government without compromising its own values.

The Church has been co-operative with regard to their activities and agenda and they are now being pressured to give in on the fundamental issue of autonomy over leadership decisions.

For updates on the situation visit www.UnitingWorld.org.au



Fiji Methodist Deputy General Secretary Rev Tevita Nawadra Banivanua. Photo by Bruce Mullan



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Catalyst for change

By Tara Burton

THE TRINITY Theological College Library at the Synod office in Auchenflower, Brisbane, is now open to all members of the Uniting Church in Queensland.

Not only has the physical space changed but the library now has an affiliation with the Australian Catholic University, free membership to Uniting Church members and more readily available electronic resources.

Librarian, Alethea Hubley, said that the Trinity Library is dynamic and can be a catalyst for change but has previously been an under-utilised resource.

"Opening up free membership to Uniting Church members

was important so that we could increase our members' use of the library," she said.

"There is an increasing emphasis on lay education and in order to develop lay leadership within the Uniting Church, as part of the Christian education program, it's important that members have access to resources."

Ms Hubley said the change was prompted by the need for more electronic resources as we move into the digitised world.

"Electronic documents, specifically Uniting Church documents, are available via the catalogue. We are trying to digitise as many of the older reports as possible."

The changes have also meant that membership to the library is not restricted to those who live close to Brisbane's CBD.

"We have been ensuring that people in remote areas of Queensland are aware that we will mail them resources wherever they live.

"The growing emphasis on electronic resources means that it doesn't matter where you live in Queensland, you can have access to the library.

"People in remote locations or even within the greater Brisbane area can also access the full text of journals online using the library login information," she said.

For more information visit www.trinity.qld.edu.au/library



Alethea Hubley said the Trinity Theological College library is open to all Uniting Church members. Photo by Osker Lau

Women unite in paradise

By Mardi Lumsden

IN AUGUST, 14 people from St Andrew's Uniting Church on Thursday Island visited Saibai Island, in the Top Western Group of islands in the Torres Strait, for a religious program organised by Lima Uku, the wife of Pastor Lindsey Uku of Sigabarduru United Church in Papua New Guinea.

After much preparation and paperwork, including writing to the Chairman of Saibai Island to obtain permission to visit, a group of 11 women, two six-month-

old babies and one man from St Andrew's headed to the event.

Thursday Island Uniting Church pastor, Jan Bryde, said the trip was wonderful and humbling.

"We were welcomed by a guard of honour of women who sang us into the hall. Our number seemed so small with there being about 50 ladies from Sigabarduru," she said.

"How humbling it was for us to be invited to serve ourselves first at the dinner table."

This inaugural event saw women from Sigabarduru and Mabadawan, in PNG, and Boigu

Island and Duan Island, in the Torres Strait, as well as women from Saibai Women's Fellowship.

Ms Bryde said Pastor Uku's message during the worship service encouraged women to be who God is calling them to be.

"To be bold women for God," she said.

"Worship was a lively affair with much dancing and rejoicing in the Lord."

Teaching included sessions on women in prayer, tithing and offering, women in faith, and faith in action.

"Each 30 minute session was

led by a different speaker who inspired us all. We all enjoyed more singing and dancing after the sessions."

A long night of singing, dancing and worship drew the event to a close.

"There were many tired ladies and men but there were many who were awakened and blessed by God over the two days," said Ms Bryde.

"We had come together and shared our common love for God. To be part of this program was such a privilege and such a blessing.

"We from Thursday Island felt blessed by the generosity and love poured out on us. We are praying that this is just the beginning of the times we can have together."



Jan Bryde and friends. Photo by Colin Bryde

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:

What does Synod mean?

IT'S THAT time of year again: time for the Synod to meet. But what's a synod when it's at home and where do we get these words from?

Holy Mother has been pontificating (building bridges) for centuries with language that came out of the ark.

Bill Cosby once asked, "What's an ark, anyway?"

For a denomination less than forty years old, the Uniting Church has a lexicon going back centuries. We have 'presbyteries' when we mean regions and a thing called a 'synod in session' when we have a state-

wide meeting of Church representatives. This meeting is held every 18 months.

For The Uniting Church in Australia, a synod is an ecclesiastical court above the presbyteries and subject to the Assembly.

It dates back centuries in the Roman tradition as a gathering of bishops.

The further back we go, the more sense the word makes for us in 21st century Australia. 'Synod' is derived from the Greek preposition SYN meaning 'with' or 'together,' and the word ODOS meaning 'on the road'.

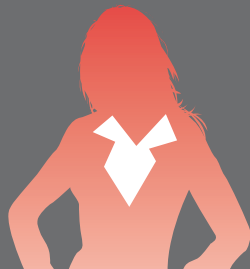
Like the early church, The Uniting Church in Australia understands itself as a pilgrim people, together on the way.

Through the inter-related councils of the church, including the synod, we come together to follow God on a faith journey.

The Synod website expresses it this way: "The Uniting Church believes that Christ alone is supreme and that he may speak to the church through any of its councils. It is the task of every council to wait upon God's Word, and to obey God's will in the matters allocated to its oversight."

In Queensland we have been on a vision process called *Together on the way, enriching community*. That banner overarches the agenda for the 29th Queensland Synod this month.

Those attending will wait upon the Spirit and seek to follow God together on the road ahead.



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Voices raised for justice

By Mardi Lumsden

OVER TWO hundred Christians gathered in Canberra from 17-20 September to share their concern for the poor with the nation's political leaders.

The annual Voices for Justice gathering, an initiative of Micah Challenge Australia, saw Christians from all over the country speaking directly to politicians about achieving Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets.

Two Queensland Uniting Church members present were Andrew Johnson, World Vision Church partnerships team member, and Rev Ben Webb, minister with St Paul's Uniting Church in Stafford, Brisbane.

Mr Webb was inspired by last

year's event and is particularly concerned with the high rate of global infant mortality.

"An estimated 8.1 million children under five years of age will die this year, mostly from easily preventable causes," he said.

"Approximately 25 per cent of those child deaths could be avoided if we just invested money in improving sanitation in poor communities.

"The Micah Challenge campaign gave me the tools I need to join with others in calling for change.

"I went to Canberra because I believe that in a democracy it is up to us to make sure our leaders are listening and acting."

Mr Webb requested a private meeting with his local member, Wayne Swan MP, Deputy Prime

Minister and Treasurer, to tell him the people of Stafford care about their global neighbours.

During the gathering the group created the world's longest toilet queue to raise awareness of the importance of adequate clean water and sanitation.

Mr Johnson said water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) is a key target in MDG 7, which looks into environmental sustainability.

"Water and sanitation are crucial to saving the lives of children and mothers in particular," he said.

"Voices for Justice is unique in gathering ordinary Christians together in Canberra to share their heart for the poor with our political leaders."

Micah Challenge National



Ben Webb, Joanne Lee, Benton Wecker, Senator Claire Moore, and Gary Truloff join the toilet queue in Canberra.

Photo courtesy of Ben Webb

Coordinator, John Beckett, said that in order to achieve change, the Australian Government and the Opposition need to keep their bi-partisan commitment to increase Australia's aid budget to 0.5 per cent of our national income by 2015.

The campaign also urged leaders to provide a timetable for when and how they will reach the International Aid Target of 0.7 per cent. Currently, Australia's aid contribution is just 0.35% GNI, well short of other nations.

Mr Beckett said gatherings like Voices for Justice really do make a difference.

"The message we get from politicians is that this kind

of grassroots lobbying really does make an impact on them personally," he said.

"We know that it's also making a huge difference in the lives of the world's poorest people."

Micah Challenge is a global movement of aid and development agencies, churches, schools, groups and individuals who want to deepen their engagement with poor communities and influence world leaders to meet their commitments to the Millennium Development Goals.

UnitingWorld is part of the Micah Challenge coalition.

For more information visit www.micahchallenge.org.au

Facing up to reconciliation

By Tara Burton

FOR THE past twenty-seven years the Uniting Church's National Assembly has strengthened relationships with Indigenous people through reconciliation and discipleship.

Faith development consultant for AboutFACE (Faith and Culture Exchange) and national Uniting Church faith development consultant, Rev Tom Kerr, said the program aims to broaden participants' worldview in an Indigenous community.

"The lens I see AboutFACE through is discipleship and reconciliation," he said.



Elizabeth Mullan and a friend during AboutFACE in 2009. Photo courtesy of AboutFACE

"Just by being with the Indigenous people, the participants' worldview expands and they might have an about face experience," he said.

