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SEARCHING FOR BELONGING

Mardi Lumsden

Mardi Lumsden

PEOPLE all over the world are searching for a sense of belonging.

A National Church Life Survey (NCLS) report determined that inclusion is one of nine core qualities of vital church Life.

The report, *The Role of Innovation in Church Life and Health*, released in March 2010, states that innovation inspires belonging when it comes to church attendance.

"Research shows that churches where attenders said that there was a willingness to try new things also tend to have higher levels of both belonging and growth in faith.

"Being a vital church is more than just growth in the numbers of attenders. At the heart of any church are relationships with God, between church attenders and with people in the wider community."

According to NCLS, growth in faith and belonging to a Christian community are intimately connected.

"Churches should function as spiritual families where members experience friendship, share life, struggles and hopes and contribute their gifts," said the report.

The book *The Spirit of Generation Y: Young People's Spirituality in a Changing Australia* by Michael Mason, Andrew Singleton and Ruth Webber exposed the challenges facing those born between 1981 and 1995 regarding faith and belonging.

Released in 2007, the book looks at the individualistic and consumerist world these young people have grown up in and how that affects their search for spiritual belief, or lack thereof.

From 2003-2006 the authors

interviewed 1216 Australian members of Generation Y. They found that 71 per cent of those surveyed are not involved in any kind of community service in a typical month – whether fundraising, signing a petition, or collecting for a charity – and do nothing for others apart from close family and friends.

That figure includes 51 per cent of the young people who identified as being active Christians.

The book suggests there is a link for many young people between a belief system and what it means to be a good citizen and asks who, apart from parents, would pass these values on to them.

Perhaps this is where local churches with members who are active in the community can demonstrate service and encourage a sense of belonging as a community of faith.

This drawing, by Shantia Dekkers, aged 14, is one of the winning entries featured in the 2012 Synod calendar.

MONTHLY PRAYER

Living God,
draw us into relationships that enable people to belong to your kingdom. May we be agents of hospitality and welcome as we engage with our communities. With Jesus as our model, teach us to be Christ to one another.
Amen

February 2012

Belonging to the body

Mardi Lumsden, Editor

IN the synod office we are calling 2012 the year of belonging. It has a nice ring to it, doesn't it?

Back in July our communications team, now known as Uniting Communications, got together to nut out our mission statement. What we came up with inspires everything we do. Here it is:

In serving God, Uniting Communications will inspire, resource and engage in conversations across all parts of the Uniting Church in Queensland, making mission and belonging possible.

We don't want the way the message is communicated to get in the way of the message itself. To that end, you may notice a few changes in *Journey*. There will be an ongoing belonging theme throughout the year in addition to our regular themes.

We have introduced a couple of new regular sections that we hope will give you more chances to interact with the paper and our monthly themes, as well as the Church's Vision 2020.

Our Snap That column (see below) asks for photos of your church, small group, community service or school living out the themes in *Journey*. Each month we will give you the following month's theme and if you see something you are doing fitting into that (e.g. the Never Alone Friendship Centre, page 11), then send us a photo.

We also want to hear the fantastic questions your children or grandchildren ask about God for our Stuff Kids Ask column (page 4). Each month we will ask someone working in youth and children's ministry to help us answer those deep spiritual questions that only children ask.

We have combined the What's On and Prayer Diary so praying for congregations around the synod becomes part of your calendar. And we include a photo from each entry of people from the congregation living out the *Together on the way, enriching community* Vision.

This year, our hope is that all people feel like they belong to the body of Christ and within the Uniting Church in Queensland.

More than just a name tag

Rev Kaye Ronalds, Moderator

YOU know that you belong when you turn up and they have a name tag for you.

At the very least they will feed you. But is that the same as belonging?

It might just mean that the efficient electronic registration system has you on the list. It doesn't mean that you will feel welcome and included.

I recently attended Summer Madness, the synod youth camp held at Alex Park on the Sunshine Coast. I got a name tag, a bed and enjoyed the food but, more than that, I was welcomed at the gate, saw some people I already knew and made some new young friends.

For me, belonging means having a legitimate place in the group and building relationships that make being in that group supportive, fruitful and life-expanding.

When our family lived in Rockhampton we hosted three exchange students.

For a few months they

belonged to our household.

The day we met the first one at the airport we were all so nervous. Francesco had travelled from winter in Italy and was a bright young man with excellent English, so we were able to talk about all kinds of things. Our daughter, Ellen, had spent some months in Italy so some of the conversation was in Italian.

We found some common ground and my husband built a bicycle for him. After several months of training, Francesco was able to ride up Mt Archer, a climb of 600 metres over 11 kilometres. He showed us how his mother cooked tortellini and I discovered that he liked to eat creamed rice pudding after an energetic soccer practice.

Francesco and I shared a love of reading and on Mother's Day he presented me with an English translation of an Italian novel that was one of his favourites.

For the first time our household took a special interest in the World Cup that year and Italy won!

By the end of his six-month

exchange Francesco belonged to our family. We still keep in touch.

Some years ago the Uniting Church produced a discipleship tool called *Belonging*. It explores the Christian faith by connecting faith, beliefs and living.

Although it is designed for 12 sessions it is flexible enough to be used in a mentoring relationship, in small groups or for retreats or camp studies. I adapted it for confirmation classes. It considers what it means to belong to God, to belong to God's people and to belong to God's world.

The experience that our family had hosting an exchange student taught me that the elements of belonging include having a common language for communicating, a desire to share and learn from each other and a willingness to be stretched or changed in the process.

Enabling people to belong is more difficult when there is not much common language or when the dominant group requires the newcomer to just fit in.

At this time of the year there may be people who are new to



your neighbourhood, workplace, school or congregation.

How might you help them to feel welcome and what might you do to assist them as they embark on the journey of belonging? If you are the newcomer what special effort will you need to help you to belong?

1 Thessalonians 2:8

Because we loved you so much, we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well. (The New International Version)



Kaye attending the Montville Uniting Church Centenary, Sunshine Coast, on Sunday 15 January, with Montville Uniting Church chairperson, Duncan Drew, and former Montville ministers, Rev Ian Taylor and Rev Ray Townsend

Where's the Moderator?

This month Rev Kaye Ronalds will be at many events including:

7 Feb UnitingCare Board meeting.

12 Feb Commemoration of Rev Harold Kilah's 35th anniversary of Ordination. Gatton Uniting Church.

13 Feb Induction of former Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson. St Andrew's Uniting Church, Brisbane City.

24 Feb The Downs Presbytery meeting.

1 Mar The Lord Mayor's Prayer Breakfast, South Brisbane.

Snap that!

Send us a photo that captures the *Journey* theme.

This month: Belonging.

Assembly General Secretary, Rev Terrence Corkin, embraces National Elders Representative, Rev Walirr Garrawurra, after members of the 12th Assembly passed the proposed changes the preamble to the Constitution of The Uniting Church in Australia. An emotional moment and symbol of what it means to be an inclusive church. Photo by Kim Cain.

March theme: Learning.



Send a high quality photo with an explanation as to how it fits the theme (learning) to journey@ucaqld.com.au

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Sharing love this Easter

THE Queensland Synod's Uniting Communications is again partnering with congregations to produce high-quality, low-cost resources for Easter outreach in local communities.

Easter is love is the theme of the 2012 Easter postcard campaign.

The back of the card will say "Share it!" and have a space for congregations to put their Easter service and event times.

Communications Manager Mardi Lumsden said the use of the word 'love' in many different languages represents the diverse nature of the Uniting Church and the formal commitment to being a Multicultural Church made at the Fourth Assembly in 1985.

"By using this theme we aim to encapsulate that Easter is a time of community and of people all over the world, from different cultures and who speak different languages, coming together as the body of Christ to celebrate the resurrection," she said.

"As with the Christmas 2011 postcards, our theme once again stems from one of the Call statements the Uniting Church in Queensland made in its 2020 Vision: Acting with love."

The aim of the cards is to present an image of the local Uniting Church as a place to worship and reconnect with the Easter story and to remind people that their local church is a big part of their community.

"Giving someone a card will not get them in the church door though; building authentic connections in the community is the only thing that will do that," said Ms Lumsden. "Giving them a card, however, might help break down the barriers or be a good reminder to them that their local Uniting Church cares about them and is active in the community."

Additional materials provided online will include copies of the artwork for congregational use, PowerPoint templates, a video worship resource and inclusion in the online list of Easter service times and locations.

Queensland congregations that do not participate in the Easter campaign can still sign up to a special section on the Queensland Synod website (www.ucaqlld.com.au) listing their Easter service times and locations.

A starter pack of 3000 postcards and 10 full colour A3 posters costs \$185 (includes packing and postage to your congregation or delivery to your presbytery meeting, if printing timelines allow). Additional postcards are available at \$150 for 3000 (minimum lot) and posters at \$20 for packs of 10. Registrations close Monday 13 February.

For more information visit www.ucaqlld.com.au/easter2012 or contact Tara Burton on 3377 9834 or Tara.Burton@ucaqlld.com.au



Church supports constitutional change

Amy Goodhew

President of the Uniting Church in Australia Rev Alistair Macrae welcomed the report from the Expert Panel on Constitutional Recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in January.

Mr Macrae said the report signals a landmark opportunity in our journey towards reconciliation and was a necessary step following the moving apology delivered by the then Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, in February 2008.

"We welcome the release of the report and congratulate the members of the panel for their work," he said.

"The directions suggested offer a significant opportunity for us, as a nation, to recognise and

honour the identity of the First Peoples.

"In 1994, the Uniting Church formally apologised for its complicity in the injustices that led to the First Peoples being dispossessed of their land, their language, their culture and their spirituality.

"The apology to First Peoples was the catalyst for the Uniting Church to engage in its own process of Constitutional change.

"We now have a Preamble which speaks honestly about our past and looks forward with hope to our future. It has enabled us to imagine our new shared destiny together," said Mr Macrae.

National Chairperson of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) Rev Ken Sumner said he

was pleased that the panel recommended the removal of the race powers provisions.

"These provisions have served as a reminder of shameful aspects of Australia's history," he said.

