

<p>Sounds of joy Solomon Islands nurse receives the gift to hearing</p>	<p>End of an era Rev Dr Neil Sims retires</p>	<p>Directing Mission Rev Heather Den Houting inducted as Blue Care Director of Mission</p>	<p>President reflects 35 years living out the <i>Statement to the Nation</i></p>	<p>Presbytery thanks Jean Dodd's enduring devotion</p>
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REDISTRIBUTING ABUNDANCE

Louise Heinrich

CHRISTIANS must talk about economics. So says Rev Ched Meyers, author of *The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics*, who describes us as “addicted” to the current system, devoted to upward mobility and accumulation of wealth.

Apparently, Western society is captivated by capitalism. We accept the economic structure that generates profit for few by means of exploiting many; normalising inequality and becoming blind to injustice.

“Economic models, like sexuality,” writes Mr Meyers, “are not inherently evil; they are intrinsic to our humanity. But our appetites ... are exploited mercilessly by the highly sophisticated techniques of seduction.”

According to the Californian theologian, there is an alternative: to return to radical Old Testament teachings about money.

The Biblical Vision of Sabbath Economics is a collection of Mr Meyers’ articles which detail the Bible’s teachings about economic principles, and how to apply them to our life.

Mr Meyers thinks we’ve missed a lot of important points by domesticating Bible verses about money and wealth. Churches suppress the socio-cultural context of Bible stories, thereby recontextualising the meaning within our political assumptions.

In order to avoid falling into traps of greed and selfishness, Mr Meyers recommends living within the revolutionary paradigm of Sabbath Economics, taught to us in the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, and echoed throughout the rest of the text.

He said the main points of Sabbath Economics are “Abundance”, “Jubilee Consciousness”, and “Redistributive Justice”.

Mr Meyers teaches that God provides for all. Allegedly, our earth has the resources to feed every living being equally, but human greed means that “the wealthiest 20per cent of the population receive 83per cent of the world’s income, while the poorest 20per cent receive less than 2per cent!” he said.

Simply put, we in the Western world want everything in abundance.

Beyond resting to aid the body and preserve the soul, the rule of Sabbath is intended to halt the cycle of consumption. Observing the day of rest and relief also teaches us to receive God’s gifts gracefully, and trust that all seven days will be provided for, despite only six days of human production.

“Torah’s Sabbath regulations represent God’s strategy for teaching Israel about its dependence upon the land as a gift to share equitably,” said Mr Meyers, “Not as a possession to exploit.”

He encourages people to re-examine consumer habits and the impact purchases have upon the earth and other people.

Jubilee Consciousness refers to the book of Leviticus where jubilee is the 49th year during which structures of social inequality are dismantled by releasing people from debt; returning forfeited land to its original owners, and freeing slaves. The Jubilee year of debt-release was apparently “intended as a hedge against the inevitable tendency of human societies to concentrate wealth and power in the hands of the few”.

Come the New Testament, principles of debt release are still relevant. Many of Jesus’ teachings were centred on Jubilee Consciousness, which is Mr Meyers’ phrase for Jesus’ news of debt release from sin. He said Christ too was in the business of “promising poor sharecroppers abundance, but

threatening absentee landowners and rich householders with judgement”.

This is practical teaching which is still relevant today.

Communities of faith who follow Sabbath Economics must regularly practise rearrangement of resources to bring about social justice or Redistributive Justice.

The first Christians of Acts understood this well, undertaking a communal redistribution of wealth regularly amongst followers.

A technique of practising Redistributive Justice could be a social or community investment, often in developing countries.

For example, some organisations will lend donated money to women so they can purchase items to set up a business and support their family, before paying back the money. Closer to

home, we could be ready to give simple possessions away to friends or strangers who are in need.

Mr Meyers’ reading of the Bible is classic Liberation Theology. Whilst many points are hard-hitting and relevant, it seems that any passage can be twisted to suit his ideology. Even so, the valid points remain, and are incredibly challenging. Mr Meyers has begun the conversation about Jesus and the economic system we are entwined in.

This article was first printed in *New Times*, the magazine of the Uniting Church in South Australia

MONTHLY PRAYER

God who provides, teach us to use what you have given to build up your church and enrich our communities. Direct us as we spend our time, talents and money in service of our Lord. Amen

Unlocking the meaning of stewardship

Mardi Lumsden, Editor

IT is the end of the financial year and everywhere I look there are worthy causes hoping for my tax-deductible dollars. But how do I choose who to donate to? It seems like an impossible, almost callous, task of deciding what is most worthy.

In the midst of all this (not to mention 2012-13 budget planning) we focus on stewardship in this edition of *Journey*. We have had much discussion around the office about the meaning of stewardship. It can be a confusing word. It means different things to different people. But the best thing about words like that is that they can encompass so much.

I like to think of stewardship as the management of resources. It is the discernment of the best uses of the gifts we have been given, be they money, people, talents or time.

As Christians we are also called to be stewards of creation. In this edition Uniting Green's Rev Dr Clive Ayre helps us get our heads around creating a green economy.

David Chilton of Karana Downs Uniting Church talks about how he stopped people cringing in the pews when he talked about church funds and stewardship campaigns.

And our back page celebrates people who enrich their communities by giving the gift of time through volunteering.

When we talk about money in the church people get very uncomfortable. We live in a consumerist society; a society that churns through not only money, but people.

How can we, as people of faith, invest our money, time and gifts wisely? How can we be stewards of God's church and creation?

In his book *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*, Douglas Hall captured the complexities of the concept of stewardship.

"Being a steward is not only the vocation of individual Christians, it is the mission of the whole body," he said.

"Rightly, to understand the depths of this old-metaphor-become-contemporary-symbol is to realise that when we speak stewardship of the church, we are speaking about its mission."

I think we have nailed it if we can live out our Call: Uniting in Christ, acting with love, living with hope, witnessing in faith, working for justice.

If you have innovative ways of looking at stewardship, why not tell us! Post a message on the Uniting Church Queensland facebook page or email journey@ucaql.com.au.

Tending the house of God

IT'S that time of the year again when charities remind their supporters to donate and get the benefit of a tax deduction. Government policy rewards generosity.

Last year the Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies, based at QUT Business School, released a study of tax-deductible gifts claimed for the 2008-2009 financial year.

Based on that data, mixed crop and livestock farmers claim the highest percentage of their income, about 3.4 per cent. The second highest percentage of income was claimed by ministers of religion.

They gave almost 1.9 per cent of their income in ways that were tax-deductible.

However, the data about tax-deductible donations does not reflect the money placed in an envelope by pensioners each week to support their local church.

Nor does it reveal how many people tithe their income via direct-debit or funds transfer.

In addition, many people give spontaneously to support disaster relief or put cash in the

retiring offering on communion Sundays which helps people dealing with life's emergencies.

There are more than 500 verses in the Bible on prayer, 500 verses on faith but more than 2000 about money and possessions.

The way we use our money can indicate the priority we have chosen. Many of the parables that Jesus told raise issues of money and property.

In 1998 Rev Douglas Jones prepared a paper for the members of Synod titled, *Explorations in Stewardship*.

From it I learned that the term "steward" is used in a particular way in the Hebrew Scriptures. It can be translated as "servant" but it is a more superior role than a slave. It is more like a foreman or supervisor who has the authority to make decisions, take initiative and give and take orders.

It is one who is given responsibility for the management and service of something belonging to someone else. It is a position of trust granted by the owner, ruler or king.

Joseph, favoured son of

Jacob, became a steward in the household of Potiphar. The role of a steward was not just a job. It was an office or a vocation.

The Greek word for household is *oikonomos*. The same word can also be translated as economy.

So how do we exercise appropriate stewardship of God's household?

In his book *A Pilgrim People* John H Westerhoff III wrote: "Stewardship is what we do after we say we believe, that is after we give our love, loyalty and trust to God, from whom every aspect of our lives comes as a gift."

Our time, talents, money and possessions are not only for our own benefit but for building up the whole. Our stewardship of God's economy also has a corporate aspect.

It is easy to be generous when everyone is getting along well. When relationships are strained people sometimes behave by withholding affection, time, support or money.

From time to time congregations have chosen not to support the wider church with their funds because they have disagreed with a decision of a council of the church or a public statement made by a leader.

Generosity can be fickle. Stewardship is the careful commitment to caretaking as a response to God's provision for our lives.

This month we have been trying to craft the next budget for the Synod in Queensland. I am mindful that every dollar committed to a particular project or to provide wages or stipends has to come from somewhere.

Some congregations struggle to meet the costs of maintaining ministry.

Other congregations are overwhelmed by the number of new people moving into their communities and wonder how they will be able to respond to the many hungry souls in their district.

Take some time to reflect with people in your part of the church about how you are being



stewards of God's household. Look beyond your own area and consider how you might be able to support the work of God in other parts of the Synod.

The Mission and Service Fund is one way that you can support those helping people to grow in their relationship with God.

Where's the Moderator?

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

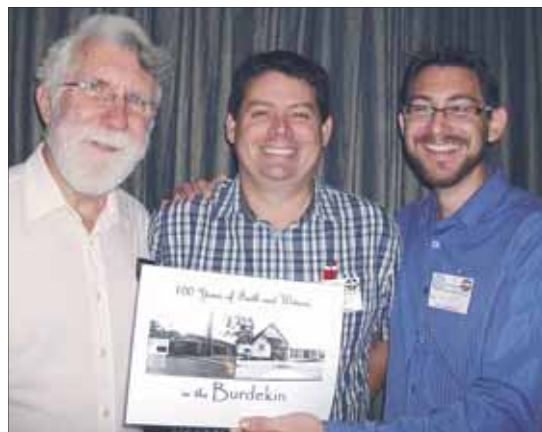
3 June Crossway Uniting Church 6th anniversary, Holland Park.

8 June Lutheran Church of Australia Queensland District Synod welcome event, Talebudgera.

11 June Queen's Diamond Jubilee Garden Reception at Government House.

13 June Queensland Churches Together launch of the *Christians in Dialogue* studies, Milton.

24 June Service for the 35th anniversary of the Uniting Church, Brookfield Uniting Church.



Many people gathered to celebrate 100 years of service to the Burdekin community. Pictured here are former Burdekin Uniting Church ministers Rev Peter Blackburn and Rev Paul Clark with current minister Rev Greg Rankin. Photo by Kaye Ronalds

Snap that!

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

This month: stewardship.

This photo was taken at the Prison Chaplains State Dinner in March. These are just some of the people who are stewards of the gospel message in Queensland's prisons.

July theme: sport, dedication, and going beyond your limits.



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Occupy Faith announces pilgrimage

Jo Siedlecka, ENInews

A group of faith leaders announced in May that they would be making a pilgrimage from London to Canterbury in June to protest unjust economic systems in the 21st century.