AboutFACE began in 1984 and since then has sent participants to partner churches in El Salvador, throughout the Pacific and a number of communities in Asia.

However, Mr Kerr said the sole focus now is exchanges with Indigenous people.

"Participants can learn about friendship, grace, love, forgiveness, acceptance, reconciliation, faith and culture from their Indigenous hosts," he said.

"There are also Stepping Stone events now being held in many Synods which are smaller reconciliation gatherings."

Despite its merits the number of AboutFACE participants has declined over recent years and Mr Kerr is concerned for the future of the program.

"AboutFACE is at risk of being lost in our church," he said. "I believe the time is right for a huge growth spurt in this excellent program.

"We need better relationships with each other and the reconciliation movement needs to keep spreading."

Registrations for AboutFACE 2012 have been extended to Friday 14 October. For details visit <http://aboutface.org.au>



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Shalom students dance for thousands

By Johnny Pearce, Shalom Christian College

A SPECTACULAR display from Townsville's Shalom Christian College students sent the crowd wild at the 19th Laura Aboriginal Dance Festival in late June.

The comic 'Chooky' dance broke from the largely traditional performances at the three-day, biennial event attended by around 5000 people.

Dressed in funky outfits the students performed their own version of the contemporary Indigenous dance.

The 'Chooky' became a worldwide hit when a group from Arnhem Land recorded it and uploaded it to YouTube.

John Morgan, a parent who

helped coach the dance troop, told the crowd: "We'd pay respects to the traditional owners of this land. This act is breaking with the traditional performances you have seen up to now. It is a comedy act and very different. It is with no disrespect that we perform this dance."

Onlooker Nicole Hunter, from Cairns, said it had a very different feel to other festival performances.

"I was looking at the crowd and everyone loved it. It was fantastic," she said.

A Shalom group also performed traditional dances from north-east Arnhem Land.

Dancer Meryl Nyikalawuy, a 17-year-old Shalom student, said,



Shalom students dance at the Laura Festival. Photo by Wayne Quilliam Photography and courtesy of Shalom News

"I've never danced the 'Chooky' in public before so it was a bit difficult.

"The crowd enjoyed the performance and it gave me a big lift when I heard them cheering.

"I loved the festival and I'll definitely come back."

Sixteen-year-old Shalom dancer, Anthony Pascoe, said the performance felt great.

"The crowd's reaction gave us all more energy.

"Dancing is a big part of our culture and it's a great way to keep fit and stay healthy," he said.

Shalom College Principal, Steve Thomson, said the trip to the festival had been a great success and wonderful education for students, parents and staff.

"Attending the Laura Festival

helped us to build toward Shalom's NAIDOC celebration."

The NAIDOC celebration was held on 9 September at their main campus in Condon, Townsville.

This article was originally printed in *Shalom News*

For more information visit www.ccdeu.org.au

Riding for suicide awareness

LIFELINE AUSTRALIA and UnitingCare Community, in Queensland, is supporting the efforts of the Cycle 4 Life team who cycled 1600kms, from Canberra to Brisbane, to raise awareness and funds for suicide prevention.

Canberra locals, Philippa Seldon and friend Gary Lilley, completed their epic journey at the Brisbane Botanical Gardens on 10 September after stopping at Lifeline Broadbeach on Thursday 8 September.

Ms Seldon said the journey was inspired by the tragic loss of her brother, Dale, to suicide two years ago.

"Losing a loved one by suicide leaves so many questions unanswered and so much heartache for family and friends,"

she said. "I would like to turn my family's pain and Dale's death into something positive.

"Every kilometre that Gary and I rode is nothing compared to what those grieving the loss of a loved one endure.

"My goal is to educate people about suicide prevention, what we all can do to assist someone at risk of suicide, and to make people aware of the professional support that is available," she said.

Lifeline Australia is at the forefront of suicide prevention helping over 1250 Australians in crisis every day.

"Up to 50 of these calls each day are from people at high risk of suicide but many more don't seek help," said Ms Seldon.

UnitingCare Community (formerly Lifeline Community

Care Queensland) spokesperson, Anna Masci, said raising awareness about suicide prevention and the importance of help-seeking is an ongoing priority.

"This is why we banded together to ensure Philippa and Gary's efforts have not gone unacknowledged.

"Philippa and Gary's journey has been a tough one, but their determination to pay tribute to their lost love one and to raise awareness of the life changing effects suicide can have is truly touching."

Both Ms Seldon and Mr Lilley were exhausted but proud of their achievement.

"The cycle has only made us more passionate about suicide prevention and the work that



Gary Lilley (front) and Philippa Seldon visit Broadbeach. Photo courtesy of Meryll Mills and UnitingCare Community Broadbeach

Lifeline does," Ms Seldon said.

"Having our journey acknowledged with a BBQ at the Brisbane Botanic Gardens is really great and will further help to raise awareness."

The Cycle 4 Life team's efforts raised over \$8900 which will help support Lifeline Canberra

and the national crisis telephone counselling service.

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Two positions



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Applications are invited for the role of Director of Mission for UnitingCare Queensland (full-time) and for UnitingCare Health (part-time).

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For further information and position descriptions go to www.ucareqld.com.au or phone Anne Cross, CEO UnitingCare Queensland on (07) 3025 2001 or Richard Royle, Executive Director UnitingCare Health on (07) 2025 2501. Please email applications to wendy.barrie@ucareqld.com.au

Applications close Friday 28 October 2011

Our Values: Compassion, Respect, Justice, Working Together, Leading through Learning

Knitting revives body and spirit

By Mardi Lumsden

WHAT BEGAN as a small project for two keen knitters two years ago has grown into a small army of women knitting blankets for the Hamlin Fistula Trust in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia.

Heather Allison and Sarah Hucklesby investigated charitable organisations that could use hand knitted materials and decided on the Trust not only because of an Australian connection (the trust was founded more than 50 years ago by two Australian doctors, one of whom, Dr Catherine Hamlin, is still practising), but because they were drawn to the work of the Trust.

"It supports very vulnerable

women who have suffered dreadful childbirth injuries resulting in incontinence," said Ms Allison.

"Many young women in Ethiopia undergo unsupervised childbirth. Many women labour for five to seven days, resulting in the death of their baby and the development of a fistula (a tear in the bladder and sometimes the rectum).

"This results in incontinence and often rejection by their husband, family and their entire village," she said.

"This injury is often able to be repaired by surgery and rehabilitation and continence is restored.

Conveniently the Trust

required blankets made from knitted squares so the two women decided such a straightforward task should be shared with many others and Women Knitting for Women was born.

"When women are admitted to the Fistula Hospital they are usually wearing clothes that are stained, ruined and smell offensive," said Ms Allison.

"Each woman is given a blanket which she wears like a shawl over the hospital gown."

The women keep the blanket when they leave the Hospital.

Ms Allison said the group is fairly unstructured and supports and encourages women around Brisbane to knit for the Trust.

They only meet three times

a year but, on those occasions, teach women to knit or crochet woollen squares and join them into blankets.

"We have a real cross-section of women knitting for us, from teenagers to older women.

"Connections have been made with work colleagues, neighbours, family members and friends.

"We have women knitting for us in New Zealand and the UK, school girls in Melbourne, and even grey nomads as they caravan around Australia," she said.

"One elderly lady who has dementia and lives in a nursing home knits for us.

"Another lady with a mental illness has derived a great deal of satisfaction from completing squares and passing them on.

"We organise the many bags of wool and squares that are donated from far afield. We fundraise in order to pay the freight to Ethiopia and we educate our supporters regarding women's health issues in the developing world."

Ms Allison said the idea is not to make this a large fundraising venture, but rather it is an opportunity for women to connect with like-minded women, to be aware of maternal health issues in the developing world, to get their hands into some beautiful wool and to contribute to blankets for their "sisters" in Ethiopia.

While these women are knitting for a cause, they are also part of a national knitting revival.

"Knitting is an opportunity to slow down in our hectic lives and to feel we can produce something tangible from our own hands.



Heather Allison with finished rugs. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

"Once you get over the awkward learn-to-knit phase, the action is repetitive and soothing. It becomes automatic, allowing plenty of brain space to think or listen.

"Knitting then becomes the perfect thing to do when conversing, at meetings (or Synod) or when listening to music.

For more information contact Heather Allison on heatherallison@optusnet.com.au



WATCH

Lighting a Candle (DVD)
A documentary following Dr Hamlin's 50 year journey with the women of Ethiopia.