"We urge the Government to ensure that an extensive public education and awareness campaign is conducted prior to the calling of a referendum.

"This will ensure that all Australians are aware of the importance and value of Constitutional recognition of the First Peoples for everyone in our society," said Mr Sumner.

Mr Macrae said he hoped all political parties would support the recommendations.

"The dignity of recognition afforded by Constitutional

change will allow for the continued building of a relationship based on truth-telling and justice. It will provide

for us a strong foundation for continuing our journey towards a just and reconciled nation," he said.



Uniting Church President Rev Alistair Macrae with Rev Dr Djiniyini Gondarra, former Moderator of the Northern Synod. Photo courtesy of Amy Goodhew



MORE THAN JUST AN EDUCATION

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Day and boarding school for girls Prep to Year 12

Boarding: Years 7 to 12

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Sunshine Coast Grammar School

Co-educational day school Prep to Year 12

(07) 5445 4444 www.sccgs.qld.edu.au

Clayfield College

Girls: Prep to Year 12 Boarding: Girls from Year 5

Boys: Prep to Year 5

(07) 3262 0262 www.clayfield.qld.edu.au

Brisbane Boys' College

Boys: Prep to Year 12

Boarding: Years 5 to 12

(07) 3309 3500 www.bbc.qld.edu.au

Pilgrim on the move

Mardi Lumsden

THE new year has brought changes to the Queensland Synod's Pilgrim Learning Community (PLC) with the commencement of a new Director, Neil Thorpe, and Christian Educator, Rev Dr Marian Zaunbrecher.

Over the years the work of Rev Dr Rob Bos, who retired in 2011, and Rev Karyl Davidson, who now works in the Presbytery and Synod of Western Australia, was invaluable in building up PLC and its critical role of lay education and Christian formation.

Mr Thorpe comes to the role after working in Queensland Education for 25 years.

"My vision is for Pilgrim to take its part in helping our lay people to become much more informed and therefore take a greater partnership with the clergy in making sure the Vision of the Uniting Church in Queensland actually takes shape," he said.

"We have a part to play in the *Together on the way, enriching*

community journey and I'm hoping that as the year unfolds and as congregations participate more fully in that journey, that we can support congregations and presbyteries in their work in Christian formation."

Mr Thorpe hopes PLC will network with others in the Uniting Church to provide courses and support programs that really do enhance an informed laity partnering with clergy.

Dr Zaunbrecher has worked in lay education in three Synods and was previously in the role of Queensland Synod Associate General Secretary.

In recent years she has been involved in supporting the work of PLC in many areas and wants to work with the solid foundation that has already been built.

"I want to continue the heritage that Karyl Davison and Rob Bos have left us with at Pilgrim and continue the enthusiasm and excitement that is generated, especially by the lay preacher's courses."

She said the courses are not just for people who want to be



Pilgrim Learning Community staff, Neil Thorpe, Rev Dr Marian Zaunbrecher and administrator Tilla Gibson. Photo by Osker Lau

lay preachers.

"It is not just important to have good lay preachers, it is really important to have an educated laity. Unfortunately I think sometimes people haven't progressed their understanding of their faith.

"Sermons aren't there to educate people, they are there to challenge and refresh."

Dr Zaunbrecher said that as one of the Uniting Church's specified ministries, lay preachers play a vital role in supporting the minister and, at times, taking the minister's place

in a congregation.

"In isolated communities it is really important to have educated lay preachers because often they are the ones who sustain congregations in worship," she said.

Dr Zaunbrecher said there are many benefits of doing a lay preachers course.

"I think people will find that their faith will grow and will be challenged. Often lay people are working in isolation so there is a sense of collegiality. Often there is a spiritual hunger that is fulfilled as a result of the courses.

"You can almost literally see the light bulbs going on in people's minds as they participate in a lay preacher's course. It is an emotional, intellectual, exciting environment."

PLC is also responsible for assisting ordained (as well as lay) ministers with their continuing education and will host an in-service for Pastors in July.

PLC is now located on level 2 of the Synod office, 60 Bayliss St, Auchanflower. For more information on PLC visit www.pilgrim.qld.edu.au

Churches still strong on gambling reform

A new voice in the fight for poker machine reform, the Stop the Loss Coalition, was launched on 20 January along with a new research paper arguing that the gambling industry has grossly overestimated the financial impact of the proposed poker machine mandatory precommitment reforms.

The paper, *Rubbery Figures: An examination of the claimed and likely cost of poker machine reform in Australia* produced by The Australia Institute, refutes claims by the gambling industry that the proposed reforms will cost \$5 billion.

The Institute showed that the cost is likely to be between \$171 million and \$342 million.

The Institute's Executive Director, Dr Richard Denniss, said the \$5 billion estimate is an exaggeration based on the cost of introducing a policy that no-one is actually proposing.

"They have ignored the proposed phase-in periods and, in turn, ignored the fact that the cost of replacing machines is less for every year of service, and after seven years, non-compliant machines are replaced with new compliant machines at virtually no extra cost," he said.

The launch of the report and the Coalition was followed on 21 January by the announcement that federal politicians were unable to agree to evidence based reform and action mandatory

precommitment in this parliamentary term.

UnitingCare Australia National Director, Lin Hatfield Dodds, said the announcement was "deeply disappointing".

Speaking after the Prime Minister's announcement of the compromise position on poker machine reform, Ms Hatfield Dodds said problem gambling will continue to cause untold damage to the lives of people struggling with poker machine addiction, with huge knock on impacts for their families and communities.

"If the legislation outlined by the Prime Minister passes through Parliament we will have national legislation regulating

pokies for the first time," Ms Hatfield Dodds said.

"This is a significant step in the right direction."

Founding Stop the Loss Coalition members include UnitingCare Australia, Anglicare, GetUp, the Gambling Impact Society, PokieACT and the Free Yourself Program.

Rev Tim Costello, chair of the Australian Churches Gambling Taskforce, spoke at the launch

of the Stop the Loss Coalition in Sydney.

Also present were Ms Hatfield Dodds and Catholic Social Services Australia Executive Director Paul O'Callaghan.

The Coalition also unveiled a plan to letterbox one million homes in New South Wales and Queensland about the need for reform.

For more information visit www.stoptheloss.org.au



If God loves me the way I am, then why do I have to get dressed up for church?

Answer by Rev Paul Clark, Redcliffe Uniting Church

WHEN I was younger, before I was married, I used to think that for a girl to love me she would have to take me as I am – uncombed hair, shower once a week, stained clothes and picky eating habits. If a girl really loved me, she would look past these surface issues and see the real me.

Fortunately, I realised that if I was to love a girl, I would consider what she thought.

My wife loves me even when I don't shower – but I show my love for her (and others) by

showing regularly! I think my youthful slothful behaviour also revealed something about my own lack of respect for myself.

In the same way, you never have to get dressed up for God.

Dressing up can be a way to demonstrate your love for God, but it is certainly never a sign of your godliness, or that you are better than others.

Remember, while living with your parents things are easier if you do what they want.

I pray people will consider you by your character, not the cut of your cloth.

A passage worth reading with your parents is Matthew 22:1-14.

This year *Journey* will feature this column of fabulous questions from the mouths of babes. If you have heard a great question from a young person, please send it to journey@ucaqlld.com.au



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

GENERAL SECRETARY

The Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) is a living Christian faith community which is committed to being faithful to God and to seeking ways of love, peace and justice for all people. The UCA lives out this commitment through its large network of congregations, social justice advocacy, and extensive provision of services through its schools and child, family, community and aged care services.

The UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania seeks a General Secretary to provide strategic leadership of the Church throughout the Synod and to fulfil the functions of Chief Executive Officer.

With a sound knowledge of UCA structures and polity, an ability to lead and co-ordinate a complex organisation, a strong understanding of good governance, and the capacity to lead and inspire a senior executive team, the General Secretary will ensure the development and implementation of a focused vision for the Synod.

Outstanding interpersonal, communication and pastoral skills are essential as are an involvement in the life of the Church

and commitment to fostering relations with aboriginal and islander, multicultural, and ecumenical partners. Tertiary qualifications in theology and business administration (or similar) will be well regarded.

Submit applications to Rev Sue Withers C/- 130 Little Collins Street Melbourne 3000 by 9 March 2011, or for further information email sue.withers@victas.uca.org.au or phone 0417 317 770.

Community joins forces to spread joy at Christmas

LAST year was a year of dramatic weather events throughout Queensland.

In Western Queensland, heavy rainfall over the 2010/11 festive period saw the townships of Alpha and Jericho inundated.

Property owners, although isolated during the flooding, were later blessed with large amounts of grass growth and a fantastic season for cattle production.

The first storms of the season (in mid-October 2011), saw lightning strikes create bushfires on properties to the north, south and west of Jericho.

Water-bombing planes and Rural Fire Brigade ground crews from townships further afield provided support to landholders fighting the fires.

Due to strong winds and inaccessible terrain fires continued to burn for weeks.

The pressure and stress on

property owners who were fighting fires, mustering, moving stock and trying to feed hungry stock while being surrounded by a black, scorched, and desolate environment was at times overcoming.

In total, 38 properties were burnt with 10 of these being totally devastated – losing 95 to 100 per cent of their stock feed. Thousands of cattle had to be fed and relocated.

But out of the blackness came a shining light – the warmth, kindness and generosity of people wanting to help those who had been affected.

Immediate emergency needs were met by a variety of government and non-government organisations.

With Christmas around the corner, and at that stage no rain in sight, it was decided to bring some festive cheer and happiness to those who had lost so much



Rev Suzy Sitton and Scott Ballment ready to spread Christmas joy. Photo by Aleta Ballment

and continued to work so hard.

Rev Scott Ballment, Uniting Church Minister based in Barcaldine (covering Alpha, Jericho, Blackall and Aramac), and Jane Williams, Rural Family Support Officer for the Barcaldine Regional Council, worked together to surprise those who had sustained

significant losses.

With the generous help of the Uniting Church's Queensland Synod disaster relief fund, nine families on properties received Christmas hampers.

Emerald Uniting Church kindly supplied additional Christmas presents for two families with young children.