The group, called Occupy Faith, met at St Paul's Cathedral in London with the permission of cathedral authorities, in contrast to last year's four-month clash between clergy and Occupy protestors outside the cathedral.

The 62-mile Occupy Faith Pilgrimage will start at St Paul's on 7 June and end on 20 June at Canterbury Cathedral, site of Archbishop Thomas Becket's 1170 assassination and a

pilgrimage site ever since. Members of the Anglican, Catholic, United Reformed, Quaker and Methodist churches will be walking alongside members of the Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Buddhist faiths. Pilgrims will stay in churches or camp on open land, Occupy Faith said.

Rev Paul Nicholson, chair of the Zacchaeus 2000 Trust, an ecumenical charity campaigning against poverty in the UK, said, "Any Colombian drug baron can put laundered money into London property while Londoners are squeezed out of their homes into uncertainty, debt and who knows where. We want that to stop."



Occupy London protesters camped in front of St Paul's Cathedral in London were removed from the site in February. In May the Occupy Faith protesters launched their pilgrimage at St Paul's, where they will begin their journey. Photo by Peter Trimming <http://petertrimming.webs.com>

Rev Kevin Snyman from the United Reformed Church in Wales said there was also a strong spiritual dimension in the pilgrimage.

"We are at a very exciting stage in history. I believe we are in a spiritual battle at the moment ... Politicians come to power with good intentions but

they cave in. What we are doing here is shining the light of prayer on the injustices taking place in the world."

Varinder Singh from the Sikh Turban Campaign, said people of faith have always played a vital part in bringing social change.

"Whether it was campaigning to end slavery or apartheid or

helping the poor and the sick.

"We believe that faith groups are a progressive force for change and are instrumental in highlighting the economic and social inequalities that exist today.

"We hope that all communities will support this initiative."

Budget delivers for low waged families

UNITINGCARE Australia said the Federal Budget is fiscally responsible, fair overall and will deliver a chance at a decent life for more Australians.

National Director, Lin Hatfield Dodds, said the suite of Budget initiatives promises a brighter future for families and unemployed Australians.

"Reducing executive tax perks and golden hand-shakes, better targeting superannuation concessions, and deferring defence spending have enabled the Government to spend more on the things that matter," she said.

"Investment in aged-care reform, rolling out the National Disability Insurance Scheme, and better access to dental

services for low income and disadvantaged Australians are particularly welcome initiatives.

"Previously mooted company tax cuts of \$4.5 billion have been shelved and the revenue saved largely redirected to families and unemployed Australians through the new Benefits of the Boom package.

"This package boosts support for families by \$1.8 billion, and includes a new supplementary allowance worth \$1.1 billion for people receiving Newstart, Youth Allowance and Parenting Payment. While this very modest allowance falls well short of the \$50 a week increase we called for, it's a trend in the right direction.

"We hope it's a down-payment on a decent increase in

unemployment benefits in next year's budget.

"It's disappointing to see the Government has proceeded with plans to cut parenting support for single parents whose children are older than eight years, an effective drop in income of almost \$120 a fortnight.

"However increases to the Jobs Education and Training program and more childcare for unemployed single parents will assist people as they move into jobs and provide a better start for vulnerable children.

"The new Schoolkids Bonus cashes out an inefficient and ineffective tax refund system that failed to deliver the full education benefit to nearly 80 per cent of eligible households.



"Budgets are all about choices. They expose our values as a nation. This Federal Budget overall delivers a better deal for many Australians," Ms Hatfield Dodds said.

The UnitingCare network provides social services to over 2 million people each year in 1300 sites in remote, rural and metropolitan Australia.

Aid down but increase to Pacific

Bruce Mullan

THE Pacific Institute of Public Policy reports that the Australian government's target for increasing aid as a percentage of the national economy has been pushed back, but the 2012-13 budget sees aid to the Pacific region increasing modestly to \$1.17 billion, up from \$1.16 billion in 2011-12.

In most cases, the changes at the country level are slight:

aid to the Solomon Islands will decrease by \$23 million, mostly due to the scale down of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI), and there will be a small decrease in assistance to PNG.

Samoa, Vanuatu, Nauru, Kiribati and Tuvalu are set to receive small increases, with the Fiji program expanding to \$55.6 million, up from \$37.5 million in 2011-12.

If the government does follow

through with its scale-up, large increases in aid are in store for the Pacific.

For the first time, AusAID released regional aid projections for the forward estimates period. Aid to the Pacific and PNG is projected to expand to about \$1.6 billion by 2015-16, an increase of about \$400 million.

Bruce Mullan is UnitingWorld's Associate Director for Church Solidarity (Pacific)



Bruce Mullan trying his hand at a basic water pump in Kiribati. Photo by Mark Dewar



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Determination, faith and friendship

Mardi Lumsden

FROM little things, big things grow. For the members of Enoggera's Emmanuel Uniting Church, Brisbane, and the Noro congregation in the Solomon Islands an ongoing friendship has led to one intelligent young nursing student being given the gift of hearing.

Emmanuel Uniting Church Treasurer, Barry Jardine, said the congregation's long tie with the Solomon Islands was strengthened when one of their congregation members moved to Munda to work at the Helena Goldie Hospital.

"Our minister, David Fender, and one of our congregation members, Annette Kaspar went with a team led by Bruce Mullan [UnitingWorld] to the Solomons in early 2010 and it was during this trip that the connection with Noro was commenced.

"It was also this trip which convinced Annette to give up her job as an audiologist in Brisbane and commit to the hospital in Munda for a three year term."

Early on in her stay, as she established the only audiology department in the Solomons, Ms Kaspar met Stephen Heshibo, a profoundly deaf nursing student.

As a result of abuse Mr Heshibo had been losing his hearing since he was five. The determined young man got himself through school and study (and learning four languages) by lip reading and guesswork to communicate.

"Annette became aware of Stephen's profound deafness and began making enquiries through her contacts in Brisbane about the possibility of getting a fully funded cochlear implant," said Mr Jardine.

The life-changing surgery was provided free in a collaborative



Emmanuel Uniting Church, Enoggera, member and audiologist Annette Kaspar conducts hearing tests on Solomon Islands nurse Stephen Heshibo. Photo courtesy of Annette Kaspar

effort between Dr Chris Que Hee, St Andrews War Memorial Hospital in Brisbane, and Queensland Cochlear.

In early December 2011, the 25-year-old became the first person in the Solomon Islands to have a cochlear implant.

"Annette is quite a resourceful young lady and clearly, with

God's help, moved quite a few mountains. We really only got involved once Annette had managed to get a lot of the cochlear implant arrangements in place," said Mr Jardine.

A prayer support group set up before Ms Kaspar left for the Solomons also became a fundraising committee once the team heard about Mr Heshibo.

The group ran a trivia night that raised over \$4500 for airfares for Mr Heshibo.

"A huge amount of prayer went into all of these arrangements from when we first learnt about Stephen's operation until he actually underwent the surgery and then as we waited for him to return home for the 'switching on' of his cochlear device which was successfully done amongst his family in his local village outside of Honiara."

While in Australia Mr Heshibo was welcomed with open arms not only into the Emmanuel congregation but also into the home of Maureen Witheyman, a regular host of Solomon Island visitors.

"Because of his profound deafness it was difficult to communicate," said Mr Jardine.

But in a service the week before his operation Mr Heshibo thanked the congregation for their support and expressed his faith in and praise for God in guiding him throughout his life.

"This had a very profound

effect on the whole congregation!"

While Mr Heshibo and Ms Kaspar have both now returned to the Solomon Islands, plans are afoot for Emmanuel congregation members to visit them and another guest of the congregation, Rev David Vakipide who, after his visit, went home and set up a Boys' Brigade. The company has just celebrated its first anniversary and has over 70 boys involved.

"Plans are under way for David Fender, Maureen Witheyman and me to visit both Noro and Munda in late June/early July."

"We sent a team of five people to Noro in February 2011 to assist David Vakipide in forming a Boys' Brigade company. This team are planning another trip in August to conduct leadership training ... so that the Boys' Brigade can spread and grow. "We are quite certain that we have seen God's hand in all of this as each of the many contacts has helped to build up the relationship and, at the same time, assisted in both congregations' faith journey."

"It will be in the slow, relationship building involvement with our friends at Noro where we can listen for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we seek to walk beside our Solomon Islands brothers and sisters in our journey of discipleship."

stuff kids ask

I'm only a kid. What can I give to my church?

Answered by Rev Paul Clark, Redcliffe Uniting Church and children's book author

WHEN I was a kid my parents taught me about giving to God. From the \$1 pocket money I received I was to give ten cents back to God. I used to delight in working out what one tenth would be and was excited that my little bit counted; that God would smile at what I gave. (Mark 12:41-44)

Even though it was my pocket money, I didn't have a problem giving back to God and I think having learnt that at an early age has meant that I have never had a problem with money.

It's always been easy to give to God; giving to God first has helped me to put money in its proper perspective.

Giving isn't all about money. In the congregations I've been part of we've had

children who play in the band, or who do drama and bible readings. We have children who drive the PowerPoint and sound desk in worship, and children who lead worship with their families. We've even had children who go on mission to other towns.

Best of all we have kids who give of themselves outside of church to be like Jesus at school, sport or home.

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



PROJECT OFFICER CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Together on the way, enriching community

(0.6 FTE), two year contract and available to lay people and those in specified ministry within the Uniting Church.

This role is part of a strategic response to the Synod's *Together on the way, enriching community* journey. The role will support and facilitate projects designed to develop the practices of Christian Formation within the life of the Uniting Church in Queensland.

The successful candidate will possess:

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To obtain a position description, visit www.ucaqld.com.au/job.aspx

Applications close Friday 15 June 2012.

*This position is negotiable up to full-time dependent on skills and experience.



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Together on the way, enriching community

Full-time*, two year short-term placement for a person in specified ministry in the Uniting Church.

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The successful candidate will possess:

- An affinity for the mission, ethos and theology of the Uniting Church and the capacity and willingness to work within the mission, ethos and theology.
- Experience with and training in mission engagement methodologies.
- Demonstrated ability to build vital mission engagement strategies within Christian community.

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Applications close Friday 15 June 2012.

* This position may be negotiated as a part-time placement.



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End of an era at Trinity

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson

ON 17 May Trinity Theological College, representatives of the wider church, family, friends and former students marked the retirement of Rev Dr Neil Sims, 39 years after his ordination.

Dr Sims joined the Faculty of Trinity in 1997 and is the longest serving faculty member. He has been responsible for teaching in the area of Ministry and Mission as well as being Director of Field Education.

Prior to his placement at Trinity he served in various congregational placements throughout Queensland.

Speakers at the farewell commented on Dr Sims' commitment to the ministry of the church and the enthusiasm and encouragement he brought to his teaching. Note was also made of the growing recognition being given to Dr Sims' expertise in the area of Supervision for Ministry. During his time at Trinity over 130 students for the Uniting

Church's specified ministries had passed through the College and come under his influence and he has set up over 100 field placements.