Dr Catherine Hamlin with patients at the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital. Photo by Lucy Perry of Pure Graphics for the Hamlin Fistula Relief and Aid Fund

OzHarvest plants seeds in Brisbane

By Emma Tucker

WASTED FOOD is a natural result of the hospitality industry, but OzHarvest Founder and CEO Ronni Kahn decided that she could not stand by and watch as the twin problems of food waste and hunger co-existed.

After researching options for dealing with food waste and coming up empty, Ms Kahn decided to start up a food rescue charity herself.

November 2004 saw the launch of OzHarvest in Sydney, a one-of-a-kind program that collects fresh surplus food from restaurants, supermarkets and

other food sellers and distributes it to people in need with a same-day service.

Seven years and one million meals later, OzHarvest have locations across Sydney, Canberra, Newcastle and Adelaide.

Now they have formed a partnership with Wesley Mission Brisbane to launch in Brisbane.

Wesley Mission Brisbane Executive Director, Geoff Batkin, said he was looking forward to the fruits of their labour.

"We are looking forward to the difference this new initiative will make to charities throughout the region," he said.

"It is an important service which will not only address environmental issues of food waste, but also help organisations to better support people in need."

Veteran OzHarvest truck driver Bob Hannah has made the move up from Sydney to help out with the fledgling Brisbane service.

"There's nothing better than seeing the smiles on their faces when we deliver food," he said.

"It's a good feeling at the end of the day, when we go home knowing that people in need have something in their tummies.

"Some places will go out of their way to prepare meals for us



OzHarvest Founder and CEO Ronni Kahn, the Hon Teresa Gambaro MP, Federal Member for Brisbane, and WMB Executive Director, Geoff Batkin launch the Brisbane project. Photo by Rochelle Nolan

while they're working."

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Mission for a fresh church

By Mardi Lumsden

THE FRESH Expressions movement is creating a buzz of excitement in the Uniting Church around new kinds of mission and outreach.

In essence, the movement isn't doing anything new at all. It is almost taking mission and outreach and the activity of 'church' back to its fundamental roots: being Christ in the community.

In 2005 the Church of England established their Fresh Expressions initiative; a collaboration between the Archbishops of Canterbury and York and the Methodist Council.

It began as a follow-up from the best-selling report, *Mission-shaped Church*, published in 2004.

The report highlighted the need for a mix of "parish churches" and "network churches" that work in partnership across a wide geographical area.

The movement encourages new forms of church for an increasingly mobile world.

The Queensland Synod's former Vision for Mission advocate, Rev Duncan Macleod, spent years creating networks and fostering mission on the edges of the Church.

Now, he is Presbytery Minister (Mission and Education) with the Canberra Region Presbytery.

Fresh Expressions advocate, Rev Dave Male, is passionate about creating communities that connect with people outside the conventional Sunday service.

For seven years he was Vicar of the Net Church, in Huddersfield, UK, said to be one of the first official Fresh Expressions activities.

Mr Male is now Associate Missioner of the Fresh Expressions team and Leader of the Mission Shaped Ministry Course for Cambridge and Suffolk.

He often visits Australia including recent trips to Adelaide and Perth.

"I desperately do not want this to be a blip in a declining church," he told *Church Times*, the UK's leading Anglican newspaper, in 2007.

"If this is God's agenda for us we must be honest with ourselves about what really is happening on the ground and be prepared to continue to develop our thinking around the issues created."

Mr Male told *Journey* the Fresh Expressions movement was about allowing the community to shape the church.

"It's about mission shaping church rather than the church shaping mission."

"We are starting with mission and seeing what sort of contextual church is then beginning to grow," he said.



A *MessyChurch* gathering at St Peter's Uniting Church in Freshwater, NSW. *MessyChurch*, is a fresh expression of church and is a multi-age congregational planting strategy focused on connecting with 'unchurched' children and their families. Photo by Luke Roberts

Mr Male has been working on fresh expressions of church for more than 10 years now.

The fact that people still see this as a forward thinking movement shows how flexible it is to adapt to new technology and the surroundings and the needs of the people involved.

But not everyone agrees.

In an ABC Religion and Ethics article, "Why the parish still matters" (22 March 2011), writer Alison Milbank said she does not disagree with the outreach of the Fresh Expressions movement, but rather, the philosophy.

"Form and content of faith are not so easily separated," said the Associate Professor of Literature and Theology at the University of Nottingham, UK.

"In seeking this separation, the language and identity that forms us communally is quite lost because the meaning lies in the practices and not beneath them."

"The Fresh Expressions movement sees Christianity quite abstractly as a set of ideas, which can be separated from their

embodiment and then inserted into a new culture."

Fresh Expressions and Evangelism Officer for the Uniting Church, South Australia, Rev Ruthmary Bond, said there are many churches already doing something that could fit under the Fresh Expressions banner, but perhaps just not calling it that.

For example, a 'Pub Church', a single parents group, or running a café could all be fresh expressions of church.

Ms Bond has been involved in the Fresh Expressions movement for six years and started in the Synod role in January this year.

"The challenge for the Uniting Church is to quickly come to an understanding of how we acknowledge these communities and train ministers to lead in a missionary environment," she said.

Her participation in the movement began quite organically.

"I had a small congregation who were concerned for their friends and talked with me about

how they thought their friends would feel uncomfortable coming to a traditional church service and what could we do.

"We took time to talk with people and see what would make them feel comfortable."

"This listening raised the points that people wanted space to ask questions and share what they believe."

Ms Bond said being a place where people could go to explore faith, ask questions, have deep discussions, drink good coffee and eat became the centre point of their worship.

"People always opened up over a meal or having coffee and so we changed to a café congregation."



READ

Church Unplugged: Remodelling Church without losing your soul

By Dave Male

QR codes look to future

By Mardi Lumsden

QR CODES (or Quick Response codes) are two-dimensional barcodes that can store more information than a regular barcode.

They allow people to link to digital content such as websites or open certain functions on your phone, for example your contacts section to import data from a digital business card.

They work by using your smart phone's camera to scan the code.

A QR code reader is needed to scan the code and there are many good, free apps available (like Crafter).

Once scanned the data in the QR code will appear and give the options to click through to the information.

There are also a lot of websites that allow you to make QR codes for free. All you need to do is tell it what data you want the code to point to.

During the 29th Synod each nametag will have a QR code on it. This code links to the 29th Synod web page containing all the downloads for the Synod in session as well as some of the *Together on the way, enriching community* resources.

Less printing and more

provision for digital interaction at the Synod meeting is one way the Uniting Church in Queensland is trying to live up to the 28th Synod's commitment to be a green church.

There are many potential uses for QR codes and we are only scraping the surface.

Products are beginning to display them as a way of selling online.

If someone sees a product they like, they can scan the QR code which might take them to the company's website or a secure "buy now" page.

QR codes on DVDs could take you to a preview of the film.

The church could use them on a PowerPoint presentation to direct people to where they could download the presentation or notes associated with the presentation (e.g. Synod reports).

There is a limit to how far away you can scan a QR code from but it could be something on a screen during meeting breaks.

There is only so much you can say on a business card before it looks crowded.

A QR code could share additional information, such as a brief biography, or even redirect users to a video clip introduction.



When scanned, the contact details go straight into the smart phone's contacts section saving the person's name, phone numbers, email address and websites in one scan.

For more information on QR codes read "How Your Church Can Use QR Codes" by Andre Barnes at www.churchmarketingsucks.com

Poverty inspires justice

By Mardi Lumsden

IT'S NOT every day you see a music video featuring the people the song is about, especially when the song is about a young Filipino prostitute.

But that didn't stop Brisbane band, Remember Seven, launch a video clip for their song Red Lit Stage in September.

Indeed, the band usually goes against the norms of the music industry, not because they want to be different, but because the members of Remember Seven are called to write music about the issues and people who matter to them.

The band helps fund several projects including the Mwandi Orphans and Vulnerable Children Centre in Zambia, and Isai-ah's Home of Love, a home for orphaned and abandoned babies in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

When it comes to songs about topics like prostitution, HIV/AIDS and starving orphans, our airwaves are silent.

Even the Christian music scene is somewhat lacking in this area, as was evident when Remember Seven were told that their lyrics were too deep during a recent Christian band competition.

Yet, they continue to sing messages of justice, hope and faith.