Mr Ballment said many property owners were humbled by the generosity of others, with some suggesting the hampers should be given to those needier than themselves.

"They expressed their thanks for the way the church and the wider community brought hope into their homes at Christmas."

Lay Preachers answer the call

Aaron J. Ghiloni

LAY preacher Helen Tualau said: "I believe God has called me to preach and to witness."

Ms Tualau's declaration could be echoed by many other lay people.

Over the past 14 months the Moreton Rivers Presbytery has accredited and commissioned 17 lay preachers.

This group – which varies in age, education and ethnicity – shares a common sense of being led deeper into the ministry of Christ.

Whilst lay preachers remain active in their home congregations, many also preach and lead worship in other settings, ranging from retirement homes and McDonald's cafes to country churches and regional worship centres.

The Moreton Rivers Presbytery has greatly benefited from the upsurge in active lay

preachers. They enable the presbytery to maintain consistent Sunday worship services in congregations where ordained ministry is unavailable.

However, lay preachers do not see themselves as mere proxies; instead, they understand this ministry to be a natural step in living out the Gospel.

Shirley Sargeant, a lay preacher based at The Gap in Brisbane's west and a leader at the Stillpoint Centre for Personal and Spiritual Growth, agreed.

"We are all called into the priesthood of believers, lay as much as clergy," she said.

"This is a way that lay people can co-partner Christ Jesus in bringing healing and hope as they live out their everyday lives perhaps more deeply immersed in this broken world."

The process of becoming a synod-accredited lay preacher involves a combination of biblical and theological study, practical

assessment of sermons, and a recommendation by one's local congregation.

For some participants this is their first formal learning experience in years, while others hold advanced degrees.

Dr Dennis Shanks, a distinguished scientist who undertook his lay preacher studies at Moreton Rivers' innovative Learning for Living program, said, "I became a lay preacher in order to have a disciplined program to prepare myself to preach and lead worship."

The process of becoming a lay preacher is highly rewarding.

Not only do lay preachers find themselves with deeper theological understanding and improved ministry skills, they also develop enriching relationships with fellow learners and lecturers.

They discover they are not alone in answering the call.



From left: Rev Paddi Mullan, Dr Aaron Ghiloni, Robson Brunt, Rev Andrew Gunton, Salote Tuinona (front), Paula Hukehuke, and Aisea Tuinona celebrate the commissioning of lay preachers at Kangeroo Point Uniting Church. Photo by Emele Tuinona


Logan Uniting Church
presents


A Pilgrimage to the Holy Land
22 Sept – 6 Oct 2012

- See Israel, including Jerusalem, Sea of Galilee, Dead Sea & Jordan Valley
- Total price: \$6500 (twin share)
- For more details visit www.ift.net.au or contact Trish on 1800 074 426 (toll free)

 United Theological College

**Position vacant:
College Secretary (full-time)**

United Theological College is seeking to employ a college secretary full-time. The person concerned will be based at the Centre for Ministry in North Parramatta, Sydney, NSW. The secretary will assist and work closely with the principal in areas including human resource management, event and communications management as well as providing administrative support to members of the Faculty.

Applications close at 12 noon, 1 March 2012.

Please direct inquiries and a request for further information to Joanne Stokes, joannes@nsw.uca.org.au or phone (02) 8838-8914.

www.utc.edu.au

 GrowFaith



GrowFaith is a Queensland Synod project exploring the development of a digital resource to help form active and accountable disciples of Jesus.

We need your help in the research phase! Youth, young adults, parents and youth leaders/mentors please fill out an online survey at <http://growfaith.ready2air.info/>

Find GrowFaith on Facebook and Twitter

Come on the journey with us to create something that best fits what you need in a discipleship resource.

GrowFaith is an activity of  The Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod

Making an event of Lent

Cath Taylor

ALL over Australia, people are putting aside their coffees, weekly newspapers and favourite television shows and instead throwing their energy behind efforts to build water tanks in Zimbabwe.

No, they're not actually travelling to Africa. It is all part of UnitingWorld's Lent Event.

People help overcome poverty by giving up an item from everyday life during the period of Lent and donating the cost toward overseas development projects.

At the same time they are encouraged to reflect on their spiritual journey through the use of the *Journey Guide*, which includes daily prayers and a six-week bible study, *This One Life*. Worship and children's resources are also available.

Beenleigh Region Uniting Church member Sharon Robinson said members of her church enjoyed taking part in last year's Lent Event.

"We had about 70 people involved in the Bible studies and

found them absolutely fabulous.

"We also enjoyed the worship material and our children participated through their Sunday School activities too," she said.

"We found Lent Event helped us understand the importance of being in relationship with partners overseas and helped prepare us for the relationship we've formally developed with a community in the Solomon Islands.

"It's been a totally life-changing experience," said Ms Robinson.

St Paul's Uniting Church in Stafford, Brisbane, took part in a Lent Event Water Walk on 13 November 2011 and are looking forward to spring boarding into Lent Event 2012.

Congregation member Julie Packer said she had been asked to think about directions for church mission and the next day received the Lent Event Water Walk information in the mail.

"It seemed to me that God was nudging me straight away in the direction he wanted us to be heading," she said.



St Paul's Uniting Church, in Stafford, members take part in a Water Walk. Photo courtesy of Cath Taylor

"We had about 45 people of all ages involved in the Walk which helped raise money as well as awareness for water projects in Milne Bay, Papua New Guinea.

"We were able to include all ages in a worship service and I think the event had a big impact on everyone."

Lent Event has raised close to \$2 million for water and

sanitation, education, health and nutrition projects in countries as diverse as the Philippines, India and Zimbabwe.

Congregations report that they come away with a better understanding of the issues, and the way the Uniting Church in Australia partners with communities overseas to help alleviate poverty and injustice.

They also say they bond around a common cause, with people of all ages supporting each other as they focus on the needs of others.

Lent begins on 22 February. To register or to order a study guide contact the UnitingWorld Lent Event office on (02) 9868 2277 or visit www.lentevent.com

Student captures a centenarian's life

Emma Tucker

EACH year, Wesley Mission Brisbane welcomes a group of talented students from Griffith University to take part in a unique experience.

The Griffith University/Wesley Mission Brisbane (WMB) photographic competition encourages photojournalism students to tell the stories of staff, volunteers and the people WMB support and present a portfolio of photographs from their time with the organisation.

The year 2011 was the seventh year in which WMB and Griffith University have held the photographic competition, culminating in an exhibition to display the students' work.

Photographer, musician, student and part-time hair stylist Dylan Evans was awarded first prize for the 2011 competition for his project, "Timeline of a Centenarian".

Through his work Mr Evans photographed the life of retired Uniting Church minister Rev Ellis Bramley, a resident at one of WMB's independent living facilities.

Mr Bramley served as a minister for over 70 years and is a valued member of the community, one year receiving over 450 Christmas cards.

Mr Evans said a conversation with Mr Bramley inspired his project.

"We sparked up a conversation and just started

chatting, and he showed me some of his things, like his old army uniform and his letter from the Queen.

"Seeing his possessions gave me the idea to do a portrait of 100 years to show people what a full life looks like visually."

Lenore Eggins, manager at Wesley Mission Brisbane's Day Respite Centre, said that people often undervalue what older people have to offer.

"One of the issues I see is that we don't ask older people to tell us about themselves or their opinions; we forget that their ideas and values are just as important as our own and hold a wealth of experience, wisdom and insight," she said.

Mr Evans said he and Mr

Bramley connected because of Mr Bramley's great story-telling skills.

"One of the most interesting things in his possession was his manual hair clippers," said Mr Evans.

"I loved that they still had hair in them, as if they were frozen in time. We also found an old record player that I think Ellis had forgotten he even had. It's amazing what people collect over a lifetime."

David Lloyd, Deputy Director of Learning and Teaching at Griffith University's College of Art, has high praise for the competition and partnership with Wesley Mission Brisbane.

"It's an opportunity for students to engage meaningfully with their community, and learn about community issues in a personal way," he said.



25 / 10 / 2011

See more of Mr Evans' photographic work at www.dylanevans.com.au



The SCOTS PGC College

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space to learn

Belonging to God

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson

IN the service of Congregational Reaffirmation of Baptism, the members of the congregation are invited to trace the sign of the cross on each other and to declare as they do so: "You belong to Christ".

It is a powerful moment in which we are reminded of the identity we received at our baptism. If we allow the sign and the words to tap into their deepest meaning, the power of the moment lies in its subversive intent.

Yet the subversive power of this moment has itself been undermined by the centuries of domestication and sentimentality under which the sign of the cross has been buried.

Peel back that domestication and sentimentality and what do we have?

A sign of one of the most violent forms of state execution practised in the ancient world.

This is the sign that we place on each other as we declare that we belong to Christ. It is also the sign that we place on infants when they are brought for baptism.

The modern parallel would be for us to mark each other – and our infants – with an image of a hangman's noose or an electric chair. How completely bizarre!

It would be so much easier if we just said, "You belong to Christ". But the physical remembrance of the cross reminds us of just who this Christ is to whom we belong.

The only Jesus Christ to whom the sign of the cross entitles us to belong is the Jesus who persistently challenged commonsense ways of belonging.

And this persistence helped to

get him killed.

Jesus' family thought he belonged to them, but Jesus told them he belonged to those gathered around him.

The people of his home town thought he belonged to them, but he walked right through the midst of them and went on his way.

Some of Jesus' Jewish contemporaries thought that God belonged to Israel, but again and again Jesus insisted that everyone belonged to God.

Even the disciples thought that Jesus belonged to them. When they tried to isolate him from children, or sick or hungry people, he would demonstrate to the disciples to whom he belonged.

Uniting Church theologian Rev Dr Garry Deverell recently suggested that to belong to Jesus is to be "torn away from our natural roles in favour of a way of life which ... calls into question the most common paths by which we journey through life".

Perhaps every service of baptism or reaffirmation of baptism should become an occasion for such questioning.

As well as the reminder that we belong to Christ, perhaps we should challenge one another by asking, "What uncommon paths are you following?"

Imagine if we warned parents at the baptism of infants that by marking their child with the cross they are deliberately exposing their child to a call to an uncommon life.

