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The education edge

What is Christian education, exactly?

Kate Indigo

ALONG with Christian education, in today's society we also talk about spiritual development or Christian (or spiritual) formation, and how we can be theologically informed in our everyday lives. But by whatever name, who is it for, what is it for, and how do we acquire it?

The word "education" is derived from the Latin *educare* which means to bring up, to raise, or to rear. Christian education is thus raising a person in the Christian faith.

It's the notion of intentionality that helps to distinguish education from mere learning. So we could say that Christian education is an intentional guiding of people in their Christian development.

And it's not just for children, of course – a hallmark of healthy, engaged adulthood is to constantly challenge ourselves and commit to lifelong learning.

Neil Thorpe, Director of Pilgrim Learning Community, part of the Synod's Network for Christian Formation, along with Trinity Theological College and the regional campuses of the Presbyteries, talks about the "learning edge" – the boundary of an individual's personal competence. By definition, it is outside the comfort zone.

"Many adults are inclined to learn when they see the motivation for doing so," he says. "A common comment we hear is, 'I need to know more.'"

"This could be a student struggling with the place of faith in science, a worker confronting the meaninglessness of the task, a helper wondering why God has allowed a good person to suffer – all are in a place where the questions of faith and the experience of life meet in a crisis encounter."

The key then is growth, because learning necessarily results in change. When we learn something, we have changed, and so, probably, will others along with us. Learning and growing go together and both are lifelong processes – and because they involve change, they can be unsettling.

"The 'learning edge' is the place where the need to learn is sharp," says Mr Thorpe, and education that happens at that edge is "not just acquiring information, but gaining deep understanding, and dealing with intellectual, emotional, psychological and spiritual issues."

Pilgrim Learning Community provides lay education to all members of the church interested in deepening their

faith through increasing their biblical literacy, and contributes to forming lay leaders who can help guide others and congregations.

"Our leaders can enable members to identify and confront their learning edges. There is a collective dimension as well. When a church community is faced with a challenging issue, it is also the time to learn!"

Mr Thorpe thinks that as a church our biblical literacy is fairly low. It's a longstanding problem, identified by church leaders going back to the address to the 2nd Assembly in 1979 by inaugural President Davis McCaughey.

Adults can bring an edge of personal experience, often with high educational or professional qualifications and broad community involvement to their learning experiences, says Mr Thorpe. "And in the *Basis of Union*, the Uniting Church lays upon its members the serious duty of reading the Scriptures."

MONTHLY PRAYER

Lord of life,
Expand our minds to explore the big ideas
in the Bible. Plant in us a hunger to develop
and grow in our understanding of you.
We pray for all who are in the teaching
ministry of your church, inspired by Jesus
and guided by the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

September 2012

Growing pains

TALKING to so many educators for this issue could not help but make me think about how much I am learning myself every day at work on *Journey*.

It made me reflect, too, on how we really do learn in community with others – whether in dedicated classrooms or lecture halls, or in the midst of the communities we find in our families, neighbourhoods, congregations or workplaces.

More than one of the distinguished educators in this month's pages made the point that it is the congregation itself that is the seat of learning when it comes to Christian formation. I was also struck by how the graduates of Trinity Theological College we spoke to emphasised the significance to their formation for ministry of the experience they found at the college of community, with lecturers and fellow students alike.

Life itself is a great teacher. And if we stop learning, we also cease to grow. Sitting still is comfortable, to be sure, but it's a comfort we indulge in at our own risk.

Much better is risking the unknown by taking that journey to what Pilgrim Learning Community director Neil Thorpe calls the "learning edge". Although Trinity Theological College Principal Rev Dr Geoff Thompson is thinking about theology when he quotes Sarah Coakley in his piece on page 7 as saying that discipline must involve duress, discomfort and bewilderment, I think we could say that all learning, and indeed all teaching, requires us to shake ourselves up in this way.

Committing to lifelong learning is the same as committing to lifelong growth – and being curious, exploring the new, and challenging ourselves in our existing knowledge will keep us vibrant and youthful in our outlook forever.

During this month of September, members and congregations of the Uniting Church will have the opportunity to increase their knowledge of our neighbours from other faith communities through the Assembly initiative, Interfaith September. As Rev Heather Griffin points out on page 3, it is important that we choose our beliefs and actions out of knowledge not fear.

I hope you find this education issue of *Journey* not just interesting, but thought-provoking and illuminating.

Kate Indigo, Editor

Thinking about God

Rev Kaye Ronalds, Moderator

A YOUNG man who attended a Lutheran school was going out with a girl who was educated in a Roman Catholic school. He was amazed to discover that she had never heard of Martin Luther or the Reformation.

What do you think should be taught in a church-based school?

What do you hope the graduates of our Uniting Church schools will know about Jesus, the Bible, theology and other world religions?

As I reflect on my own experience of formal theological education, I realise how lucky I was to spend three years studying full-time at Trinity Theological College.

We attended college four days per week. Each morning we started with worship, except on Thursdays when we concluded at lunchtime with a celebration of Holy Communion. Most of us were also finishing degrees at the university concurrently.

From Friday through Sunday was our Field Education.

This changed each year so that we had a variety of supervisors and we were exposed to different models of congregational life.

I remember the way the then Principal, Rev Prof Rollie Busch, explained the purpose of theological education.

"We are not here to give you a Bible study. You will read and study the Bible as part of your personal devotions or in the life of your congregation. We want to give you the tools that you will need to proclaim the Gospel and to use the Scripture to help you frame the questions about God, the church, life and our place in it. We are not here to just give you the content. We are here to help you develop a methodology."

You don't have to be a theological student to wonder, "Where is God in this?" or to ask, "What are the characteristics of human beings that this Bible story underlines?"

For me, the dialogue between candidates and professors was just as instructive as the many chapters we read on church history, theology and mission.

Making the links between what happens in life and the teachings, traditions and rituals of the church is the ordinary work of every follower of Jesus.

I would hope that students who emerge from our church schools will be able to make connections between the stories of God's people in the Scriptures and their own lives today, identifying what is the same and what is different. Our culture is the lens through which we interpret what we read.

Theology is just a word for "thinking about God". We all do it in some form or another.

My own spiritual life has often been enriched by a thought or insight that I came across while studying.

I am often encouraged to find that ministers and chaplains are giving people the tools to explore the Bible's landscape. Some are introducing a variety of books for comment and criticism.

As I move around the state I meet lay people who are studying theology through the courses offered by Pilgrim



Learning Community or Trinity Theological College or by distance through other institutions.

Perhaps some of our Year 12 students might consider using their gap year to deepen their understanding of the Bible and Christian life. What about studying one of the biblical languages? And perhaps a family camp could include learning some tools for reading the Bible?

Whatever stage of life you are in, I hope God stirs in you a hunger to learn and grow in your Christian faith.

Where's the Moderator?

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

7, 9 September
Stretching Faith young adult theology weekend, Alexandra Park Conference Centre.

10 September
Women in Ministry talk, Trinity Theological College.

16 September
Lowood Uniting Church centenary celebrations.

27 September
Annual Army Cadet Camp, Greenbank.

28 September
National Police Remembrance Day Prayer Vigil, Albert Street Uniting Church.



Library Technician Vanessa Edwards and Synod Librarian Alethea Hubley. In support of lifelong learning, all members of the Uniting Church are entitled and welcome to borrow from the Trinity Theological College Library at the Synod office in Auchenflower, Brisbane, or online. Please call 3377 9961 or visit www.trinity.qld.edu.au/library. Photo by Osker Lau

Snap that!

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

This month's *Snap That!* is brought to you by Emmanuel congregation in Enoggera, Brisbane. In June and July, Rev David Fender, Maureen Witheyman (pictured) and Barry Jardine travelled to one of our partner churches, the United Church in Noro, Solomon Islands, to provide education to members of the Noro congregation in computers, bookkeeping and budgeting.

October theme: places and spaces of worship.



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Closing date for editorial and advertising for October *Journey* is Monday 17 September. The next issue of *Journey* will be available on Sunday 7 October.

Church condemns "moral failure" of Houston report

Dianne Jensen

THE Uniting Church in Australia has decried the "dangerous lie" behind the demonising of asylum seekers who arrive by boat, describing new legislation to reintroduce offshore processing as lacking in compassion and breaching international obligations to the United Nations Refugee Convention.

Through a range of national forums, Uniting Church leaders have reiterated the church's longstanding support for onshore processing, community placement for people on bridging visas, and an increased humanitarian intake.

In an article on the ABC Religion and Ethics website, Uniting Church in Australia President Rev Prof Andrew Dutney expressed deep disappointment at the recommendations of the Houston Panel on Asylum Seekers, released on 13 August, and dismay at the enthusiasm with which Parliament passed legislation three days later that saw Australia close its doors to asylum seekers arriving by boat.

The panel was appointed by Prime Minister Julia Gillard on 28 June, and comprised Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston AC, AFC (Ret'd), Professor Michael L'Estrange AO and Mr Paris Aristotle AM.

The panel made 22 key recommendations to the Australian Government, including establishing offshore processing facilities in Nauru and Papua New Guinea as part of a "comprehensive regional network", and an increase to Australia's humanitarian intake from 13 000 to 20 000 places a year, rising to 27 000 within five years.

The government has accepted all 22 recommendations, some of which can be made by executive decision; others need legislative backing.

Prof Dutney was scathing about the process that saw both major political parties support legislation to fast-track the return to offshore processing. "We are witnessing not only grave moral failure, but also a political process that has completely lost its moorings in Christian heritage – tenuous enough to begin with – and now drifts like one of the crowded, leaking boats at the centre of this debate, aimless and deadly," he says.

Prof Dutney and Assembly Associate General Secretary Rev Glenda Blakefield wrote to members of the Australian Senate on 15 August in an unsuccessful bid to urge them to reject the legislation.

"While the government maintains that these proposed



Christmas Island Immigration Detention Centre. Photo DIAC Images www.flickr.com/photos/diacimages

amendments are an expression of its commitment to the development of a regional protection framework, the key goal of any such framework must be its ability to improve the prospects of a durable settlement option for displaced people in the region," write the church leaders.

"We fail to see how these amendments make any positive contribution to such a goal."

The letter expressed particular concern about the "unfettered power" vested in the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship as part of the Migration Legislation Amendment (Offshore Processing and Other Measures) Bill 2011.

"The Bill allows the Minister to personally designate any country as an offshore processing centre. Unaccompanied minors will also be at risk under this Bill,

with the explanatory memorandum detailing amendments to the *Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act 1946* that allow the Minister to disregard the responsibilities he would normally carry for this vulnerable group," say the church leaders.