After many trips to Africa and America, Centenary Uniting Church member and one of the songwriters in Remember Seven, Katie Wallis, was inspired to visit FOCUS over Easter 2010.

FOCUS is an NGO working to free women from prostitution in Manila in the Philippines.

"We landed, dropped off our bags and went straight to bars and brothels to sit with these young girls," said Ms Wallis.

"I saw a bunch of girls get up and dance for their lives; to seduce potential customers.

"Each girl would put on the same pair of shoes to perform.

"It was one of the most horrific nights of my life seeing girl after girl get up and stare at me with dead eyes.

"I wished they could experience life in my shoes and I knew, having seen the shoes they wear every night, I couldn't do nothing about their plight."

In that moment, Ms Wallis had already started writing the song Red Lit Stage and one year later, thanks to Red Earth Films, she returned to the same Manila brothel to film a video clip starring one of the young women who danced that night.

Red Earth Films Co-Director and former Uniting Church Youth Worker, Jason Bray, took Ms Wallis to Africa on the 2007 Global Walking trip.

That trip changed her life and how she saw the world.

"Jason has played a major role in my life, opening my eyes to issues of justice and challenging my views of who God is and how He is present with, and in, the suffering," said Ms Wallis.

When she heard that Red Earth Films was filming a documentary called *Street Dreams*, following



Katie Wallis, actress, Diane, and Remember Seven guitarist, Joy Stovall on set in Manila. Photo by Red Earth Films

organisations helping young women out of the sex industry in South-East Asia, Remember Seven offered them their music for the soundtrack.

Mr Bray and Co-Director Mike Crowhurst felt the song Red Lit Stage captured the heart of the film and offered to do the video clip.

"The inspiration from *Street Dreams* comes from the same dingy brothel that inspired Katie to write Red Lit Stage," said Mr Bray.

"When I saw the young girls in that bar I knew there was a story of injustice going on that needed to be told.

"I knew I wanted the last part of the documentary to feature everyday Australians using their gifts in their

struggle against the sex industry. "I asked Katie and her guitarist, Joy Stovall, to come to the shoot and they were gracious enough to say yes."

Ms Wallis had mixed emotions about returning to Manila and seeing the young dancer and would-be video clip star, Diane, she befriended a year earlier.

"Meeting Diane again was bittersweet," she said.

"It was lovely to see her beautiful face, but devastating to know that, in the year since I had last seen her, her life hadn't changed even slightly.

"She was still dancing every night, seducing every night, wearing cheap shoes every night in a dark, dingy bar.

"I was sitting again in the filth with stale beer still hanging in the air, seeing the face of a young girl who was beginning to realise that perhaps she was created for

more than endless nights in this hellhole.

"Every emotion captured in the clip is that much more real because that was where it really started for me."

But there is still hope for Diane.

"The day we filmed the clip Diane was not a prostitute, she was an actress portraying the nightmare she lives every day but hopes to escape from," said Ms Wallis.

"We learned that FOCUS is working with Diane to find a suitable school for her to finish

in the Philippines, the shoot was dramatic.

"Katie, Joy and director/cameraman, Mike, spent about an hour talking about the concept and three hours filming it," he said.

"There was a monsoon outside and I almost electrocuted myself in a puddle of water next to the sound system in the club."

He said, like the video clip, the *Street Dreams* documentary (currently seeking completion funding) helps humanise the victims of the sex trade.

"We want to introduce viewers to the Mary-Janes of the South-East Asian sex trade and, hopefully inspire people to help them."

Ms Wallis continues to be inspired, challenged and captivated by her friends living far below the poverty line.

"They inspire me. They move me. They never cease to show me who God is," she said.

"My hope is that I will spend the rest of my life in pursuit of ways to live in true community with them, sharing their burden and encouraging others to do the same.

"I have a heck of a lot to learn, but I always have hope."

It was one of the most horrific nights of my life seeing girl after girl get up and stare at me with dead eyes ... I couldn't do nothing about their plight.



Remember Seven video clip star, Diane. Photo by Red Earth Films



WATCH

Red Lit Stage

Remember Seven video clip by Red Earth Films

<http://youtu.be/B42-RtUt7Ug>



WEB

Street Dreams

See a preview of this moving documentary at www.redearthfilms.com.au

Andrew Juma works in the communications office for the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. Originally from Kenya, he has lived in Melbourne for the last seven years and offers his reflection on the tragedy unfolding in East Africa. This article was first printed in *Crosslight*.

War and famine:

The real East Africa story

By Andrew Juma

THE MOST insidious aspect of prolonged conflict is the total destruction of the lives of survivors.

Once the bullets stop ringing and the staccato of missiles is silenced, the survivors have to try to rebuild their lives from the rubble.

Teachers who once dreamt of mentoring future leaders have no classrooms in which to impart knowledge; doctors do not have the tools by which to alleviate suffering; farmers have to reconstruct plots littered with the debris and ordnance from the war campaign.

The Horn of Africa (encompassing more than 100 million people in Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti) has known conflict for most of the last 20 years.

Somalia, in particular, has disintegrated into a collection of fiefdoms and a hotbed of religious extremism.

This is the place the world forgot and collectively hoped would sort itself out.

As a result, the warlords continue to fight each other and the emboldened Al-Shabab movement that is loosely affiliated with al-Qaeda.

In the midst of this powder-keg is the budding Transitional Federal Government (TFG) that controls a minuscule segment of the country.

Inadequately supported by the international community, the TFG is largely ineffective outside a tiny enclave of Mogadishu.

War and famine are the only issues these disparate factions agree on.

Al-Shabab recently lifted the ban on foreign aid agencies assisting the local population ravaged by drought.

Realising the gravity of the situation, the United States has also indicated its willingness to provide relief aid to local populations in areas under the control of the Al-Shabab militia.

Researchers indicate that this drought is part of the larger La Niña climate cycle that led to the recent Queensland Floods.

In the Horn of Africa, the seasonal rains, which are vital for crop production, have been exceptionally poor over the last two years. In some areas, it has failed to rain at all.

It is the worst drought in East Africa for more than 60 years and more than

11 million people in the region face famine.

With constant conflict making it impossible to farm the little tracts of arable land during these flash rains, people are literally starving to death.

Livestock, the main store of wealth for the pastoral communities in the region, have also been decimated by the drought.

This means the little food that is available is out of reach for all but the ruling warlord-class.

A 90 kilogram bag of maize is now worth five goats, up from one goat 12 months ago.

In the world's newest nation, the Republic of South Sudan, the looming humanitarian crisis is the dark cloud hanging over the celebrations.

While aid agencies can begin operating freely in the country, they lack the necessary infrastructure to reach remote areas; road networks, schools, development policies and local government machinery have to be constructed from the beginning.

The situation is far worse in the disputed region of Abyei.

While international agencies are hesitant to explicitly label the actions of North Sudan as genocide, ethnic cleansing is clearly occurring.

Villages are indiscriminately petrol-bombed by gigantic Antonov transport planes and death squads routinely massacre civilians.

There are also tribes from

This is the place the world forgot and collectively hoped would sort itself out.

the north being re-settled in the area, planting the seed of future conflict.

With this violence and hunger, survivors face almost certain death as they decide between staying in hope or fleeing hundreds of kilometres across desert lands to camps in Kenya or Ethiopia.

The people who stay hope that it will rain again and a semblance of normalcy will return.

In the interim, they wait for food relief and contend with the war around them.

Those who choose to leave face a perilous trek to camps in Northern Kenya, which while providing relative security, only offer morsels of food aid.

This trek typically lasts up to two weeks in the unforgiving sun, across the baked desert.

Their livestock, an embodiment of their achievements, will undoubtedly die, along with the weakest among them – the sick, the old, the very young and pregnant women.

The light at the end of the tunnel is the massive Dabaab refugee complex; the world's largest according to the United Nations.

Constructed at the end of 1991, it has a capacity of 90 000 people, far exceeding that of Kakuma (which was featured in the SBS series *Go back to where you came from*).

The Dabaab complex currently holds more than 370 000 people and is receiving approximately 1500 refugees each day.

Although Kenya is considered a safe and prosperous African nation, it is struggling with this humanitarian crisis.

The government can barely afford to look after its most vulnerable citizens.

Neither can the aid agencies currently operating in the region which contend with a rising tide of donor fatigue.

The world has poured millions of dollars into Africa, but the majority of this is wasted on administration costs and mismanagement.

As a result Africa in general, and the Horn of Africa in particular, is seen as a lost cause – a monolithic failed state.