Not a call to success but to simplicity, not to career but to caring, not to wealth but to poverty. Perhaps baptism really ought to come with official warnings.

The call to belong to Christ



Photo by Tilen Krivec

has heavy demands, but it also announces a liberation.

Despite widespread anxiety about the future of the church, we are privileged to live at a time when the church has slowly but surely been weaning itself from the culture of Christendom and

its lure of success, influence and status.

Perhaps more so than our forebears we are able to learn what it means to belong to Christ when there is nothing or no one else to belong to.

Marked with the cross, we can

become an uncommon people living out the same hope in God which enabled Jesus to let go of those natural ways of belonging.

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson is Principal of Trinity Theological College, Brisbane

Partners on the journey

Tara Burton

WHEN a church calls a person in ministry it is not just that person who answers the call.

A move to a new congregation or role impacts their whole family.

Partners in Ministry (PIM) originated in the Methodist Church over 60 years ago to support this group of people.

Queensland PIM secretary Andi Griggs said that although the group was originally for

women it now includes ministers' spouses, either male or female.

"A small regular number of men attend our events, but I'm sure some are still apprehensive of previous assumptions that it's just for women," she said.

"It is open to those who are partners of ministry agents, married to those studying to be a ministry agent and retirees."

Ms Griggs values the sense of belonging that she gains from her friendships within the PIM community.

"PIM has always been set up to support, encourage and journey with those partners of ministry agents.

"We are what we make of it and we truly have some delightfully inspiring and engaging voices," she said.

As an ordained minister's wife Ms Griggs has struggled in knowing where she fits in.

"A calling to a placement isn't just of the minister, it's to the entire household."

She said the role of the

minister's wife has changed remarkably in the last 20 years. Now, most ministers' partners (be they husband or wife) work full-time.

"These days there are little or no expectations on you, which in theory sounds wonderful and liberating, but in practice can be difficult to determine," she said.

"It would be my hope that every placement would hearten conversation with the entire household and not only the minister."

Ms Griggs said the Queensland Synod PIM retreat for families in ministry, which is specifically aimed at families with children still at home, is a

way of ministry families coming together to share in the struggles and joys of their similar paths.

"I dream of my kids knowing and engaging with other kids doing life similarly, knowing their struggles and passions are being appreciated and heard.

I dream that we, as the Queensland Synod, protect and advocate for our family units. I dream to breathe life back into this community we call the church. If we can do this, then perhaps we can live out the church we dream of."

For more information on PIM contact Andi Griggs at andi.griggs@gmail.com

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Building men of hope and courage

Dave Martin

I grew up in a community that was both microscopic and networked at the same time. It was a microscopic community because my family lived on lighthouse stations.

At the same time it was a dynamically networked community across the whole country, with 24 manned stations and the accompanying support networks.

Looking back, it was a safe community. There were no known incidents of child molestation, domestic violence or stealing. Parents had no safety concerns with children visiting their neighbours or vanishing for hours on end when moving around by boat, train or plane.

There was a continuous stream of men visiting throughout the year – mechanics, relief keepers, painters and technicians. What stands out is that they were men who were safe for women, children and young people to be around.

My image of men, then, was of robust, hardworking, honest and trustworthy people. For a growing boy to belong to this group was a highly desired prize indeed.

Today, things are different. While much of our community is still safe it seems that men, in general, have changed. There is increased domestic violence; the

incidence of rape and incest is on the rise; marriage relationships now commonly break down while men are often seen as heroes of the pub and the punt.

Recently I was in Thailand to visit child protection projects and was astounded at the number of sex tourists, many of them Australians, who carry out their activities with no apparent sense of shame.

They are men commonly aged between 45 and 70 years, who rent girls who could be anywhere from 15 to 20 years of age. These men brazenly appear with their rented prizes in cafes, restaurants, hotel dining rooms and around touristy areas. There is no apparent conscience for what are obviously grotesque relationships. Belonging to this group of men would not, in my opinion, be a good thing at all.

What has caused these changes, making men seemingly so indifferent to any sense of decency? My guess is the rise of pornographic culture, the ease of access to pornography online and the increase of sexualised content in mainstream movies and TV shows.

These factors have brought about a related decrease in how women and children are viewed by men to the point that many men appear to see women and children as little more than commodities.

As I look back on the



Dave Martin at work in Asia. Photo courtesy of Dave Martin

community of my youth and reflect on the issues in the community to which I now belong, I have to ask, what is it that makes men and the overall community safe?

Things like trust, integrity, honesty, clear boundaries and a putting others' needs at an equal place or above those of self come to mind.

Jesus Christ, of course, models all of these good qualities and the Bible is described as "a lamp for my feet, a light on my path".

The Bible lays out visible guidelines for what will, in

effect, produce a safe, nurturing community through its laws, codes and examples. It has very clear instructions on taking care of single parents and children, who represent the most vulnerable in any community.

While we cannot expect our whole society to take on the Bible's way of doing things, there is a place for Christians to do two things.

Firstly, Christian congregations can be places in which a safe, nurturing community is modelled.

Secondly, it is appropriate

for Christians to speak out on matters that damage our community; to voice concern; to offer an alternative point of view and to call for change where appropriate.

It would, of course, be wonderful to return our community to the status of a safe community whether our people are at home or abroad.

Dave Martin is the Church Partnerships Manager with World Vision Australia and founder of www.positiveaussieimage.com

Navigating belonging and singleness

Estelle J McCrohan

SINGLES come in all shapes, ages and conditions – students away from home; semi-permanent visitors; recent migrants; separated or divorced folk; people who have lost a loved partner.

They all have one thing in common: the need to belong – to be included.

Our church communities

are good at catering for groups of people: prayer groups, Bible study, craft or other hobby groups perhaps.

We invite anyone who wishes to come along, then wait to see who arrives.

It may be difficult for people in secure families and relationships to realise that not many singles have the confidence to step out into that warm welcome you have offered.

When they don't turn up, you may take it that they don't want to come – perhaps even feel slighted that your invitation was not taken up.

But it can be very daunting to launch into a new group situation.

Anyone dealing with a recent loss or major changes will have undergone major shifts in attitudes and state of mind, as well as questions of residence, grief, finances, decision-making, the list goes on.

Migrants face different customs, language and other problems.

Loneliness is a truly debilitating state.

Of course people who live alone are not always lonely, but most would admit that certain days and times are difficult.

Who will you share that sudden idea with; the joke and humour of a situation?

Just being in a different, caring environment where opinions are sought and considered could make a real difference.

They probably feel left out – our society is set up for couples.

If a single wants to travel, fares

are always per person twin share.

Even an offer of free coffee coupons turns out to be two for the price of one.

People used to having a partner find the social scene very different when they are solo.

Safety and security are concerns. When living alone one must think, "How long would it take before I was found if I collapsed and couldn't reach the phone?" That is sobering.

Outings can loom as unrewarding.

Certain places are not welcoming for Christian singles – clubs and hotels, restaurants, even the cinema.

To go to a crowded event only to realise that everyone has a partner or friends except you is distressing.

Couples have each other and their own routines – you don't want to intrude. One doesn't want to appear needy or desperate, even if you are.

But what can we as Christians do?

Instead of simply greeting someone at church and letting them know the groups that are available, why not adopt a recent

(or not so recent) single member of the congregation?

Invite them to have a cup of coffee or a meal with you and your family.

Ask about their transport situation and, if convenient for them, scoop them up then and there.

An informal and friendly meal together can do wonders in starting a true friendship.

The early church was made strong by "having all things in common".

Get to know them. Start by understanding their particular situation and sensitivities. Truly listen.

As Christians it may be difficult for singles to find social friends and companions.

If adopted they can be assured of company and will meet other Christians in a natural way. Families may find a carer, babysitter, reliable friend, grandparent figure or adviser.

Come, friends, ask God's guidance about truly befriending that lone person God wants cherished and encouraged.

You may just find yourself entertaining angels unawares.



Photo by Charlotte Na

Finding your other self

Tara Burton

BORN in the Northern Territory, Trinity Theological College student Fa Ngaluafe speaks rather eloquently about belonging and the challenges that come with belonging to two different cultures.

"Belonging is a worldwide human desire that we all seek," she said. "It is like a missing piece within our hearts and lives which we continuously search for.

"I have come to a peaceful conclusion within myself that both my cultures, Australian and Tongan, make up who I am.

"To neglect one is to neglect an important part of who I am."

Ms Ngaluafe remembers the times in her life when she just wanted to fit in and be a typical white Australian girl. However, this ideal had effects on her self-esteem and body image.

"I used to see it as a curse, now I see it as a blessing to be able to have two cultures," she said.

"Being a second generation young adult is difficult because you are brought up as your ethnic culture and then you

are surrounded and live in the dominant culture.

"I found it really difficult to find a place to belong.

"I found myself wanting to fit in more with my Tongan culture, but there were areas of my Aussie culture that I liked and I wanted to sort of mesh them both together."

Ms Ngaluafe stressed that everyone is on a search to belong.

"We all want to belong to something, to be part of something amazing, something spectacular and we may find that in our culture, in our family, friends or job.

"I don't believe we appreciate those treasures fully until we find belonging in the family of Christ," she said.

Rev David Won Kim agrees with Ms Ngaluafe regarding the struggle to belong, especially when it comes to cultural identity.

Born in South Korea, the minister at Crossway Uniting Church in Holland Park, Brisbane, said his Asian heritage had been westernised and he is now a fusion of the two cultures.



Fa Ngaluafe. Photo by Phil Johnson

Mr Won Kim favours the term "belongingness" which he said is an act that requires constant effort.

"Belonging to different cultures is about finding your other self.

"If I had lived in Korea all my life I wouldn't have been able to see that I have another type of personality.

"It's been a blessing that I came to Australia to be able to

find myself, find my other self," he said.

"The Uniting Church in Australia has helped me to understand the First People and the Second People.

"God sent the Aboriginal and Indigenous people to look after this land.

"The First People welcomed the Second People.

"That's the focus of God as well. I think of Australia like a big

family reunion."

Mr Won Kim stressed the importance of not being judgemental and recognising that every culture is different.

"God loves us the way we are. It doesn't matter how we look.