Members of the 29th Synod last October passed a minute of appreciation for Dr Sims' faithful service to Christ and the church.

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson is Principal of Trinity Theological College and Director of Studies – Systematic Theology



Rev Dr Neil Sims.
Photo by Osker Lau

Ecumenical sermon on the mount

Richard Lance

THE Mt Mee Community Church was spilling over on Sunday 20 May as people celebrated an ecumenical landmark.

Members of the church have produced a Covenant recognising that Mt Mee is a single congregation, composed of adherents of different traditions. Pastoral care is given jointly by Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran and Uniting Church ministers.

Moderator, Rev Kaye Ronalds, and Moreton Rivers Presbytery Minister, Rev Andrew Gunton,

joined their counterparts from the Anglican, Catholic and Lutheran churches, as well as local ministers who serve the community, in leading praise to God.

Mt Mee Community Church was opened in 1922 after farmers around the beautiful hamlet at the top of the D'Aguilar Ranges formed a committee to fund the building of a church for all Christians on the mountain.

The trustees had to find a repository for the deeds and a sponsor for insurances, so the land and building remain the property of the Uniting



Maragret Cox lights a candle at the service to celebrate the Mt Mee Covenant. Photo by Kaye Ronalds

Church (as the successor to the Methodist Church) to this day.

Ninety years on, the leaders of denominations represented in the community have almost

caught up with their members' ecumenical fervour.

Richard Lance is pastor with the Dayboro Uniting Church

New Pacific Church leaders visit Queensland

THE new Moderators of two of the Uniting Church's important Pacific partners will visit Queensland in July as part of a leadership development program sponsored by UnitingWorld.

Bishop Bernard Siai, Moderator-elect of the United Church in Papua New Guinea, will take up his post as Moderator in October 2012 leading a church of around

600 000 members spread across most of PNG.

UnitingWorld Associate Director (Pacific) Mr Bruce Mullan said the United Church in PNG is the largest of the Uniting Church's Pacific partners.

Rev Wilfred Kurepitu is the newly appointed Moderator of the United Church in Solomon Islands, a church of 60 000 members mainly in the Western

Province of the country.

"Both these leaders will have significant roles not just in their own churches but also in the wider Melanesian communities where their churches are located," said Mr Mullan

UnitingWorld has invited Mr Siai and Mr Kurepitu to spend time in Australia taking advantage of a variety of leadership development opportunities and meeting with key Australian church leaders.

The Queensland Synod UnitingWorld Support Group invites people to meet with the Pacific visitors at St Andrew's Uniting Church, Brisbane City, on Tuesday 10 July from 9.30am.

For more information contact Beth Clarke on 3408 3082 or nbclarke@optusnet.com.au



Moderator-elect Rev Bernard Siai will lead the United Church in PNG. Photo courtesy of Bruce Mullan

Together on the way update

Mardi Lumsden

THIS month we are celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Uniting Church in Australia.

In May we launched the *Side by Side* study resource and are happy to say the additional resources are all now online at together.ucaqld.com.au.

Additional online resources can accompany the study and include four videos looking at different partnerships, music selections and potential prayers.

We'd love to hear how you are using the study!

Post your comments on the Uniting Church Queensland facebook page or email journey@ucaqld.com.au.

The Web Migration Project is progressing steadily with almost all affected websites in the process of rebuilding.

The project is a great opportunity for people to ensure their websites are up-to-date and refreshed. Statistics show that the first place people go to when searching for a new church is to their website, so it is a very important communication tool.

Questions relating to the Web Migration Project should be directed to Project Officer, Anna Lagos, on 3377 9747 or anna.lagos@ucaqld.com.au.

The Synod office congregation visits continue.

Last month members of Indooroopilly Uniting Church visited the Synod office to meet the staff, learnt about the work they do, worship with the Trinity students and have morning tea with the Moderator. It is a great opportunity to ask questions and meet the Synod office team. If your congregation is interested in a guided tour of the Synod office, contact Tara Burton on 3377 9834 or tara.burton@ucaqld.com.au.



The Uniting Church in Australia
Queensland Synod

RESEARCH OFFICER

Uniting Communications (Full-time based in Auchentflower, Brisbane)

We are seeking an enthusiastic team member to help us research and communicate issues impacting the Uniting Church in Queensland and the community.

Uniting Communications is the communications team for the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod. The Research Officer will proactively identify and analyse current and emerging social issues and trends relevant to the Uniting Church in Queensland.

This role will support the Moderator and General Secretary in fulfilling the mission of the Church. Specifically, the position will involve writing a range of theologically informed material for varied audiences and participation in a number of networks and committees to ensure all parties are informed about key issues.

To obtain a position description contact careers@ucaqld.com.au or visit www.ucaqld.com.au/job.aspx

Applications close Monday 23 July, 2012.



BRISBANE BOYS' COLLEGE

ASSOCIATE CHAPLAIN

Brisbane Boys' College, a day and boarding school with an enrolment of 1565 boys from Prep to Year 12, has been preparing students for the challenges of life since 1902.

Applications are invited for the position of Associate Chaplain to join a team consisting of the Chaplain, three full-time Christian Education teachers and two other teachers with part-time Christian Education loads.

The appointee will be a registered teacher with Christian theological training. Applicants should be sympathetic to the aims and ethos of independent schools and be prepared to give keen, active support to the College's Christian faith and principles. There is also

an expectation of participation in the College's wider program.

For a position description, including selection criteria, please visit the College website at www.bbc.qld.edu.au.

Applications including a CV, statement addressing the selection criteria, and the names and contact details of at least two recent referees should be received by COB 30 June 2012, addressed to:

Rev Guido Kettniss
68 Charlton Street
ASCOT QLD 4007
Email: crb@aapt.net.au

A School of the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association
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Blue Care welcomes Director of Mission

Samantha Marsh

BLUE Care has welcomed Rev Heather Den Houting as the new Director of Mission.

Formerly the minister with Kenmore Uniting Church in Brisbane's west, Ms Den Houting said the transition to Blue Care has been both challenging and inspiring.

"Blue Care is a huge organisation with many facets so becoming familiar with how it works and all comes together has been a steep learning curve," she said.

"Everyone has been extremely open and hospitable to me which has not only made the learning process so much easier but roused my enthusiasm to be a part of the organisation.

"I have been struck by the commitment I've seen so far within Blue Care to the organisation's values of compassion, respect, justice, working together and leading through learning."

Working with a team of 38 Blue Care chaplains, Ms Den Houting's role is to oversee spiritual and pastoral care which is embedded in the services Blue Care provides and is central to the organisation's culture.

"With a strong history of association with congregations, Blue Care is part of the way the Uniting Church expresses itself in the world," Ms Den Houting said.

"As the nature and structure of the Uniting Church changes, we need to remember how to provide vital ministry in spiritual and pastoral care to the community.

"It appears to me that chaplaincy services are one of the key ways of doing this. Such services provide a fruitful and enriching experience of the compassion of Christ and it is my aim to ensure congregations support and champion the chaplaincy services within the Uniting Church."

Sustainability initiatives will also fall under Ms Den Houting's broad role with Blue Care.

"The enthusiasm and energy I've seen from staff in relation to sustainability has been widely evident which is encouraging me to drive this strongly."

Ms Den Houting has significant experience in the vast and diverse requirements of the position including social responsibility and sustainability.

She commenced her career as a solicitor in private



Bremer Brisbane Presbytery Minister Rev David Baker, Moderator Rev Kaye Ronalds, Blue Care Director of Mission Rev Heather Den Houting, UnitingCare Queensland CEO Anne Cross, and UnitingCare Queensland Director of Mission Colleen Geyer celebrate Ms Den Houting's induction. Photo by Osker Lau

practice before moving into the Queensland Department of Justice/Department of Families, Youth and Community Care in a

variety of legal and project officer roles, several involving advocacy for social justice.

She then joined the Uniting

Church Queensland Synod office as a Social Responsibility Advocate and International Mission Consultant.

New minister on patrol

Rebecca Beisler

REV Craig Mischewski feels right at home in his new post as the Frontier Services' Flinders Patrol Minister. The 50-year-old minister was built for work in the bush.

"I'm hard wired for the west," Mr Mischewski said ahead of his induction at St Andrew's Uniting Church in Hughenden on 9 May. "The more I can see of the horizon, the happier I get. I feel more peaceful in the bush. It just makes sense to me."

In his work as a Patrol Minister, Mr Mischewski will cover a large area of north Queensland. The Patrol is based out of Hughenden and sits on the western edge of the Great Divide. It is bounded by the shires of Flinders, Richmond and McKinlay.

Mr Mischewski will travel

across the region in his four wheel drive providing both practical support and pastoral care to individuals and families who are faced with the realities of isolation as well as drought, floods and fire.

A large part of his role will be to simply spend time with people, offering a listening ear or lending a hand on the property when needed.

"I'm looking forward to having the space to be with people – having the opportunity to minister in a way where you are just there. Being with people is my passion.

"I'm also ready to bring my fencing wire strainers to get out there and help where I can."

Mr Mischewski, a grandfather of two, comes from a professional background in community services. Prior to his studies he spent time working

on cattle stations in the NT and Queensland. He has also been an Army Chaplain.

His most recent role was Minister at the Townsville City Central Mission.

This church has a strong community focus, supporting people with disabilities, mental illness and those living on the street.

Mr Mischewski is returning to Hughenden for the second time.

He worked with a family support service based there about 20 years ago and recalls the despair for families who were affected by the collapse of the wool industry at the time.

"We spent all of our time getting out there and sitting with people," he said.

"So much of what happens in the bush you cannot control, but you can listen and be there to support people."



New Flinders Patrol Minister Craig Mischewski with his wife Judy. Photo courtesy of Frontier Services



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Embracing uncertainty: the church in a secular age

Scott Stephens

THERE is at present a rather unhealthy stand-off between Australian churches and increasingly vocal secularists.

On one side, there are those who assume that once religion is removed from public/political life, and consigned to mere private belief (where they assume it belongs), the secular space that is left will be neutral, moral and inherently equitable.

On the other side are the Christian 'exceptionalists' who not only rely on their position of historical privilege and on government money (whether through direct funds or generous tax concessions), but who also seem to believe that God's providential care of the world can be mediated through political coercion and that being on the government's payroll is not hazardous to the church's soul.

Both sides reflect a crisis of identity.

Secularism suffers from a kind of self-reinforcing delusion, whereby it can give no coherent account of what secularism is and how it came about, other than that it represents some sort of natural or spontaneous human condition that emerges once the

constraints of religion have been removed.