This leaves the most vulnerable to starve to death.

The situation appears daunting and it is easier to wait for solutions to be provided by the upper-echelons of government. But we can all do more today to save a life.

We can donate even two dollars to an aid agency that is committed to getting resources – food, medicines, vaccines, shelters – to those in need.

We can care about climate change because that has a real effect on cyclical environmental phenomena such as El Niña.

We can then demand better foreign aid policies from our political leaders to ensure the money and resources we donate actually better the lives of those in need.

UnitingWorld is running the Horn of Africa Crisis Appeal to provide relief to the refugees in Dabaab and Kakuma. Their aim is to raise \$50 000. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

For more information visit www.unitingworld.org.au or phone 1800 998 122



Photos courtesy of UnitingWorld

Young adults stretch their faith

By Mardi Lumsden

UNITING CHURCH young adults aged 18 to 30, grappled with life's big questions during a weekend of exploring faith, life and theology for young adults in September.

The camp, entitled *Consume: Sex, Money, Power ... God?*, was held in Maleny on 9-11 September. Organised through Trinity Theological College, it is a Moderator's Initiative.

Part of the ongoing *Stretching Faith* events, it provided a time for theological reflection for young adults to think about the links between Christian theology

and life in a consumer culture.

Organising committee member, Andrew Johnson, said keynote speaker, Dr Ben Myers, challenged and inspired those present.

"Ben Myers really delved into the deep challenge that money, sex and power is to us in our lives and painted a picture coming out of the monastic tradition about how money, sex and power could be thought of in a different way," said Mr Johnson.

"Young people both explored the theological issues at stake but also the implications on how they live their lives as disciples.

"Geoff Thompson shared one

aspect of the theological tool kit (sources of theology) and how to use the tool kit in relation to particular issues."

Speaker, Rev Michelle Cook from Mapoon, said she was "stretched in applying what we think we know about God to my actual life".

Jacqueline Dunbar from St Mark's Mt Gravatt Uniting Church, also appreciated Mr Myers' teaching.

"He asked a simple question: are we consuming celebrity or consuming Christ?"

"This is a very poignant topic for today and how we spend our time," she said.



Sondra Paulson, James Ellis and Ben Myers at the 2010 Stretching Faith event. Photo by Katie Evans

Jo Scarlett from Oxley Uniting Church, said one of the best things was, "Having a weekend away in a picturesque setting

with great people, discussing our amazing God."

Mr Johnson said there will be another event next year.



One of the Ministry Expo stalls. Photo by Josie Nottle

Expo inspires community connections

ON SATURDAY 27 August Indooroopilly Uniting Church hosted the second Bremer Brisbane Presbytery Ministry Expo, a capability-building initiative.

With a common theme of developing community connections, there were around 27 displays and stalls from congregations in the Presbytery as well as the Synod and the Assembly alongside those from ecumenical and para-church

organisations and agencies, such as World Vision.

Speakers included Uniting Church President, Rev Alistair Macrae, Assembly Theology and Discipleship National Consultant, Rev Dr Chris Walker, and UnitingWorld Director, Rev Dr Kerry Enright.

Organiser and Oxley-Darra minister, Rev David MacGregor, said a notable feature was a session where those three speakers fielded questions from the audience

and compere, Kenmore Uniting Church minister, Rev Heather den Houting.

"A common theme running through these speakers was the need to reclaim the place of evangelism; i.e. to encourage culturally-appropriate ways for Uniting Church folk to share faith."

Christian band Remember Seven provided two brackets of mission-flavoured songs.

Oxley-Darra Uniting Church

youth worker, Ken Acworth, spoke of how, in the aftermath of flood devastation in the Oxley-Corinda area, connections are being made with community, local church and Christ.

"Ministry expo 2011 provided a forum whereby those attending could be encouraged by mission and ministry happening in various congregations, schools, agencies and organisations; as communities are being served," said Mr MacGregor.

Taizé opens eyes and ears in the South East

By Kerry Pierce

TAIZÉ BROTHERS Matthew and Ghislain shared an evening of reflection and prayer with an ecumenical gathering at West End Uniting Church on 15 September.

Focusing on youth ministry, the Brothers encouraged others to move with the Spirit and listen with the heart to God's leading.

No strategies or formulas had been employed in the transition within the Taizé community in France to becoming a centre

where tens of thousands of young adults engage in the community through prayer and study every year.

Apparently, the culture of the community that Brother Roger formed was open and willing enough to be transformed by the young visitors who sought a quiet reflective community to deepen their own faith journeys.

As the young people received hospitality they also brought their own gifts, a passion for meaningful faith, and enthusiasm

for engagement in community life.

The evening was a blessing to the West End Uniting Church community who are prayerfully discerning their own pilgrimage of faith beyond the busyness that strategies and formulas can bring.

The visit was sponsored by Queensland Churches Together and Brother Matthew and Brother Ghislain also visited other ecumenical gatherings in Brisbane and Toowoomba.



Penny Allen, Jacqueline Dunbar, and Jock Dunbar from St Mark's Uniting Church, Mt Gravatt, with Br Matthew of the Taizé Community. Photo by Rob Pierce



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The 29th Queensland Synod

A meeting of the whole Uniting Church in Queensland at Alexandra Park Conference Centre.

September 28-October 1, 9am-5pm. The GOOD NEWS according to Mark seminars at Middle Ridge Uniting Church, Toowoomba. This four-day workshop will provide historical, literary and theological background to Mark's gospel valuable for preaching and worship leading. \$60 full course, \$15 Saturday only. Contact Rev Rob Callow on 4636 3850 or rob.callow@bigpond.com.

October 1, 7am-1pm. Mega Plant Sale at Holland Park Central Uniting Church. Proceeds to support local school chaplains. Contact Megan Evans on 0421 443 483 or evans.meganj@gmail.com.

October 5-7. Refuel: School Of Theology at Caloundra Uniting Church. Presented by Pilgrim Learning Community and featuring Emeritus Prof Rev William Loader. Open to anyone. \$150/person (includes meals) or \$120/person unwaged (includes meals). Contact Tilla Gibson on 3377 9724 or Matilda.Gibson@ucaqld.com.au.

October 8, 6am-12pm. Giant Garage Sale at Paradise Point Uniting Church. Contact Peter Alfredson on 5529 3669 or pgaca@bigpond.net.au.

October 8, 7am-12pm. St David's Uniting Church Garage Sale in Holland Park. Contact Robyn Sloman on 3349 2034 or ptmac2@tpg.com.au.

October 8, 8am-1pm. Annual Garage Sale and Mini-Mart at Bald Hills Uniting Church. Contact Geoff Webber on 3261 4539 or dgwhisson@optusnet.com.au.

October 9, Gymanfu Ganu Festival (Welsh Hymn Singing). St David's Anglican Church, Chelmer. Contact Bill Thomas on 3287 3616 or kmathie@tpg.com.au.

October 9, 11am-5pm. A Taste of Egypt fete at St Mary & St Joseph's Coptic Orthodox Church, Calamvale. Contact David Mahrous on 0408 899 005 or frdavid@copticmail.com.

October 14-15, 10am-4.30pm. Living the Honest Life art exhibition at St John's Cathedral, Brisbane. City. A collection of 30 abstract works depicting the quest for the sacred in Australian suburbia. Contact Margaret Moore on 3870 9427 or mollyjon@tpg.com.au.

October 17, 9am-5pm. Spirited Generosity Workshop at Centenary Uniting Church, Middle Park. A do-it-yourself three year process for developing giving invitations and growing a culture of generosity focussed on a congregation's mission. The workshop is \$795/congregation plus \$10 per person. Contact Andrew Gunton on 3366 0236 or office@moretonriverspresbytery.org.au.

October 18, 9.30am-12.30pm. UnitingWorld Synod Support Group Qld. meeting at Wesley House, Ann St, Brisbane City. Contact Judith Finau on 3711 4622 or ljfinau@gmail.com.

October 23, 1.45-5.45pm. Spiritfest at St Stephen's Catholic Cathedral, Elizabeth St, Brisbane City. Join friends from all denominations at a wonderful festival of song organised by the Queensland Branch of RSCM (Royal School of Church Music). To join the combined choir contact Dr Ralph Morton on 3336 9104 or qld@rscmaustralia.org.au.

October 29, 6-11am. Broadwater Road Uniting Church Garage Sale and Market, Mansfield. Contact Karen Stehbins on 3219 7819 or stehbos@bigpond.com.