"If we have that notion, and we practise that notion, we will have a much better church, a much better country and, most importantly, a much better world."

Hope overflowing

Tara Burton

ONE year on and the physical and emotional scars of the January 2011 floods and cyclone

are still evident throughout Queensland.

In an area which bore the brunt of the flood's casualties, The Downs Presbytery Minister

Sharon Kirk said she deliberately did not watch any news replays of the footage from the devastating events.

"I just can't bring myself to relive it or watch people's tragedies replayed.

"To me it seems wrong to sensationalise the event again, although the anniversary does need to be marked in a respectful way – it's a fine balance and a challenge for the media," she said.

Ms Kirk went on to say that in the past year trauma from the floods has changed her life significantly.

"This year I decided not to go away due in part to anxiety about getting stranded.

"I listen to weather and road reports very carefully these days.

"There is a sense that somehow we missed a chunk of 2011 that people usually rely on for rest and recreation, emotionally and psychologically.

"We can't get that time back so we have been running on low reserves for all of 2011," she said.

Disaster Recovery Chaplain Rev Bob Rutherford agreed.

"One year on I could well imagine that many are still processing what happened and constantly fearing whether it will happen again and how can they prepare for such an event of this magnitude," he said.

As Disaster Recovery Chaplain, Mr Rutherford hopes to encourage communities to develop their own program of recovery that hopefully will include memory, and the "telling of the story".

"It is a bit like Anzac Day. Old

soldiers do not gather to glorify war but in order to tell their stories. It is in telling their stories each year they process and deal with the horrors they all went through.

"Our role now is not to help people to forget but to remember and to assist them build back better in their own way," he said.

Mr Rutherford emphasised the need to remember last year's events and the value of ritual in assisting with the recovery process.

"I am now able to make a response some 12 months down the track. I do believe this is the best time, as it will have taken this long to just begin to process what has happened and, for many, the next step will need much care and consultation.

"I see my upcoming role as communicating and consulting with the communities and assisting them to develop a degree of emotional resilience as they put in place what I believe must be a community-led recovery process."

Crows Nest Uniting Church minister Rev David Graham said that making sense of the lives lost during the floods may take a lifetime.

"The lives that have been lost can never be replaced. But we believe that they are in God's care now."

To prevent a similar disaster from happening again, Mr Graham would like to see legislation enacted which would prevent people from living in low-lying areas beside waterways.

"It would be seriously remiss for future generations not to learn the lessons from this disaster," he said.

One of the only positives that may have come out of the floods



The Downs Presbytery Minister, Sharon Kirk, inspects the plaque erected in Toowoomba to commemorate the events of January 2011.

Photo by David Kirk



WATCH

Happy Feet (2006)

Award-winning animation directed by George Miller
Rated G



WATCH

Rabbit Proof Fence (2002)

Three young Aboriginal girls are forcibly removed from their families.
Rated M



READ

Boy Overboard (2002)

Young fiction by Morris Gleitzman



READ

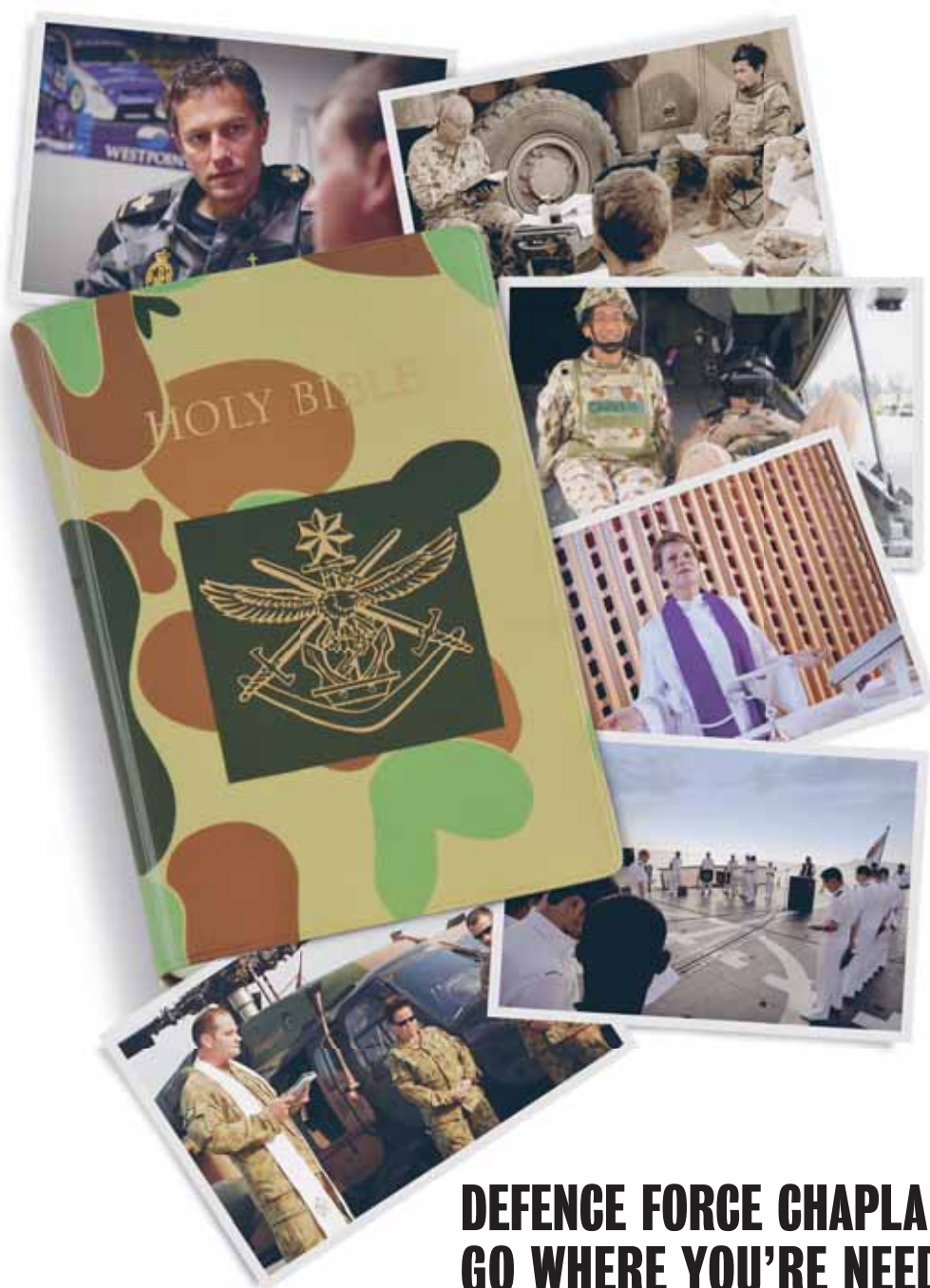
The Faith of Generation Y (2010)

A study into what British youth believe by Sylvia Collins-Mayo, Bob Mayo, and Sally Nash

is a course in Psychological First Aid which has been mandated to all ministers in The Downs Presbytery to help people trying to cope with psychological trauma.

"We also saw the very best of human nature in action after the floods as the community pulled together to help the survivors.

"That, at least, was a blessing." Another minor blessing was the sense of community that saw neighbours who had never spoken helping each other in a time of disaster.



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Your church's valuable real estate

Jane Moad

HOW often do you receive emails with funny photos of church signs? They're often very witty, clever and laugh-out-loud funny.

While browsing Twitter recently, I came across a similar topic (if you're a Twitter user, search for #churchsigns).

Curious, I followed the hashtag and found a whole list of church signs, some of which were mildly amusing, some confusing, and many of which were theologically questionable.

Quirky signs may be fun for a laugh on email, but what do they actually communicate on the side of the road?

Church signs are essentially billboards. Even in the suburbs or regional areas, billboards rent for thousands of dollars per month.

As an example, billboard company GOA provides an illustrative rate of \$750-\$1500 per month for a six metre by three metre billboard, in a regional area.

Granted, it is bigger than your average church sign, but the impact of your message can be just as great.

If your church had to budget an additional \$1000 per month to maintain your sign, would it make you think twice about the message you send?

St Lucia Uniting Church interim minister Rev Maxwell Vines said their sign was looked after by a member of the congregation who sees it as a ministry to perform.

"As a form of outreach, it's important to use this medium to try to connect with the neighbourhood and to those passing by. Ironside State School is right across the street from our building," said Mr Vines.

"There are so many gimmicky church signs which are almost an insult to intelligence, that we decided straightforward, down-to-earth statements and information was preferable."

The sign is frequently used to announce events, worship times and opening hours for their thrift



Are you using your church sign to its full potential? These are some of the 2011 Sign of the Times entries

shop and the Church Council will often discuss other ideas that may be helpful.

At Pine Rivers Uniting Church, Rev John Gill said that the messages on church signs should welcome people in, not condemn them.

One of the congregation's most successful messages was a simple, 'What can we do to help you? Call us or drop in.'

"That week, we saw an

increase in the number of requests for help from the community, as well as people visiting our website and checking out our online sermons," said Mr Gill.

"Three of those people are now regular attendees at worship with our congregation."

As it's not always easy to come up with a fresh message each week, the Church sign checklist below may give you a useful

starting point.

An online resource dedicated to church communications and marketing is www.churchmarketingsucks.com.

It works from the philosophy that we have the greatest story ever told, so let's try to stop our communications from being a stumbling block. The message will do the rest.

Not a lonely Christmas Day

OVER 50 volunteers made sure that people were not left alone on Christmas Day on the Gold Coast.

The Never Alone Friendship Centre, an outreach of the Burleigh Heads Uniting Church, provided lunch for 70 people from the community who would otherwise have spent a very lonely Christmas Day.

Speaking to *Journey*, co-founder and chairman of the Centre Neville Free said that this was the third year the Centre had provided a Christmas Day lunch for the lonely, isolated and homeless in the community.

"Christmas can be a very emotional time for many and to have to spend it alone can be very depressing," said Mr Free.

"Our aim is to ensure we maintain the spirit of the season and make the day happy and

memorable for as many people as we can.