Likewise, Christian 'exceptionalists' seem to have so tenuous a grasp on the faith and the nature of Christian witness that they assume that the staggering decline in church attendance, and therefore the diminishment of its capacity for charity and beneficence, is best mitigated by softening its language, bastardising its message, accommodating the fickle demands of religious consumers and appealing to government funding and tax-breaks, as if from the hand of God, to make up the shortfall.

I'd suggest that the very assumption on the part of said Christian 'exceptionalists' of a place of relative privilege in Australian law and society – and thus access to the corridors of power – actively undermines the credibility of Christianity in Australia and effectively neuters its ability to bear faithful witness to Jesus Christ.

The church in this time and in this place ought to be distinguished by its willingness to embrace a self-imposed vulnerability, precisely because it relies on the health and charity of local, organic communities of Christian disciples – which

the Church has long believed is the immediate sphere of God's activity and providence – and not on the largesse of the state.

Indeed, one of the surest signs of the church's present malaise is that the increase in Christian lobbyists, accountants and compliance officers has been inversely proportional to the health of local Christian churches and the effective training of parish ministers.

The present climate poses particular dangers to the Uniting Church. To date, its response to the shifting political and social terrain has been:

- To rationalise its resources (thus abandoning entire localities through the sale of buildings and the formation of 'regional ministry cooperatives' and centralised synod initiatives);
- To loosen its grip on Christian orthodoxy and adopt the language of the soft-left (thus making it, in the eyes of many, morally indistinguishable from the Greens); and
- To rely increasingly on its government-funded arms to secure its place in Australian society.

I would argue that, while expedient, these measures

represent a terrible mis-reading of our current situation.

In a time of increasingly hostile secularism, when government occupies an almost messianic role and all interested parties jostle for increasingly scarce funds, the vitality of the local parish, the health of organic relationships and the imperative of church planting have never been more important.

Nor has it ever been more incumbent on the church to refuse to be just one more interested party.

Scott Stephens is the Religion/Ethics editor for the ABC (www.abc.net.au/religion) and was formerly a lay minister in the Uniting Church



What should the church's role be in the governance of our country? Image by Journey

Intentional giving

Tara Burton

STEWARDSHIP comes in all shapes and sizes and the people who give their time and talents as stewards of the church's finances take that responsibility very seriously.

The Queensland Synod's Chief Financial Officer, Jim Barry, said stewardship comes down to the split between the missional aspect of the church and financial compliance.

"It's almost a bit of a dichotomy that we get ourselves into where we try to join the two and then meet at the end of the financial year," he said.

"It's one of the very few times when the mission and finance actually meet, but people don't see the mission part of it; they just see the finance part."

Mr Barry said that the missional aspect is having a snapshot of how your finances went during the year.

"It's that one point where you verify your funds and your funds flow."

"You're verifying where the money is coming from during the year and you're verifying where you've expended that."

Mr Barry encourages the Giving Direct program when thinking about intentional stewardship.

"I think from an intentional commitment point of view, Giving Direct is on the money."

"You're actually making a commitment to give; a commitment to contribute. Once you lock into something like Giving Direct it's there; you don't have to worry about it."

Mr Barry said programs such as Giving Direct take pressure off congregations when they think of their annual finances.

"If you've got a large component of your congregation with that intentional commitment, in essence they've locked that amount in. So from a budgeting point of view and from a treasurer's point of view their job becomes a lot easier."

"They can say we've got a pre-commitment of this amount, so we know that we can spend that."

Mr Barry hopes that in the future the Queensland Synod's Finance and Property Services can be more connected at the congregational level.

"Sometimes there's a bit of a disconnect, but there doesn't

need to be," he said. "At the moment we tinker on the advice side, not the actual provision of service. I think that in the future we could fill that void and ease the burden that's placed on congregations and presbyteries. We are here to help."

Bill Taege has been the treasurer at Aspley Uniting Church, in Brisbane, for the past 42 years. He said that Giving Direct has many advantages for congregations.

"Our members appear to give more consideration to their offering when it comes out of their account on a regular basis," he said.

"The average weekly offerings through our Giving Direct program are substantially higher than offerings through the envelopes system or open plate."

"Income under the Giving Direct program is regular and certain," he said. "Giving Direct also reduces security issues in handling and banking substantial amounts of cash each week."

Robert Packer, Director of the Queensland Synod's Finance and Property Services, said God has provided everything we need (including gifts and talents) and expects us to use them wisely for the benefit of his kingdom.

"In Finance and Property Services we are asked to focus upon a smaller part of the

Church's assets: finance and property.

"While stewardship of these assets is extremely important to us, we mostly work in partnership with congregations, presbyteries, schools, agencies and other bodies to whom beneficial use has been given by the Church," he said.

These groups are stewards of their property or assets, not owners of them.

"The true measure of our effective utilisation of finance and property is directly related to

our ability to recognise that these assets were provided to benefit the Church as a whole," said Mr Packer.

"This requires an active participation by all to recognise the things we should stop doing, do more of, or start doing with our resources to further God's mission."

For information or promotional material about Giving Direct contact the Synod office on 1300 655 653 or finance@ucaqld.com.au

Jim Barry is the Queensland Synod's Chief Financial Officer. Photo by Holly Jewell



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Growth found through vision

Rev Stu Cameron

I really don't like talking about money. Like most pastors I like to be liked and I know that as soon as I talk about money there will be some in our church who won't like me! Rather than speaking too much about money in the church we end up speaking too little, if anything, regarding stewardship.

This is a serious omission which stymies the growth of people as disciples and in turn the mission of the church.

Over the last few years Newlife has grown steadily, including in its generosity. While we still have a long way to go, through trial and error we have learned some key factors that foster healthy church stewardship. I love alliteration (sorry!), so here are our "Four Cs":

CALL People to Biblical Stewardship

The scriptures are full of principles and insights on how followers of Jesus should steward their financial resources. Jesus often addressed our obsession with material things. Despite this wealth of material possessions, many people in our churches are ignorant of biblical stewardship principles like generosity and tithing.

Given this ignorance, and our culture's obsession with material comfort, it is critical that we teach regularly, practically and systematically on money matters. Perhaps the area converted last in us is our hip-pocket, bank account or property/share portfolio.

In calling people to biblical stewardship we devote at least one Sunday a year to teach the principle of tithing. We aim to teach an extended stewardship series (four to five weeks) every three years. Teaching biblical stewardship is not an event – it is a continuous process.

COMMUNICATE a Vision

People do not give to a program; they give to a vision. In exploring why people do not give more to their local church, researcher George Barna identified that a key reason is that churches fail to provide a compelling vision for how the money will make a difference in the world. As our church has become more engaged in mission, so too has our giving increased. We all know the biblical warrant that without vision, the people perish. Equally, without a clearly articulated and compelling vision, people will not give – at least not generously.

As Lead Minister I must connect the vision of our church – lives and communities changed by the gospel – with people's giving. When there is spiritual movement in a church people are more likely to open their hearts and wallets. People will give when they see their money connected with changed lives.

CREATE Multiple Opportunities

Perhaps the most significant learning we have made in recent



Newlife Robina Uniting Church Lead Minister Rev Stu Cameron. Photo by Craig Hindman

years is the power of providing multiple giving opportunities. This principle is based on the understanding that people are motivated in different ways to give. In a church context, some people are motivated by bricks and mortar – they love to give to building or major capital programs, while others are inspired to give to special mission projects and others still are faithful, steady contributors to ordinary church operations. At Newlife we have a "five-bucket" approach to stewardship. The five buckets are normal tithes and offerings, local mission through Newlife Care (counselling, emergency relief), overseas mission, church planting and Time to Build – our major capital program.

Our experience of providing multiple giving opportunities, including the use of appeals has been revolutionary for us as a church in these ways:

Rather than detracting from tithes and offerings (Bucket One), promoting special appeals and other giving opportunities has not seen a dip in normal giving.

In a couple of cases, this giving actually increased through the period of the appeal. For example, last year we raised \$3.7 million dollars in pledges and gifts for a major expansion of our church facilities. Since then our normal giving has increased by 12 per cent.

Special appeals have uncovered new donors.

People love to be challenged to meet a target that will stretch the community, especially when it will benefit those outside the church directly. Successful appeals are a shot of faith – adrenaline for the church.

CULTIVATE a Generous Culture

While we have so far to go, the thing I celebrate most in our church regarding stewardship is that God is cultivating in us a culture of generosity.

A few years ago a local school chaplain visited our church and shared about her work. A recently retired couple were touched by her sharing and

decided to support her ministry, even though she had made no financial appeal. They contacted her employing body and made a \$30 000 donation, which six months later they followed up with another donation of \$30 000.

I only found out about the donation when contacted by the employing body. I have never been so thrilled about a donation that did not contribute one cent to our church's bottom line! I loved telling the story (with their permission and they remained anonymous) to the church.

As I see people in our church giving generously, sacrificially and spontaneously, I know that God really is doing something wonderful in our midst. God is helping us along the journey towards excelling in the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7). And isn't that how it should be?

Rev Stu Cameron is the Lead Minister at Newlife Robina Uniting Church on the Gold Coast. This article was first printed in *New Times*

Credit crunch inspires giving

David Chilton

IN 2004 Karana Downs Uniting Church was at a point where our income and funds would not meet our expenses – it was going to be crunch time for our congregation.

We made that the theme of our stewardship program and handed out lots of Crunchie bars during the presentation in our worship service.



David Chilton. Photo by Osker Lau

The presentation was so well received, both in response and tone, that we have continued with a chocolate bar theme every year since.

The themes in the following years have often been tenuous, even corny, but that did not matter, the chocolate lightens up a serious subject, and our people have responded well.

We are still building a new congregation and, at the time, we realised that to do that properly, we needed to grow our people as well as our church. Stewardship is a natural part of the life of a healthy church.

Most people see money as a scarce resource. Many have significant financial obligations and they juggle lots of competing demands for its use.

Stewardship is about the responsible use of all the resources with which we have been blessed and money is one of those resources.

Direct debiting should be promoted and encouraged in all our congregations. It makes well-intentioned givers into well-disciplined givers. Most of our offering comes in this way now.

The challenge of stewardship is to inform, encourage and inspire, not coerce.



Chocolate injects some fun into discussions around stewardship and church funds. Photo by Holly Jewell

Stewardship is about the responsible use of all the resources with which we have been blessed and money is one of those resources.

Paul's letter to the Corinthians gives good instructions on Christian giving.

Paul writes about the wonderful example of the Macedonian Christians.

They gave generously, even though they were poor, they gave willingly, without pressure,

and they gave in response to their love for Christ.

We have always given an opportunity for people to make a response on our Pledge Form to use their time, talents and gifts to participate in our Mission and Ministries (or M&Ms).