October 29, 8-10am. Christmas Craft Market at Aspley Uniting Church. Contact Dorothy Smyth on 32632953 or landdsmyth@bigpond.com.

November 3, 10am-1pm. Frontier Services Auxiliary Bush Christmas Cheer at Albert St Uniting Church, Brisbane City. Entertainment by Prime of Life Choir followed by a light lunch at Wesley House. \$10. Contact Margaret Douglas on 3355 3885 or randlbettenay@bigpond.com.

November 3, 7-9pm. One G-d Many Voices seminar at the Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University, Nathan Campus. Annual evening of Jewish, Christian and Muslim sacred voices and music followed by a kosher-halal supper. RSVP by 28 October to Yaseen Haider on or admin@qct.org.au.

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

Logan church welcomes VIPs

LOGAN CENTRAL Multi-cultural Uniting Church, and minister Rev Dr Apichart Branjerdporn, had the great honour of welcoming Their Excellencies Governor-General Ms Quentin Bryce AC and Mr Michael Bryce AM AE, into the congregation for Dr Branjerdporn's concluding service on Sunday 4 September.

The Governor-General came to meet with the bereaved members of the Tongan and Samoan families who lost 11 members of their families in the tragic house

fire at Kingston in August, and to console and give comfort to them during the Church service.

After a long friendship with Dr Branjerdporn she was also happy to be part of the baptism of his granddaughter.

"I know the Taufa and Lale families well so I feel that there is a sense of mutual support for our family and the church family to celebrate life as God's gift to us on this occasion," said Dr Branjerdporn.

"Emotionally it was

overwhelming; both death and life. We all experienced God's greatness among us."

More than 500 people attended the service where Dr Branjerdporn, his wife Gwenda, their daughter, Michelle, and her husband Rob McDonald brought their first daughter, Grace, for a blessing (below with family members and special guests).

"It was a very joyous occasion for us and, as our church had been holding a prayer vigil every night since the tragic fire, the families and the congregation were ready to move on and look forward to the funerals."



Enriching community together

By Mardi Lumsden

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

In the light of the Church's 2020 Call and Vision, five areas of priority for the next two years have been identified.

Priority Direction E looks at "Engaging in opportunities for intentional, open community connections and partnerships".

At this stage this group is

focused essentially towards congregations rather than agencies, as agencies are already engaged in community.

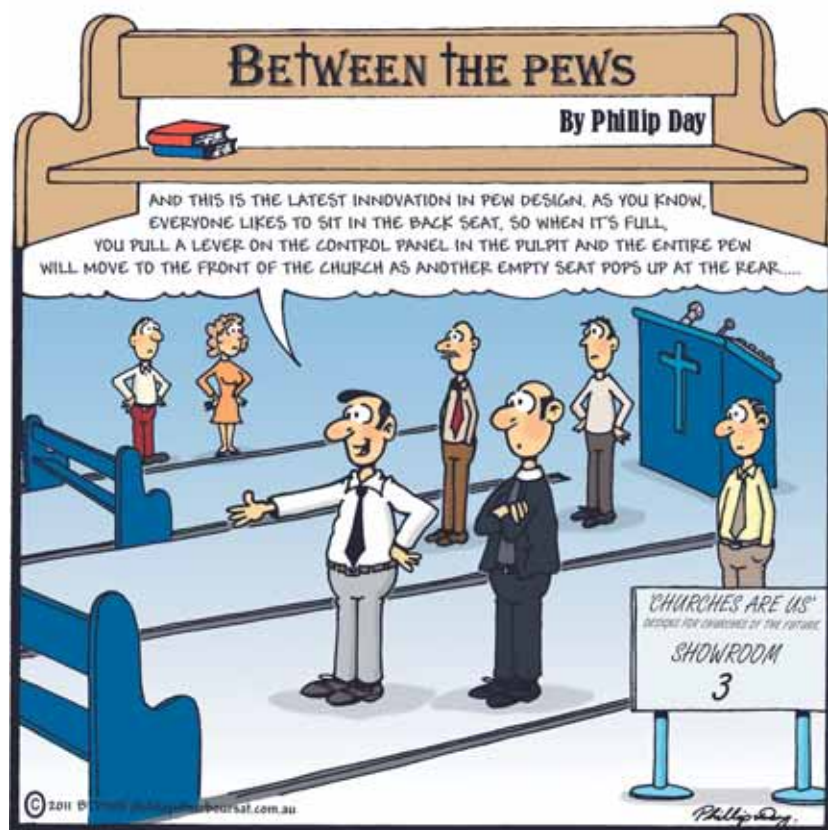
The group's report to the 29th Synod say true community engagement will "require cultural change in terms of how as a whole church we understand and approach engaging with our communities as connections and partnerships rather than as charity."

The group noted the need to learn from the wider community in terms of what partnerships are required.

"We believe that just as we have had the ecumenical question and the youth question on our agenda, community engagement should be on all agendas," the report said.

"We believe that there are already great stories of the church involved in community engagement that can inspire and excite other groups. Initial energy can be spent in gathering these stories so that they can be shared."

As always, the key to "engaging in opportunities for intentional, open community connections and partnerships" is developing relationships with people in the communities we serve.



The Sinner's Prayer: Its Origins and Dangers

By David Malcolm Bennett, Even Before Publishing, 2011, RRP \$18.95

Reviewed by Paul Clark.

THIS IS an important book.

Having counselled those who have gone forward and prayed the sinner's prayer at evangelistic rallies, only to find that they had no idea what they were doing or who Jesus was, I have a gnawing feeling that there is something wrong with this approach.

At the same time I have experienced the power of that moment when everything seems to come together.

Author David Bennett, traces the history of the sinner's prayer, as made famous by *The four spiritual laws*, and shows that rather than being a tool used by the apostles in Acts 2, it is a modern phenomenon that developed in the late 1800s from the theology and

practice of evangelists like Dwight Moody, before being refined and popularised by evangelists like Billy Graham and Bill Bright.

Mr Bennett does not want to undermine the integrity or work of these men, but rather show how the cultural phenomena of individuality and modernity have led to an understanding of making disciples as simply a formulaic prayer for instant conversion.

Apart from the resulting bad methodology for evangelism that a sinner's prayer approach has, it is also bad theology.

Salvation becomes an act of human decision rather than the action of God, which we are swept into.

Mr Bennett argues that salvation is a complex journey that is played out, for most, over many years. It comes from exposure



to the gospel, witnessed to by significant others, the bible and the church.

The Sinner's Prayer is more about the analysis than the application. Mr Bennett scours historical records to find evidence for his thesis.

Some would find this laborious but this is an academic work that allows us to reap the benefits and see the sinner's prayer in its cultural and biblical context.

Painting with Sally

By Jane Murdoch with students of Mornington Island State School, Published by Black Ink Press, 2009, RRP \$15

Reviewed by Noela Lister.

PAINTING WITH Sally is a delightfully simple children's book highlighting Australian Indigenous culture.

It illustrates the many benefits of intergenerational interaction.

Sally Gabori is a resident of the Aged Persons Hostel on Mornington Island and her great-granddaughters are among the students from the school who visit the Hostel.

Ms Gabori is a valued Aboriginal artist who enjoys helping the students learn her art.

The illustrations in the book are photographs taken by teacher, Jane Murdoch, as she accompanied the students on their visits to the Hostel.

The photographs ground the story for young readers, taking it out of the fantasy world often represented in



children's literature.

The project was sponsored by Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation to encourage reading and community relationships on Mornington Island.

Painting with Sally is published by Black Ink Press, a community-based publishing activity of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

I recommend this book. The photographs of Indigenous people will help Indigenous children identify with the book and it will give non-Indigenous children an insight into Aboriginal culture.

How to Be a Perfect Stranger: The Essential Religious Etiquette Handbook

Edited by Stuart M. Matlins and Arthur J. Magida, Skylights Paths, 2011, (5th edition), RRP \$20 USD,

Reviewed by Aaron Ghiloni, PhD, who lectures on religious pluralism at Trinity Theological College and world religions at The University of Queensland.

IN A POLYVALENT society, Christians are increasingly coming into contact with 'strange' people whose rituals and values seem perplexing and perhaps troubling. But, as the title implies, we are strangers too!

Skill at social interaction with others can go a long way towards building bridges for respect and understanding. This book helps with just that.

How to Be a Perfect Stranger is a catalogue of practical religious information, with a particular emphasis on social protocols for attending sundry religious ceremonies.