"This year, and with the help of many volunteers from the community, donations of money and food, we were able to provide a three course meal, entertainment and some fun on the day.

"We were encouraged again this year by the number of people who were willing to give up their Christmas Day to ensure others less fortunate enjoyed theirs.

"Individuals and families joined in to host, serve and entertain."

The Never Alone Friendship Centre operates from the Burleigh Heads Uniting Church each Wednesday from 9am until noon and provides fellowship, games, craft and other activities for anyone who would like to drop in.



Some of the guests and volunteers at the Christmas Day lunch. Photo courtesy of Neville Free

Church sign checklist

Do you have someone whose ministry is the church sign?

Do you keep a list of ideas and note which messages work well?

Do you keep it simple? Good billboards usually have fewer than seven words.

Who are the people who pass your sign? Where are they going? What other community facilities are nearby? What is important to them?

What does your sign say to people about your church? Does it give people a clue about who you are, what your church stands for, or what it finds important?

Do you use jargon? Do members of your local community understand words like sin, repent, salvation, mission, body of Christ, or famous biblical characters?

Do you invite your community in? Try asking how your church can help.

Do you advertise community services such as emergency relief, playgroups, exercise groups, thrift shops and family events?

Do you share service and sermon themes that will connect with your community?

Do you show people you care by saying thank you to volunteers?

And one final piece of advice: don't be overwhelmed by the task of communicating with your community.

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11 FEBRUARY 9.30am – 2pm

Australian Christian Meditation Day at Holy Spirit School Hall, New Farm. Includes meditation, two talks, reflection, and other activities. Morning tea served, bring lunch to share. Suggested donation \$10. Contact Gabby Nelson on 3711 4227 or toga@bigpond.net.au.

12 FEBRUARY

Please pray for Brookfield Uniting Church. Vision Statement: Sharing Christ's love within our community giving hope and encouragement to people on life's journey

Please pray for:

- the Church Council as it plans activities and outreach for 2012
- Shrove Tuesday pancakes for local school children
- response to pot luck supper on Tuesday evening, 21 February
- planning for and response to February Children's Service
- planning for ministry leadership beyond 2012
- guidance to Rev George Barnes and his wife Kay for their ongoing ministry leadership.

**12 FEBRUARY** 9.15am – 11.30am

35th Anniversary of the Ordination of Rev Harold Kilah at Gatton Uniting Church Maitland St, Gatton. Lunch available at the Gatton Golf Club after the service for \$20/head. Contact Rev Harold Kilah or Mrs Cynthia Kilah on 3392 9431 or haroldkilah@bigpond.com.

14 FEBRUARY – 24 APRIL

Christianity and the Visual Arts, a 10 week study course, at Indooroopilly Uniting Church. Gives an historical and ecumenical overview of the place of the visual arts in the life and worship of Christian churches. Contact Geraldine Wheeler on 3437 8743 or gwheeler25@bigpond.com.

17 – 18 FEBRUARY

Garage Sale at Wheller Gardens, Uhl Hall 930 Gympie Rd Chermide (Opposite Westfield Shopping Ctr). Preloved clothes, household appliances and homewares, crafts, books, knick-knacks and lots more; from 8am to 1pm both days, bargains galore; funds raised will support the facilities at Wesley Mission, Wheller Gardens. Contact Barbara Wood on 3359 7010 or trevorjwood@bigpond.com.

19 FEBRUARY

Please pray for Living Faith Uniting Church, a growing congregation serving the areas of Carina, Carina Heights, Carindale, Mt Gravatt East and Mansfield in Brisbane. As the body of Christ in this place we are experiencing Holy Spirit power in who we are and what we are doing and the challenges that go with that. It is an exciting time to be the church. We recognise that, "We are a living witness, shining the light of Jesus Christ to bring faith, hope and love to the community."

Having identified the things we value as the church, we have set a number of Faith Goals and are now working toward how to live those out.

Please pray for:

- Life Key's children's ministry and for additional staffing for ministry to children and youth
- our connections with the community including Balance Builders exercise group, Possums Playgroup, our annual Hearts and Roses event to support Cystic Fibrosis Queensland, the Brisbane Billy Cart Championships, the Bulimba Creek Catchment group and the Coffee, Chat and Care group

We welcome your prayers to partner with us in what we are endeavouring to do for the Kingdom of God.

**21 FEBRUARY** 9.30am – 12pm

UnitingWorld Mission Support Group (QLD) at Wesley House, Brisbane City. Supporting our overseas partner churches. Contact Beth Clarke on 3408 3082 or nbclarke@optusnet.com.au.

26 FEBRUARY

Please pray for Gladstone Uniting Church, a multicultural congregation in Central Queensland. The area is experiencing a construction boom with an ever-changing population as people move to Gladstone for contracts in the industry. We strive for Gladstone to be a community where everyone can experience the transforming love of Jesus. We feel that God's direction for our congregation is into the children's, youth and family ministries.



Gladstone has many young families with no direct family support so we support these families and help them to create networks of support through our Little Explorers Playgroup and youth group KUCA.

Through the UnitingCare Christmas appeal we support our local Women's Refuge, Endeavor Adults and Lifeline. Many of our congregation members are part of the local BlueCare and BlueCare Auxiliary which each month hold a garage sale with as many as 40 volunteers helping.

Please pray for:

- the young families in our area
- KUCA (Grade 4 – 7 youth group)
- Little Explorers Playgroup (birth to school age)
- the BlueCare and BlueCare Auxiliary
- our small groups and Bible study groups
- our prayer groups

3 MARCH 7am – 12pm

Garage Sale at Beaudesert Uniting Church. Good used furniture, clothing, books, household articles, plants, home cooking etc. Contact Stuart Thompson on 5543 1254 or info@beaudesertuniting.org.

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

Joan Stott Bursary

APPLICATIONS are now open for the 2013 Uniting Church Adult Fellowship (UCAF) Joan Stott Bursaries.

The UCAF National Executive may award up to two bursaries each year, to the value of \$1500 each, to assist those committed to, or who already are, studying in the field of leadership or theology, within the ethos of the Uniting Church.

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

This will be the third year a bursary has been offered. A previous Queensland recipient was Rod Fisher, a recent Trinity Theological College graduate.

Applications from Queenslanders need to be forwarded to Caroline Foulkes on lynton.foulkes@bigpond.com by 31 May.

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

New Lenten studies

FORMER Pilgrim Learning Community director, Rev Dr Rob Bos, has produced a series of Lenten Bible studies called *Journeying with Jesus: Six Lenten Bible Studies For the Year of Mark*.

If you would like a copy of these very interesting studies, contact Dr Bos on robertbos29@gmail.com

Memory hunting

The Berserker Street Uniting Church, Rockhampton, will celebrate its 75th anniversary over the Easter weekend this year (6-9 April).

Marguerite Stubbs is

collating a book celebrating the congregation's history and is looking for memories of past and current worshippers to present in the publication.

If you can assist please contact her on stubbsswm@bigpond.com or 4928 2781

Moggill Markets add Christmas sparkle

Samantha Marsh

Some 20 Blue Care community clients received a special surprise this Christmas when Blue Care staff delivered gourmet hampers donated by The Moggill Markets Committee.

Blue Care Brisbane Northside Community Care Service Manager Rebecca Bell said the hampers brought a lot of joy to people who receive assistance from Blue Care staff to remain

independent in their own home.

"Some of our clients may not have family to spend Christmas with, so it's important they still feel special during this time, which is what Moggill Markets is helping Blue Care to do," she said.

Ms Bell also thanked the Brookfield Show Society and Lions Club for donating extra items and the Country Women's Association which helped pack the hampers.

Moggill Markets Committee member Erica Parker said the markets started in January 2009, and as a not-for-profit organisation, the funds generated are used to support the local community.

"A lot of time and thought went into the hampers of gourmet goodies and we hope Blue Care clients enjoyed them," Ms Parker said.

Since it began as the Blue Nursing Service in 1953, Blue Care has grown into one of Australia's leading providers of residential aged and community care, caring for more than 12 500 people every day.



Blue Care staff accept donations for the hampers. Photo courtesy of Samantha Marsh

A Dangerous Dozen: 12 Christians Who Threatened the Status Quo

Edited by the Rev Canon C.K. Robertson, SkyLight Paths Publishing, 2011, RRP \$23.95

Reviewed by Karyl Davison.

WE don't often think of Christians being dangerous, let alone great Christians. But throughout the history of the Christian church there have been Christians who were not afraid to ask what God would have them do, and actually do it.

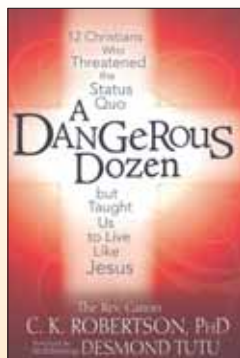
Their words and actions challenged the status quo, often bringing them into conflict with both the church and the world.

Canon Robertson brings together 12 amazing Christians from the near and

distant past.

Some will be well known to you – Paul of Tarsus, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Oscar Romero, for example. Others may surprise you – Mary Magdalene and Francis of Assisi – and others will probably be unknown to you – Sojourner Truth, Janani Luwum and K. H. Ting.

All these Christians were change agents, choosing to engage seriously, in Jesus' name, with the hurts and injustices of their time – just like Jesus. Just like Jesus they were often seen as a threat.



They were courageous people who were not always understood or appreciated even by the church.

A Dangerous Dozen invites the reader to learn about these 'saints' and in doing so discover the courage within to love as God loves.

Highly recommended.

A thinker's guide to Sin: Talking about wrongdoing today

Edited by Neil Darrach, Accent Publications, 2010, RRP \$39.95

Reviewed by Karyl Davison.

MOST of us have puzzled in recent years about the way sin is understood in Australian society. Although for some of us it remains a religiously meaningful term, this has somehow become less than helpful for many. Even in the church we are no longer sure what sin is.

So how can we speak about wrongdoing in a way that is meaningful both in the church and our wider society today? This is the conundrum *A thinker's guide to Sin* is trying to address.

The book is a collection of articles, coming out of New Zealand, written by over 20 authors from different Christian traditions.