Rev Elenie Poulos, National Director of UnitingJustice Australia, urged all parties "to reconsider the principles of compassion and protection in what has been an ugly conversation.

"For too long the debate has focused on punishment and a false logic of deterrence. The Committee emphasised a 'no advantage deal' for asylum seekers arriving by boat. This serves only to punish people based on their method of arrival here – an approach that lacks

compassion and breaches our international obligations," said Ms Poulos.

While welcoming the increase in refugee numbers to 27 000 within five years, church leaders pointed out that Australia remains the only country in the world with the policy of reducing its offshore refugee intake for every person accepted as a refugee onshore.

"This continuing policy is arbitrary and unnecessary. It achieves nothing other than to perpetuate the double lie: that our hospitality is already stretched to the limit, and that onshore refugees are 'queue jumpers,'" said Prof Dutney.

"This is wrong enough in itself. But the pitting of one group of disadvantaged people against another is shameful."

Embracing neighbours

THE desire to live in peace and goodwill with neighbours in local communities and around the world lies behind Interfaith September, a celebration established by the Assembly's National Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths.

Beginning with Interfaith September Sunday 2 September, Uniting Church congregations and other interested groups will select activities to complete

throughout the month.

Participants will take a journey of reflection over the four weeks of September that traverses the September 11 anniversary of the World Trade Center bombing and the United Nations' International Day of Peace on 21 September and culminates with Interfaith Community Sunday on the last Sunday of the month.

At the recent 13th Assembly

in Adelaide, the importance of helping Uniting Church congregations and members develop neighbourly relations with people in Australia's multicultural society who are shaped by other faiths was affirmed by the acceptance of the paper, "Friendship in the Presence of Difference: Christian Witness in Multifaith Australia". New study resources will be created drawing on the paper, and will be commended to Presbyteries and congregations.

Rev Heather Griffin, Queensland representative on

the Assembly Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths and secretary of the Queensland Synod Interfaith Relationships Committee, says that "Friendship in the Presence of Difference" was created in response to post-September 11 changes to the global and Australian context and goes further than the resource from the 9th Assembly in 2000, "Living with a Neighbour Who is Different".

"It is actually a very important biblical principle, Thou shalt not be a false witness to thy neighbour," she says, "and it is



just as important as the biblical principle that we should hold fast to what we believe ourselves.

"This can be a blind spot for otherwise intelligent and well-educated people.

"It is important that we oppose things out of knowledge not out of fear."

For Interfaith September information and resources, visit www.assembly.uca.org.au/rof



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Hervey Bay: there's no place like home

THIS month, as part of our series on belonging, *Journey* asked members of Hervey Bay Uniting Church what makes their church feel like home.

Pastor Graham Huth:

Hervey Bay Uniting Church is a dynamic community within this fast-growing locality. Once known as the retirement capital of Australia, Hervey Bay is changing as not only retirees but families flock to the area to enjoy the coastal lifestyle. Similarly, the church has witnessed significant growth as people who have come

for a visit have experienced the joy of being part of a loving Christian community, and have decided to stay. At a recent service, 13 new members were welcomed into our church family. Around 200 people worship each Sunday at two quite different services, with many more attending services held at eight local retirement villages.

The church caters for all ages, with a Sunday School and a strong youth ministry which sees young people hungering for the word of God, and regularly

participating in leading worship.

One of the greatest strengths of the congregation is that it refuses to sit in isolation, but constantly seeks ways to engage with the wider community as it lives out its vision: "To grow in the love of God, to make disciples, and to show God's love in all we do."

Kellie Alloway, new member:

From the moment I walked into the Hervey Bay church, my daughter and I were greeted like family by all the people we met. It is this sense of family,

friendship and fellowship that I remember from my childhood and what I want for my daughter. Whenever Emma has a "baby moment" during a service, you can still relax; there is such a kindness and acceptance. It feels like you belong. Each week it is like we have returned home.

Gert Day, long-time member:

My journey with the Methodist/Uniting Church over the past 70 years has been a

wonderful experience of God's love and presence in my life. Throughout that time, most of which was spent in Hervey Bay, I have enjoyed the loving care of a church family who have supported me as we have grown together in faith and strength. Now in my 95th year, I look forward to attending church each week where I am really blessed by the worship service and enjoy the fellowship our church offers.



Left: Kellie Alloway and her daughter Emma. Right: Gert Day. Photos courtesy of Hervey Bay Uniting Church

Feeding body and soul

Tara Burton

IN July, Kangaroo Point Uniting Church celebrated the first anniversary of Macedonian Ministry.

Minister Rev Paddi Mullan says that through this ministry, 20 members of the inner-city Brisbane congregation feed up to 40 people every week.

"After much prayer and time set aside seeking to discern the voice of the spirit, we felt we would try and develop a community meal that would reach out to the folk in and around the Kangaroo Point area.

"We call ourselves 'Macedonians', which reflects the comment in Paul's Second Letter to the church at Corinth where he referred to the faithful support of the Macedonian Christians for the church in Jerusalem. Supporting those without: 2 Cor 8:1-6."

Initially, the food was paid for by Kangaroo Point Uniting Church but as the ministry grew the congregation struggled to fund it.

"Thankfully in an answer to prayer Oz Harvest (through Wesley Mission Brisbane) came in and it is they who now provide the food," he says.

"Oz Harvest has proven to be a great friend and support in this ministry.

"We're just going to continue to trust God the Holy Spirit. As he gives us the challenges for mission we will take them.

"We are blessed over and over by the folk who come along and share their stories and in a sense reach out to us.

"These folk have become our friends," he says.

Mr Mullan also gives thanks as Macedonian Ministry has helped strengthen the Kangaroo Point congregation and helped them to see beyond themselves.

"Many come expecting there to be conditions for receiving the meal.

"We have none. The only question we ask is, 'Are you hungry?'"

"It is a privilege to serve the community and for the opportunity we give Him the praise."



Rev Paddi Mullan and congregation cut the cake at the first anniversary of Macedonian Ministry. Photo courtesy of Kangaroo Point Uniting Church

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Sit down, this is my story

Dianne Jensen

"WALKING on country" is a concept which speaks to every Australian about the powerful ties that bind us to land and lore. For Indigenous people, it means literally walking on their traditional homelands, and connecting with the memories, legends and laws.

Sharing that sense of belonging can transform both the teller and the listener.

Members of The Gap Uniting Church in Brisbane have had the opportunity to see familiar and less-familiar places through new eyes, as part of the Walking on Country initiative that has sent nearly 90 people to Indigenous communities over the past two years.

The Gap Families and Community Ministry Coordinator Rev Richard Cassidy, a Nywaigi man, last year led the first group of 40 congregation members to his traditional lands in the Ingham region. The group were hosted at Mungalla Station, a cattle station and tourism destination owned and managed by the traditional owners.

"For many, including myself, the journey north stretched our faith, challenged our thoughts, raised questions, and provided insights," says Mr Cassidy.

Off the tourist trail

This year the congregation sent groups to two destinations, the first setting out in early June for K'gari country around Hervey Bay/Fraser Island, the traditional lands of Tammy Cassidy, Richard's wife, and home of the Butchulla people.

The visitors stayed at Pialba, and were introduced to the Indigenous history of the area by local elder and retired public servant Glen Miller.

They travelled through the Great Sandy National Park, visiting remote spots on Fraser Island and hearing the stories and traditions associated with each place.

Led by Conway, a local Indigenous ranger for Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, the trip was an opportunity to have an experience far richer than the usual tourist tour, says church member Terry Edwingsmith.



Rev Richard Cassidy (right) on Cassidy Beach, central Queensland, with members of The Gap Uniting Church congregation. Photo by Janelle Bennett

"The strength of this small exercise lay in the fact that the Fraser Coast traditional owners saw a group of Brisbanites willing to experience their culture, to see the world from their point of view, to come and visit because we were interested," says Mr Edwingsmith, who came away with a renewed understanding of Indigenous perspectives.

He discovered, for example, that the serene Indian Head lookout has sacred associations for the traditional owners in part because it was the site of a massacre of Aboriginal women and children.

For the visitors, encountering first-hand the passion and respect of the local Indigenous people for the land was a moving experience, said Mr Edwingsmith.

Hard listening

The second group headed north in early July to Mungalla Station.

Steve and Janelle Bennett and their sons Joshua and Isaac were

among those who experienced the challenge to slow down, and to simply listen.

And it was good, says Mr Bennett.

"Good for us to quell our desire to rush in and 'fix' or 'improve' or 'build' or 'give stuff'. Good for us to suspend our ridiculously busy lives long enough to hear and absorb stories that have been developed over many lifetimes. Good, also, for the storytellers, who repeatedly told us how much they appreciated our willingness to just 'sit with them'."

The visitors heard many stories from young adults through to elders that ranged from The Block in Redfern, Sydney, to Palm Island; but the highlight was a tour of "the garden".

"Garden" is a euphemism here," says Mr Bennett. "Richard told me with a smile that it was typical of his people's laconic sense of humour that they would describe a mosquito-infested gully as if it was some sort of

tropical paradise. This bit of 'prime real estate', he told us, was where his people were allowed to stay if they behaved.

"You might think such a conversation would leave its predominantly white audience feeling mighty uncomfortable ... but there was no hint of reproach in Rich's voice. Repeatedly, after telling us of some routine injustice perpetrated on his people, he would shrug his shoulders and say, 'But that's just part of my story.'"

Mr Cassidy adds, "Walking on Country is an attempt to put flesh onto the issues by listening, sitting, hearing and just 'being', reflecting on what has become an ongoing connection between this urban Brisbane congregation and Indigenous people living on traditional land.

"It is not a work party. It is not a program of promises. It is not an attempt to walk in the shoes of another. It is, however, an attempt to hear what the spirit of God may say to us in and through this sharing."

Together on the way update

Dr Shirley Coulson, General Secretary, Queensland Synod

LATELY I have been on the road visiting Presbyterian meetings, attending the Assembly meeting and talking to people about our shared journey: *Together on the way, enriching community*.

When people ask me how we are travelling, I ask them what they have been doing. They have told me many inspiring stories about living out the church's Call and Vision 2020.

In the Synod office, we are developing sustainable mission-oriented organisation for the church in Queensland. We are seeking ways to eliminate duplication and increase collaboration across the Synod and with Presbyteries, congregations and Uniting Church agencies like UnitingCare Queensland and Wesley Mission Brisbane.

Other exciting projects are the Christmas postcard campaign and the 2013 Synod calendar art competition, which gives young people a way to use their creativity to connect with the *Together on the way, enriching community* journey.

I encourage you to share your stories with other communities, congregations, Presbyteries, and with *Journey*.

How are you engaged in the Monday Midday Prayer initiative launched by the Moderator at the last Synod meeting? How are you forming active and accountable disciples in your own context? In your community, what or whom have you been listening to?

What is the story and how (and to whom) is it being communicated?

For more information on the calendar art competition and the Christmas postcard campaign visit www.ucaqld.com.au

Calendar art competition

What does being a disciple (follower) of God in 2013 look like to you?

Young people aged five to 17 are invited to creatively express their ideas on the theme *Being a Disciple of God in 2013* for the 2013 Calendar Art Competition.

Win \$50 for yourself and \$50 for charity. Entries close 21 September 2012.

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

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Pacific partners: building a healthier nation

A PARTNERSHIP between UnitingCare Health and UnitingWorld is helping to build capacity in the critical area of health care in the Solomon Islands.

The Helena Goldie Project at The Helena Goldie Hospital in Munda in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands is providing teaching and resource support to one of only three Diploma of Nursing programs available in this tiny nation.

Run by the United Church in Solomon Islands, the hospital partners with the Uniting Church in Australia.

The Helena Goldie College of Nursing offers students a three-year diploma course, with the first group of 16 registered nurses graduating in December 2012, two of whom have been sponsored by

UnitingCare Health.

Wendy Zernike, Project Manager and Director of Clinical Education at the Wesley Hospital, says that UnitingCare Health's support had enabled the expansion of the course and the resourcing of both students and instructors.

The training includes a week each year devoted to spiritual formation, Christian ethics, and study in the development of faith in a clinical setting. These courses are developed and taught through the Helena Goldie Project.

UnitingCare Health staff are fundraising for the tuition and board for future students at the college.

For more information, call (07) 3232 7572 or visit www.unitingworld.org.au



A patient being assessed by a nurse at the Helena Goldie Hospital. Photo courtesy of Russell Shakespeare, *The Courier-Mail QWeekend* magazine

Powering theological education in the Solomons

PAST Director of Pilgrim Learning Community Rev Dr Rob Bos is taking up the challenge in his retirement of training ministers in the Solomon Islands.

He has just left for a one-month teaching stint at Seghe Theological Seminary in the Solomons, where he will focus

on how Scripture can be used to respond to issues affecting Solomon Islanders today.

Several years ago, Dr Bos participated in an official assessment of the theological education at Seghe conducted by the church.

"I realised how much there was to be done, and felt that in

my retirement I had something to offer," he says.

Enrolments at Seghe Theological College are robust.

"The students are very committed. Because of the distances and poor communications, it's hard for families and local church communities to provide moral or financial support for the students. But they persevere, and make a lot of sacrifices to graduate."

The United Church in Solomon Islands accounts for about 80 to 90 per cent of the country's population – and about 60 000 people in the Western Province, where Seghe is located.

"In most villages the United Church is the anchor both spiritually and socially," says UnitingWorld's Bruce Mullan, Associate Director for Church Solidarity (Pacific).

"Along with the village chief, the minister is the key person in the community, and probably also one of the most educated. So it's important to ensure that

theological education is of the highest quality."

Dr Bos says despite the challenges, belief in the transforming power of the Gospel to bring about change for the people of the Solomons is strong.

"The faculty are committed to the use of the Scriptures to deal with big-picture issues like globalisation," he says.

"There's concern in the Solomons over logging and mining."

And what does he believe he can offer students who have sacrificed so much to study at Seghe Theological College?

"I hope that I'll help them ask the right questions of the text. They really only have the Bible – no internet or commentaries! I hope they'll acquire some skills in biblical interpretation to make the text relevant."

Dr Bos and his wife Ainslie, also a retired minister, will live on campus, relying on the help of neighbours for their meals.

"Food is what you grow and catch yourself," Dr Bos explains. "There are some shops, but just for provisions such as white rice,

noodles and canned corned beef. The weather will also be an adjustment – at 8 degrees south of the equator, it's unrelenting."

Dr Bos is taking small solar packs for lighting to Seghe Theological College and accessing generators for modest items like mobile phone chargers. Diesel for larger generators is difficult to procure and electricity remains a luxury outside the larger cities such as Honiara.

"I have 22 years' experience in Aboriginal work and while the Melanesian setting is different, there are some similarities," he says. "I imagine that when I teach from the prophets Amos and Hosea there'll be dialogue about where this teaching illuminates what's actually happening for people right now."

The Uniting Church in Australia supports theological education for the United Church in Solomon Islands through UnitingWorld. Theological education is also supported in Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Zimbabwe, Fiji, Tonga, India and West Timor.

For more information, contact Kathy Pereira at UnitingWorld.



The library at Seghe Theological Seminary. Photo supplied by UnitingWorld

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Worrying about theological education

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson,
Principal, Trinity Theological
College

THE church is worried about theological education. So far as I can tell this is a permanent state of affairs in the life of the Uniting Church. And let's hope it remains so. We should start really worrying if we stopped worrying about theological education.

It was as a theological undergraduate in the 1980s that I first discovered that you didn't have to scratch far below the surface to discover the contested nature of the relationship of theological colleges to the church.



Rev Dr Geoff Thompson

Questions were asked about the money spent on theological education, the pedagogies employed at the colleges, the doctrinal positions of the theological teachers, the relationship between a "theological education" and "ministerial formation". The sharpest debates have usually been between theologians and Christian educators. In recent years "mission" and "leadership" have entered the mix as new flashpoints.

As with all controversies in the church these debates have produced their own mix of reaction, suspicion, mutual enrichment, enhanced practices, as well as both easy and uneasy alliances between church leaders, theologians, academics, and practitioners. Generally, the debates are not altogether unlike those which occur between the intellectuals and practitioners in other professions.

The decision of the recent Assembly to replace the Ministerial Education Commission with a new Education for Ministry Working Group will provide a new framework for these debates, perhaps the resolution of some of them, and, hopefully, a renewed orientation of the whole church to being educated and formed for ministry. (For the record,

when the Assembly Standing Committee asked for initial responses to the draft proposal for the new Working Group, the Trinity faculty broadly endorsed it.)

For what it's worth, however, I think something is missing from these long-running discussions. The question of theology has been so firmly tied to discussions about ministerial formation that we've tended to skirt around the question of why the church should bother with theology at all.

Long before there were universities, theological colleges and seminaries, long before there was the Reformed tradition's emphasis on scholarly ministers, and long before there were "theologians", Christianity was doing theology. By this I mean it was wrestling critically with the questions which life throws up at the claims of the Gospel. If Jesus defeated evil, why is there still so much of it? If God is uniquely revealed in Jesus, why do we find truth outside the church? If different parts of the Bible reflect different theologies, is there an underlying unity?

Sometimes the church has found itself giving definitive answers to these and other questions. But the church's theological vocation is not exhausted by giving answers.

By exposing itself to questions, the church allows its collective imagination to be provoked, fine-tuned and renewed. Thereby its faith in Jesus Christ and its engagement with his mission can be deepened, enriched and strengthened.

So defined, theology was not invented by the need to train ministers or by a desire to be academic; it arose from the intersection of faith and life. The church's theological vocation is exercised when faith's confession of Jesus' lordship bumps up against the unevenness of life and the objections of faith's critics. Thereby the church forms its collective Christian imagination.

Accordingly, there is a deep pathos to theology. This is well captured by the theologian, Sarah Coakley. For her, "theology must involve the stuff of learned bodily enactment, sweated out painfully over months and years, in duress, in discomfort, in bewilderment [but] also in joy and in dawning recognition".

The Uniting Church in Australia's foundations are a good illustration of this. In proposing an explicit christological foundation and a missional orientation for the new church, the uniting churches were asked to surrender many elements of their traditional identities. This frequently evoked "duress,

discomfort and bewilderment". The christological, missional theology that brought the Uniting Church into being was a hard-won theology.

It was hard-won then, and can't be taken for granted now. The persistent gravitational pull of Christendom, the abiding temptations of denominationalism, and the comforting domesticity of civil and folk religion all would draw us away from this vision. It requires ongoing theological work to keep our collective imagination focused on this vision.

Many of our worries about theological education have been driven by the proper concern that ministerial formation involves more than a theological education. I would argue that one of the present challenges is not just to get the balance right between them, but to allow both of them to be framed by the church's larger theological vocation.

Formed with a rich, creative and generous Christian imagination, our ministers can use their theological education to help prod, shape and nurture the collective Christian imagination of local congregations as together we participate in Christ's mission.

Thinkers explore Christian education

CHRISTIAN education is essential to the church and to all aspects of people's lives, say two Queensland Christian education thinkers.

Rev Dr Wendi Sargeant, chaplain at The Lakes College at North Lakes, Brisbane, says that in Uniting Church schools, Christian education involves the intentional development of young people in Christian faith and ethos, as espoused by the Uniting Church in Australia.

Dr Sargeant drew on her experiences in the role of chaplain in writing her PhD, "Christian Education and the Emerging Church".

"Questions I am regularly asked as a Uniting Church in Australia college chaplain have heightened my awareness of issues facing contemporary Christian schooling. Questions like: What difference will following Jesus make in my life? What practices does a Christian undertake and why? How does a follower of Jesus act? How do you think theologically about aspects of everyday life?"

"These are all elements of a well-formed Christian education. They are questions of Christian ethos – character, ethics, behaviour."

Christian faith interacts with all aspects of our lives, she explains, and Christian education attempts to cultivate an entire lifestyle.

"It is not just about knowing Bible trivia or Sunday School answers any more. To be taken seriously as Christians, students

(of whatever age) must learn to walk the Christian walk as well as talk the Christian talk."

The Lakes College attempts to walk the walk of faith, with faith development permeating all of school life. There, Christian education includes daily devotions conducted by the classroom or homeroom teacher, weekly chapel services that are attended by all students, and weekly Christian education lessons given by the college chaplain or classroom teacher in consultation with the chaplain.

Another educational thinker, Rev Dr Elizabeth Nolan, was honoured at the recent 13th Assembly for her many years of work for the church through the Christian Education Reference Committee. Offering the Minute of Appreciation for her tireless work, Rev Glenda Blakefield, Assembly Associate General Secretary, observed that "For Elizabeth, we can't have growth in our lives without Christian education."

Dr Nolan, who is currently the minister at Indooroopilly Uniting Church in Brisbane, expands.

"Our Christian growth in faith and in witness depends on the very process of Christian education – and the growth is throughout our lives.

"I am passionate about Christian education – in its widest form. And that's my concern, that people don't really understand that Christian education goes from cradle to grave. It's a lifelong process of learning and growing in faith."

Dr Nolan's own formation began in the cradle. Brought up in a family where her mother taught Sunday School in the Methodist Church, she attended from the age of six months. Throughout her childhood she took daily Bible studies and, after qualifying as a secondary teacher, travelled to the United States where she undertook a Doctor of Education in Religion and Education.

Along with several years writing curriculum for Christian education in the 1980s and 90s, she was involved in religious education administration and training chaplains, before moving to congregational ministry in Victoria and Tasmania from 1996.

This range of experience lends her a vantage point from which to view the place of Christian education among other fields – and in people's wider lives. Christian education is a field that integrates, she explains.

"In theological and educational colleges where people are trained to be ordained or lay leaders of congregations, their ultimate aim is to help people to grow in their faith. The field of Christian education is very important with that."

"It is the process that enables you to take the field of theology, the scripture fields of the Old and New Testaments, the history of the church, what has happened in the doctrines of the church, and put it together."

"Christian education is that field that actually integrates the



Rev Dr Elizabeth Nolan. Photo by Osker Lau

work of those other fields so that you can say, okay, if this is what the faith of the church is, how do we make it fit and work together? And how do we then communicate it with our local twenty-first century society?"

The integrative field also has an integrative function, she adds. "An outcome is expected."

"Christian education asks how we become effective witnesses to the faith that comes to us through theology and Scripture. It asks how we live as disciples."

"The answer, the outcome,

is both a spiritual growth in understanding and in our relationship with God, as well as a visible practice of ethical behaviour, of justice behaviour, of advocacy for the poor."

Like Dr Sargeant, Dr Nolan regrets that too many people in the church think of Christian education as Sunday School on a Sunday morning.

"That's just one aspect of it. But it's much more than a straight-out activity. It's a process, a lifelong one."

Lay Preacher Central

LOGAN Central Multicultural Uniting Church south of Brisbane could be aptly renamed Lay Preacher Central for the extraordinary participation of its congregation in lay preacher training through Pilgrim Learning Community.

Church Council Secretary Gewa Au counts 16 accredited lay preachers in the congregation of around 500 people, with another five or six in training at the moment.

The congregation includes groups from many cultural and linguistic communities, notably

Tongan, Samoan, Papua New Guinean, and Matu people from Burma.

"It's a learning community here," says Mr Au. "We learn from each other, we fight, we make peace. All that is part and parcel of being a community."

"Particularly in congregations like ours with a strong multicultural aspect, we help each other out," he continues.

"Other congregations could come and see what we are doing and maybe teach us different ways of doing things. And also, maybe, learn from us."

He credits Rev Dr Apichart Branjerdporn, who retired last year as minister to the congregation, as being the driver behind the extraordinary uptake of lay education at Logan Central Multicultural.

"With Apichart, it was brilliant, it was fun, it was culturally appropriate for our cultural and linguistic groups."

Dr Branjerdporn says that being in the Uniting Church for over 30 years, he learned a sense of urgency about helping culturally diverse people – and also Australian people.

"We are a Pilgrim people," he says. "It's lack of understanding or ignorance that drives us apart."

"The congregation is the seat of learning – but there's a gap.

If the congregation is ignorant or fearful of other cultures, it reinforces that driving apart."

"The whole idea that people get excited about with lay education is not so much the piece of paper but the social impact that they can have."

"When I arrived at Logan Central Multicultural, there were so many culturally diverse groups – but they weren't talking to each other. I thought, how can we operate? So I went to each group, got one leader from each, and instead of attacking them, asked them how they could allow me to help them, how we could learn something together. What were their needs?"

"And we saw that they needed to know the Bible in a way that

their own lay preachers could give them help and guidelines with – about the Bible, and also about tradition and customs."

"I thought I had won the Lotto, actually!"

Dr Branjerdporn leaves a legacy of enthusiasm as well as of lay education and empowerment of culturally diverse communities.

Mr Au is looking forward to the future.

"We have a retired supply minister at the moment, Rev Ray Bush, and we've just appointed a new minister who is coming in December. He's a Kiwi! I'm really excited because it's a Kiwi who's coming. His name is Rev Hohaia Matthews."

Becoming a lay preacher: the great cloud of witnesses

Alison Finger

I THINK we all find it amazing at times to look back and think about the way our lives have unfolded over the years.

Almost 20 years ago I volunteered on the church cleaning roster – and within months found myself nominated for eldership!

One of the advantages of a small congregation is that members find themselves extended into many roles in an "all hands on deck" approach.

Without a minister for a time, we four elders took turns to lead the worship in our congregation at Clermont, central Queensland.

But I felt inadequate and ill-equipped. So when the

opportunity arose to learn theology and preaching skills at weekend seminars, I was keen to participate.

Caroline Holmes, the lay preacher coordinator at the time, recommended that I apply for official lay preacher accreditation.

Under the guidance of Karyl Davison, our learning group was blessed to have instructors from Trinity Theological College – the principal Rev Dr Geoff Thompson, Rev Dr Rob Bos and Rev Dr Marian Zaunbrecher – who challenged us, extended us and opened up ideas and concepts that would never have occurred to us. I sometimes found myself shaking my head and saying "Wow!"



Alison Finger at her commissioning service at Clermont Uniting Church on 24 June with Rev Dr David Ferguson (left) and Central Queensland Presbytery Minister Rev Brian Gilbert. Photo courtesy of Alison Finger

Hebrews chapter 12 talks about the great cloud of witnesses – those who have gone before and are there beside us now encouraging us, cheering us on. I think of the life example of my parents, people of steadfast faith, and of my sister, two brothers and sister-in-law, who are all in active church membership.

I thank Rev Dr David Ferguson, minister of my congregation at Clermont, for seeing me through assessment services and being always available to help with information and advice.

Gaining accreditation as a lay preacher is an acknowledgement of my commitment to live out the new commandment that Jesus

gave in John 13:34: "I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

My commitment is to serve God and the wider church – the people of God.

Teaching and learning anywhere, anytime

THE Queensland Synod is taking a step forward to support continuing learning for all members of the church with access to the internet.

Neil Thorpe, Director of Pilgrim Learning Community, is involved in early work on a new online learning capability using Moodle software and is developing it as part of the vision of *Together on the way, enriching community*.

"There are great possibilities," he says. "Folk in distant and isolated parts of the state would be able to access courses to strengthen their ministry and deepen their faith. Training programs that have only been available occasionally in face-to-face formats might now be available whenever the need is required."

"And Pilgrim Learning Community is currently

evaluating placing lay preacher courses online."

Online learning has been in existence as long as the internet itself, and for Christians, there is no lack of resources. The vast number of Christian websites places them in the top five categories on the internet.

However, Pilgrim Learning Community will be offering courses and resources that are tailored and relevant to our congregations and members, based in the perspectives of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Work on this online platform is underway, with a launch anticipated in the next few months.

The parish mission school: a model for life

WHY is the Uniting Church involved in schooling? And what is the best model to develop Christian faith and practice in their students – especially since Christian formation is a lifelong process that permeates every aspect of a person's life?

Rev Dr Wendi Sargeant, chaplain at the Lakes College, Brisbane, and minister to the North Lakes District Uniting Church Faith Community congregation that worships in the school chapel, believes that the parish mission school model, where the congregation is vitally involved in the life of the school, is the best, most genuine way of fulfilling this aim.

"The essential context in which Christian formation and transformation occurs is the worshipping community," she explains. "And the purpose of the Christian community is to glorify God in all of its life."

"So the Christian community cannot exist for itself alone.

It is Christ's body on earth."

"The worshipping congregation, as the body of Christ, becomes the most vital element in the formation of young Christians in our schools."

The Lakes College is one of a small number of examples in Queensland of the parish mission school model, along with Calvary Christian College, a ministry of Logan Uniting Church.

Rev Graham Keech, Logan Uniting Church minister, also emphasises the transformative power of ministry to young people, pointing to the mission statement of Calvary Christian College: "Transforming lives through quality education and Christian discipleship." He adds that this also powerfully reflects the Logan Uniting Church congregation's purpose of "Drawing people into a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ."

"The college is a mission field in its own right," he says,

"with less than 50 per cent of the 1250 students Christians or from Christian families."

"But the parish mission model of the church and school is not just a powerful means through which we can fulfil the ministry of Christ to young people in helping them become disciples of Christ who discover God's call for their life."

"We can also help them make a genuine contribution to our global community. The college reflects the wider Uniting Church in having a significant emphasis on social justice as part of its life and witness."

Dr Sargeant reiterates that the community service orientation of the wider Uniting Church community is vital to the formation of Christian character that is entailed in Christian education.

"Part of this formation is the development of a Christian ethos, a call to an understanding of who God is and so to the worship of God," she says, "along with witnessing God's presence and participating in service in the world."

Trinity scholars launch books

TRINITY Theological College lecturers Dr Jason LeCureux and Dr Aaron Ghiloni will celebrate publication of their new books in a shared launch event at the college in September.

Dr LeCureux's doctoral thesis about the 12 minor prophets – the short Old Testament books Hosea through Malachi – has been published by respected scholarly publishing house Sheffield Phoenix Press, in the Hebrew Bible Monographs Series, a notable accomplishment for a PhD.

The Thematic Unity of the Book of the Twelve, he explains, is based on the theory that the writings of the 12 minor prophets, though individual works, are contained on the one scroll, lending them some level of unity.

"The book is about whether they are a unity, what kind of

unity it is and how the works are unified. I landed on a theme of Yahweh's call to his people to return."

Also attempting some type of synthesis, Dr Aaron Ghiloni's book *John Dewey among the Theologians* centres on the humanist philosophy and pedagogical theory of American Pragmatist thinker John Dewey (1859–1952), and, as the title suggests, brings educational theory and religious studies into dialogue.

"John Dewey and the theologians seem like two separate areas – and how do you communicate between two academic fields which appear to be chalk and cheese?" Dr Ghiloni asks.

"Dewey was often seen in his day as an anti-Christian. Conservative Christians of the day got their hackles up because



Dr Aaron Ghiloni (left) and Dr Jason LeCureux with their new books. Photo by Osker Lau

he questioned things that for them were sacrosanct.

"For me, the challenge was being true to Deweyan insights but also being true to a theological reading of them."

Receiving two offers for his manuscript, Dr Ghiloni declined

a theological press in favour of Peter Lang, which is known more for humanities, social sciences and educational theory.

Dr LeCureux's book will be launched by Associate Professor Edgar Conrad and Dr Ghiloni's by Rev Dr Neil Pembroke in the

Trinity library on 17 September at 10.45am.

To attend the launch, please contact Alice Foo on 3377 9958 or alice.foo@ucaqld.com.au.

New school internship for Wesley Hospital

ON Friday 10 August, CEO of UnitingCare Queensland, Anne Cross, launched an innovative week-long internship program at The Wesley Hospital for Year 11 students.

Twenty-five students from 12 schools in the Wesley Hospital catchment area of the Brisbane inner-city and western suburbs will be selected for the tailor-made experience.

The week-long program designed to identify and support the healthcare workforce of

the future will run from 3–7 December.

Over the week, students' days will begin with presentations and conversations with healthcare leaders and end with a debrief, while each will have the opportunity for a practical work placement with a healthcare practitioner, take tours of specific departments, and attend education sessions in the simulation labs in the clinical school.

Ms Cross said the program

"speaks strongly to the identity of UnitingCare Queensland and The Wesley Hospital.

"It's in our DNA to care about the wellbeing of the individuals and communities, and we want to foster future generations of committed, passionate and talented health industry workers, as well as being a leading state and national health and community service provider."

The 25 places in the program will include 10 for nursing, five for medicine, five for allied health

and five for support services such as trades, health information, biomedical technicians and catering.

The 12 schools can nominate up to five students, with at least two from each school to be selected.

Thanking Program Leader Rev Murray Fysh, Manager of The Wesley Hospital's Pastoral Care Department, Ms Cross reiterated that UnitingCare Queensland's organisational values of Compassion, Respect,

Justice, Working Together and Leading through Learning are fundamental to the work of the agency.

She said she hoped the program would be the beginning of a very fruitful and long-term "working together" with local schools and their students.

"For us, Leading through Learning is all about encouraging innovation and supporting learning."

For more information, contact Rev Murray Fysh, Program Leader, on 3371 6834 or email murray.fysh@uhealth.com.au.

Calvary puts faith in action

KAREN Kolope, Year 7 teacher at Calvary Christian College in Logan, south of Brisbane, sees mission as being faith in action – and has acted accordingly.

"Along with another teacher at Calvary, Susan Prior, I had been running Tongan mission trips from the school since 2005. We gave it the name Calvary in Action at the beginning of 2011 to encompass all that we do."

Calvary in Action, which operates in the middle and senior school, has given a wide variety of aid to the government schools on the Tongan northern island of Vava'u on trips taken every year but one since then.

"Our very first year, exploring what could be done there, we saw that a lot of the traditional churches have a Sunday School format of an older gentleman standing and talking, rather than hands-on activities," she says.

"So we took some of our Calvary students in and did some programs in one of the primary schools – a puppet show, a Bible story skit, and some art and

craft – the kinds of things that they actually hadn't been doing."

In projects large and small since then, Calvary in Action has brought equipment such as lawnmowers and whipper-snippers to the high school, and painted blackboards.

In 2008, Calvary in Action was able to get the high school library up and running again after several years of it being out of operation.

"We shipped over heaps of books that our college community donated, and then we got them all onto the shelves. It was a huge job."

An important part of the aid for several years has been skills exchange through professional development for kindergarten, primary and high school teachers.

"One year we worked with a local rotary club which helped us send over supplies for a home economics kitchen," Ms Kolope says. "We took fridges, and also small equipment like measuring cups and spoons that you can't



Calvary Christian College staff providing professional development for primary school teachers in Tonga. Photo courtesy of Karen Kolope

buy in bulk over there.

"We brought gas burners, too, because the girls had been bringing their own gas bottle and burners from home to cook with. And it happened that our manual arts teacher had come that year, so he built some tables for the home economics room."

But the key contribution of Calvary in Action to the Tongan school communities, she says, is the way they have been able to present the Gospel.

"Every year we've gone to either kindergartens or primary

schools where we present the Gospel message in those fun and hands-on ways to the children there," Ms Kolope says.

"I say to the Calvary students you may not think you're doing much, but we are presenting the Gospel to these little children in a way that they've never seen before."

For Calvary students, she adds, meeting their Tongan counterparts opens their eyes to the fact that we don't need all the material things that we have in the West to be happy.

"Participating in aid challenges their faith, challenges them to put their faith into action."

"We use 1 John 3:16–17 as our Scriptural basis – we who have so much, how can we turn our backs on others who have less, and say that God's love is enough? That's not how it works at all. God's love is shown through what we can do for others and how we can help them."

Moreton Bay College honours Judy James

ON Tuesday 24 July, Mrs Judy James was presented with the Moreton Bay College Medal on their Founders Day.

The Moreton Bay College Medal was established to recognise excellence on the part of past students. The purpose is to celebrate the achievements of past students and to provide inspiration for current students of the college and other past students.



Mrs Judy James

The medal was awarded to Mrs James in recognition of her contribution to community service. Mrs James has worked tirelessly in this area for many years while bearing the burden of her own illness, Multiple Sclerosis (MS).

The 2011 Volunteer of the Year and a nominee for Australian of the Year, Mrs James, a professional artist and sculptor, was diagnosed in 1992 with MS.

Finding a lack of help and information in the Toowoomba and district areas about MS, she became a founding member of the Toowoomba and District MS Support Group in the same year, going on to serve on the MS Support Group Committee for the next 19 years and holding all executive positions at various times.

Among her many other community service activities and achievements that have enriched the lives of people living with a disability, she is a Life Member of MS Qld, a member of People With Disabilities Australia and Women With



Mrs Judy James at the ceremony at Moreton Bay College on 24 July where she was presented with the Founders Day Medal. Photo courtesy of Moreton Bay College

Disabilities Australia, and has been instrumental in people with disabilities getting access to the Baillie Henderson indoor therapy pool in Toowoomba.

Mrs James credits her Christian education at Moreton Bay College with inculcating the qualities and values that have shaped her life.

"Even as a small child I had always stood up for the underdog, taking home every waif and stray, lame dog and duck. The Moreton Bay College reinforced my compassionate traits with their Christian

outlook and training – something that became part of my intrinsic nature for the rest of my life.

"Through this journey of my life, I have lived the footsteps of my Christian upbringing, both as a child and then at secondary education, finding that loving kindness and compassion expands and grows the more that it is used. It is a genuine renewable resource."

Ms Jennifer Haynes, Principal of Moreton Bay College and Moreton Bay Boys' College, said that Mrs James had set a

marvellous example of a life and work formed and informed by the Christian education the college fosters.

"Judy is an inspiring woman not only because of what she has done for others but because of the resilient and positive example she sets personally," she said.

"Her fondness for the college, evident in her speech at the ceremony, also warmed our hearts. It was an honour to be able to recognise her as an embodiment of what we hope our girls will be as adults."



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Dr Jason LeCureux, Principal Rev Dr Geoff Thompson, Rev Dr Malcolm Coombes, Dr Aaron Ghiloni

"Is there a better time than now to be called to ministry? With the collapse of Christendom, everything is new. The church is in uncharted waters and seeks leaders who can speak and live the gospel in fresh and creative ways. Studying theology with that horizon before you is exciting and enriching. Trinity Theological College is well-equipped to help you become such leaders."

Principal, Rev Dr Geoff Thompson

Trinity is small enough to offer a very personal and caring approach to students. The teachers are passionate and also instil that passion into students. My faith deepened immensely.

Rev Heather Allison
Chaplain, Wesley Hospital

Trinity helped me understand that discipleship is just as much about knowing the questions as it is about finding the answers. I have come to a faith that is owned not just learnt; not a puzzle to be solved but an ocean to swim in. Trinity shapes people to articulate the Gospel to the world.

Rev Harlee Cooper
Emmanuel Uniting Church, Enoggera

Trinity is a small body with a big heart. The foundations of my faith and being are challenged and stretched by lecturers who have made the journey themselves and want me to understand and to succeed. It is not an education but a lifelong journey.

Fa Ngaluafe
Student

Young adults: the present and future

Tara Burton

AT the 13th Assembly meeting, delegates from the National Young Leaders Conference presented the statement, "Reconciliation People", which addressed key justice issues identified by young people within the Uniting Church.

The statement was prepared in February at the National Young Adult Leaders conference, when 75 Uniting Church young people from across Australia gathered in Sydney.

The conference was hosted

by then President Rev Alistair Macrae and Rev Ken Sumner, then Chairperson of the Uniting Aboriginal Islander Christian Congress. UnitingJustice President Rev Elenie Poulos facilitated the workshop on social justice.

The National Young Adult Leaders Conference aims to bridge the gap between generations within the Uniting Church, while inspiring, encouraging, sustaining and developing young adult leaders.

Conference coordinator Tom Kerr said the conference enthuses and encourages young

adults to be the servant leaders they are called to be.

"This is an experience where young adults grow in love and faith in a truly unique gathering of young adult peers and mentors," he says.

"It is an experience of our multicultural, theologically diverse faith family, belonging together and behaving at its Christ-like best."

Anna Mulcahy, who is currently completing supply youth work at Broadwater Rd and St Mark's Uniting Churches in Brisbane, said that the conference is a crucial event.

"The conference provides an avenue for young leaders in the Uniting Church to have a voice in the life of the church. I attended this year's conference as I was frustrated with being treated as a token young person who had nothing to offer beyond my age itself.

"I was excited by the opportunity to provide some input into the direction of the church, as well as to voice and tackle some big issues that I believed the church hadn't been dealing with appropriately.

"The statement at Assembly was challenging and confronting, as it established young adults of the Uniting Church as a group that is engaged, passionate, and refuses to be overlooked."

Ms Mulcahy emphasised that if the Uniting Church wants to stay relevant in the future, young people are the key to helping identify how that will be possible.

Josie Nottle, youth minister with Centenary Uniting Church and delegate on the facilitation team for the 2013 conference in Brisbane, said that watching how the statement was received at the 13th Assembly was incredibly moving.

"For the first time I saw something beyond the orange card, beyond duty or responsibility. They were proud of us. They responded with respect and admiration.

"To be heard as a legitimate and significant voice within the

church was inspiring.

Bundaberg Uniting Church member Hayden Gaffel said that young people are not only the future of the church, but also the present.

"As young people we have a very different worldview, different desires for our path, and different concerns for our world.

"To make the best decisions for the church (and hopefully for the world), both young and old must come together to share their experience, wisdom and ideas."

Mr Gaffel said that he has always stuck with the Uniting Church for its willingness to change for the better.

"I've had my fair share of dealings with other denominations. Many of them seem too rigid and unshakeable in their thinking, while the Uniting Church continues to adapt. It might just be the residual of being a relatively new denomination in its current form, but this sort of adaptability is written into the fabric of the church and I hope it never leaves it," he said.

Applications are now open to Uniting Church leaders aged from 18 to 30 at <http://goo.gl/Nw2Tj>.

For more information contact Tom Kerr at tomk@nat.uca.org.au.

Watch Reconciliation People at www.vimeo.com/45563018

stuff kids ask

Who made God?

Answered by Rev Paul Clark, Redcliffe Uniting Church

WHEN I was in Year 8, I read the Bible from the beginning, one chapter a day. In Exodus, chapter 3, reading about Moses and the burning bush, I came across something that amazed me. Moses was worried that the Hebrews

wouldn't believe that he really had met God, so he asked God his name to prove it to them. I didn't know God had a name!

And when I read it, it made me think. In English, God's name is I Am. As I pondered this, I realised that it answered one of those perplexing questions,

"Who made God?" If we asked God, "Who made you?" or "Where did you come from?", God's answer would be, "I Am. Nobody made me. I just am. I've always been. In the past I Am, in the present I Am, in the future I Am. I have no beginning or end. I am the beginning and end. I Am."

This year *Journey* features a 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

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2 SEPTEMBER

Please pray for Aurukun Uniting Church:

- for Forgiveness Week, 2–7 September.
- for peace. We have gone through so much, as a church and as a community.
- for love. We face so much hatred in our

community. Now is time to bring about love in the name of Jesus.

- for unity. The community has been divided and so is the church. The time is now to bring about unity in both.

6 – 8 SEPTEMBER

Quilt and Craft Expo. Uniting Church Complex, 45 Patrick St, Laidley, Lockyer Valley. Quilts, craft and fine arts, patchwork, stitchwork, needlework, dolls and bears. Theme: "City to the Bush".

Contact Graham Welden on 5465 3222 or gwe30503@bigpond.net.au.

7 – 9 SEPTEMBER

Stretching Faith: Where on Earth is God? Alexandra Park Conference Centre, Mari Street, Alexandra Headland. A weekend of reflection for Uniting Church young adults (18–30 yrs) about the links between Christian theology and living at the edge of the church and culture in the midst of the environmental crisis. Cost \$105. Contact Alice Foo on 3399 9950 or ttc@ucaqlid.com.au.

8 SEPTEMBER 8am – 1pm

Spring Fair and Floral Show, Elanora Uniting Church 17 Applecross Way, Elanora. Stalls, floral art and cooking. Morning teas and BBQ. Contact Mary Flynn on 5598 8733 or flynn10@bigpond.com.

8 SEPTEMBER 9.30am – 2pm

Australian Christian Mediation Community Qld Community Day. Holy Spirit School Hall, 36 Villiers St, New Farm. Bring finger food to share for lunch. Suggested donation \$10. Contact Gabby Nelson on 3711 4227 or toga@bigpond.net.au.

8 SEPTEMBER 7pm – 9pm

Sacred Concert by Brisbane Festival Male Choir, Sandgate Uniting Church, 116 Board St, Deagon. \$10 includes supper. Contact John Buchanan on 3269 6960 or office@sandgateuc.org.au.

9 SEPTEMBER

Please pray for our Uniting Church schools in Queensland and their nearly 20 000 students and families. The board members, principals, chaplains and staff appreciate your continued prayers.

- Pray for all Year 12 students as they come close to the end of their schooling.
- Pray for the various missional trips that will be made in the forthcoming school holidays.
- Pray for those who are working in our schools as chaplains and teachers of religious education.
- Pray for the leaders of our schools, that they might be encouraged and strengthened as they accept great responsibilities for students, staff and programs.
- Pray for those who serve as directors/councillors on the boards of our schools as they ensure that their organisation is true to its mission while being sustainable financially.

9 SEPTEMBER 10am – 4pm

Flinders Uniting Church 140th anniversary, Peak Crossing. Light luncheon. Any memorabilia welcome. Contact Diane Palmer on 5467 2322 or st.dpalmer@bigpond.com.

16 SEPTEMBER

The Fernvale–Lowood Congregation is a recent coming together of two congregations to form a new one that worships from a redeveloped site in Fernvale and ministers to the communities of Fernvale and Lowood and the surrounding areas. Please pray for:

- the recently commenced Natural Church Development program.
- commencement of redevelopment on the Fernvale site.
- the 125th anniversary of worship on the Lowood site and the preparations leading up to the celebration on 16 September.
- the ecumenical work to re-establish religious education in the local primary schools.
- the ministry team, church council, elders and congregational members as they continue to seek to faithfully serve God and the growing communities of Fernvale and Lowood.

17 SEPTEMBER 10.45am

Book launch at Trinity Theological College library. *The Thematic Unity of the Book of the Twelve* by Dr Jason LeCureux launched by Associate Professor Edgar Conrad, and *John Dewey among the Theologians* by Dr Aaron Ghiloni launched by Rev Dr Neil Pembroke. RSVP to Alice Foo on 3377 9958 or alice.foo@ucaqlid.com.au.

19 – 21 SEPTEMBER

Multifaith Multicultural Centre, Pure Land Learning College Association, 57 West St, Toowoomba. Interfaith forum, "Resolving Crises through Religious Education and Cooperation". Register at www.interfaith-harmony.org.

21 SEPTEMBER 7.30pm

United Nations International Day of Peace celebrated with the Inaugural United Nations Association of Australia Annual Brisbane Peace Lecture by Leneen Forde, first female Governor of Queensland. St John's Cathedral, 373 Ann St, Brisbane City. All welcome, no charge, supper provided. RSVP on 3254 1096 or unaabalmaln@optusnet.com.au.

23 SEPTEMBER 8.30am – 11.30am

90th anniversary of the Aspley Ladies Fellowship, Aspley Uniting Church, Robinson Rd, Aspley. Fellowship and morning tea. Former members of the fellowship most welcome. Contact Viti Packer on 3861 5451 or office@aspleyuc.org.au.

23 SEPTEMBER

Please pray for Bundaberg and Coral Coast Uniting Church. They are involved with the local minister's association and support the many ecumenical activities in the area. Pray:

- for guidance as we discern future ministry needs in the parish.
- for more leaders in our youth ministry areas.
- for funding and more volunteers to help with Andy's Place.
- for the ongoing ministry of the combined churches with the carol services at both Bargara and the city.

6 OCTOBER 8am – 11.30am

Trash and treasure sale at Yeronga Uniting Church Hall, 58 Kadumba St, Yeronga. Books, household appliances and homewares, knick-knacks, toys and furniture at bargain prices. Sausage sizzle and homemade cakes. Contact John Newman on 3848 3779 or newman_jg@yahoo.com.au.

Upload your What's On entries at www.journeyonline.com.au

Items may be shortened due to space limitations.

Frontier Services centenary reaches a high note

ON 26 September, up to 2000 people will celebrate 100 years of continued support for the people of remote Australia in a celebration in Melbourne.

Moved by John Flynn's vision for the church to extend "a mantle of safety" across the outback, the Australian Inland Mission was established on that date in 1912.

A century on, Frontier Services continues to provide the services and care needed to build sustainable communities in remote areas of Australia.

Frontier Services Patron Tim Fischer AC will formally welcome those attending and Uniting Church President Rev Prof Andrew Dutney will deliver the message. Songs specially written for the centenary will be sung on the night as part of a special liturgy led by Chair of the John Flynn Foundation and past Uniting Church President Rev Gregor Henderson. Ted Egan will perform a song by Rev David MacGregor.

The evening will be the high point for centenary celebrations throughout 2012.

Hundreds of Frontier Services staff will travel from remote parts of the country to attend, including Queensland staff from as far afield as Cape York, Georgetown, Hughenden, Longreach, Charters Towers,

Charleville and Cunnamulla.

These include primary health-care nurses from remote communities, early childhood education specialists who provide mobile services for isolated families and patrol ministers who provide practical and spiritual care for people.

"Thousands of people have played a part in keeping the dream alive across the century," said Frontier Services National Director Rosemary Young.

"This year we celebrate all those people, their determination, their hard work and commitment. We also look to the challenges and opportunities ahead and remain determined to continue to support people, when and where they need us."

At the 13th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Adelaide, delegates of the church passed a resolution to "commit anew to the people of remote Australia". Those gathered in Melbourne will give a rousing affirmation to this century-long commitment.

The service will be held at the Dallas Brooks Centre in East Melbourne. All are welcome.

The event is not ticketed, but if you plan to attend please RSVP on 1300 787 247 or at www.frontierservices.org/centenary/centenary-events.



Frontier Services staff will travel across remote Australia to attend the centenary celebration in Melbourne. Photo courtesy of Frontier Services

Fernvale–Lowood Harvest Festival



Brad Heck

On 4–5 August, the Fernvale–Lowood congregation in the Brisbane Valley celebrated their annual Harvest Festival.

Following biblical tradition, members and farmers of this agricultural district donated top quality locally grown produce, craft and other handmade and cooked products to demonstrate God's goodness to his people

and to offer praise and thanksgiving.

An auction of the donated produce was held the next evening, with the proceeds of over \$2250 donated to the church property committee.

The Harvest Festival has taken place for over 50 years, and this year's enjoyable weekend reminded the community that despite the devastating floods of 2011, God will never forsake us.

About Bioethics (vol. 2): Caring for People Who Are Sick or Dying

By Nicholas Tonti-Filippini, Connorcourt Publishing, 2012, RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Rev Dr Noel Preston, adjunct Professor in Ethics at Griffith University and volunteer chaplain at Wesley Hospital.

THAT we will all die is a fact of life but how we are to die or whether we are to live may become a matter of ethical dispute. Indeed, we may safely predict that, at some point, in societies like ours, the dilemmas of bioethics confront all families.

Part of a developing series, *About Bioethics* (vol. 2) is not a complete bioethics text. It deals with issues such as the right to know and refusal of treatment; end-of-life questions like euthanasia, artificial feeding, pain management, representation and advanced directives; and includes a short piece on mental illness.

The author is a nationally

respected professional, a Roman Catholic bioethicist who is currently Associate Dean and Head of Bioethics at the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family in Melbourne. Altogether, the text illustrates helpfully how an (official) Catholic moral theologian combines reason and faith. He unambiguously relates his formation in the natural law tradition of Catholic moral theology with his decades of experience in public debate and on committees of the National Health and Medical Research Council.

The impact of Dr Tonti-Filippini's own faith stance is explicit throughout, especially as he relates his personal story of long-term suffering with life-



threatening disease. Indeed, his reflections on suffering, in the context of bioethics and pastoral care, are challenging.

In the end, though, it is more than a bioethics manual on death and dying; it may interest particular general readers, and it is a must for the shelves of those with responsibilities in health-care ethics. Though it is primarily a resource for carers who work in Catholic institutions, this reviewer's copy will find its way into the Pastoral Care library at the Wesley Hospital.

Street Dreams

Directed by Jason Bray, Red Earth Films, 2012, Rated M

Reviewed by Mardi Lumsden.

STREET Dreams is a documentary that has been made with love, sweat and tears.

It follows the work of organisations F.O.C.U.S. and Destiny Rescue in their bid to release young women (particularly girls under 18) who have been victims of human trafficking for the sex trade in South-East Asia.

There were many powerful messages in this film. As Remember Seven singer Katie Wallis said in the film, the

issue of human trafficking will not be stopped by one person, or one documentary; it will take an army. And that is what this documentary may just create.

Street Dreams follows filmmakers Jason Bray and Mike Crowhurst into the dark reality of the second-largest illegal industry in the world.

What shocked me most was not only that Australians frequent bars in Thailand and Indonesia (where prostitution is illegal) and take pleasure in the trafficking of women and girls, but that Australians sometimes own these businesses.

To hear from women who have been trafficked and now help rehabilitate women coming out of the industry was a heart-warming and heart-breaking experience.



The aim of this film is to inspire people to act, to speak out, and to seek out their own way to make a difference. This is why it was my privilege to donate the use of a song in the film and why other songwriters did the same.

Go and see this film – but be ready for the change it will inspire.

For more information and screening locations, visit www.street-dreams.com.au.

The Hunger Games

By Suzanne Collins, Scholastic, 2011, RRP \$18.99

Reviewed by Frances Manfield.

SUZANNE Collins' trilogy *The Hunger Games* has cemented itself as a must-read in the Young Adult fiction genre, sparking fascination and excitement reminiscent of the *Twilight* phenomenon.

The movie version of the first book, which shares the name of the trilogy, was co-written and co-produced by Collins and hit cinemas in March this year. Following its success, the movie version of the second book, *Catching Fire*, is due for release in November.

Set in post-apocalyptic North America, the human race resides in the nation of Panem, ruled over by a totalitarian regime who control the outlying districts from within the central metropolis, the Capitol.

The *Hunger Games* are an annual event, where one boy and one girl are selected via lottery from each of the 12 industrial districts to compete in a televised fight to the death.

The story is told from the perspective of 16-year-old Katniss Everdeen.

When her younger sister's name is drawn at the lottery, Katniss volunteers to take her place.

Katniss remains throughout the trilogy a reluctant hero, a symbol



of resistance against an oppressive government.

The second and third books follow Katniss as she copes with the aftermath of having won the Games, and with her subsequent role in the revolution she has inspired.

The books paint a stark picture of dystopia, where the comfort of a few depends on the suffering of many.

But it is not that which is novel or notable about *The Hunger Games* – nor is it the gladiatorial blood sport, nor even that it is child soldiers who are battling it out.

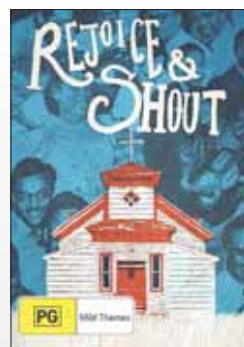
What is truly provocative in *The Hunger Games* is how it makes excellent prime-time viewing of violent death.

And of course, the key factor to our enjoyment and acceptance is that it is someone else's child on the screen.

Rejoice & Shout

Written and Directed by Don McGlynn, Magnolia Films, 2011

Review by Dr Robert Davidson, Lecturer in Composition, School of Music, The University of Queensland.



AFRICAN-American gospel music is at the heart of American popular music.

It is the fabric from which most of the plethora of genres is cut, including jazz, rock, soul, country, funk and hip-hop.

Gospel legend Smokey Robinson, interviewed in this joyful and energising documentary spanning the century-long history of gospel music, traces it back to slavery days; for him, "the root of all American music is plantation music".

We meet many of the genre's luminaries, from Ira Tucker and his family revisiting Philadelphia's Metropolitan Opera House, the scene of overpowering gospel events in the 1940s (Tucker sang for 70 years – yes, 70 – with the Dixie Hummingbirds) to Mavis Staples, one of the civil rights movement's principal inspiring voices.

The film finishes with Martin Luther King Jr's characteristic speech-song oratory, clearly demonstrating its kinship with gospel music.

Other figures are vividly heard and seen in stunning, long-buried archival clips, from the raucous but suave Hummingbirds to the wildly individual electric guitar-toting Sister Rosetta Tharpe.

Gospel's journey from barbershop quartet in 1902 to intricate, innovative and ecstatic multistranded music is made clear in a historical progression in which the artists' deep connection to faith is demonstrated as the principle concern.

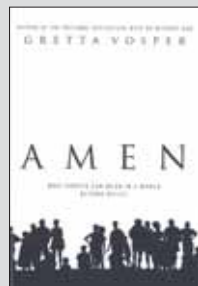
If *Rejoice & Shout* has a fault, it is in its overarching aim of representing the entire history of this genre – it's impossible not to omit many central artists, while the encyclopaedic attempt results in an overly complex narrative.

But this should not deter you. The energy and joy in these performances is incredibly infectious, capturing a passionately personal, participatory way of worshipping.

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

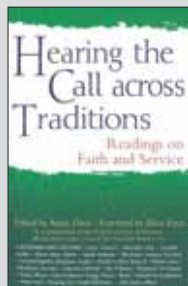
Amen: What Prayer Can Mean in a World Beyond Belieft

By Gretta Vosper, HarperCollins Publishers (Toronto), 2012, RRP \$35.99



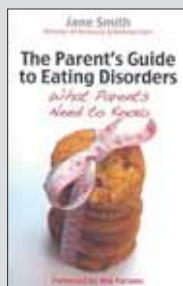
Hearing the Call Across Traditions: Readings on Faith and Service

Edited by Adam Davis, Skylight Paths Publishing, Woodstock, Vermont, 2009, RRP \$26.95



The Parent's Guide to Eating Disorders: What Parents Need to Know

By Jane Smith, Lion Hudson, 2011, RRP \$16.99



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 www.rainbowbooks.com.au.

Mission responsible

Rhonda Sutton

THOSE who love travelling in Asia but feel concerned about the negative impact of tourism on local environments, livelihoods and cultural traditions can now turn to Responsible Travel, an initiative by the Commission for Mission of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

I always felt guilty at enjoying being a tourist while so many people lived in desperate poverty, and on a visit to East Timor in 2003 I donated some funds I had raised at home.

It was life-changing to see how dramatically this improved the lives of the recipients, and I became involved in various projects in East Timor.

Inspired by stories about my experiences, others started to join me in small group tours of the country.

When the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship in Victoria funded a position through the

Commission for Mission for a Responsible Travel Advocate, I jumped at the opportunity.

In addition to advocating for responsible travel, I organise Uniting Journeys that are profoundly moving experiences for each participant.

Over \$4000 has now been given to projects in East Timor.

Participants sell fair trade products, submit articles to local papers and speak to their local communities about responsible travel and the projects they have encountered in their travel.

In 2013, our Jetaway Travel Uniting Journeys will again travel to East Timor, where we'll support training for massage therapists as well as enjoying massages ourselves.

We'll teach some English and visit remote villages, supporting the Alternative Technology Association as it provides training and employment in installing solar energy equipment.



(From left) Responsible Travel Advocate Rhonda Sutton, Jim Wakelam and Elyse Le Cerf from Victoria, and Penny Hearn from Noosa, with East Timorese guides on the most recent Uniting Journey trip. Photo courtesy of Rhonda Sutton

We can all travel more responsibly with just a little effort and research.

Think about the impact of your travel. Ask where the money you are spending is going and

make decisions accordingly.

If you visit a developing country and stay at a chain hotel or resort, the profits are probably leaving the country even if it employs local staff.

Learn more about Responsible Travel at www.responsibletravel.org.au or email Rhonda.Sutton@victas.uca.org.au or phone (03) 9251 5965

500th deep brain stimulation surgery performed in Brisbane

Colleen Clur

THE world-renowned team of neurologist Professor Peter Silburn and neurosurgeon Associate Professor Terry Coyne have together performed their 500th deep brain stimulation (DBS) operation at UnitingCare Health's St Andrew's War

Memorial Hospital in Brisbane.

"This is an extraordinary achievement, and we believe it to be unmatched by any other team in Australia. Peter and Terry are among the top five DBS specialist teams in the world – what they are doing is creating hope for the many people affected by chronic neurological illnesses,"

said Professor Helen Chenery, Director of the Asia-Pacific Centre for Neuromodulation, a joint initiative between St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital and The University of Queensland's Centre for Clinical Research.

Deep Brain Stimulation involves surgically implanting

electrodes in a deep part of the brain. This brain "pacemaker" sends electrical impulses to a targeted area on each side of the brain to block the signals that cause the disabling motor symptoms in conditions such as Parkinson's disease, dystonia and essential tremor.

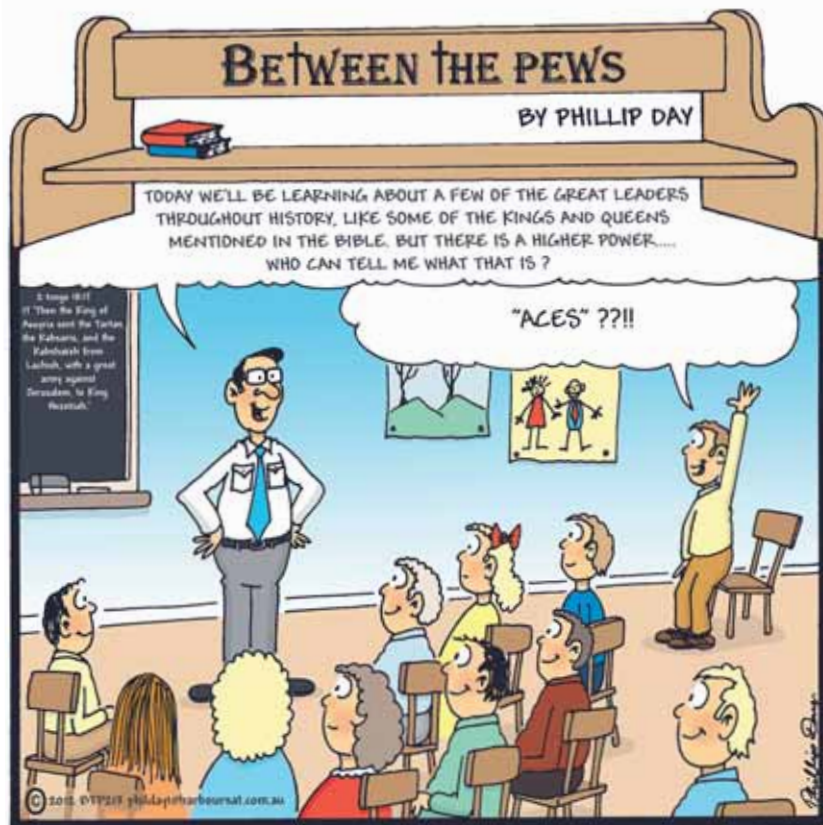
"Our 500th patient is a 61-year-old woman who runs a cattle station in north-west Queensland. Making a difference to our patients and their families is what motivates us every day to continue performing DBS, but also to research how DBS can help people with a wide range of neurological conditions," Professor Silburn said.

Neurologists and neurosurgeons have used electrical stimulation since the 1960s.

Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) usually uses two surgically implanted medical devices, similar to cardiac pacemakers, to deliver electrical stimulation to precisely targeted areas on each side of the brain.

Peter Silburn is Professor of Clinical Neuroscience at The University of Queensland and a world expert in the treatment and research of Parkinson's disease and related neurodegenerative disorders and in Deep Brain Stimulation.

Terry Coyne is a St Andrew's based neurosurgeon and Associate Professor at The University of Queensland with specialist skills in brain and spinal surgery who has worked extensively with Professor Silburn.



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Padre flies on the wings of song

Janine Kinnear

THE Flying Padre in Cloncurry was on the minds of the 250 people who gathered at Elanora Uniting Church on Sunday 29 July to enjoy a performance by the Australian Chamber Musicians.

Titled *On the Wings of Song: From Bach to Gershwin*, the concert delighted all present, and the church donated the entire

proceeds of \$3700 to Flying Padre Rev Garry Hardingham.

Pianist Brierley Cutting added a surprise solo piano piece by Rachmaninoff to the program in honour of the grand piano recently acquired by the church.

After such a successful and enjoyable event, the Elanora Uniting Church congregation is planning to invite the Australian Chamber Musicians to perform at the same time next year.



Elanora Uniting Church member Janine Kinnear with Paul Kopetz, bass clarinet player with the Australian Chamber Musicians. Photo courtesy of Janine Kinnear

Find Uniting Church Queensland on Facebook



Facebook comments

Uniting Communications team photo

What a good looking bunch!

Colleen Geyer

Nice photo. Thanks for turning the camera around and introducing us to the team. However, I am noticing the lack of males in the team.

James Hyams

What a great team – love the colours! Don't worry, James, Osker holds his own!

Shirley Coulson

Log in and have your say now!

Moggil Community Expo

This came out of our small group effort at the beginning of the year – looking beyond ourselves and into our community. One small group with the help of the rest of the congregation are making this happen.

Catherine Solomon

What a great idea!!

Fiona Askin

2013 Uniting Church National Young Adults Leaders Conference

This was discussed at Central Queensland Presbytery. We are looking to sponsor some of our young folk to go.

Philipa Core

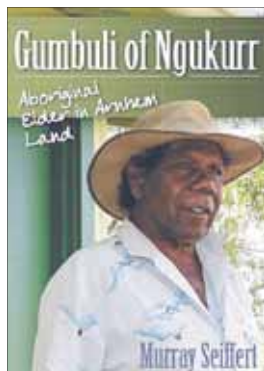
OUT academic honour

Synod Ministries Coordinator, Rev John Cox (centre), was awarded an academic prize on Tuesday 3 July by the Australian Centre for Philanthropy and Non-Profit Studies, a centre within the business school at Queensland University of Technology, for his work in the Graduate Certificate of Business (Philanthropy and Non-Profit Studies).



2012 Australian Christian Book of the Year

THE Australian Christian Book of the Year was announced on 16 August at the Australian Christian Literature Awards in



Melbourne. *Gumbuli of Ngukurr* by Murray Seiffert (Acorn Press) emerged from a tight field of over 40 entries, with the judges praising it as "a unique and timely contribution to the story of Aboriginal engagement with western culture and Christianity."

"Always informative, it also, at times, makes for profoundly uncomfortable and provocative reading. This singular story of Indigenous protagonism, self-determination and leadership in the face of overwhelming obstacles – hostile opposition, blind ignorance and numbing indifference – maps a way forward for the peoples of this continent."

Geoffrey Blainey took second prize with *A Short History of Christianity* (Viking), and

Love, Tears and Autism: An Australian Mother's Journey from Heartbreak to Hope (Ark House) by Cecily Paterson third prize.

The Australian Christian Literature Awards recognise and celebrate excellence in Australian Christian writing, and also include prizes for unpublished manuscripts by young writers. Claire van Ryn won the Young Australian Christian Writer Award for her manuscript *Faith Like a Mushroom*, and Daniel Li the Australian Christian Teen Writer Award for his work *A Short Walk*.

For more information on the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge Australia and the Australian Christian Literature Society visit www.spcka.org.au

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Book

G Lindsay Lockley: A Daughter's View Book available for \$30 including postage from author: Barbara.merfield@three.com.au or phone 07 3216 8225.

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



Board Members

The Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia is seeking to appoint two new members to the Board of UnitingCare Queensland. The appointments will take effect from March 2013.

UnitingCare Queensland is the health and community service provider of the Uniting Church in Queensland. It is one of Australia's largest non-profit organisations and Queensland's largest provider of health, aged care and community services. UnitingCare Queensland employs over 15,000 people and has an annual turnover in excess of \$1.3 billion. Its network of services includes Blue Care aged care community services, residential aged care and retirement living, UnitingCare Community children and family services, disability services, counselling and crisis support services and UnitingCare Health's group of hospitals including The Wesley Hospital, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, The Sunshine Coast Private Hospital and St Stephen's Hospital in Hervey Bay and Maryborough.

The UnitingCare Queensland Board is responsible to the Church for developing the overall strategic direction for the organisation, ensuring the organisation is dynamic, visionary, true to its mission, values driven and sustainable into the future.

Community service, health, business and professional leaders who can demonstrate appropriate qualifications and outstanding achievement are encouraged to express their interest in these positions. In particular we are seeking candidates who have board and senior executive experience in large complex organisations. Membership of the Uniting Church would be an advantage.

An information kit can be obtained by phoning Andrew Haynes, Director Group Governance at UnitingCare Queensland on (07) 3025 2019 or emailing andrew.haynes@ucareqld.com.au. Your expression of interest should be submitted by 30 September 2012.

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What was your education like?

"I thought I knew the Bible!"

Graham Atherton, student lay preacher

"There were times of great collegiality and inspiration and growth in faith. The simple environment of the old Ryans Road Church of Trinity College created a learning community that enriched my life immensely.

"At Trinity College I was taught to think theologically, given a wonderful grounding in the Scriptures, and the witness to Christ. Upon that solid foundation I have grown and continued to learn about the way God would use me to serve Christ's mission."

Past Moderator, Rev Bruce Johnson, St Andrew's UC, Brisbane City

"Trinity College in the late 1970s made me the Christian I am. Our lecturers taught by example – especially Rollie Busch and Han Spykerboer. They modelled how to reflect theologically on the public issues of the day, and how to act with integrity and courage as disciples of Jesus."

Rev Prof Andrew Dutney, President, Uniting Church in Australia

"The college was not only a place of learning, it was also a place of community. Along the way some students experienced a crisis in their life. Some wrestled with family matters, with their identity as servants of God and the Uniting Church as a host and context for service. The process of forming us as ministers of the Gospel served to sift and shape us. We learned new languages and ways of asking questions as we reflected on our encounters with God and God's people."

Rev Kaye Ronalds, Moderator

"One of the things I have seen in Bible studies at the congregational level is what has inspired people to become lay preachers is that we have good lecturers from Trinity Theological College and Pilgrim Learning Community – people like Geoff Thompson, Marian Zaunbrecher, Neil Thorpe and Rob Bos, and various other ministers."

Gewa Au, Church Council Secretary, Logan Central Multicultural UC

"I was very privileged to have as my theological educators men (it was an all-male faculty) such as Han Spykerboer, Rollie Busch, David Pitman, James Haire, and Douglas Galbraith. Quite a line-up! One thing that I appreciated about the way that they went about their work was its holism. They integrated academic theology, pastoral practice, personal spirituality, and authentic relationality.

"They would often ask me about my life, my family, my studies, and my vision for my future ministry (the same went for all of their students of course). At first I thought that they were just a really polite bunch, but I soon realised that they were genuinely interested in the development of their students in all its facets.

"I can't say how profoundly I value my four years in the college."

Rev Dr Neil Pembroke, The University of Queensland

"Through this journey of my life, I have lived the footsteps of my Christian upbringing, both as a child and then at secondary education, finding that loving kindness and compassion expands and grows the more that it is used – a genuine renewable resource."

Judy James, Moreton Bay College Founders Day Medal winner 2012

"I will forever be grateful for the time I was able to spend at Trinity Theological College. During the course of my study I found myself being shaped and moulded in ways that will be with me for the rest of my life.

"Theological study pushed me to engage with thoughts and ideas far beyond my own; at times it even uprooted some of my most closely held beliefs. This journey from certainty to faith was, and continues to be, unsettling – but it has allowed me to begin to fathom just how truly vast God is."

Rev Harlee Cooper, Emmanuel UC, Enoggera

"Under the guidance of Karyl Davison, our learning group was blessed to have instructors from Trinity Theological College and Pilgrim Learning Community – Rev Dr Geoff Thompson, Rev Dr Rob Bos and Rev Dr Marian Zaunbrecher – who challenged us, extended us and opened up ideas and concepts that would never have occurred to us. I sometimes found myself shaking my head and saying 'Wow!'"

Alison Finger, accredited lay preacher



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