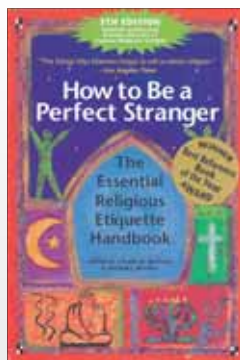
Five areas are covered for

each religion: history and beliefs, the basic service, holy days and festivals, life cycle events, and home celebrations.

Although the book is ostensibly about "all religions, all backgrounds," a Christian focus dominates; two-thirds of the "religions" are Christian denominations.

I like the idea of this book, but have questions about its usefulness. While it is not designed as an introduction to the theological meaning of ritual practices, its almost exclusive focus on manners leaves embarrassing gaps.

While repeated reference is made to the Old Testament in the



chapters on various Christian denominations, the chapter on Judaism neglects any mention of the Talmud.

The chapter on Islam omits any reference to the Hadith or Sunnah.

Readers should not confuse proper etiquette with a sympathetic knowledge of a religion. If you plan to eat a Shabbat dinner, observe a puja, celebrate a wedding in a gurdwara, or visit a sweat lodge, this is the book for you.

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

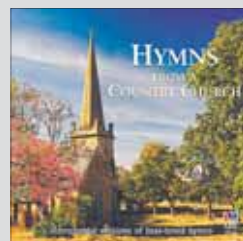
Soul Surfer: A true story of faith, family, and fighting to get back on the board

Gallery Books and MTV Books, 2004, RRP \$19.99



Hymns from a Country Church

ABC Music, 2011, RRP \$19.95



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>.

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& **PETER JANETZKI**...

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THERE'S PLENTY OF ACTION & GOOD LAUGHS TO BE HAD!

IN THE BIG GREY SHED
BUCHANAN ST, ROTHWELL QLD



Dr Paul Inglis (third from right) with Robyn Inglis (front centre) as he receives the Dayboro Resident of the Year award. Photo courtesy of the *Dayboro Grapevine*

On Sunday 2 October please pray for Logan Central Multicultural Uniting Church

LOGAN CENTRAL Multicultural Uniting Church is unique in its features as well as in its locality.

The worshipping congregation consists of English speaking people as well as Burmese, Papuan New Guinean, Samoan, and Tongan people and includes youth and young adults.

They are diverse in culture, age, economics, education and traditions.

We praise God for their respect of each other and working in partnership with all people.

Twenty members of our congregation have completed the Lay Preaching course through Pilgrim Learning Community as well as the preaching component, and will be accredited and commissioned through the

South Moreton Presbytery.

We thank God for their dedication and faithfulness in serving our Lord within our Uniting Church.

Some of them have gone through a Period of Discernment (POD) and have become candidates for ordination to be trained for the ministry. Others have gone on to university studies.

Please pray:

- for the economic situation as many people are unemployed or under-employed

- for the families affected by the fire at Kingston in which 11 family members passed away, as they are going through this terrific loss and grief. We are thankful for the timely visit of Their Excellencies the Governor-General Ms Quentin Bryce AC and Mr Michael Bryce with their official party on 4 September. It was a real comfort to the families

and the Church community

- for the extension of the Church building which has been envisaged as we need twice the amount of space as we have now to seat about 500 people

- that there will be more money to add to the savings so that this urgently needed worshipping place can be built

- for the new minister who will come as Rev Apichart Branjerdporn concludes his ministry with retirement at the end of October. That this person will be able to continue this nurturing ministry which gives leadership and pastoral counselling to this fast growing/strategic ministry, and to empower people to reach their full potential both in Christ and to make a contribution in this multicultural society.

Queensland's first official community minister retires

By Kay Murchie

AFTER MORE than ten years in the job, the Queensland Synod's first official Community Minister, Dr Paul Inglis, is retiring.

Mr Inglis began the role as a volunteer on the invitation of the Moreton Rivers Presbytery and the Dayboro Uniting Church congregation.

After retiring from QUT, he agreed to a two year contract which grew into five repeated contracts and, together with his very supportive wife, Robyn, saw the congregation grow by 600 per cent and its finances grow to the present point where the congregation at the Dayboro and Mt Mee churches can now support two part time ministers (one at 50 per cent, the other at 26 per cent) and a part-time office manager.

Dayboro has also increased its Mission and Service giving by 10 per cent each year.

The congregation has raised a team of seven preachers who bring diverse perspectives to the teaching and intentionally encourage tolerance for broad theological thinking.

Much of this success can be attributed to the skills and experience which Paul and Robyn brought with them: their focus on local matters, the drawing in of many talented and critically thinking people and a big emphasis on families and community welfare.

With a background in teacher education and process management, Dr Inglis changed meetings from boring talk fests to short, interesting and goal achieving events.

In ten years no meeting was longer than ten minutes but the

work that went into gathering and sharing ideas and reaching agreement prior to meetings in non-conflictual ways meant that these were happy years where the congregation felt they were valued and a part of every decision.

Thirteen elders, nine Sunday School teachers and many more people involved in worship and welfare programs, make this an exceptional small community congregation.

This year Dr Inglis was honoured with the Resident of the Year award, which means he got to open the Dayboro Show and is an invited guest at many community meetings.

In presenting the citation, the member for Pine Rivers, Carolyn Male, said, "Although he may pay tribute to the efforts of others, this award is all about his working towards the realisation of his vision to establish an effective welfare program in Dayboro – supported by the community."

Being the longest serving minister in the 110 years of the Dayboro Church and living in the community, relating purposefully to the schools, health professionals, service groups, marrying around 200 people, baptising or confirming another 100 and conducting many funerals that drew up to 600 people, Dr Inglis has really got to know what makes the area tick.

Working closely with the Anglican, Catholic and Lutheran Churches he has steered the Mt Mee Church to a covenant to the formal establishment of a combined Uniting/Anglican congregation.

Dr Inglis' last service at Mt Mee will be on Sunday 23 October and at Dayboro on Christmas Eve.

On Sunday 9 October please pray for the 29th Synod in session

EVERY 18 months people from across the life of the Uniting Church in Queensland gather to share experiences of the work of God, hear how God is inspiring, guiding, shaping and empowering other parts of the church, and commit to continue this work.

The Synod in session is a significant Council of the Church that exercises important responsibilities and, as outlined in the Basis of Union, "Has responsibility for the general oversight, direction and administration of the Church's worship, witness and service in the region allocated to it with such powers and authorities as may from time to time be determined by the Assembly." (para. 15(d))

The Synod meeting will be held from Friday 7 October to Wednesday 12 October at Alexandra Park Conference Centre on the Sunshine Coast.

Throughout the meeting,

around 400 people will celebrate the grace of God in Jesus Christ and worship together. Please pray for:

- the members of Synod, that they may be guided by discernment in their decision making and engage in respectful and thoughtful discussions about the future of the Church

- the opening celebration at Unity College in Caloundra (7 October), the farewell of Moderator, Rev Bruce Johnson, and the induction of the new Moderator Rev Kaye Ronalds

- newly inducted Moderator, Rev Kaye Ronalds, that she grows into her role and is supported and upheld by the Church throughout Queensland

- the Synod business committee, as they seek to run an organised and effective meeting

- General Secretary, Dr Shirley Coulson, as she facilitates her first Synod in session

- the staff at Alexandra Park Conference Centre as they host

the event

- Synod office staff who have prepared the meeting and who are present at the meeting

- the efforts to make this meeting as paperless as possible and to be a 'green' church

- members of FUN Synod (For Under Nineteens) as they learn the process of a Synod meeting and experience many different aspects of the Church in Queensland

- the continuation of the *Together on the way, enriching community journey*. That through it God breathes new life and direction into the Church throughout Queensland

- renewed fellowship and the commitment to be challenged and inspired to make informal and formal resolutions that influence the whole of the Uniting Church in Queensland.

On Sunday 16 October please pray for Ipswich North Uniting Church

THE CONGREGATION of Ipswich North Uniting Church is part of the West Moreton group which includes Rosewood, Haigslea, Walloon, Fernvale and Lowood. This area ranges from urban to semi-rural.

Ipswich North is the urban end of the group, yet finds itself very comfortable in this mix of congregations.

The January floods affected our whole community and a number of our people.

Some people are still not back in their homes.

We have also seen some who have lost their businesses due to the floods.

Many of our neighbouring congregations are in farming communities that have lost

their income and also some of their land.