David Chilton was Church Council Chairperson at Karana Downs Uniting Church, in Brisbane's west, for the last decade



WEB

UnitingJustice World Environment Day worship resources
www.unitingjustice.org.au/resources/information-and-action-resources



WEB

Church of England's stewardship report and support resources
www.parishresources.org.uk/givingforlife/



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Evan Almighty (DVD)



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TED talk: Sasha Dichter: The Generosity Experiment
www.ted.com



LISTEN

Big Ideas: Theology and the Good Society Podcast
www.abc.net.au/radional

Cultivating a green economy

Rev Dr Clive Ayre

WORLD Environment Day, established by the UN in 1972 to stimulate worldwide awareness of the environment, is celebrated each year on 5 June. The theme in this International Year of Sustainable Energy for All is "Green Economy: Does it include you?"

It raises the question: What is a green economy?

We usually associate the economy and stewardship with financial arrangements. There are at least two problems with that. First, we tend to relate to the Earth merely as a resource pool for us to exploit, and the natural environment by definition does not have a dollar value.

It is therefore subject to abuse and the political judgment that a liveable environment would be good if the economy could afford it.

Secondly, "economy" literally means "household management", which means that we need to see this term more holistically with "house" defined as the Earth itself.

The term "green economy" therefore helps us to see more of the whole, and to provide a more substantial platform for management of the house.

The Christian church has a particular calling to re-vision this more holistic view of the house,

which is God's world, and of the household, which is the life God has created.

A green economy recognises that unlimited growth on a finite planet is not possible.

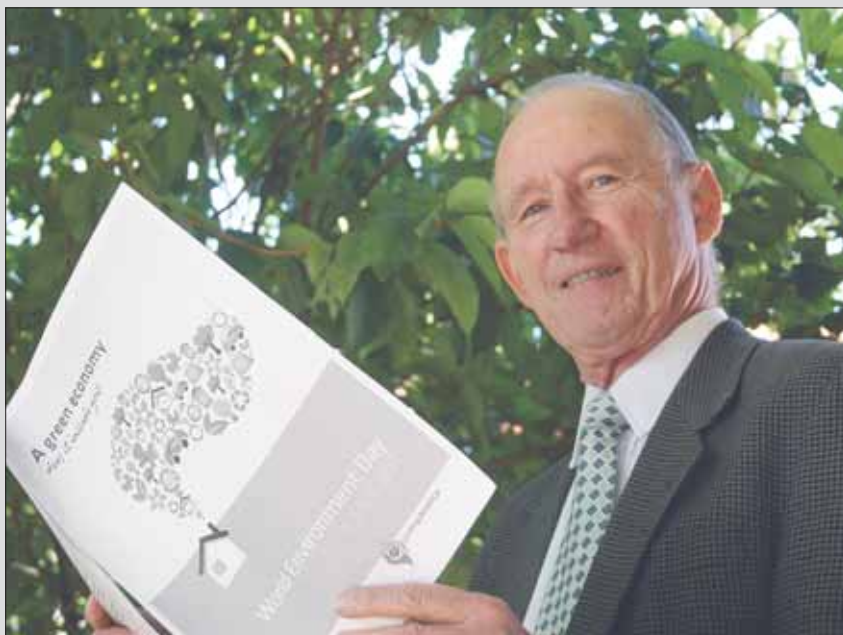
We need to re-image these terms to see progress and growth as the flourishing of all life, rather than the accumulation of wealth by a few at the expense of the many.

Progress needs to be seen in terms of the bringing about of the reign of God so we see a household that is more just, equitable, respectful, compassionate and loving.

If members of God's family continue to suffer because some of us are taking too much or if many of God's wild creatures continue to experience the threat of extinction, we are not growing a more holistic household.

The need for a green economy is of course related to increasingly obvious environmental problems, but even more it needs to be understood in the context of our most basic theology, including a doctrine of creation.

Earth care is essentially a theological issue that informs our understanding of mission. It is therefore essential for us to revise and broaden our definition of economy to include the natural world and defy any attempt to put a dollar-only value on it.



Rev Dr Clive Ayre inspects the UnitingJustice World Environment Day resources. Photo by Holly Jewell

A green economy must involve us all in our expectations, political judgments, and in every other aspect of our life.

It is at this point that stewardship becomes significant; it is not the only word used to describe our calling to care for creation, but it is the most common. In a significant book, *Environmental Stewardship*, Prof Sam Berry said that "stewardship is about caring", and that involves not only everyday things and relationships we value, but also

the environment. "Put another way," he said, "relationship is at the root of stewardship."

In the same volume, Sir John Houghton said, "Stewardship is not an option; it is integral to God's order in creation."

Thus we return to the original question: does it include you? Clearly the only possible answer is "yes".

As church we have a responsibility to re-imagine the house in a more holistic sense and to contribute by designing

systems and structures that help us live together in ways that take the whole into account.

Rev Dr Clive Ayre is a voluntary Eco-Mission Consultant for the Queensland Synod's Uniting Green and Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Queensland. He is presenting at the Christian Faith and the Earth conference in Cape Town in August. For more information visit www.greenchurch.ucaqld.com.au

The art of generosity

Tara Burton

STEWARDSHIP is a hot topic around the end of the financial year, but what does it truly mean to be stewards of God's church?

St Mark's Mt Gravatt minister, Rev Jock Dunbar, said stewardship is about God's mission of bringing about God's kingdom.

"I believe that stewardship in the church's context is firstly about our stewardship of the commission by Christ," he said.

"We are summoned and commissioned to be part of this mission, therefore we are stewards of that commission.

"Offerings, tithes, church budgets and giving financially are central within this context of God's mission."

Mr Dunbar said all that the church does and gives will serve the mission of God.

"For lots of congregations and ministry teams, the finances might just be a way of keeping the place running.

"But for congregations and ministry teams that have a better biblical understanding of their nature and purpose within God's mission, of making disciples of Christ, they are more conscious that the offerings are facilitating

their particular expression of God's mission."

Mr Dunbar said the Spirited Generosity workshops are a great resource for congregations who are committed to returning to a church model that sees itself in incarnational terms.

"Spirited Generosity will provide congregations with tools to rethink church budgeting and will provide a three year resource that is not onerous or exhausting to congregation members or ministry teams," he said.

Co-Director of Spirited Generosity, Carolyn Kitto, said that there's a yearning for being part of a community that is generous.

"The more people respond, the greater the sense of generosity in the church," she said.

"The resource comes out of looking at what it is that congregations who are exuberantly generous are doing in their lives and helps put in place the practices of generous communities of people."

The presbyteries of South Moreton, Bremer Brisbane and Moreton Rivers are participating in a Spirited Generosity workshop in July this year.

Bremer Brisbane Presbytery Minister, Rev David Baker said



Bremer Brisbane Presbytery minister, Rev David Baker, said the church needs to take stewardship seriously. Photo by Osler Lau

they are hoping the workshops will inspire congregations to actively engage in mission.

"We're keen on seeing these workshops getting picked up by congregations because it's a way we can resource them to find their strength in exercising leadership.

"It's a process of resourcing congregational leadership to actually be able to implement a program.

"It gives congregations the arms and the legs, the process by which they can engage their own

congregation in their mission."

Mr Baker said the workshops reflect Priority Direction C (developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the Church in Queensland) on the *Together on the way* journey.

"The workshops are a commitment to the Call. They deepen discipleship, connect our communities and grow leadership. Essentially, they are about getting organised for mission," he said.

Mr Baker said that

congregations need to decide how to approach stewardship in new and innovative ways and invite people to participate and share.

"If the relationships in the church are going well and being lived out effectively, and if the leadership demonstrates hope about where the church might go, then people will be ready to participate.

"Every congregation has to work out the hopes for the future themselves."

Coming of age

Rev Alistair Macrae

“PEOPLE of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches have united. A new church has been born.”

It was with these words 35 years ago that the Uniting Church in Australia was created.

To celebrate, the church issued a *Statement to the Nation* that spoke of the importance of every human being, the proclamation of truth and justice, and our responsibility as Christians to involve ourselves in social and national affairs.

As we celebrate our 35th birthday as a church, it is a timely opportunity to look back at that statement. I think it's as relevant today as it was on 22 June 1977.

Our *Statement to the Nation* spelt out our Christian responsibility to society and called us to respond by involving ourselves in social and national affairs.

Today UnitingCare puts that commitment into action in its work as one of the largest providers of community services in Australia. We serve over two million Australians each year.

And the Church's services extend well beyond Australian shores.

Across Africa, Asia and the Pacific, UnitingWorld works with our partner churches to build capacity in disadvantaged communities and represent their

needs to the church in Australia.

We still affirm our eagerness to uphold basic Christian values and principles, such as the importance of every human being, the need for integrity in public life, the proclamation of truth and justice, and a concern for the welfare of the whole human race.

Since 2003 UnitingJustice Australia has been doing just that, serving as a strong voice for the Church in opposing all forms of discrimination, as well as urging the wise use of energy, and the protection of the environment.

As the Uniting Church has grown, we've also become a more multicultural church. Every week worship is offered to God in more than 30 languages. Right across the Uniting Church our commitment to multicultural and cross-cultural ministry informs and reinforces our Christian witness.

As President, I am proud of our Church's early naming of the importance of ecological sustainability.

Something conspicuously missing in the 1977 Statement is any reference to the First Peoples of Australia. The formation and development of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in 1985 has probably been the most significant development since Union.

100 years ago the eradication



Pastor Julia Lennon, Sophie Monks and Uniting Church President Rev Alistair Macrae at Oodnadatta. Photo courtesy of the Assembly

of poverty in remote areas of Australia was the focus of work of Dr John Flynn's Australian Inland Mission. Frontier Services continues that work today.

Assembly groups such as Christian Unity, Adult Fellowship, Doctrine and Worship all work to celebrate our identity, build fellowship within our church and resource our witness in word and action to Christ.

The theme of our next triennium is *Life Overflowing*. I hope to continue to see

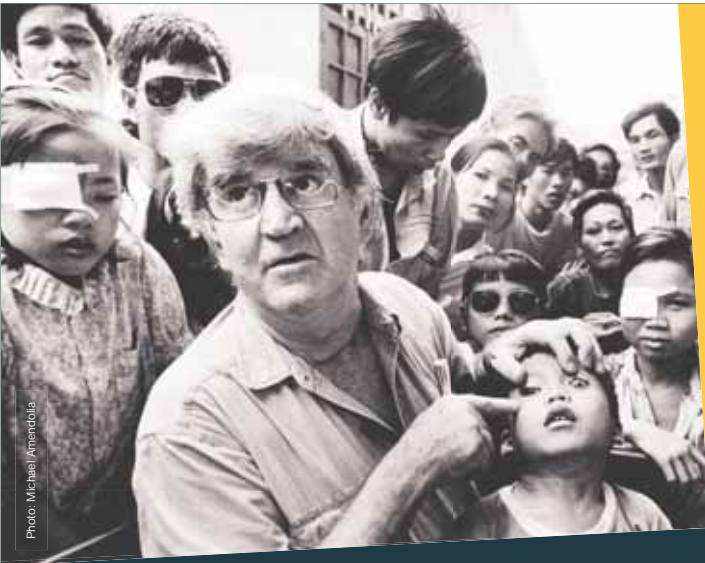
expressions of that life, and the hope and joy that can't be contained, springing up across the church.

In 2012 we again pledge ourselves to hope and work for a nation whose goals are not guided by self-interest alone, but by concern for the welfare of all persons everywhere.

We are still in the process of uniting; seeking, with God's help, to embody the reconciliation and renewal of all things. Thanks be to God!

Rev Alistair Macrae is the President of the Uniting Church in Australia. Read the full version of this article at <http://assembly.uca.org.au>.

To celebrate the Uniting Church's 35th anniversary, the Assembly has prepared free multimedia and worship resources for congregational use. To register, email your name, postal address and contact phone number to media@nat.uca.org.au



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Erin's bright future now in focus

I felt broken. I was talking, smiling, trying – but I was completely broken.

My name is Erin. Not so long ago, I was a single mum caring for an 18-month-old baby. A victim of domestic violence, I had no job, nowhere to go and absolutely nothing to my name. I was surrounded with barriers and couldn't see a way out of my situation.

I've been a part of Wesley Mission Brisbane since they invited me to join their Young Parents program. They were so supportive of me during my pregnancy, from the wonderful people I met to their antenatal classes I attended. Right from day dot, they understood I was in a bad place and supported me in ways I couldn't have even imagined were possible.

Things got really bad when I moved with my partner to Rockhampton for his career. I didn't want to go – it meant leaving everything behind – but I thought my son deserved to have both his parents around. We had no friends or family up there. I was at home with my son and had no one to talk to. I wasn't allowed to go out, I wasn't allowed to drive his car and I wasn't allowed to spend 'his' money. I received \$200 a week from Centrelink and out of that I had to pay for all our food; phone, electricity and internet bills; petrol and anything my son needed from medication to clothes. Anything that was out of the norm, I had to pay for. To this day, I have no idea how I survived living like that.

After being emotionally abused for years, my partner became physically abusive. Something in me snapped. I didn't want my son to grow up thinking that was the proper way to act or that how his father was treating his mother was normal! Parents are role models for their children. And so I decided to leave. When I came back to Brisbane

my head was spinning. I returned to my beloved Young Parents program who were right there with open arms, ready to welcome me back. They referred me to the Futures in Focus project, which is how I met my wonderful case worker Tab. Futures in Focus is a program that helps prepare people for work by equipping them with interview skills, information, knowledge of available resources and how to access them and even how to dress. Every time I was there, I would chat about what I was up to, how I was feeling and how I was coping. They always listened; they never judged me. If I needed help, they would go above and beyond trying to find me resources I could utilise – from food parcels and help paying bills to referring me to someone I could talk to.

It's hard for me to think about some of the things I've gone through. It still upsets me to think about how hard I worked from when I left home at just 16, and how quickly that was all taken away. I was still going to school five days a week, which meant having to get up at 4am to catch the train as I lived a long way from school. At night, I worked casually so I could save up for all those material things you don't think about very much – like a fridge, and a bed, and clothes. I worked so hard to buy those things. When I left Rockhampton, I had to leave it all behind. I literally had nothing – no savings, no car, no bed, no job. I had to start over again from scratch.

I focused a lot on my son. He's the reason I picked myself up and worked so hard to make a change. I didn't want him to suffer.

I set myself goals every day of what I had to do. My first step was getting a second-hand car so I had transportation. My next goal was to be moved into my own place by the

time my son turned two, which was about six months later. I was still paying rent, buying groceries, paying all my normal bills – I budgeted down to the last cent I had. I saved every single dollar I could. Each week, with the money I saved, I bought one thing for my future house. Just small things – one week a microwave, the next week some cutlery. I sacrificed so much, and it was absolutely worth it.

With the belief and encouragement of Futures in Focus, I achieved my biggest goal and hosted my son's second birthday party in our new home. I could not have felt any prouder. Even though I sat on the floor and had no TV, I knew I was turning my life around.

The only reason any of this was possible was because of the incredible support programs like Young Parents and Futures in Focus gave me every step of the way. It's also had a huge impact on my son's life. His future is going to be vastly different because they helped me change my situation for us. I am just so grateful.

Futures in Focus helped me identify my options. They helped me achieve goals from buying a washing machine to putting me into a career program which has led to me now having a job. I'm pretty much working full-time now and it's made such a huge difference.

It's been such a long journey and I still have days where I could sit on the floor and just cry, where I feel like I've achieved nothing. But I know that's not the case. In twelve months I've completely turned my life around, and I honestly couldn't have done it without the help of programs like Young Parents or Futures in Focus. I didn't want to give up. I wanted to change. I wanted to live the life my son and I



deserved.

People like Tab and her team helped me identify my barriers and then gave me strategies to help me overcome them. There are so many people who could benefit from programs like Futures in Focus. As a mother, you live for your children. Wesley Mission Brisbane surrounded me with people who turned around and said "You're important too. What do you want in your life?"

So now, I want to ask you a question. Please, will you consider making a donation to help people like me and my son whose lives have the potential to be completely different thanks to the support of programs like Futures in Focus and Young Parents? Your generosity has the potential to completely change the lives

of people who feel they're trapped in desperate and hopeless situations with no one to help them.

I am so grateful to those people, those programs – I still can't fully express how much they helped turn my life around.

But they couldn't do it without your support. So from the bottom of my heart, my son and I would like to thank you, too.

Erin

P.S. For every story like mine, where I was lucky enough to get help, there are so many others who slip through the cracks. Please, send your donation and know you've made the world of difference to someone who feels broken.

Yes, I would like to make a gift to Wesley Mission Brisbane

Name: Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Other _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

My gift

☐ \$20 ☐ \$30 ☐ \$40 ☐ Other \$ _____

☐ I would like more information on how I can remember Wesley Mission Brisbane in my Will

☐ I would like to make a monthly pledge to Wesley Mission Brisbane. Please charge \$ _____ monthly to my card until advised.

Cardholder's details

☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Cheque / Money order


Name on card _____

Card number _____

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Please make cheques and money orders payable to Wesley Mission Brisbane. Your tax receipt will be posted shortly. Gifts of \$2 or more are tax deductible. Thank you.

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Locked Bag 7005
Chermside Centre QLD 4032
P: 07 3621 4693


www.wmb.org.au



27 MAY – 3 JUNE

National Reconciliation Week

3 JUNE

Please pray for the ministry of Uniting Green:

- for congregations and agencies as they seek to care for God's creation
- for the effective use of the UnitingJustice World Environment Day resource and other resources
- for the new Queensland Churches Together Environmental Network in the process of formation
- for those in regional areas facing issues with Coal Seam Gas and for the Church as we seek to respond to those issues
- for Rev Judith Dalton and Rev Dr Clive Ayre as they seek to give leadership in eco-mission

3 JUNE 2pm – 5pm

Omega Writers Meeting. St Francis College, Milton, annexe of Old Bishopsbourne. Join other Christian authors to share support, information, inspiration and prayer. For more information visit www.omegawriters.com or contact Ruth Bonetti on 3375 1775 or info@omegawriters.com.

10 JUNE

Please pray for Mapoon congregation. Mapoon congregation is a remote aboriginal community in Cape York and we aim to live out the call of God in our everyday lives.

- Pray for an Indigenous Land Use Agreement to be finalised so that a Church can be built to replace the one burnt down in the removal in 1963
- Pray for the future of the children of Mapoon
- Pray for our covenanting relationships with Crossway Korean, Indooroopilly and Centenary and especially the visit by Indooroopilly in late June.
- Pray for the third visit by Scotch Oakburn College (a Uniting Church School from Tasmania) happening in early June
- Pray for the fortnightly playgroup which started this year.



10 JUNE – 12 AUGUST

Vitality in Silence. Vera Wade Gallery, St Andrew's Uniting Church, Cnr Anne and Creek Street Brisbane. Fine Art by Glenine Hamlyn and Marion McConaghy: A combined exhibition of artworks based on a meditative approach to observation and the creative process. Contact Jenny Ponting on 3221-2400 or saintandrews@saintandrews.org.au.

16 JUNE 7.30pm – 9pm

Around the world in 80 minutes with Counterpoint vocal ensemble. Weller's Hill-Tarragindi Uniting Church, 24 Pope St, Tarragindi. Counterpoint presents a whirlwind tour of the globe in classical and light music, followed by a light supper. \$20 (\$15 concessions), school-age students free. Contact Ian Walkden Brown on 3284 3688 or browniw5@optusnet.com.au.

16 JUNE 7am – 12pm

Car Boot Sale. Brookfield Uniting Church, 2 Upper Brookfield Rd, Brookfield. \$20 for a site. BBQ, tea and coffee for sale. Contact Ray Powell on 3374 3835 or geobarn39@hotmail.com.

17 JUNE 2.30pm – 5pm

Around the world in 80 minutes with Counterpoint vocal ensemble at Redcliffe Uniting Church, cnr Richens St and Anzac Ave Redcliffe. Contact Ian Walkden Brown on 3284 3688 or browniw5@optusnet.com.au.

19 JUNE 9.30am – 12pm

UnitingWorld Mission Support Group QLD. Level 9, Wesley House, 140 Ann St, Brisbane City. Sharing stories of God's work in our UCA Overseas Partner Churches as we pray and support them. Contact Beth Clarke on 3408 3082 or nbclarke@optusnet.com.au.

20 JUNE

World Refugee Day

22 JUNE

35th Anniversary of the Uniting Church in Australia.

24 JUNE

Please pray for the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly. It sets national policy and promotes the Church's mission in the world and within the Church. Please pray:

- for our 13th triennial Assembly meeting to be held in Adelaide, 15 – 22 July
- for God's guidance to Assembly members as they consider the important matters before them and the future of our Uniting Church. (Visit www.assembly2012.uca.org.au for more information)
- for wisdom and discernment for all Assembly members, especially the President Rev Alistair Macrae, President-elect Rev Prof Andrew Dutney and General Secretary Rev Terence Corkin
- for our many multicultural and cross cultural congregations; that they may continue to grow, share and rejoice in the mission of the church
- that we may stay true to the origins of our church and our fundamental mission to exercise a Christian responsibility to society
- for a fruitful and compassionate dialogue between the different faiths in Australia
- for Frontier Services as they celebrate 100 years at the heart of rural and remote Australia.

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

New beginnings in Emerald

ON 13 May Blue Care Avalon Aged Care Facility in Emerald celebrated Mother's Day by opening their new café, Café 126.

Emerald / Fernlees Uniting Church minister, Rev Suzy Sittton, said Café 126 is a place where all who visit can share a cuppa and companionship.

"The new café is a sign of hope for the Emerald community and a witness to the generosity of many people who want to make life pleasant for the elderly residents of Avalon," said Ms Sittton.

"Staff, residents, friends and family from Blue Care Avalon attended the opening where tea, coffee, cakes and scones were served.

"The furniture was supplied by Mitre 10 Emerald, with other businesses providing signage, potted palms, umbrellas, and embroidered aprons," said Ms Sittton.

"It was a wonderful gathering of residents and staff of Avalon Blue Care, friends and family".

Central Highlands Regional Council Mayor, Councillor Peter McGuire, officially opened the café and Ms Sittton gave the blessing.

The café is run by volunteers and operates on a Sunday afternoon from 2-4pm.



Pat Schwarz, Rev Suzy Sittton and Philipa Core at the opening of Café 126. Photo courtesy of Suzy Sittton

St Mark's spoil mums

MOTHERS were spoiled at St Mark's Uniting Church in Mt Gravatt in Brisbane's south with an early Mother's Day gift, a high tea.

Sixty-two people attended the two sittings on Saturday 12 May and were treated to small delicacies made with care and love. Congregation member Penny Allen said the event was an extension of a smaller high tea held last year as part of the congregation's month-long celebration of members' special talents.

"Last time we raised \$400 and this time we were able to raise \$672 for St Mark's," said Ms Allen.

"All who came had a wonderful time and indicated that they would be coming back and bringing more of their friends, which is wonderful to hear.

"Many who came were not from St Mark's and do not go to any church, so it's a growing event, which is very exciting and it's so much fun!"



Carole Cougan, Narelle Richardson, Noela Gibson, and Annette Coupland enjoy a Mother's Day High Tea. Photo by Kerry Price

The Business of All Believers: Reflections on leadership

By Richard A. Norris (Edited posthumously by Timothy F. Sedgwick), Seabury Books (New York), 2009, RRP \$23.95

Reviewed by Rev Dr David Ferguson, minister with the Clermont and Capella Uniting Church congregations.

I am currently studying for my Masters of Ministry in Missional Leadership and was interested to hear a different voice on the subject.

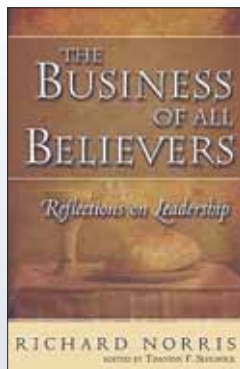
This book, compiled from the collected essays of the Episcopal theologian Richard A. Norris, is certainly thought provoking.

The essays move from discussion on the nature of the church to the tasks of ministry in our current time, moving effortlessly from examining scriptural and traditional models to ones based on current dominant social

structures such as corporations and CEOs.

As with any study from another tradition there are going to be sections of the essays which disturb or challenge us but there are several sections that provoke thought and the occasional incisive aside.

For example, while I feel Mr Norris goes too far in the direction of humility in discussing the nature of the church as being a signifier of the kingdom of God rather than a participant in the mission of God, there is wisdom in his cautions against the church



overconfidently seeing itself as the citizenry of the kingdom of God or falling into the trap of considering itself as the only participant in the mission of God.

Ultimately, Mr Norris' final comment on Christian leadership shows both the depth of thought contained in his writings, plus his humble and engaging view of ministry which makes both the journey and the destination worthwhile to anyone exercising leadership.

From Santa Maria with Love

By Margaret Hebblethwaite, Darton, Longman & Todd, 2011, RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Wendy Scott, Kenmore Uniting Church.

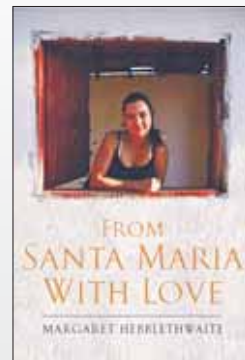
THE title says it all. The author is a theologian and journalist who passed through Santa Maria de Fe in Paraguay on holiday. The ties to places and people in South America are strong for anyone who does not go in a tour group and meets the locals on their own terms.

After being widowed, then having her children become independent, Margaret leaves her job to live in and help this small impoverished community.

The paperback is a collection of two to three page weekly journal articles for *The Tablet*, a British Catholic weekly journal.

The style is very readable and familiar; the reader will meet these devout, joyous people living under oppression and in abject poverty.

Ms Hebblethwaite has captured the beauty and spirit of the people of South America. She has since started an education charity and



written an English tour guide to Paraguay.

Having just come back from visiting our Consuegros (our son's parents-in-law) in Peru, via Ecuador, Chile and Argentina, I concur with Margaret that the South American poor are a people of great faith and joy.

The middle income earners are an absolute delight as well, in a culture devoid of political correctness and workplace health and safety.

This is armchair travelling with a conscience.

Leaders Who Last: Sustaining yourself and your ministry

By Margaret J. Marcuson, Seabury Books (New York), 2009, RRP \$39.95

Reviewed by Peter Harvey, Rural Ministry Associate Presbytery of WA.

MARGARET Marcuson has provided pastors with a practical, powerful guide to living out their ministry as leaders in such a way that their leadership itself becomes a ministry.

In each chapter she highlights ways to think and act as a leader that result in greater health, clearer direction and deeper satisfaction in ministry.

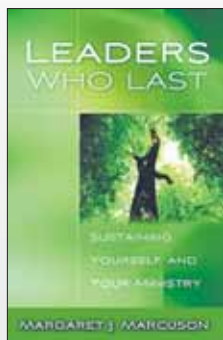
I loved *Leaders Who Last*. It was short and packed full of information. It does come from a systems perspective, but this helps ministry leaders deal with congregational anxiety within a church.

The chapters are excellent with the topics ranging from knowing the story of the congregation to knowing your own story. It deals with the issues of money, triangles, leadership, and purpose.

I would highly recommend it to all ministry leaders.

The ideas are all deep, such as can you continue to move forward with criticism and can you give people space?

There is an excellent



chapter on how anxiety affects giving in the congregation and by using personal examples Ms Marcuson demonstrates how the leadership principles she identifies actually work in the complex world of pastoral ministry.

She does not offer simple solutions. Rather she provides guidance to leaders whose path can often seem steep and fraught with obstacles.

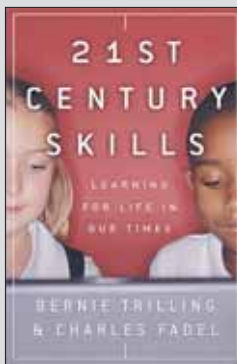
Leaders Who Last will add to your ministry and your life as you deal with all the problems that arise in a church. This is true spiritual food.

More reviews online at

www.journeyonline.com.au including:

21st Century Skills: Learning for life in our times

By Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel, John Wiley & sons (San Francisco), 2009
RRP \$47.95



Creating With God: The holy confusing blessedness of pregnancy

By Sarah Jobe
Paraclete Press, 2011
RRP \$25.95



Forgiven (DVD)

Produced, written and directed by Alan Autry
Starring Alan Autry, David Hart and Kimberley Autry,
Heritage Home Entertainment, 2010



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>.



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Downs' nod to Mrs Dodd

THE Downs Presbytery marked the retirement of their long-standing secretary, Mrs Jean Dodd, in April.

Wilma Proudlock of Pittsworth Uniting Church said there were probably few members of Presbytery who could remember a time when Mrs Dodd wasn't Secretary of Presbytery.

"We acknowledge the enormous contribution Jean has made to the life of the Presbytery," she said.

"Not only has she been secretary to the Presbytery itself, but also for the Standing Committee and the PRC.

"So much of the work of a secretary is not seen. Everything comes to us by email now, but for years all those reports and minutes had to be photocopied, collated, boxed and delivered to Presbytery meetings.

"When members travel by bus to Charleville or Cunnamulla, it is Jean who organises all the transport, information for host parishes about attendance and meals, lists that they can check off with minimal effort, chasing up late registrations and reports not written, all done with maximum efficiency and a minimum of fuss.

"Jean has been incredibly loyal in her attendance at Presbytery meetings, sometimes at considerable cost to herself.

She has attended inductions, taken part in parish consultations and supported a number of Presbytery chairpersons in their relationships with congregations. She has represented the Presbytery at Synod meetings over many years.

"We give thanks to God for the way in which Jean has responded to his call on her life.

"Jean has certainly used, to the full, her God-given gift for administration in this service to the Downs Presbytery and the wider reaches of the body of Christ."



Jean Dodd and Downs Presbytery Minister, Sharon Kirk, at the celebration. Photo by Karen Dunmill



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

UnitingCare NSW.ACT

UnitingCare NSW.ACT is a leader in the provision of community services, chaplaincy and social justice advocacy. It is a Board of the Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of NSW and the ACT. This work is inspired and guided by the principles of justice and compassion. Services included aged care and disability programs, services for vulnerable families, children and young people and quality early childhood education and care. UnitingCare NSW.ACT also manages the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre.

Due to the retirement of Rev. Harry Herbert, UnitingCare is seeking an Executive Director, to lead the organisation in fulfilling its role and mission as a leading provider of community services and social justice advocacy and in fulfilling its role and mission as an expression of the Uniting Church in the public domain. The successful candidate will be responsible for leading the organisation in response to the strategic directions, managing ongoing change across the organisation and ensuring support from key stakeholders. Key challenges of the role include the rapid change in public policy arrangements for the human services sector; the need to understand, establish and maintain mutual understanding and trust between sections of the Church and the UnitingCare organisation at a time of structural change within the Uniting Church as well as the external environment. As Executive Director, you will also act as a spokesperson for UnitingCare, advocating on behalf of people who are marginalised and vulnerable, across government, and more broadly in the public domain.

Sought is a proven leader within the human services, not for profit sector or religious sector, with outstanding capacity for driving and delivering change in a large and complex organisation operating as a part of the Uniting Church in Australia. Complementing these experiences will be your excellent strategic, communication, change and stakeholder management skills.

Enquiries and expressions of interest should be directed to Bronwen Kerr of The Insight Group (02) 9233 3711 or search9@insgroup.com.au

Bellows sound for anniversary

Dr Steven Nisbet

THE Organ Society of Queensland celebrated its 60th Anniversary with a Gala Organ Concert at St Andrew's Uniting Church, Brisbane City, on 19 May. The concert was part of the 4MBS Festival of Classics.

Brisbane organists, Christopher Wrench and Peter Krenske presented a program of works by composers including Bach, Widor, Mathias, Howells, Ireland, Ibert and Debussy. The concert continued the 60-year-old tradition of the Society promoting organ music in the community.

In its 60 years, the Society has been active in presenting

and sponsoring organ concerts, arranging seminars and workshops on organ playing, organ music, church music, and organ building, and organising organ rambles to organ venues in Queensland, and interstate.

In November 2009, the Society organised the well-attended final concert at Brisbane City Hall before the Willis organ was removed prior to the restoration of the Hall.

Organs on Ann Street has been another popular presentation by the Society as part of the annual Cathedrals Week program.

Last year in September, the Society organised two events in a series entitled Never Too

Young to promote the learning of the organ by children and young people, at which organ students aged from 11 to 15 performed on a full-size organ. The events will be continued this year.

The Society continues to promote and assist the development of organ-playing skills especially for church organists.

Dr Steven Nisbet is the organist at St Andrew's Uniting Church in Brisbane City.

For more information contact OSQ President, Dr Steven Nisbet, on 3411 2811 or rsnisbet@optusnet.com.au



Christopher Wrench at the organ of St Andrew's Uniting Church, Brisbane City. Photo by Peter Robinson

Two celebrations at Kairos

KAIROS Uniting Church, Earnshaw Road congregation, in Brisbane's north had cause for double celebration on Sunday 13 May.

Not only was it Mother's Day but it was also Rotuma Day, the anniversary of the island's cession from the United Kingdom in 1881 and joining Fiji.

Minister Rev Sandra Jebb said the multicultural congregation included a number of people from the island of Rotuma.

"We had a wonderful day celebrating the blessings God has given us in the life and culture of Rotuma," she said.

"We were delighted to have two special guests from the Fijian High Commission in Canberra, Ms Cheryl Brown-Irava and Mr Larry Irava, join with us in our celebrations.

Pastor Gabriel Manuelli, who is from Rotuma, enjoyed being part of the service.

"We thanked God for our



Cheryl Brown-Irava, Rev Sandra Jebb, Larry Irava, and Pastor Gabriel Manuelli. Photo by Nina Jory

beautiful island with its people and all its natural resources and then afterwards enjoyed a

traditional hangi lunch together served in the Rotuman cultural way; it was a great day."

Flood of thanks

THE Combined Churches of the Maranoa region launched a Flood Appeal effort in response to the devastating floods experienced in Roma and Mitchell in February this year. Mitchell was particularly hard hit - water was experienced in areas that had never seen flood water before.

Donations have been sourced from some of the major players in the Oil and Gas Industry - and rightly so.

The Maranoa Regional Council acknowledged the input of the Churches the last time we got our feet and bums wet and promptly passed the baton over again.

As at the date of writing, the Appeal has received approximately \$233 000 - and the applications for assistance are still rolling in. Each applicant's circumstances are assessed with a personal visit and the refrain is often, "I'll be OK, but you should check on ...". So we do.

One factor that has emerged is that we are very good at giving but very poor at receiving. And how often does that also apply to God's

love for us all?

In my visits to those whose lives have suffered such dramatic upheaval, I am very conscious of the fact that this committee is a conduit for the dispersal of God's gifts to those in need. I am also very aware of the sacrifices made by the Uniting Church Congregations who have given so generously to this Appeal.

Please accept the heartfelt thanks from our combined communities - may you all be blessed. Your thoughts and prayers have provided much comfort to those in need.

The streets are looking tidy and much of the debris has been cleared away, but spirits are still in sore need of your prayers - keep 'em coming.

Lyn Kajewski
Committee,
Maranoa Combined
Christian Churches
Flood Appeal and
Chair, Maranoa
Congregations,
Uniting Church in
Australia



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Facebook comments

Anzac Day

Lest we forget. And our thoughts are with the current soldiers on the front line today.

Evaleigh Jade Burton

Teamwork quote of the week

But simply talking about it doesn't make a good team - it must be enacted.

Karyl Davison

Favourite Journey edition last year

I liked your front cover from Synod. I thought that was a way of telling an important story of Synod in just a photo. I think the best content was in August 2011. I liked the Moderator's piece in April 2011.

Andrew Johnson

Heather Den Houting's induction

It was wonderful. Heather will be amazing!

Colleen Geyer

Login and have your say now!

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.

Unity breaks down bullying

Lisa Farrell

WHETHER it was prep students on the play gym or P-Plate drivers on the road, Unity College students made it clear that bullying will not be tolerated during their annual Break Down Bully Week.

The week-long event was held during the first week of May with all students at the Caloundra based Uniting/Catholic school participating.

One of the highlights of

Break Down Bully Week was the Friendship Circle created by Prep to Year Six students with their Year Ten buddies. Children were escorted by their senior buddies to the Auditorium where every student formed a spiral holding hands: the message was clear as the students called out together, "Bullying is not cool!"

Other initiatives organised throughout the week included a colouring in competition for Junior students, Oz Tag challenge for Middle and Senior students

and a community breakfast.

Unity's school counsellors gathered data through pastoral profiles in each grade.

Movies at lunch time, random acts of kindness, anti-bullying videos put together by students, and information for parents reinforced the anti-bullying daily message.

Lisa Farrell is Year 10 Coordinator at Unity College, a Uniting / Catholic school on the Sunshine Coast



Unity College students enjoy Break Down Bully Week.
Photo courtesy of Unity College

CLASSIFIEDS

Accommodation

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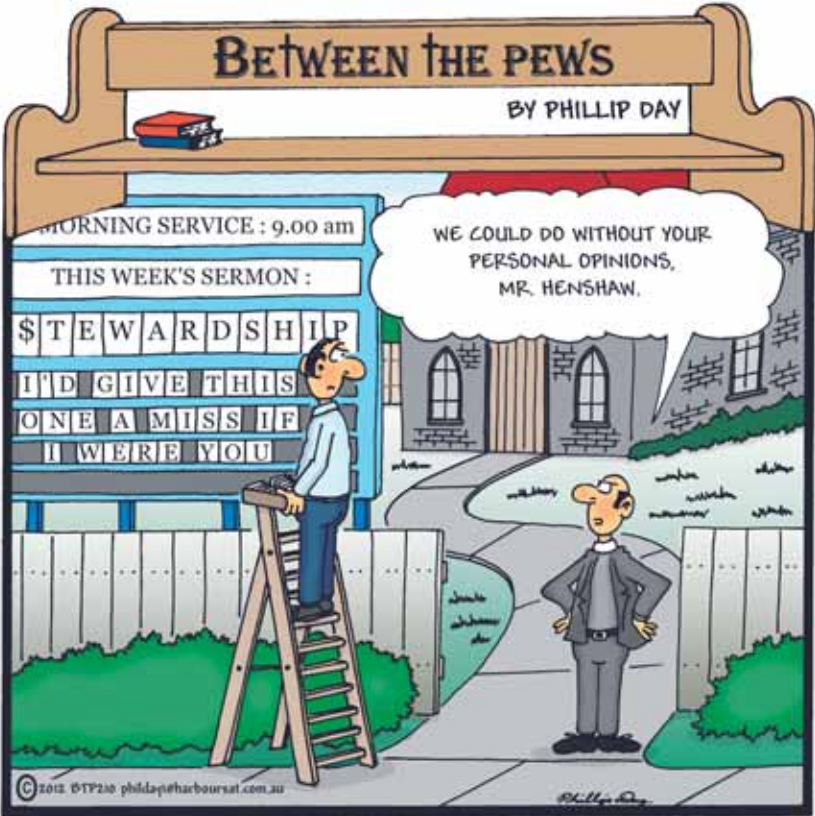
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How do you enrich your community?

Gwen Rowe

FOR me, stewardship with regard to people is simply based on the song *If I can help somebody*. The lyrics say: "If I can help somebody as I pass along ... then my living will not be in vain."

Stewardship of the earth is not difficult as God's beautiful creation is all around us. That reminds me of other songs: *In the garden of my heart* and *I come to the garden alone*.

To me stewardship in the church is about serving God's people faithfully. To do that, all we need to do is make things comfortable for everyone who attends the church so they can retreat and worship.

This involves helping with the mundane necessities of the building and property of the church but gives the satisfaction of knowing that all who attend are cared for physically and spiritually.

It has been a joy to be involved in befriending refugees from Africa and Burma through the Logan Central Uniting Church. Their stories and styles of living have a lot to teach us about stewardship of the earth and devotion to God.

Gwen Rowe is a member of Logan Central Multicultural Uniting Church and was a recipient of the 2008 Moderator's Community Service Medal

Pam Woodhouse

WE were brought up to do things for other people, to work and care for others. We were told to go out and serve, so for me volunteer work is a natural part of life.

During the 35 years I was a volunteer with the Blue Nursing Ladies Auxiliary, we raised a lot of money (more than one million dollars in the last 10 years up until it was disbanded more than three years ago) which was used to buy much needed, expensive equipment and services for retirement villages, Blue Care clients in the community and respite care.

The money was raised through a lot of devotion and hours of people's time so it was important and indeed our responsibility to make sure it was used wisely.

Since the auxiliary disbanded, we are still great friends and are there to support one another now that we are at the stage of life when we are succumbing to illness – the circle has gone round.

Pam Woodhouse is a member of Southport Uniting Church and was a recipient of the 2008 Moderators Community Service Medal

Jeannine Moye

AS a volunteer I feel that I get back as much from others as I give.

Being part of organisations such as Lifeline and the SES is like being part of a big family and the thing about families is that that they look out for each other, support one another and each member benefits from this.

Stewardship is about looking after things – not just property but people too. For example, it's very important when a disaster hits and the SES volunteers are faced with trauma and tragedy at every turn, that they have an opportunity to offload to someone so that they can stay strong and keep going. Sometimes, if they are having trouble at home, it comes to a head when they are away working in an emergency situation.

I am glad to be there for them when this happens and hope that I can support them so they can carry on looking after those affected by flood, fire, cyclone or other disasters.

Being part of the Lifeline team has also been very rewarding and the support and encouragement given by the co-ordinator and staff has enabled me to continue in this service.

Jeannine Moye is a Lifeline telephone counsellor and SES Peer Support volunteer. She was a recipient of the 2011 Moderator's Community Service Medal

Anne Jeays

WE were a small part of an ecumenical team that worked together to keep the heritage-listed Mt Mee Church as a community resource. It was built in 1922 by the Mount Mee community with donated land, materials and labour.

By 1985 the church was in danger of becoming a ruin and the grounds were unfenced and untended. It was important to all those involved that the church be brought back to being as good as new.

If it had been allowed to go to ruin, the heart would have gone out of the community – something very precious would have been lost.

We feel that the church and grounds are an outward symbol and a visible presence of God in the community.

They are also an important link with the early years on the mountain and we didn't want to lose this symbol of hard work and sacrifice made by the early pioneering families of different denominations who worked together to build this place of worship and its beautiful grounds.

Under the current care of a dedicated local ecumenical committee the church and grounds are now better than ever, serving the mountain community and its many visitors.

Anne and Andrew Jeays are members of Sandgate Uniting Church and were joint recipients of a 2010 Moderator's Community Service Medal



Gwen



Pam



Jeannine



Anne

Journey asks was collated by UnitingCare Queensland



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