The aim is to articulate, for Christians as well as interested members of other religions and the wider society, a broad understanding of sin and its

contemporary equivalents. Thus it does not assume a Christian readership, although it will probably be of most interest to people from a Christian background.

The collection is divided into four parts. Part one deals with some of the shifts that have taken place in the way sin is talked about. Part two explores what we actually mean by the concept of sin and wrongdoing in our lives.

In recognition that there are many shades of grey when we try to define wrongdoing, part three looks at the complexity involved in defining the boundaries of sin and wrongdoing.

Finally, part four discusses some new kinds of sin, those areas of wrongdoing which may not have featured previously such as environmental, rural and intergenerational wrongdoing.

The underlying message is the hope that in discussing sin,



or wrongdoing, we might be more able to overcome, or even, eliminate it.

It seems clear today, with the aid of new understandings in psychology and theology, that traditional emphasis on individual sin is neither nourishing or empowering, nor does it recognise sin as embedded within many of the structures of our society.

This book offers thoughtful reassessment of this key theological concept.

God in a Brothel: An Undercover Journey into Sex Trafficking and Rescue

Daniel Walker, IVP books, Illinois (2011), RRP \$15.95

Reviewed by Rev Dr Marian Zaunbrecher.

GOD in a Brothel is not a book for the faint-hearted, but is for all those passionate about the mission of God, a mission that calls the church to proclaim freedom for prisoners and release the oppressed (Luke 4:18).

Author New Zealander Daniel Walker is a Christian policeman who saw himself as a superhero and ended up discovering his own brokenness and humanity.

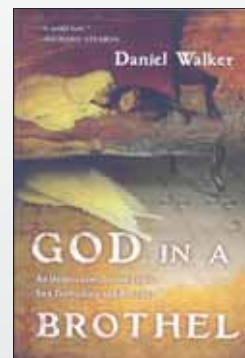
With fire in his heart for those women and children who have been trafficked into sexual slavery, he worked for four years as an undercover agent throughout the world.

His life was frequently in danger and the success small, as he was able to place survivors with social work agencies.

This book also chronicles his own doubts, fears and personal issues. It is a very candid story.

Each chapter includes the story of a trafficked child or woman and a page of facts about the worldwide trafficking that occurs.

More than two million children are exploited worldwide in the sex industry, and while it is found more



frequently in poorer countries where families may benefit from the rewards of selling their children, sex trafficking is found in Australia and other western countries too.

Most difficult to read were those portions of the book describing the corrupt involvement of law enforcement agencies in the industry.

God in a Brothel is a call to the church to become again the abolitionist it once was. It will challenge every believer, congregation and welfare agency.

A Lever and a Place to Stand: The contemplative stance, the active prayer

Richard Rohr, Hidden Springs, New Jersey (2011), RRP \$22.95

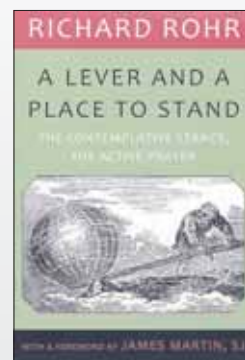
Reviewed by Bob Warrick.

THE Charge (or Word of Mission) at the end of a worship service usually includes an exhortation to not just have listened and thought, but to make a difference in the world.

That is one of Mr Rohr's major thrusts. His concern is with religious attitudes that "create an alternative pious world for believers without really challenge the oppression, materialism, and sectarianism of our modern world".

He argues that religion's primary purpose is to be a transformational system and that it cannot recover this purpose without a genuine contemplative and healing stance – hardly surprising, as he is a Franciscan priest and founder of the Centre for Action and Contemplation.

He suggests that we have moved toward being a "civil" religion rather than the new mind and heart of Christ. In order to really change the



world, it is necessary to move away from where cultural Christianity is standing and so gain leverage to effect change.

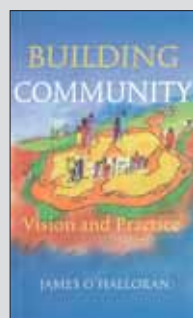
It's not new, but he reminds us that the world knows when we are quoting clichés that we hardly believe ourselves or mouthing doctrine that is not connected to life.

Mr Rohr exhorts us to embrace our humanity and encourages us to question the ways in which we live our beliefs.

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

Building Community: Vision and Practice

James O'Halloran, Currrach Press, 2011, RRP \$13.95



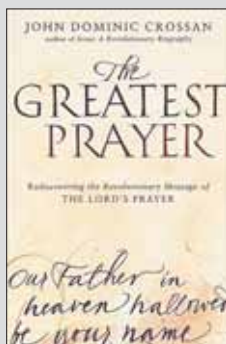
Pocket Posh King James Puzzles: People of the Bible

Andrews McMeel Publishing LLC, Kansas City, 2011, RRP \$7.99



The Greatest Prayer

John Dominic Crossan, Harper Collins, 2010, RRP \$21.00



Books available from ...

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

Youth mad to serve

Mardi Lumsden

ALEXANDRA Park Conference Centre on the Sunshine Coast was inundated in January with more than 200 Uniting Church young people for Summer Madness 2012.

Organised by a team of youth leaders and people with a passion for helping young people experience God, the camp was a huge success.

Over four days, high school aged youth and their leaders experienced the theme Ignite and were challenged to find where their passion for serving God lay.

One of the organisers, Youth and Families Resource Minister with the Mary Burnett

Presbytery and Buderim Uniting Church, Rev Tim Griggs, said Summer Madness 2012 (SM12) was more than just a camp.

"All churches that attended SM12 were encouraged to take up the SM 25:40 Challenge," he said.

"By responding to the Matthew 25:31-46 passage individuals and groups had the opportunity and resources to help them reflect, engage and act on each need.

"We really pushed to make it not just a great camp that lasts a weekend, but rather a network of people that are committed to making a difference in our communities throughout the entire year, nay, our entire lives."



Magician Christopher Wayne shows some campers a few tricks. Photo by Kaye Ronalds

Proserpine-Whitsunday Uniting Church minister Rev Wayne McHugh attended with

some of his young people and said the event was truly inspiring.

"The campers, guest speakers/performers and perhaps most of all the leadership of Summer Madness were amazing," he said.

"My biggest thrill was in witnessing the awesome leadership team. Summer Madness was no one's 'job' (all leaders were either congregation based workers or volunteers) but they have taken the initiative and delivered a fabulous camp experience for this generation.

"It compels me to provide my support in whatever way I can to make sure that if Summer Madness 2013 happens it reaches more youth than ever, and that the leaders have more support than ever."

One of the highlights for many

people was guest speaker Shane Claiborne.

Jessica Slaughter, a youth leader at Maryborough Uniting Church, particularly enjoyed what Mr Claiborne, a bestselling author and prominent Christian activist, had to say.

"Summer Madness was an incredibly amazing experience," she said.

"Shane Claiborne inspired me to find what I am passionate about and spread that fire.

"Another aspect of the camp that I enjoyed was the worship from (guest band) Remember Seven and (worship band) Heist.

"I found it easy to connect with God and it helped strengthen my relationship with him," she said.



Campers find their name tags. Photo by Kaye Ronalds

Focusing on forming disciples

Mardi Lumsden

AN exciting project to explore the possibility of developing a digital discipleship resource was launched at Summer Madness youth camp on the Sunshine Coast in January.

The project, called GrowFaith, is in the research phase.

The resource is an integral part of enacting the *Together on the way, enriching community* (see <http://together.ucaqld.com.au>) recommendations to the 29th Synod of the Uniting Church in Queensland.

This will be a central part of the Uniting Church in Queensland's Priority Direction D (facilitation renewal of leadership for the mission of the

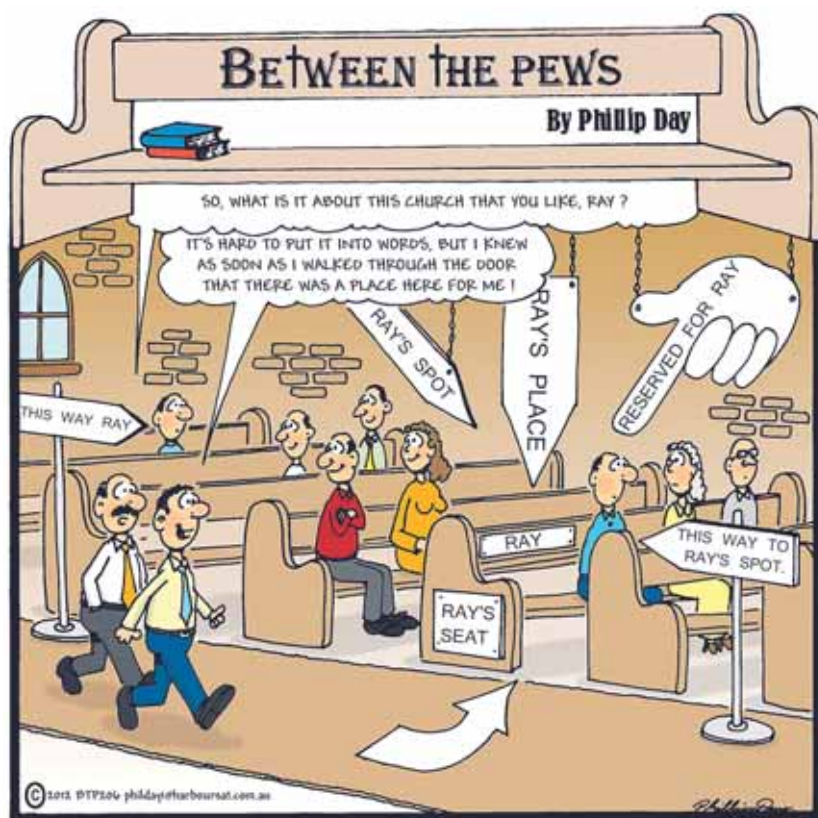
Church) and is directly linked to be "forming active and accountable disciples of Jesus".

Initially, the resource will target youth and young adults, with the aim of developing to all ages in future stages.

The vision is to see every part of the church growing in their walk with Christ, encouraging each other on the journey, serving in their diverse areas, and sharing their faith with the world.

An online survey has been designed to evaluate what the needs and gaps are in current discipleship resources.

To fill out the survey or for more information visit <http://growfaith.ready2air.info/>



Jared Hayward and Jo Scarlet log on to the GrowFaith online survey. Photo by Josie Nottle

Community thank you

I am writing on behalf of the Lifeline Community Recovery team across Queensland. Many of you will recall that almost 12 months ago Lifeline crisis support workers and counsellors came into your community following the worst summer of natural disasters this country has experienced in living memory.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the privilege of entering your lives at that time, and for your willingness to share the difficulties and struggles you were encountering as you commenced your long journey of recovery.

We Queenslanders are a proud and self-reliant mob and it is never easy for us to come to the point of accepting help from strangers. It was an honour to come into your community and into your homes.

There are few words that can describe your experience (and ours). To have shared this time with you is unique and we feel very humbled by this experience.

We have admired your courage and tenacity. We have shared your family, your home, your hopes and your dreams. Most of all, we have admired your determination – never to be defeated no matter what Mother Nature sends your way.

For all we have been through together we would like to sincerely say, thank you.

Can we remind you that we are only a phone call away? Please call 13 11 14 should you require support.

Matthew Wilton
UnitingCare
Community



Women in ministry

THE article headed "Milestone for Queensland's first female minister" in the December *Journey* reminded me of my own Congregational days prior to church union at Cracknell Road, Annerley.

There, I experienced worship led by Reverends Dorothy Wacker and Thelma Murray who were ordained in 1951 and 1959 respectively.

Rev Lindsay Lockley, in his book *Congregationalism in Australia* comments on religious equality in our country and saw the beliefs of

Congregationalists reach its full equality in the ordination of women to the ministry as early as 1926.

Having experienced the ministry of these two women in Queensland enabled me to become accustomed to the benefits of eliminating any distinction between men and women in ministerial service and helped me grow in my faith journey.

John Newman
Yeronga



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

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

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Facebook comments

"Charity cheats to feel the law" article responses:

It does not cost much to call the attention of the sensationalistic media in order to show and prove what the selfish, rich, people are doing. It is important to denounce the wrongs of the society in general and particularly something that is hurting our ability to help more brothers and sisters in need. Keep in mind that to denounce and fight this type of evils is an important aspect of our apostolic, prophetic, mission.

Francisco Orlando Lopez Arevalo

It all comes down to clear communication on what is and what is not acceptable to donate. Yes, sadly some people are downright lazy and dump their unwanted goods at charities, because they can't be bothered otherwise disposing of them, but there are also some other well-meaning people who donate things they shouldn't because they don't know any better.

There will always be some people who don't follow the rules, but for the rest I think re-enforcing the message not to donate anything that isn't in reasonably good condition, and providing information about alternative and more appropriate places to take items that are not required by charities, is the key to reducing this problem.

Kate Metzdorf

Advice for students awaiting tertiary placements:

Think about the goal, particularly if you fill like throwing the towel, but never forget that the journey is what really matter. God bless you always.

Francisco Orlando Lopez Arevalo

A very nervous time, no doubt for many young people. Whether they get the placement they hoped for or not, pray for them and for the life-giving God to lead them into wonderful futures.

Graham Slaughter

There are other paths that you can take to reach your goal if you don't get to the course you want. Just need to get out there and ask around! May take a little longer but if it's what you want to do you will make it happen and it will be worth it in the end.

Bec Binks

Looking forward to Summer Madness:

I am just looking forward to catching up with people who I haven't seen in a while and just the whole experience in general. Summer Madness 2012 is going to be awesome!

Rhi Paton

Looking forward to seeing young lives changed, connecting with God and loads of fun!

Jessica Slaughter

Login and have your say now!

Inspiring caring adventurers

UnitingWorld is partnering with Inspired Adventures to offer a team of people the chance to trek through the Himalayas, visit Development projects and engage in inter-faith action with our partner church in North India in September.

Together, the team will raise at least \$75 000, enough to cover the costs of UnitingWorld's education projects in Amritsar for a whole year.

The Gap Uniting Church minister Rev John Ruhle will be the UnitingWorld representative

on the trip to India.

A member of the National Committee for UnitingWorld, he has served in East and West Timor and has visited India on previous occasions.

"We're looking forward to taking a team of motivated and active people who are excited about all dimensions of this project," he said.

"With the experience of Inspired Adventures, team members will receive great support to achieve their fundraising and personal goals in 2012."

For more information visit www.inspiredadventures.com.au/unitingworld/india



John Ruhle in West Timor. Photo courtesy of John Ruhle

Apology

Apologies to John Butters who, in the article "Bonds of faith in Cleveland" (page 5 December *Journey*), we incorrectly called Frank Butters. Please forgive *Journey* for any confusion caused. Ed.



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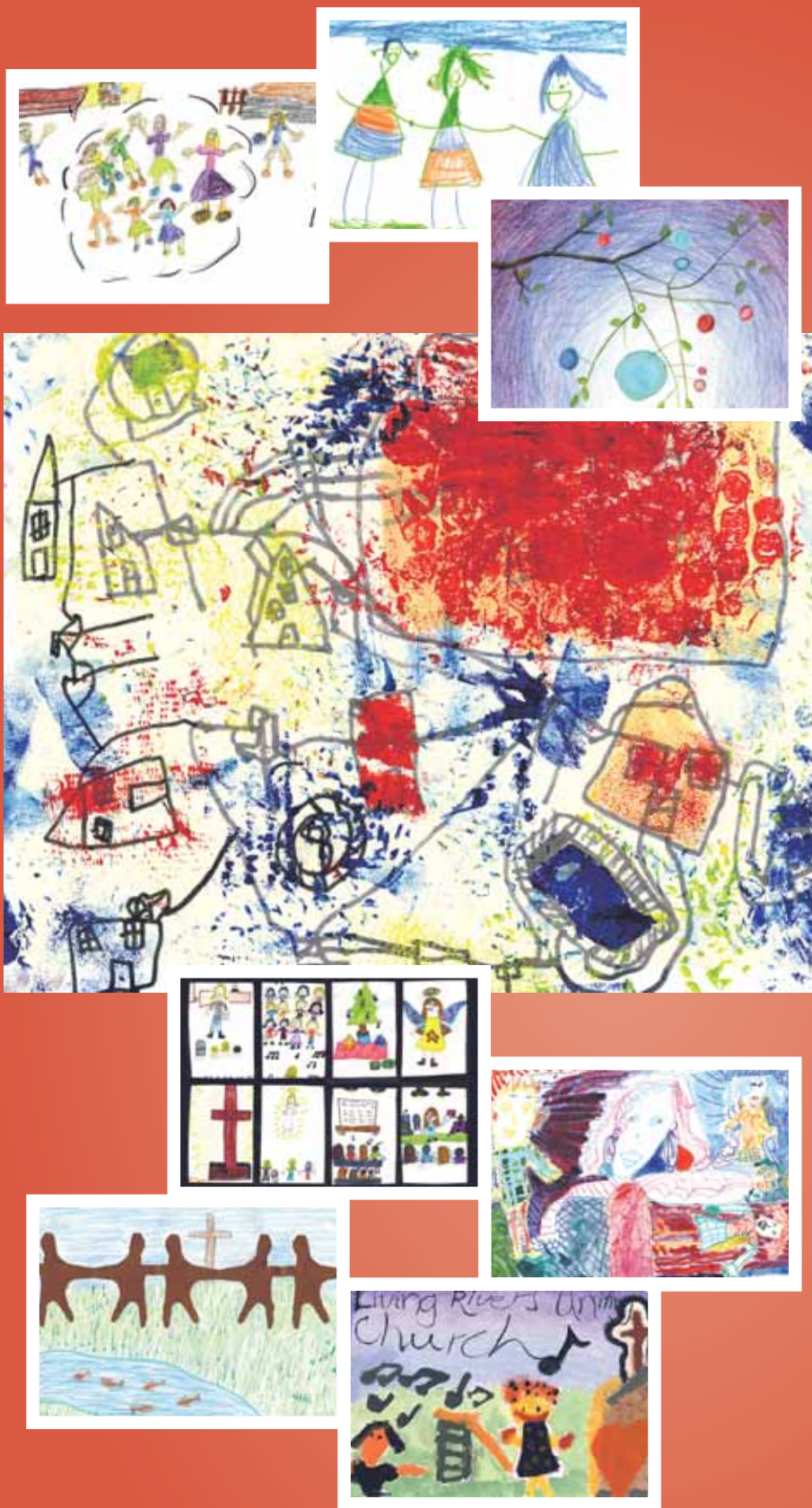


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What does belonging as part of the Uniting Church mean to you?

Gathering together and celebrating God's will.
Amelie Toop, 9, Wynnum.

Fun, praying and singing songs about God.
Andie Lang, 6, Moura.

To have fun and praise God.
Finlay Niemi, 10, Charters Towers.

Being connected.
Finn Jewell, 10, Oxley.

Caring for each other and God's world.
Gillian Watson, 10, Indooroopilly.

Belonging to Jesus' family.
Isabella Lamb, 8, Tingalpa.

Sing and learn about Jesus
Kiara Taylor, 8, Tingalpa.

Worshipping God with people we love.
Singing and music. Sunday school fun.
Playing with friends on the playground.
Kimberly and Taylor Randall, 9 and 6, Nerang.

To be able to unite in love and friendship.
Krystal George, 13, Nanango.

Having fun with other kids and learning about God.
Lillian MacGregor, 12, West End.

I love God with all my heart.
Sarah Hancox, 6, Labrador.

Recognising one people of God and valuing the kaleidoscope of colours they form.
Shania Dekkers, 14, Rockhampton.

Having friends.
Tahlia Hanson, 5, Lake MacDonald.

Community life as a living organism with the Church providing the heart beat.
Xavier Dekkers, 11, Rockhampton.

Artwork and comments are taken from the 2012 Synod calendar.

Calendars are \$2 each.
To order please contact Cassandra Barraclough on cassandra.barraclough@ucaqld.com.au or (07) 3377 9711 or 1300 UCA QLD (1300 822 753).

Hi my name is Alex Gow!

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