Please pray for:

- the people who live in the Bremer Waters Retirement Estate. Many of these are still recovering from the devastation. Also pray for how our congregation can minister to these people

- the direction of worship. We recently have bought some new technology and are excited about finding ways of incorporating this into worship

- the direction in mission. That our missional focus continues to change to reflect the community's needs.

Please pray also for our two ministers who pastor to a diverse community.

Blessed from Kenya

I WOULD like to thank you for *Journey* magazine we receive online including the latest issue for September 2011.

It is full of exciting and enriching articles and information.

Reading *Journey* nourishes our mental and physical existence and I found this current issue, like many others

before it, very interesting and informative.

Reading *Journey* is making a step in the life's journey.

It enriches and helps to connect with Christians in that part of the global village. Blessings and best wishes in your work.

Catherine Ouma
Kenya



Mackay inspires

THE ARTICLE 'Community sleeps rough in Mackay' in the September 2011 edition of *Journey* confirmed my belief that there is much of value happening in our congregations that we should hear about.

All too often the grand global issues and events overshadow the efforts of our faith communities.

This was a story that demonstrated what a congregation can do when it intentionally works alongside other groups and leaders in a local community for the good of the whole community.

It also illustrated the courage of the local church and its willingness to experiment with a creative way of addressing a major social problem.

May their efforts be greatly blessed.

Several similar reports have appeared from time to time in *Journey* and I, for one, really appreciate them.

Keep them coming please.

My personal thanks for reporting this story.

Dr Paul Inglis
Ocean View



Yoga not for Christians

THERE IS no such thing as Christian yoga [September *Journey*].

Yoga is the unscriptural Hindu concept that the soul is imprisoned in the body and must be liberated and is at the very centre of most of the types of yoga that abound.

It is in direct conflict with the teaching of the Bible which asserts that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that the Christian is to glorify God in his body (1Cor 6:19-20; Rom 12:1-2).

Yoga is a dangerous form

of occultism. Participation in any form of the occult invariably results in some form of oppression by the powers of darkness which are operating behind the yoga system to ensnare the unwary (C.S. Lewis).

Having discussed the subject with a number of ministers and pastors and senior church leaders, they indicate you do not get involved in this type of stuff or you will only drown.

This applies to martial arts as well.

Other denominations with growing congregations do

not consider having it on their premises under any circumstances. Neither should we.

Jesus said that you are either for me or against me (Matt 12:30).

Yoga is definitely not for Him, then it is against Him.

The Uniting Church has lost heaps of members over the years and this is just another nail in its coffin.

Graham Wright
St Paul's Stafford



My mental health journey

I AM 80 years old, born into a dysfunctional family, mother, Christian, orphaned at 16, parents where alcoholics.

My father dressed and treated as a girl for [his] first six years, was always seeking elsewhere for truths.

The third of four siblings, I learnt I was not wanted, not to cry and to fear anger.

I did not fit in, even at school. I saw myself as eccentric. I wanted to be a boy. Reluctantly, at aged 13, I realised I was indeed a female.

I struggled, between 18 and 25, was raped, thought about suicide, attempted it four times, but God would not let me die, he had work for me.

After two [stays] in psychiatric wards during the last 10 years of a 19 year marriage that became nightmarish, after God spoke

to me and showed me a vision, I, aged 49, fled.

God led me to a new psychiatrist, whose word for me was that of Jesus, "forgive them for they know not what they do".

I found a woman's refuge, then a Pentecostal Church, where I learnt many principles, especially to forgive and honour my parents, for they had done the best they knew how.

I wrote to them and my sister in England to say I had forgiven them.

My sister, embroiled in one of my father's weird religions, committed suicide not long after, as her marriage broke up.

14 years later I remarried a Christian man who proved to be a liar, a thief and deceiver.

I left him, weeping, after seven years, knowing I had not really known him.

I know I have forgiven all those

who have treated me badly.

I feel such love and sorrow for them, who know not what they do.

I am safe now, the Lord has put me exactly where he wants me.

I will work as much as I am able to complete the task he has set before me.

If people still do not understand me, it does not matter, he does and his love surrounds me.

I rarely get down days now I have the fellowship and provisions I need.

Mental issues? The mind of Christ is there for us to replace the old man mind.

What else could I desire?

Thelma J Weir
Booval



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.



Key organisers, Marisa Wilkinson (left) and Jo Thompson at the Moggill Fun Run/Walk. Photo and story by Catherine Solomon

Moggill fun run

THE MOGGILL Uniting Church held its second Fun Run/Walk on Saturday 20 August.

Minister, Rev Costa Sthakias, announced the start for the race as 228 runners and walkers headed off on either the 5km course or the 9km course.

Councillor Margaret de Wit assisted at the prize giving ceremony and families enjoyed the jumping castle, face painting, BBQ and lots more.

The event was a fantastic opportunity to connect with the community. Money raised will go towards growing the Church's family centre to meet the needs of the community better.

Naming errors

Apologies to Rev Sione Afu, Rev Dr Apichart Branjerdporn, and Rev

Alamoti Lavaki whose names were spelt incorrectly in the September edition of *Journey*.

Mardi Lumsden, Editor

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What is inspiring you?

Andrew Dutney

MY STUDENTS inspire me. They really do.

I have the great privilege of being the Principal of a College that people come to because they want to become more faithful disciples of Jesus and more effective leaders in their local congregations or agencies.

Some of the students are responding to a call to the ministry of the Word or ministry of Deacon.

Others are ministers wanting to

reflect on their ministry experience and to equip themselves for the next challenge.

And because I'm the Principal I get to have one-on-one conversations with most of them about why they have come to the College to study.

I'm inspired by their stories of risky, costly commitment to God's call.

But I'm inspired especially by the evidence their stories give me that God is deeply engaged with the world and the church in this generation too.

God has a mission and calls

members of the church to participate in it in a variety of ways.

As I listen to people telling me what God has called them to do I'm also hearing what God is up to in our generation and challenged to join in.

The *Basis of Union* brings a theological perspective to this, especially in paragraph 13:

"The one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ's Church with a diversity of gifts, and that there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in

the ministry of Christ."

The Church will provide for the exercise by men and women of the gifts God bestows upon them, and will order its life in response to God's call to enter more fully into mission.

That's what inspires me.

Rev Dr Andrew Dutney is Principal of Uniting College for Leadership & Theology in Adelaide, Professor in Theology at Flinders University, and President-elect of The Uniting Church in Australia

Colleen Geyer

A LOT OF things are inspiring me at the moment.

Life always inspires me – from the challenges that seem way too big to the joys that sweep me off my feet.

Lately, though, I've been touched by the creativity of artists and poets.

The art of Gustav Klimt left me in awe and in tears in a gallery in Melbourne. His use of colour, gold and patterns are stunning.

A poem by Rainer Maria Rilke that speaks of letting our heart(s) grow "used to its farthest spaces" so that it lives fully aware and not protected, encouraged me to be open and live

every moment of life.

A local Brisbane poet, Kylie Johnson, uses words sparingly to convey life and beauty in her book *A once courageous heart*. Courage isn't easy.

All around us is evidence of the wonder of creativity and a creation so precious that sometimes it's difficult

to take it all in.

As Oscar Wilde said, "The creation of beautiful things is the test of all great civilisations; it is what makes the life of each citizen a sacrament and not a speculation."

Colleen Geyer is Director of Mission at Blue Care

Jock Dunbar

GOD IS AT work and it is inspiring.

This year has been a wonderful year of seeing and hearing how God is at work in the lives of our congregation members.

Testifying and witnessing to God's activity in and throughout our lives is a source of encouragement

and inspiration to many people, particularly within the Church and as part of our worship.

This year we've seen God stirring the hearts of those among us to let go of those things that keep us from following Christ whole-heartedly.

We've seen the commitment and dedication of our younger people, in particular, rise to the occasion.

Over these last few months our young adults have been hearing the call of Jesus to follow him more intensely and they are listening.

We've experienced people confirming their faith and baptism in Christ, others requesting the same for them, others wanting to be baptised, others considering if God is calling them to the ministry.

What a wonderful time to be ministering in the Uniting Church!

I am so blessed and honoured to be part of God's work in this way.

Thanks be to God!

Rev Jock Dunbar is minister with St Marks Uniting Church, Mt Gravatt, in Brisbane's south



Hi my name is Alex Gow!

5th Gow Family Generation

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

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

Alex Gow Funerals
56 Breakfast Creek Rd,
Newstead, 4006.

Name:
Address:
p/c:

