

Lend a hand
Mental Health Week

Spotlighting Milpara
Acacia Ridge reinvigorates

Speaking out
Voices for Justice shows mercy

Worshipping
Spaces and places, ways and means

Young leaders gather
Stretching Faith theology camp

PAGE 3

PAGE 5

PAGE 6

PAGES 7-10

PAGE 11

Seeking holy ground

Rev Dr Steve Taylor

LAST year, I was part of an evening of reflection on spirituality for mission at a local convention centre. Around the edges of the room were placed 10 experiential prayer stations.

At the back I spotted a shopping trolley. Inspired, I strolled over, held the handle and prayed for all who hold, push and collect trolleys. Over time, I noticed that while people were clustering at other stations, no-one was joining me at mine.

The facilitator strolled over. Gently she pointed out that she had only used the trolley to bring her things inside. But if it helped me to connect with God, I was welcome to continue to use it.

For others, it is different. David loves organ music. Every Sunday as he slips into his favourite pew, the music enhances a quiet centring that connects him with the spiritual.

Vanessa finds the outdoors a breeze. In a secluded place, communion is set, a picnic is shared and a scripture is read. For her neighbours, many of whom are struggling, it is an experience of healing. They have designated trees in the park as places to give thanks, to name their pain, to ask for help.

Religion has always had a complicated relationship with things. Can holding a trolley, or walking outdoors, help or hinder the spiritual journey?

For the people of Israel, faith began in the desert with the journeys of Abraham and Moses. Over time, their worship found concrete expression in an ark and then a temple, both of which were destroyed in the Exile.

Worship was possible, faith was nurtured, in both the presence and absence of things.

Turning to the Christian tradition, it is helpful to consider how the footsteps of Jesus became, over time, physical places of pilgrimage. Then after the Crusades, the places where Jesus walked found symbolic expressions as Stations of the Cross, located in church buildings throughout Europe. In time, however, such art was torn apart by Protestant reformers.

Recently Stations of the Cross have returned, with churches like Wesley Uniting Church in central Perth or Small Boat Big Sea in Sydney finding in their revival a life-giving expression of mission. A connection with things is proving essential for our mission and ministry.

Christian theology, from Creation to Incarnation, Resurrection to Ascension, affirms the body. Our God-given senses matter – to read this sentence, touch this paper, smell the printer's ink, hear the chink of the teapot, savour the tea – and connect us with the Divine.

This presents a significant missionary challenge. What will it mean for us, as individuals and churches, to love God not only with soul, but also in mind and body? For some the connection will be through organ music. For others it will need to be in walking churches and tactile prayer stations.

Because our bodies matter.

Rev Dr Steve Taylor is Principal of Uniting College for Leadership and Theology in Adelaide. Visit his site at www.emergentkiwi.org.nz.

The footsteps of Jesus became, over time, physical places of pilgrimage.

Seeing matters: Make an advent calendar this Christmas, with traditional or contemporary images, one per day.

Hearing matters: Organise an evening for people to bring their favourite spiritual music, and invite everyone to share the memories their piece holds for them.

Smelling matters: Arrange a wine or juice tasting, including what you use for communion, and ask people to describe the aromas and tastes.

Touching matters: Invite a practitioner of some form of therapeutic touch therapy to give a talk or demonstration about their work.

Tasting matters: Hold a party, to which each guest brings a dish, for the pure pleasures of socialising and hospitality.

Ideas from Anne Richards, *Sense Making Faith: Body, Spirit, Journey*, Mission Theological Advisory Group, Churches Together in Britain and Ireland, London, 2007.

MONTHLY PRAYER

God our shelter,
teach us to build healthy Christian communities that enable our young ones to grow strong backbones. Help us to provide supportive scaffolds for those who are vulnerable and on the margins of life. Amen.

October 2012

A place to come home to

I once lived in a church, a red brick one, which disturbed the neat symmetry of the terrace houses lining a square in a genteel part of Islington in London.

Converted in the 1980s to apartments, it had high ceilings, arched windows and metre-thick walls. I've never slept so soundly.

More recently, I lived in an 1870s house in Fitzroy, Melbourne, that had three-metre ceilings, arched doorways throughout and an arched window in the stairwell. I loved coming home to that house, too, which gave me similar feelings of peace and pleasure.

Our spiritual journeys are as unique as the domestic spaces we find and create to dwell in, and the relationships that sustain us.

Accommodating people for worship is not just the work of architects, although in this issue we look at some of the unique and beautiful physical spaces they have created to grace and enrich our communities.

It is also the work of educators, such as the theologians and ministers who dedicated a weekend this September to giving guidance and encouragement to the next generation of church leaders at Stretching Faith (page 11).

There is a "coming home" also in the communities we create together and with whom we share our highs and lows, our celebrations, our work, our relaxation.

This issue is full of people finding the sacred everywhere: at a wedding on a sandhill in the outback (page 6), in a Balinese temple (page 9), in learning about other faiths (page 14), in a hospital chapel (page 8) or even a hospital operating theatre (page 6), in a prison (page 9), at an international conference of eco-theologians (page 3), or, like the writer of our cover story, Rev Dr Steve Taylor, holding a shopping trolley.

The congregation of St Marks Uniting Church in Mt Gravatt, Brisbane, found it in raising money together to buy Street Swags for people without anywhere to call home (page 15).

There is "coming home" too, in the joyful experience if our bodily senses, as Dr Taylor reminds us, especially when we can combine them with the pleasures of socialising and hospitality.

I hope you enjoy with this issue of *Journey* the twin pleasures of sharing together and dwelling within.

Kate Indigo, Editor



Running on sunshine

Rev Kaye Ronalds, Moderator

HAVE you ever watched a TV show about people and the homes they build? One program I like tracks the progress from grand dream to completed reality.

A house in France was built from discarded car tyres packed with soil and finished with adobe walls. One in Britain featured solar collectors for hot water, solar panels for electricity and triple glazing to let in light while trapping heat. The designs express the values and philosophies of the owners.

By the time they have met the challenges of bad weather, design complications and budget blow-outs they are heavily invested in more ways than one.

Building or redeveloping a church can be a similar experience. Relationships can become strained as groups articulate how the building might reveal God, the place of preaching, the importance of

music, of access. Even before the designing is over and the quotes are in, some may want to give up.

Around Queensland there is great variety in churches. Some are simple timber buildings constructed from local timber by volunteers on donated land. One church used to be a squash court. Elsewhere people gather in homes, schools and public buildings. There are not many cathedrals in Queensland, but some Uniting Church buildings are large and beautiful and host the events and rituals of community life.

This year Frontier Services is celebrating 100 years of serving the people in outback Australia. Much of what they do happens well outside church buildings.

Some of our members have an attachment to traditional buildings while others have embraced contemporary designs. Perhaps the same could be said of the internal architecture by

which people engage their beliefs. For some, there is comfort and attraction in traditional beliefs and orthodox ideas, while others seeking something more modern

may choose a journey of deconstructing and redeveloping.

The writer of Psalm 84 describes the loveliness of the dwelling place of God. I am reminded of an episode of *The Simpsons* when Homer becomes a missionary in a foreign land and convinces the natives to build a chapel. On its completion he remarks, "Well, I may not

The God that I believe in is not confined to the timber, stone and brick buildings that we call churches.



know much about God, but I have to say we built a pretty nice cage for him."

The God that I believe in is not confined to the timber, stone and brick buildings that we call churches. God longs to dwell in our hearts. Some scholars suggest the words translated from Greek and Hebrew as "belief" are more about deeply held views than assent to a series of propositions and ideas – belief which at its heart is about relationships.

At the Bremer Brisbane Presbytery retreat in September, Rev Ian Smallbone reminisced about his involvement in the Christian folk group, Family. They had a hit on the radio in the mid-70s with their song, "This House Runs on Sunshine, Peace and Love".

My hopes are that the churches we build will help people connect with God, and that the communities we construct will be known for values like peace and love, as well as the others named in *Together on the way* – faithfulness, truthfulness, humility, compassion and justice.

While church buildings can be beautiful and grand, modest and functional, it is even better if they enable the people of God to be hosts to the community and to invite others to experience God as shelter and refuge.

Read more about Family at: www.angelfire.com/in2/familys/home.html



Faith leaders at the Stretching Faith weekend, Alexandra Park Conference Centre, Sunday 9 September. Left to right: Rev Mark Cornford, Moderator Kaye Ronalds, Rev Harlee Cooper, Rev Dr Geoff Thompson, Rev Dr Vicky Balabanski, Rev Jock Dunbar and Rev Josie Nottle. Photo by Kate Indigo

Snap that!

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

This month's *Snap that!* is a photograph of Trinity Theological College student Fa Ngalaufe taken by Unga Takai, which captures the power and simplicity of worship not in a building but in the midst of creation.

November theme: Stuffed! Consumerism and consumption.



Where's the Moderator?

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

7 October

Visit to Bald Hills and Bracken Ridge congregations.

10 October

Queensland Heads of Churches meeting, "Wynberg", New Farm.

19 October

Opening of Emmaus College, Jimboomba.

20 - 21 October

125th anniversary of Killarney Uniting Church.

30 October

Retired Ministers Fellowship, Emmanuel Uniting Church, Enoggera.

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Working toward wellbeing

ONE person in four will experience some form of mental illness in their lifetime.

Church communities have a unique role to play in Mental Health Week, 7 to 13 October, explains Jane Frazer Cosgrove, a facilitator with the Nouwen Network, a grassroots support group that seeks to raise awareness in faith communities about mental illness.

"This year's Queensland theme for Mental Health Week, 'Working Toward Wellbeing', provides an opportunity to demonstrate God's love, care and compassion to those experiencing mental health concerns, and their families and friends," says Ms Frazer Cosgrove.

The Nouwen Network blog, 'Out of the Depths', has

resources available to help individuals and churches participate in Mental Health Week: liturgies, prayers and poems; personal stories and scriptural reflections; and art.

"A terrible outcome of mental illness is that people lose their connections with their communities," says Ms Frazer Cosgrove.



"A group of us from different churches and suburbs around Brisbane started the Nouwen Network in late 2009, with help from the then state chaplains of Lifeline, Rev Bob Harriman and Rev Dr Graham Beattie. We named it for the Dutch-born priest and author Henri Nouwen in honour of his accessible, grassroots approach and vision – and his own struggles with depression."

Congregations can be caring communities for people affected by mental illness by raising awareness and offering friendship, encouragement, acceptance and understanding.

Together they can help challenge the stigma of mental illness, support people in times of crisis, value those who have mental health problems, link

them to mental health services and provide spiritual resources that promote inner strength and faith as a comfort and support.

Church leaders can incorporate appropriate prayers in worship services, preach about mental illness, and visit hospitalised members. They can also invite guest speakers who have experienced mental illness to their congregations, and help their people to develop meaningful relationships with those struggling with mental illness, whether it be depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, eating disorders or postnatal depression.

For further details about Mental Health Week 2012 and resources, visit www.mentalhealthweek.com.au, and the Nouwen Network blog at <http://nouwennetwork1234.wordpress.com>.



Nouwen Network facilitator Jane Frazer Cosgrove.

Join the monthly mailing list of the Nouwen Network by emailing nouwen-network@optusnet.com.au.

Singing from the heart of worship

"If you are a fancy worship leader you are getting in the way," was the message of South Australian minister Rev Deane Meatheringham to the annual conference of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations (ACC).

Held from 13 to 15 September in the Adelaide Hills, the 2012 gathering with the theme "The Heart of Worship" brought members and interested people together to worship and hear from four keynote speakers about worship today, and included the annual general meeting for the assembly.

It is God who makes all things new, Mr Meatheringham concluded in his address titled, "What Do We Expect to Happen in Worship?", inspired by the call in Hebrews 12:18–29 to worship the "consuming fire" of God with

reverence and awe.

South Australian Anglican minister and teacher in New Creation Ministries Rev Martin Bleby gave a keynote address on "Singing the Lord's Song". After exploring the nature of lament, he concluded with some "practical" singing.

Continuing with the theme of song, Rev Mike Raiter from the Centre for Biblical Preaching in Melbourne spoke about his love of singing in the church and captured attention with his own lament for the slow death of congregational singing.

In his presentation, "The Congregation's Other Preachers", he gave encouragement to people involved in music ministry, outlining how congregational singing was something we did together.

Mr Raiter pointed out how we

all sing Charles Wesley's hymns, but few study John Wesley's sermons – and considered how the story of the Philipians jailer who was converted through song illustrated his overall thesis: the need for good songs well sung.

Wesley Institute theology and homiletics lecturer and ACC Council member Rev Dr Peter Davis concluded the conference with a reflection on "Preaching after Christendom". He also confirmed the conference theme and Mr Meatheringham's message with his stimulating comment that "the role of the preacher is to get out of the way".

The gathering heard reports from the ACC specialised commissions (Cross-Cultural, Discipleship and Evangelism, Doctrine and Theology, and Social Responsibility). The gathering also heard reporting



Rev Deane Meatheringham preaching at the Assembly of Confessing Congregations rally to a chapel at full capacity. Photo courtesy of Peter Bentley

from the 13th Assembly.

Queensland will host next year's gathering from 12 to 14 September 2013.

This is a shortened version of an article by Peter Bentley. Read the full version in next month's *ACCatalyst*.

Placing Earth in the church

REV Dr Clive Ayre, Eco-Mission Consultant at Uniting Green, travelled to South Africa in August, where he presented a paper, "Where on Earth is the Church?" at the inaugural Christian Faith and the Earth Conference.

Hosted by the Sustainability Institute of the University of the Western Cape in Stellenbosch near Cape Town, the conference brought together scholars and others with an interest in eco-theology from Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australia.

Dr Ayre's paper was well received, and prompted the question – or challenge – from one attendee, "Where in the church is the earth?"

But although it may be true that the earth has too often been missing in the church, Dr Ayre takes a "glass half-full" view. Many Christians in this country and around the world are deeply committed to rising to the biblical and theological challenge to care for creation, he says. Also coming out strongly from the conference was the importance of working together with people of other faiths and across other differences globally in this caring for the earth.

In terms of biblical interpretation, the responsibility to care for the environment is neither new nor radical, he says. "An earth-friendly approach goes right back to the very beginnings of the church. We are made in

the image of God, who is a caring God, and that was reflected in Jesus, of course. Genesis 2:15 is often quoted in that sense – a man is placed in a garden to tend it and keep it."

Dr Ayre also feels encouraged that young people are often very engaged with environment issues from a Christian perspective. One of the challenges he says the church is facing is how best to enable them to participate meaningfully in Christian expression of earth care.

"My passion is to see the church engaged in a mission that is based not just on pragmatism but on sound theological and biblical principles – which means my passion is not so much writing academic papers



Rev Dr Clive Ayre with Rev Dr Guillermo Kerber from the World Council of Churches at the Christian Faith and the Earth Conference 2012, Cape Town, in August. Photo courtesy of Dr Ayre

as interpreting ideas to make resources accessible for ordinary people of the church.

"There are resources in the planning stages now."



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Playtime is booming

Dianne Jensen

ANY parent can testify to the impact of the arrival of a new member of the family. Add distance, broken relationships or health problems, and parenting can be a hard road to travel.

Rachel Mudge, a new mother who worships at Aitkenvale Uniting Church in Townsville, has observed many of the issues first hand from her role as a teacher. When her own baby was born last year, she decided to set up a playgroup which would also be a church-based ministry of support and outreach to the community.

Known locally as "the church on the corner" for its location at one of Townsville's main

thoroughfares, Aitkenvale Uniting Church is home to a diverse community, including the transient populations from the Australian Defence Force and James Cook University.

"After becoming a mum myself, I began a playgroup to provide mums with a place to socialise and support each other," says Ms Mudge.

The playgroup began in May this year, and has grown to

include people from the local Catholic congregation as well as those with no church affiliation.

"My vision is to grow a strong group that feel supported not only by each other but also by the wider community," says Ms Mudge.

"I guess I'm passionate about this ministry because I am a child who has reaped the benefits of being raised in a church community. What a difference a Christian community makes to the raising of a child!"

Always glad to see you

Further down the coast is the Gladstone Uniting Church Little Explorers playgroup, which, like the local area, is bursting with

newcomers. As Queensland's major industrial hub, Gladstone is experiencing an influx of young families, most of them far from their support networks.

Karen Sengstock set up

the playgroup in 2001. Sandra Beak started attending with her two young children soon after it started, later picking up the coordination responsibilities.

"The focus is to embrace those who don't have a relationship with Jesus into a caring ministry which supports them, and

not just with their parenting. Gladstone is growing rapidly, and we purposely reach out to those who are new to the area with no family or support network, and offer help in whatever way we can," says Ms Beak.

The program has two groups, each with more than 40 parents, mostly from outside the church community. New parents turn up every week.

"It is about meeting them where they are, and presenting God in a way they can relate to," says Ms Beak.

"I'm passionate about this ministry, because I've seen transformations take place, where those who have no interest in knowing God begin to ask questions. I have had my own life transformed in an amazing way, simply through attendance at playgroup.

"God certainly has his hand on this ministry."

Warm welcome

Operating a play-based group for parents and young children was a natural step for Aspley Uniting Church in Brisbane's northern suburbs.

The Aspley Early Childhood Education Centre (AECEC) already runs a childcare centre, which opened four years ago after an early childhood organisation vacated their premises under the church.

The program Playtime commenced in 2010, followed by the introduction of school-aged care in July this year.

The vision to develop Christian-based childcare is integral to the church's outreach to the community, says Peter Waltisbuhl,

Chair of the AECEC Management Committee.

"We are the only Christian childcare centre in Aspley. The centre attracts many families (60 per cent) from other churches in the district."

With its focus on offering a low-key program, a warm welcome and a sympathetic ear, Playtime is booming, with 100 parents on the roll for the two sessions, and plans for more.

While only a few of the families who use the different options offered by AECEC are members of the congregation, Mr Peter Waltisbuhl says that building up the church numbers is not the overall objective of this ministry.

"We believe that this is an opportunity for outreach into the community, to support parents, and to talk about the unfathomable love of God."



Children at the Aitkenvale Uniting Church playgroup. Photo courtesy of Aitkenvale Uniting Church

Moggill women seize the day

Tara Burton

FRIENDSHIP, fun and a warm welcome to all were what Moggill Uniting Church, in Brisbane's west, had in mind when they launched Women Today in April this year.

Facilitator Iris Marais explains that Women Today is based on the four Cs: Christianity, connection, creativity and celebration.

Women Today-ers enjoy evenings of supper and

entertainment with guest speakers on a monthly theme.

"I also arrange a prize giveaway each month. And every Women Today event is different."

Ms Marais said the success of Women Today wouldn't be possible without her large team of event volunteers.

"But I still need more volunteers. The duties are increasing along with the number of attendees, which is now more than 50.

"It's an event that I hope will

help women see Christianity as fun, relevant and uplifting, but women who are not Christian will always have a place at Women Today.

"I hope that women from all walks of life will develop new friendships that will enrich their lives and support them throughout their life journey."

To join the fun, contact Iris Marais on 3108 8114 or 0432 067 227 or at iris@iriscoconsult.com.au, and visit moggill.unitingchurch.org.au.



Women Today icebreaker at Moggill Uniting Church, Brisbane. Photo courtesy of Bernadette Draffin



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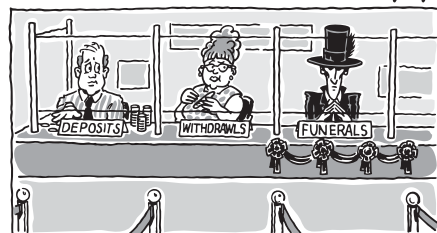


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Spotlighting the community

Dianne Jensen

THIS month as part of our series on belonging, *Journey* spoke to the congregation at Acacia Ridge Uniting Church about their revitalisation project, Milpara.

"Within walking distance" belongs to the lexicon of real estate marketing, yet for many, especially the aged and those with mobility issues, location still defines community.

The congregation of the small church at Acacia Ridge in Brisbane's south, faced with the

possibility of closure and the subsequent loss of a worship facility within walking distance, is putting its energy into a new initiative which brings local community into the spotlight.

Their determination to re-establish themselves as the focal point of community interaction reflects a growing recognition of the importance of the local church.

Still in its formative stages, Milpara is a model for creating and growing partnerships within the community; the project team providing information and resources to congregations

as well as ongoing professional support.

Uniting Church President, Rev Prof Andrew Dutney, has described the local church as "a beachhead of the kingdom of God".

"It is a sign, foretaste and instrument of reconciliation and renewal for the whole creation," he told *Journey*.

The Queensland Synod Vision 2020 journey, *Together on the way, enriching community*, also identifies the importance of community in Priority Direction E: "Engaging in opportunities for intentional,

open community connections and partnerships".

It's warm inside

A decade ago, Acacia Ridge Uniting Church decided to survive and, even more, to grow.

Census data suggests that by 2020, half the Acacia Ridge population will be aged 60 years and over. It's a profile that would fit many Queensland communities.

The church is a low-set brick building that could be mistaken for a house, positioned in the middle of a grassy suburban block with a covered patio and curtains in the windows. Simply furnished, it is a warm and informal space that is immediately welcoming.

At its heart, the Milpara project aims to revitalise local churches through expanding their role as the focal point of their community.

Initiated and governed by the Acacia Ridge Uniting Church through its Church Council, it has seed funding from private sponsors.

Originator and director Rodney Eivers is passionate about building up roles for faith communities which reconnect them to the people who live literally next door or down the road.

"The church is in a prime position to nurture and uphold the concerns for caring and compassion," says Mr Eivers, whose team of volunteers and paid consultants has put together a detailed strategy to support the Milpara vision of local churches as a "cradle-to-the-grave" ministry.

"Milpara has two thrusts – one is to be Christ-like, demonstrating care and compassion to the people in our local communities. The other is to provide a reason – as the

secular community sees it – for a place for churches in the 21st century."

While the broad approach is to restore and update the place of the traditional village church, the initial focus is deliberately narrow, focusing on people who live within walking distance.

The strategy is active and systematic, including undertaking a community-needs assessment, establishing a "Welcoming Committee", and interacting regularly and deliberately with locals.

"Isolation and loneliness are major problems among a number of groups, including seniors and people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds," says Mr Eivers.

The church hopes to foster groups and networks with a range of target populations including mothers and babies, single older men, and stay-at-home parents.

"Our primary function is not to provide services, but to link people in the community," says Mr Eivers.

The growth of the congregation at Acacia Ridge has been small but encouraging, from eight regulars to 23, as well as a small group of men who attend morning teas, and a growing Sunday school.

The small community doesn't have a minister yet, but gets support from clergy and lay preachers.

"What matters is the survival and growth of the church in local geographical communities as an agent for nurturing the kingdom of God," says Mr Eivers.

"We want the church to be the focal point for this community, and to live forever, as a witness to the gospel."

For more information about Milpara, contact Rodney Eivers at eiversrh@telstra.com.

Our primary function is not to provide services, but to link people in the community.



Rodney Eivers in the Acacia Ridge Uniting Church. Photo by Dianne Jensen

Celebrating the man on the \$20 note

Rev Rob Callow

WHAT do you get when you mix 50 dozen scones, fencing wire, a Skype connection, and a stack of \$20 notes inside a school hall?

You get the Toowoomba Uniting Churches' combined celebration recognising 100 years of ministry in remote Australia, which began with John Flynn, the man on the \$20 note.

Members of the Lifeworks,

St Stephen's, Wilsonton, Meringandan, Cambooya, and Middle Ridge congregations (plus visitors from a local Anglican church, one Sydney and three other Queensland Uniting Church congregations) gathered on Sunday 16 September for morning tea and a combined worship service to give thanks to God for a century of ministry to remote Australia through Frontier Services and its

predecessors.

Former Patrol Padres Rev Aubrey Baker and Rev Des Williams also took part – as did Rev John Case of the Bourke and Wills Patrol operating out of Charleville via Skype, which was a

highlight of the morning.

Approximately \$3500 was raised to support the ministry of Frontier Services.

The Brisbane congregation of Wellers Hill–Tarragindi, a partner of the Burke and Wills Patrol, also

celebrated the centenary with a special themed service organised by their ladies' fellowship.

The congregation took part in the "cover the country" campaign by putting a donation in the specially provided John Flynn \$20 envelopes, and covering a map of Australia with them.



Rev Peter Arnett and the Chair of the Queensland Frontier Services Auxiliary, Janet Franklin, "covering the country" at the Wellers Hill–Tarragindi celebration. Photo courtesy of Matt Gees



Former patrol padre Rev Aubrey Baker opens the combined worship service with help from Claire and Matthew at the Toowoomba celebration. Photo courtesy of Rev Rob Callow

Patrolling the frontiers of the future

WHAT are the new frontiers of ministry, in both remote and urban settings?

It's always been personal relationships that encourage people to explore faith.

Australia's 2011 census figures show that the category of no religion has grown. If you're a member of a congregation you've probably seen empty pews standing forlorn and the struggle to finance the upkeep of buildings, infrastructure or even to afford a minister.

But if people are choosing to attend a church less frequently, it doesn't necessarily mean they have lost interest in things of the spirit. Rather, discovering God differently presents a unique challenge and a significant opportunity for Christians everywhere.

An increasingly familiar phrase throughout Australia is "I'm not religious, but I guess I believe in spiritual things. And I couldn't have survived without someone to support me during the hard times".

Certainly they're familiar words to Frontier Services patrol ministers.

Deep and lasting relationships with significant people of faith who express the love of God in deep and practical ways will continue to prevail, even while the concept of organised church will probably continue to matter less.

So, perhaps unsurprisingly then, the new frontiers are not really new at all.

Finding the spiritual in the everyday

Cunnamulla Patrol Minister Pastor Dennis Cousens says he has never been one for setting up a building and expecting people to turn up.

"Look at the way Jesus did things. He spat on the ground and made mud for a poultice. He performed a miracle from the water on hand at a wedding. He was earthy and natural. There wasn't this artificial divide between what's 'religious' and what isn't. Out here, I think people sense that the line is finer than it's traditionally been made out to be."

When you live on a 2.2 million acre property; when town is a three-hour drive along a dirt track and fuel costs more than you can afford; when you live in a mining camp six weeks out of every eight and then fly home to your family – what does it mean to find spiritual connectedness?

Uniting Church President Rev Prof Andrew Dutney says remote Australia has plenty of people of faith.

"What's different is that some of the normal mechanisms of faith are not available. You simply can't gather together inside a church. It's a different experience

of being Christian."

Prof Dutney describes patrol ministers as "among the most creative, reflective people I've ever met".

"They express their faithfulness to Christ in crutching a sheep, getting a car started, baptising a child, conducting a wedding – any and all of those things are part of the work of their ministry."

"Their experiences are vital for us as we think about how we approach ministry into the next decade."

Mr Cousens recently presided over a surprise wedding on a sandhill with the bride arriving on the back of a ute accompanied by a kelpie. The hundred-odd guests, who believed they were attending a joint birthday party, stood under a full moon in hushed awe. By the light of lanterns, they joined in the couple's sacred vows to rousing 'Amen's'.

"It was one of those moments we all felt we were in a cathedral not built of bricks and mortar," he says.

"An entire community was caught up in what was definitely a spiritual moment, without needing to be openly defined that way. Similarly, we've had the most fantastic baptisms around a barbeque on the back porch of the pub. They're authentic experiences of the spirit."



Cunnamulla Patrol Minister Pastor Dennis Cousens. Photo courtesy of Frontier Services

Forging connections in a transient world

Clearly, this kind of ministry involves dedicated, one-on-one relational work. It goes on the road and whatever it encounters it deals with, heart to heart, hand to hand.

Increasingly, however, in almost every setting people are scattered. Urban churches can no longer open their doors and expect to be the centre of community life. And it is here that patrol ministry is on the frontier of future models of ministry for the Uniting Church.

By reflecting on faith over a

cup of coffee, lending a hand in the cattle yard or helping to clean up after a devastating flood, we bring the love of Christ and the presence of Christian community to people who live away from a local congregation.

This sense of belonging and connectedness to a wider spiritual body is vital, as we live out the love of Christ in a world of increasing transience.

This is an edited version of a story that appeared in August *Frontier News*.

Visit frontierservices.org

Caring for the carers

Colleen McMillan

THE Pastoral Care Department of The Wesley Hospital has long been known for its care and support for patients and their families, but is perhaps less well known for supporting the more than 2000 staff on campus.

For the most part, these staff are recognisable and accessible, and therefore readily supported. However, over 400 theatre staff work tirelessly in that most vital part of the hospital, largely behind the scenes.

The Pastoral Care team has become increasingly intentional in building supportive relationships with staff, while continuing to care for patients and their families.

The department brought to the attention of the Wesley Hospital Executive the need for ministry to theatre staff. As a result, chaplain Rev Keren Seto began a regular theatre chaplaincy in June.

"I was so excited when I was told that I was going into the theatres," Ms Seto said.

"The demands of a high-pressure environment such as an acute hospital are relentless," says Ms Seto, "and perhaps no more so than in the theatres, where between 145 and 150 procedures are carried out on any given day."

"Add to these stresses the stuff of everyday living and it's not difficult to

understand why we want our part in ensuring that the theatre staff know they are not only valued but also supported in their work and in their lives."



Left to right: Chaplain Rev Keren Seto with theatre staff Garry Botham and Heidi Kruger.

Photo courtesy of UnitingCare Health

Christians raise voices for justice

Rev Linda Hanson

ATTENDING the Voices for Justice conference was an amazing experience of public action as part of how Jesus calls us to live.

Two hundred and eighty Christians from different denominations around Australia came together in Canberra from 15 to 18 September for this national gathering of the Micah Challenge. As Christians, it is up to us to be agents of change. Many great social movements, like the call to end slavery, originate from the actions of Christians.

The theme for this year's Voices for Justice was Finish the Race, and we called on parliamentarians to finish what they started when they committed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), aimed at halving poverty and improving human wellbeing by 2015.

Effective aid has seen success with some MDGs, such as a halving of the proportion of people without access to clean water, but others – reducing child mortality by two-thirds, reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters and halving the proportion of people without access to adequate sanitation – are still unmet.

Micah Challenge National Coordinator John Beckett reminded us at the Voices for Justice opening service that our meetings with politicians in the coming days were

worship, as Jesus calls us to both personal worship and public action.

When we met my Federal Member of Parliament, Warren Truss, and his colleague Wyatt Roy, Member for Longman, they made some interesting points, while agreeing with ours about effective aid. Both men said if Christians want to sway opinion in Parliament House, they first need to sway opinion in their home electorates. Mr Truss added that he gets more letters from Christians opposing aid than supporting it.

In the forum "Faith, Justice, Politics and Change", Kevin Rudd, Member for Griffith, reiterated that as Christians we are called to both personal worship and public action.

We asked the parliamentarians and senators we met with to pledge to finishing well, and to attending a Finish the Race event in their electorate.

Pledge to "finish the race" with Micah Challenge and play your part in halving poverty by 2015. Pray for our leaders and communities and for God's mercy and justice for the poorest people in our world.

For more information or to sign the Finish the Race pledge visit Voices for Justice at www.micahchallenge.org.au.

Linda Hanson is a member of Tewantin Uniting Church



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Making the most of property

Kate Indigo

EVERYONE knows that a church is not the building but the people who worship in it, but that's not to deny that churches are organisations that own and run properties and assets. And it's a tricky balancing act to evaluate property matters and mission to find the best outcomes, yet that is just what Gary Adsett, Queensland Synod Property Services Manager, and Stephen Peake, Queensland Synod Property Resources Manager, do every day.

"Gary and I have spent a lot of time asking not just what we want to do, but how do we know that what we have done is successful," says Mr Peake. "We have used and continue to use language like, 'We'll know we're effective when ...'."

The wise stewardship of property and financial assets is a theological issue as much as a business one. The biblical basis, for example, Matthew 16:16; 24–25, is that God owns all creation and that human beings are its stewards. Resources are for the service or needs of others, especially those with the strongest needs. This also entails the responsibility to make the best use of our gifts of creativity and effort and the resources of which we are stewards for the betterment of the world (for example, Luke 20:9–16).

And, as Mr Peake points out, these responsibilities are encoded in Vision 2020 of *Together on the way, enriching community*, in Priority Direction C: Organised for mission – Developing sustainable mission-oriented organisation for the Church in Queensland.

"While it may be the case that you can't measure mission, you can measure indicators that form part of mission," Mr Peake says.

"If we want to be in 'business' into the future to do the work God calls the church to do, we have to be much more intentional about what we do, what we need to do it, and what the work looks like when it's done."

So how do you measure mission returns?

"That's a very good question," says Mr Adsett. "Indicators of mission returns might be things like the number of people who come through a facility each week, the income that is generated through that facility, the amount of money that people put into the collection plate, or the number of hours the facility is used."

"But other congregations might have a meeting space, for example, that they want to use for training. In that case the indicators could be: How many training courses am I running? Or how many people running those training courses

The foyer of Indooroopilly Uniting Church, Brisbane. The church was redeveloped by Riddell Architecture in 2010 to maximise its potential as a multi-use space with commercial and community uses as well as a sacred space for worship that reflects contemporary relationships between ministry and congregation. Photo courtesy of Riddell Architecture



are directly involved in missional activity right now?" he says.

"Stephen and I work together developing congregational property strategies," he says.

"If we can minimise the capital investment but still allow the same level of activity to support the missional endeavour, that's a better missional return on investment."

Multi-purpose facilities often enable congregations to maximise both missional goals and return on investment. Mr Adsett cites the example of Lifeworks Uniting Church in western Toowoomba, whose congregation are clear in their intention to work with families with young children.

"Their first foray will be into a multi-purpose space from

which they will run an out-of-school care program for children that will also host a mothers' group during the day and have the capacity to transform into a worship space. And once they get going with that, they will aim to provide a day-long childcare program in a dedicated space.

"It's becoming possible for them because as a congregation they were very clear from the outset about their missional priorities."

Mr Adsett says sometimes making the most of property and mission is to accurately determine the development potential of a property that is no longer meeting a missional need so as to reduce uncertainty and risk for its potential purchasers before selling it.

An example of this is the property of the Trinity Uniting Church in Camp Hill that was no longer being used for worship.

"It's highly unlikely we'll develop it, but it has a unique location on a major road close to a soon-to-be built bus terminal, creating an opportunity to obtain council planning approval for a transit-oriented development. In our experience, if we can remove development unknowns in this way, which we call adding value to a site, we get a higher sale price."

A lot of work of Finance and Property Services, says Mr Adsett, "is asking what else can we do here? If our people are open to it, how can we reimagine being a community of faith in this place?"

Redevelopment opens opportunities for mission

Diane Jensen

YOUR church is a small, heritage-listed building that is an integral part of the streetscape. If you have a church hall, it probably has a set of steps, a cramped kitchen with ageing appliances, and toilets well past their use-by date.

Many Uniting Church congregations face this scenario as they consider how to use an existing facility to serve their contemporary needs for multi-purpose space, flexible worship, disability access, and modern office and kitchen requirements.

The congregation at Kairos Uniting Church, Earnshaw Road, Banyo on Brisbane's northside spent a number of years deciding what to do with their 1927 church and nearly 30-year-old hall located on a large flat block opposite Earnshaw State College, a P–12 school.

Kairos Uniting Church formed in 2010 from congregations in Clayfield, Geebung, Hamilton, Wavell Heights and Earnshaw Road.

The Earnshaw congregation, led by Rev Sandra Jebb and Pastor Gabriel Manuelli, has a large number of members from Fiji, including people from Rotuma.

Given the limitations of the Earnshaw building and the sad state of the hall, it seemed that the simplest thing would be to put the funds from the sale of other properties into building a new church and hall complex, but the scale and the cost of the project proved discouraging.

Then one day, Ms Jebb thought, "This is a lovely church. Why don't we just work with what we've got?"

The decision to incorporate the original church into a redevelopment project meant that any renovations needed to comply with heritage and town-planning requirements, as well as meeting the needs of the congregation.

Architect Narelle Mercer from the town planning and architectural consulting firm Mercer and Mercer says the most important thing for church developments is making sure the congregation has a clear mission

I thought, this is a lovely church. Why don't we just work with what we've got?



Pastor Gabriel Manuelli, Rev Sandra Jebb and Kairos Earnshaw Road Uniting Church treasurer Ken McHugh in the Earnshaw Uniting Church. Photo by Dianne Jensen

for the new buildings.

"In our experience, congregations need to go through a rigorous discernment process, leading to mission goals. This can take some time, but will then form a brief for the redevelopment."

"For churches, the buildings must enhance and enable mission based on the particular congregation, location and existing facilities. Providing income and outreach, maximising value, and consolidation of facilities are all considered."

The development currently underway at Earnshaw has a wide, welcoming aspect, and fuses the old and the new with a sympathetic nod to the classic lines of the original building.

"This church has a wonderful culture centred around food and sharing meals together. A full

commercial kitchen design will allow catering for a few hundred people. We have created an extensive outdoor deck that links to the old hall, enabling large gatherings," says Ms Mercer.

There is an air of excitement when Ms Jebb and Mr Manuelli talk about their vision for the new facility, especially about their growing ministry to the school across the road.

"For the last two years we have been doing a lot of mission and outreach with the school and the Australian Catholic University (ACU) at Banyo. That's where we see our mission," says Ms Jebb.

Close liaison with the school has already resulted in groups attending special Christmas and Easter services, and a drop-in Wednesday afternoon tea.

The congregation has plans to turn the mid-week hospitality into an informal Sunday school,

where parents have coffee and relax while the youngsters enjoy Christian education activities.

Other projects will bring ACU students together with school-leavers, and encourage community groups to take advantage of the new facilities.

Mr Manuelli is enthusiastic about their potential.

"If you want to have a birthday party for your kids, have it here! We can do weddings. We can cater for 500 people!"

As the building takes shape before their eyes, the congregation is laying the foundations for outreach.

"We have done our homework," says Ms Jebb. "We know the only way this mission will succeed is if we work with the community."

The development will be completed in November.

Finding solace and the sacred in hospitals

CHAPELS in Queensland's UnitingCare Health hospitals are a unique space for worship, contemplation and celebration not only for patients and their families and friends, but also for hospital staff and volunteers.

The role of hospital chaplain is also unique and diverse, as befits the needs and concerns of people from many backgrounds at times of great anxiety and sadness.

Rev Henry Swindon is a chaplain at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital in Brisbane.

"Obviously people coming into hospital are all at a point of need," he says.

"We are right at the coalface. We try to be a supportive presence, a listening friend, to give empathy, and then journey with them if they want to explore a deeper meaning."

Rev Lloyd Beynon of The Sunshine Coast Private Hospital echoes his colleagues when he describes being a hospital chaplain as "a huge privilege and joy".

"You are part of a highly trained and effective team

providing compassionate care, and a visible presence of the love of God," Mr Beynon says.

"Many stories come to mind of the people who have found solace and comfort in the hospital's chapel. There was one patient who was not able to attend his son's funeral in Melbourne, so we held a service in the hospital chapel at the same time as the Melbourne service, and it was attended by his friends and members of his family."

Ms Trish Milne, chaplain at St Stephen's Hospital Maryborough and Hervey Bay, conducted a similar service recently for a woman whose health prevented her from travelling to Sydney for her sister's funeral.

"The St Stephen's chapel is a lovely, silent, reflective place.

"Obviously people who come to a hospital are of different faiths, and we have a strong fellowship with our Queensland churches and work ecumenically.

"One of our surgeons is of Muslim faith and he is very comfortable with using our chapel for his prayers."



Wesley Hospital chaplain Rev Keren Seto in the chapel beside the Bible stand gifted by Mr Peter Slaughter. Photo courtesy of UnitingCare Health

Rev Keren Seto, a chaplain at The Wesley Hospital, Brisbane, says while she thinks of the whole of the hospital as a "sacred space, where God's spirit is at work in and through every act of care and compassion", the Wesley's chapel is a particularly special place.

"It's where patients, their family and friends can spend quiet time in reflection and find renewed strength for the journey ahead," Ms Seto says.

"It's a place of solace for those grieving the loss of a loved one, or where a couple struggling under the weight of a terminal diagnosis can come and renew their marriage vows.

"It's a place where staff can come before their shift, to entrust themselves, their patients and their day to God, and where they can come in the times of sadness and disappointment."

Recently, the Wesley chapel was gifted a specially commissioned and beautifully crafted gold-plated brass and Carrara marble Bible stand from Peter Slaughter, in memory of his late wife Robin, who was a patient at the Wesley.

"Robin enjoyed spending time in the chapel throughout her illness and I thought the Bible stand was something she would have liked," says Mr Slaughter.

Ministering in the world

Tara Burton

"MY altar can as easily be a rock, a fallen tree, or someone down on their hands and knees making a table for a bride and groom to sign the marriage register on," says Pastor Dennis Cousens, deacon with Cunnamulla Uniting Church.

"My gathered congregations are often in a pub, community hall, backyard or by a riverbank, which is the most God-created cathedral around," he says.

Rev Sandy Boyce, national convener of the Diakonia of the Uniting Church and Diakonia World Federation Executive, explains how for many deacons placed in a community rather than a church, the worship space will be where the people are.

In this way, deacons are an important part of the church's embodiment of justice and

service, she explains.

"The highlight of diaconal ministry is building relationships with people who are often overlooked; made 'invisible' by the disregard of family, friends, community and the agencies they relate to.

"A deacon is able to bring the stories from beyond the congregation into the life of a gathered church, and enable people to respond to opportunities to serve in the wider community.

"Their role is contextual and creative, and often requires a way of approaching worship that will be different to that of worship in the gathered faith community in a church," she adds.

"Deacons were never envisaged in the Uniting Church as 'solo' agents, but as part of the whole people of God, equipping and encouraging others in service, and advocating for those

whose voice has been silenced.

Deacon Rev Heather Den Houting, Blue Care Director of Mission and former Kenmore Uniting Church minister, is enthusiastic about the context-driven nature of diaconate ministry.

"When *Together on the way* started I strongly encouraged the Kenmore congregation to get involved, saying, 'We have to be a part of the wider church. We have to understand where we belong and that we're not insular'.

"Deacons often say we'll go into new places, new spaces. Emphasis will always be not so much on the gathered congregation but the ministry to the community in which the congregation may find itself," she explains.

Calvary Presbytery deacon Rev Michelle Cook was called to this ministry because she needed to be pushed out into the world, rather than to turn her gaze in.

She says there are challenges to ministering at the edges of the church in society.

"When you are trying to get the church to see outside itself, there are people who are resistant to it.

"You have to be prepared to deal with helping people to change, to listen to people about where God is calling them and challenging them about the parts of discipleship that they might be neglecting."

Ministers of the Word and



Deacons gathered at the 13th Assembly. Photo courtesy of National Assembly communications

deacons can work well together, she says, as they have different gifts.

"That's what the body of Christ is. You have different gifts, and among them is the deacon's gift of helping people see outside of the box – having a prophetic voice; bringing things to the foreground that might otherwise be in the background.

"Ministers of the Word have a different kind of gift for explaining the scriptures, and teaching to equip the people of God.

"I think the gifts are complementary."

Last year marked the 20th anniversary of the formal "renewal" of the Uniting Church diaconate in recognising deacons as a full and equal order of ministry. The 13th Assembly noted the anniversary with an appreciation, thanks-giving, and a request for review of materials provided to applicants and mentors.

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The Lord was in it

Rev Kate Dix

VONNIE Atkins thought she'd missed out again when it seemed the Goombungee church property had been sold.

It had long been her dream to make the church her home if it were ever offered for sale. Her mother had once lived in Goombungee and her uncle, Len Fuller, sold milk and cream from the dairy on the hill. A couple of past near misses and the dream seemed never to be. But to her

joy she has just become the proud owner of the church and hall buildings, which sit on the highest land in Goombungee and overlook a rural scene holding happy family memories.

And what does the future hold? The hall, once the Peranga Uniting Church, will become an open-plan home with the addition of bathroom and laundry facilities.

Ms Atkins will decide on plans for the church building after doing some travelling,

with possibilities including subdividing the block and opening a bed and breakfast. But first of all she will have a plaque made for the old bell tower to mark the site of the original Congregational church in the district.

While she loves travelling, Ms Atkins is just as excited about having her new home in Goombungee to come back to. She credits the Lord with bringing her dream to fruition.



New owner Vonnie Atkins outside the Goombungee Uniting Church. Photo by Shannon Wessling

Stained glass: windows to the spirit

Dianne Jensen

CHURCHES and stained-glass windows have a natural synergy, whether they be found resonating in a medieval cathedral, a modest chapel or a contemporary worship space.

Perhaps the most enduring and accessible form of sacred art, the juxtaposition of glass, pattern, colour and light draws us into the mystical space between us and God, the "thin places" envisaged in Celtic spirituality.

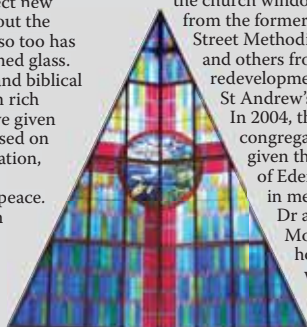
As ecclesiastical design has evolved to reflect new understandings about the nature of worship, so too has the imagery of stained glass. Gospel narratives and biblical tenets, portrayed in rich Victorian hues, have given way to artworks based on themes such as creation, the environment, reconciliation and peace.

Once freed from the constraints of traditional design and pedagogy, contemporary

glass art, whether stained, laminated, etched or leadlight, began to stretch the boundaries of colour, form and light.

Many Queensland Uniting Church buildings contain some form of glass art, from the soaring panels of the William Bustard windows in St Andrew's Uniting Church in the heart of Brisbane to the simple leadlights or evocative memorial windows which grace many country churches.

Nambour Uniting Church is a showcase of the old and the new in stained glass. Some of the church windows come from the former Maud Street Methodist Church, and others from the redevelopment of St Andrew's Church. In 2004, the congregation was given the Garden of Eden windows in memory of Dr and Mrs Moffatt, to honour the work of



The Bill Short memorial window at Southport Uniting Church. Photo by Glenda Bengtson

women in the church.

The three-panel window is the handiwork of Queensland specialists Gerry Cummins and Jill Stehn. Their studio undertook the largest hand-painted kiln-fired stained-glass project ever created in Australia, at St Monica's Cathedral in Cairns. The 24 creation nave windows, each fully painted and stained, are six metres high and 1.7 metres wide.

The beautiful Bill Short memorial stained-glass window in the sanctuary of the Southport Uniting Church was designed by Glenn Mack Studio, Daylesford, in memory of the builder of the 1964 church. The central "creation" medallion, set against a cross, depicts harmony and peace emanating from the Holy Spirit as the heavens, earth, sea, plants and animals came into being. The plants depicted are native to the Southport and hinterland regions.

Bill Short and his family worshipped at the Southport church from the early 1930s. The window, which was dedicated in 1997, was commissioned by Mr Short's widow Miriam, with costs met by the Short family and contributions from the congregation.



A rare William Bustard stained-glass window sample, belonging to Owen Ronalds, whose grandfather Ben Ronalds owned Decorative Glass Pty Ltd, a supplier of stained glass and leadlight up until World War II. Photo by Osker Lau

Worship across cultures

Cath Taylor

ACCORDING to Leslene Woodward, worshipping in other cultures, buildings and even religions can broaden perspectives on what it means to be in relationship with God.

Ms Woodward, a librarian from north Queensland who has volunteered with UnitingWorld in Bali, India and Kiribati over the past 10 years, has experienced the richness of worship in many different spaces and learnt valuable lessons from each context.

"Balinese people love natural beauty and their churches

reflect that," Ms Woodward says. "Perhaps more so than here in Australia, the architecture of churches expresses a love for creation. There's a back wall to accommodate the altar, but often it is made of glass and looks out onto beautiful natural or cultivated gardens, including waterfalls. Past the ornate front doors there are no side walls, just pillars, with ponds and ferneries alongside."

The experience raises questions about what our church buildings in Australia communicate about our image of the God that we worship, our connection with nature and how

we value creation.

Ms Woodward recently spent time in Kiribati, where 98 per cent of the population identify as Christian. Serving at the theological seminary, her experience of worship was familiar, as students are required to preach in English. However, the traditional worship services and spaces of Kiribati reveal interesting transformations.

"The churches are built on the same model as the traditional meeting house, the *maneaba*," explains UnitingWorld's Associate Director, Church Connections and Experience, Kathy Pereira. "They have a low roof, so you have to stoop to go inside; you have to adopt a posture of respect and humility.

Within the traditional *maneaba*, the men and women have to sit separately. The churches, however, have allowed the gospel to speak, transforming that tradition."

The very edifice of the church building, Ms Pereira suggests, shows how God liberates people and can transform human relationships.

Just as the way faith is expressed through physical buildings can illuminate cross-cultural worship, so can the question of how God might be found in the traditions of other religious spaces.

Ms Woodward says, "I think that walking down the street and encountering Hindus in the midst of a funeral service

or being invited to worship in a jungle temple with a history stretching back 1200 years deepens your appreciation for who God is and where God can be found."

"It's not as though we can simply say, 'This is a pagan religion and these are pagan places of worship'. God is bigger than that. In the same way that a place can be of Christian culture yet not be very Christian, so can we find the deep and beautiful things of Christ in places we may not expect."

To experiencing another culture through volunteering with UnitingWorld, contact Roz Elkington on 02 8267 4269.

Visit unitingworld.org.au

Praying in a dark place

Beatriz Skippen

PRISONS can be a very dark place, but prison ministry is an incarnational ministry.

As prison chaplains we see freedom come to incarcerated people, as their suffering may be

transformed to the glory of the forgiven.

Bible studies and worship services give a glimpse of normality to men and women in prison. A few years ago when I visited Argentina with a team we visited a prison with English-

speaking inmates. More than 100 women worshipped together. There was no chapel, but God was there.

Most of the prisons in Queensland have a chapel. Several years ago, speaking with an inmate about the church service, I mentioned that the chapel had plastic chairs. Some sections of the prison have no

chairs, only benches. Since that day he has been part of the Bible studies and worship services, worshipping God – because of a plastic chair. God's unconditional love reaches everywhere.

The Chermide office for prison ministry is a space for silent worship and reflection. Many ex-inmates and families as well as our staff find a quiet

place there a bit like Jesus's office, where we can pause and seek direction.

In all this is God's presence, as tangible as the pain of an inmate in a solitary cell. Our God is so good that the power of the Holy Spirit is manifest in broken people who allow his transformation.

Our disappearing heritage

Dianne Jensen

THE small timber churches that dot the landscape in rural areas, country towns and cities are silent witnesses to the European settlement that spanned the hundred or so years to the 1950s.

They are often simple timber boxes with modest steeples or bell towers situated in paddocks or on bare hilltops.

These icons are now disappearing, as changing demographics bring about the decline of rural communities and the rise of combined congregations and regional worship centres.

Once they have been deemed surplus to requirements, the most picturesque and well-situated of these churches are transformed into galleries, houses and cafés, while their plainer or more remote cousins may be simply abandoned to the elements.

Simple buildings, one purpose

Jim Gibson, a retired architect and church historian who began compiling a photographic record of churches from every denomination across Australia in 1997 admits, "A lot of them aren't beautiful."

His massive work-in-progress includes hundreds of photographs, with details about each building, and a historical overview of a century of wooden church construction.

Timber Tabernacles: Australia's Historic Timber Churches includes grand structures and breathtakingly beautiful examples of

craftsmanship and design, alongside modest "boxes of timber" made from local wood by volunteer labour.

It is the loss of the latter, and the precious heritage they embody, that concerns Mr Gibson.

"These are the little timber churches built in the bush that catered for a hundred people who came from all around the district to worship in that place every Sunday," he says.

They had no pretensions to architecture. They were simple buildings set apart for one purpose only – the worship of God.

"Most of them are very much the same. They had no pretensions to architecture. They were simple buildings that could be set apart for one purpose and one purpose only – the worship of God."



Jim Gibson at the historic Sinnamon Memorial Uniting Church, Brisbane, which is still in operation. The former Methodist church was built in 1888. Photo courtesy of Jim Gibson

"There are people who have been baptised in those churches, grown up in the nurture of those Sunday schools, met their life partners there, got married in them, lived a life of worshipping and maintaining Christian witness in those places – and been buried there. That speaks volumes about how important church is in people's lives."

As the architect involved in the design of a number of Brisbane churches during the 1960s, including Indooroopilly, Moorooka, Stafford, Yeronga, Toowong and Wavell Heights – and even the Uniting Church logo – Mr Gibson was at the forefront of the changes in design which have transformed worship spaces over the past 40 years.

He remains convinced that we should find ways to preserve at

least some of our small churches, even when their usefulness as a place of worship has passed. Country churches are especially at risk, and Mr Gibson believes that heritage legislation may be making it even more difficult for them to survive.

"I'd like to see it made easier to preserve them. Mostly our heritage legislation is such that you can't do anything with them for fear of destroying their heritage, and so with a little congregation that can't afford to maintain them, they just rot," says Mr Gibson.

These buildings are part of our national heritage, as tangible links to the times in which they were built, says Mr Gibson, and they deserve to be remembered.

We bought a church

Mardi Lumsden

NOTHING is easy about transforming a place of worship into a home.

When we bought a church, we didn't get just one set of keys. People from all over the neighbourhood kept giving us their set from when they swept the floors or made sure the lights were turned off.

For the six months we have been camping in a church hall, I have been visiting the gym each morning to have a shower or spending weekends attending social engagements with a towel on my shoulder.

You never notice how much your life revolves around where your next shower is coming from until you don't have one.

Banks don't grant home loans to people when it is not a house that they're buying. Council is confused by usage changes. Old mistakes mean our electricity meter is registered to a house a kilometre away. People still enquire about hiring the hall and sometimes turn up for the Thursday yoga class. All that makes it quite an adventure.



Mardi Lumsden at home in the midst of renovation. Photo by Holly Jewell

Most builders look at the five-metre ceilings and shudder at the cost of building those walls. People expected we would knock it all down and start again. But wouldn't that defeat the purpose of buying a church? Chances are if we didn't buy it, someone would have knocked it down.

There is sadness and beauty in an empty church. Curling ribbon grips tightly to a fluoro light, a deflated balloon hangs far beyond my reach. A reminder of the good times that were had.

The stage curtains hang heavy and limp. Dusty shafts of sunlight peek through worn holes.

The congregation made the

difficult decision to let go of the building, but still hold their church community in their hearts.

I think of the brides who have walked down the aisle and the grooms who have waited nervously at the altar. The loved ones farewelled. The dances and folk nights in the hall. The countless cups of tea made in the kitchen and the conversations held over them. The songs of praise, the prayers of forgiveness.

Those memories are carved into the walls. Now we are adding new walls I hope that the memories we make are worthy of them.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

MISSION RESOURCING SA

Uniting Church in Australia

Presbytery and Synod of South Australia



Applications are invited from enthusiastic, exceptionally gifted and highly motivated members of the Uniting Church, either ordained or laypersons, to this senior leadership position within the Church.

The task embraces the functions of:

- leading and managing all matters relating to the Mission Resourcing SA Ministry Centre
- high level leadership across the Presbytery and Synod

The successful applicant will have:

- a passion for the mission of God through the Uniting Church
- exceptional visionary leadership
- the ability to build and maximise the potential of a high quality staff team
- leadership, management and administrative skills that concentrate on delivering quality service that will energise a complex organisation
- the capacity to think strategically and manage multiple complex issues at the same time
- disciplined thinking and a capacity to manage change combined with a pastoral heart
- the ability to continue to increase the level of missional momentum

This is an exciting opportunity for a church embracing challenging times.

A full information pack and Position Description is available from Tracey Bost, Executive Assistant to the CEO/General Secretary, 8236 4232 or tbost@sa.uca.org.au.

Applications close 4pm Friday 31 October 2012.

Please forward applications to:

Rev Dr Graham Humphris
CEO/General Secretary
GPO Box 2145, Adelaide SA 5001
or ghumphris@sa.uca.org.au



The Lakes College

The Lakes College is a Prep to Year 12 independent co-educational college in North Lakes, well known for our amazing sense of school spirit and strong community.

We seek to actively engage students in their learning and preparation for life in the global future and has established a rigorous academic program with a wide variety of extra-curricular activities in sporting, artistic, ESL and academic arenas.

For more information about The Lakes College and the opportunities we can provide for your child, phone 07 3491 5555 or email registrar@thelakes.qld.edu.au.



The Lakes College • College Street • North Lakes Q 4509
Phone: 07 3491 5555 • www.thelakescollege.com.au

Young leaders stretch wings

Kate Indigo

TEN young adults came together from around Queensland for the third annual Stretching Faith theology weekend held from 7 to 9 September at Alexandra Park Conference Centre on the Sunshine Coast.

Kate Wilson, who was supported by the Central Queensland Presbytery to travel from Mackay for the weekend, was enthusiastic about the opportunity.

"It's networking, it's learning, and stretching my faith and getting to do some study. This is my first Stretching Faith, and I'm really loving it," she says.

This year's theme was "Where on Earth is God?", a crucial question, according to guest speaker Rev Dr Vicky Balabanski. "The clock is ticking and it's not for somebody else to fix, but up to Christians to offer leadership," she says.

A New Testament lecturer at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology in South Australia, Dr Balabanski is impressed by this initiative. "We don't have anything like this in South Australia. I am very interested in and committed to building up young people. I think it's great for them to get to know each other, but also to be resourced and accompanied by people who had that themselves when they were young, as I did."

Supported by Trinity Theological College, Stretching Faith brings Queensland's future church leaders in contact with current church leaders, with guidance this year from Moderator Kaye Ronalds, Rev Dr Geoff Thompson, Rev Dr Malcolm Coombs and Rev Josie Nottle, Rev Mark Cornford, Rev Harlee Cooper and Rev Jack Dunbar.

Mr Cooper says it is a crucial time in young people's lives for



Young adults and faith leaders stretch their wings at Stretching Faith at Alexandra Park Conference Centre on the Sunshine Coast, Sunday 9 September. Photo by Kate Indigo

this kind of engagement.

"Young people are deciding to own their faith for themselves. And a lot of them are going on to university and so their understandings are opening and their worlds are getting bigger."

"It's great to get some smart people in front of our young adults at this point to push them, probe them and unpack some stuff; to help them understand that the Christian faith is a very intellectually rich tradition as well as a spiritual one."

"I say this as someone who preaches regularly to them."

We don't always have the time to do that regularly in a sermon, or the ability to engage as deeply as the Stretching Faith weekends allow."

Dr Balabanski agrees.

"There's a sense of urgency."

Young people are making important life choices at this time. You can't leave it five years and expect them to be still asking the same questions or to have the same openness about those questions.

"And as we know, the Uniting Church is an ageing church, but that also varies across congregations. I am committed to the church, I was ordained last year, but in the end it is not about the church. It's it's about discipling for Christ."

Eric Garde, an 18-year-old youth leader at his congregation in Deception Bay, appreciated

the opportunity "to learn more about God and improve my faith, so that when I go back to Deception Bay I can be a better leader and help out the church."

University chaplain at The University of Queensland and member of the Deception Bay congregation Mr Cornford says that Stretching Faith gives back to such young adults.

"As a church we're good at engaging young adults to serving in the church, but not so good at feeding them."

"Stretching Faith is somewhere they can come for the church to help them grow in faith – and in life, as they constantly give out in their life to the church."

Stretching Faith is on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/130129223713251/.

stuff kids ask

Why should we go to church?

Answered by Bevan Loble, youth worker and minister with Kirwan Uniting Church.

IT'S a good question, why we should go to church. Nowhere in the Bible does it actually say, "Thou shalt go to church!"

So why do we go? Is it because our parents make us? Well, sometimes, maybe. When I was a kid, I went with my family because that's just what we did. But I had other reasons for going, too.

I remember having a

great time, making and being friends, hearing about God and being able to ask questions about God. (And there weren't many other places where we could do that.)

Is church important? I say yes. It's a place where we can meet and make friends with others who love God. It's a place we can learn about God and get close to God. It's a place where we can belong when we are part of God's family. I think that's pretty special.

It's also a place where we give to God. I don't mean giving our money in the plate (although there is also that), but where we give to God by singing, reading the Bible, saying prayers, doing drama, and making things that remind us about God or other people who need God. It doesn't matter what age we are, we can all give something.

Yes, I think church is a pretty special place. It can be special for all of us.

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

Summer Madness unleashes

Jane Moad

"FITTING in" is not a phrase that sits well with Az Hamilton, former 96fm family radio announcer, Compassion Australia advocate and founder of youth social justice project Just Motivation.

The organisers of the Queensland Synod youth camp Summer Madness went in search of a guest speaker to inspire and motivate high school-aged youth, aiming to find someone local and relatable who could fit in with the theme of the weekend, "Unleashed", and its vision to grow active and accountable disciples of Jesus.

When asked what the church should do to unleash its young people, Mr Hamilton was unapologetic.

"Our young people have to have a spirit that says 'we are going to make this world a better

place', and the church needs to release their youth to do those things – let them live outside the box; let them make a lot of noise; and let them impact a world that desperately needs love," says Mr Hamilton.

It was clear that he was the perfect choice to guide young people exploring questions of identity, freedom and being changed by God.

"There is no greater moment than understanding you are loved and have a purpose," Mr Hamilton says.

"When that revelation hits, it's like an almost unstoppable force – to love others."

"Jesus didn't do things by halves and I think when young people live their lives with full purpose and passion they'll experience a freedom like never before."

Through Just Motivation, Mr Hamilton is currently visiting



Az Hamilton.

Photo courtesy of Jane Moad

three schools a week, sharing his social justice challenge with more than 5000 students in the past few months.

Summer Madness will be held at Alexandra Park Conference Centre from 18 to 21 January 2013.

Registrations are now open. Visit summermadness.com.au



Uniting Church in Australia Western Australia

The Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) was born in 1977, the result of the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches. The UCA today is an inclusive church embracing the challenge to serve God's call for love, care, justice and peace in a truly Australian way.

ASSOCIATE GENERAL SECRETARY – EDUCATION

An opportunity has arisen to join our very busy and dynamic team based at the Uniting Church Centre in East Perth and to work for an employer who values its staff and supports a lifestyle balance.

The Associate General Secretary – Education is a member of the Senior Coordination Team of Associate General Secretaries in Pastoral, Mission and Resources, who assist the General Secretary with oversight responsibilities for the WA Uniting Church Synod, Presbytery and Church Centre. The Associate General Secretary, Education is also a member of the Faculty of Perth Theological Hall.

The key responsibilities for this role include:

1. Guide, resource and enable the Commission of Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL) to develop strategic planning which ensures education for discipleship and leadership for lay and ordained ministries continues to invigorate learning and nurturing of faith and continues the movement for education to be central to life-long learning for the Uniting Church in WA.
2. Provide innovative opportunities for on-going education for ordained ministries in consultation with those serving in congregational ministry, chaplaincy and the presbytery.
3. Provide leadership to CEDAL which enable the Commission to carry out its oversight of integrated planning, and policy development.

Applications close on Tuesday 2nd October and interviews will be held as soon as possible after this date.

LECTURER IN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

An opportunity has arisen for a Lecturer in Practical Theology to work with CEDAL based at the Perth Theological Hall (PTH) at Murdoch Worship Centre, Murdoch University.

The key responsibilities for this role include:

1. Provision of education in the areas of Missiology and Preaching for the Presbytery and Synod of WA.
2. Provision of teaching one unit per year within the theology program of Murdoch University as required.
3. Promotion of the study of Missiology and Preaching across the Presbytery of WA.
4. Active involvement in the life of the Presbytery.

Applications close on Friday 26th October and interviews will be held as soon as possible after this date.

Applications for these roles are invited from qualified members of the Uniting Church. The right candidates will also possess highly developed interpersonal and communication skills, be extremely organised, self motivated, able to multi task with an attention to detail, and enjoy working autonomously whilst being a team player.

A current driver's license, access to a motor vehicle, Senior First Aid Certificate and a WWCC are also required.

For enquiries and further information, please call Sarah Lynch, HR Officer on 9260 9825.

Applications can be emailed to sarah.lynch@wa.uca.org.au or by post to G.P.O. Box M952 Perth WA 6843.

You will need to demonstrate a capacity and willingness to work within the Christian ethos and polity of the uniting Church.



1 – 19 OCTOBER

Camino – Paintings of pilgrimage by Lindsay Farrell, Vera Wade Gallery, Saint Andrew's Uniting Church, Brisbane City. Contact Marion McConaghy on 0407 032 822 or visit saintandrews.org.au.

7 OCTOBER

Please pray for Calen Uniting Church.

- Pray for the congregation as they make decisions about future leadership.
- Pray for those who will step into leadership during the transition.
- Give thanks for the unity and vision of Calen Church and pray that it will continue to grow.
- Give thanks for the many speakers who will contribute to worship over the coming months.

7 OCTOBER 2pm – 4pm

Public lecture "They tell us our story" by Rosemary Crumlin, RSM OAM. Francis Rush Centre, Brisbane City. Author of *The Blake Book: Art Spirituality and Religion in Australia*. Contact Margaret Moore on 3870 9427 or mollyjon@tpg.com.au.

7 OCTOBER 2pm – 4pm

Annual Welsh Festival of Hymn Singing at St David's Anglican Chapel, Chelmer. Afternoon tea to follow. Contact Bill Thomas on 3297 3616.

12 – 14 OCTOBER

A visual presentation of Bible verses relating to light. Pittsworth Uniting Church, 15 Briggs St, Pittsworth. Contact Janice Reed on 4693 1893 or janice.reed@bigpond.com.

13 OCTOBER 9am – 1pm

Warwick Killarney Uniting Church Spring Fair, Warwick. Great entertainment, stalls, craft display, photographic competition. Free children's activities. Contact Margaret Wells on 4661 2166 or ucawarwick@dovenetq.net.au.

13 OCTOBER 7pm – 9pm

The Just Desserts Concert, Gateway Centre, Mackenzie. Fundraiser featuring the Old Boys Gospel Band: stories about Prison Fellowship. RSVP on 3399 3190 or qld.office@prisonfellowship.org.au.

14 OCTOBER 8.30am – 1.30pm

Golden Jubilee of Ministry, Aspley Uniting Church. This year a number of Qld Synod ministers celebrate 50 years since their ordination. The Moderator to preach. Morning tea and lunch for ministers and their spouses. Contact Ted Hutton on 3882 6763 or tedh@dovenetq.net.au.

14 OCTOBER

Please pray for Aspley Uniting Church that:

- our ministry team continues to know God's guidance and wisdom and be supported by the congregation
- the traditional worship service and the all age worship service continue to be relevant and meaningful
- the Fourth Sunday Evening Learning Program will benefit attendees
- the ecumenical Classes for Seniors program continues to serve the local community well
- ministry with children continues to make connections with families in the community
- Aspley Uniting Church Youth continues to grow in numbers and purpose
- the various ministries among church members will enrich fellowship
- interfaith activities create goodwill and understanding in the wider community
- the whole congregation seeks and discerns the will of God for its future ministry.

19 – 28 OCTOBER

Spirit, Life and Wonder, Montville Uniting Church. Art display by Rev Ron Potter. See adjacent story. Contact Duncan Drew on 5445 7326 or duncan10@tpg.com.au.

20 OCTOBER 6am – 12pm

Giant garage sale, Paradise Point Uniting Church. Books, clothes, craft, electrical, plants, children's activities, food and more. Contact Peter Alfredson on 5529 3669 or pgaca@bigpond.net.au.

21 OCTOBER 10am

125th anniversary celebration, Killarney Uniting Church. Tea, coffee and refreshments. All welcome. Contact Kay Scott on 4664 1815 or kay.scott5@bigpond.com.au.

27 OCTOBER 7.30pm – 10.30pm

Bucket auction and trivia night, Bracken Ridge Uniting Church. Adults \$10, children free. A great night of fun and fellowship. Contact Karen Metcalfe on 3269 8814 or metcalfe.k@bigpond.com.

28 OCTOBER

Please pray for Indooroopilly Uniting Church, for:

- Monday playgroups and Thursday English conversation classes
- leadership training and preparations for the "Christmas Adventure" program and "Stroll through Bethlehem"
- covenantal partnership with the UAICC Western Cape, Mapoon and Napranum congregations
- Grey Clouds Blue Skies counselling ministries and seminars Positive Ageing and Coping with Change.

28 OCTOBER 2pm – 4pm

The Australian Chamber Musicians Concert, Kairos Uniting Church, Wavell. \$15; proceeds to the McKay Patrol. Contact Pastor Terry Staney on 3266 9211 or terry.staney@bigpond.com.

30 OCTOBER 10am – 1pm

Retired ministers and spouses lunch, Emmanuel Uniting Church, Enoggera. Guest speaker Moderator Rev Kaye Ronalds. Contact Rev Peter Clark or Rev Clive George on 3267 5236 or macgeorge7@gmail.com.

1 NOVEMBER 10.30am – 12.30pm

Bush Christmas Cheer, Wesley House, Ann St, Brisbane City. Guest speaker Rev Dennis Cousens: Cunnamulla Patrol. Food and craft stalls; light lunch. \$10. Contact Margaret Douglas on 3355 3885 or randlbettenay8@bigpond.com.

4 NOVEMBER 4pm – 5.30pm

Choral classics, Brisbane Grammar School Great Hall. \$25/\$18 concession; children under 12 free. Tickets at the door, or book at 4mbs.com.au/ticketing. Contact Libby Schmidt on 3857 3678 or contact@canticum.org.au.

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

Items may be shortened due to space limitations.

Drawing on theology

Rev Ron Potter

IN THE midst of the secular we are touched by the sacred.

My aim in painting is to reflect our human experience of spirit, life and wonder. These experiences do not originate with us: we speak of being overwhelmed, grabbed, or seized by them.

Is that not also what religion is at its core? God is in the midst of life. Humanity is God-breathed (Genesis 2:7). God is reflected in the depths of our experience, and we miss our experiences of the divine if we only paddle in the shallows.

While not denying the experience of those who find God elsewhere, I see God reflected in Jesus more clearly than anywhere else. He is the image of the invisible God.

So, I see God as other-directed, creative, forgiving and loving.

I believe all creativity, both human and divine, arises out of this kind of love.

As any theological student knows, love comes in two major varieties: love that is attraction (eros) and love that creates attractiveness (agape). Eros comes into play when we are captivated by a scene, a person or a picture. Agape, on the other hand, creates something that did not exist before. It gives of itself for the sake of that which it creates.

Just as an artist makes use of physical material to reflect spirit, life and wonder, so the great creative Artist turns the earthly things of this life into a sacramental reflection of his presence.

An exhibition of Ron Potter's paintings will be held at Montville Uniting Church from 19–28 October. For more information, call Montville Uniting Church on 07 5494 3119.

For more of Rev Potter's reflections on his art, visit piulapublications.com



Ron Potter with *Music Man*, a painting reflecting his experience of spirit, life and wonder. Photo courtesy of Ron Potter

Journey shines with creativity

THE *Journey* team won two awards at the recent Australasian Religious Press Association Awards for Excellence held in Wellington, New Zealand on 8 September.

The 2011 *What Are You Hungry For?* Easter video took out the creativity award from a field of professional communications teams from across Australia and New Zealand.

Judges praised the high quality and thoughtfulness of the video, which linked with the 2011 Easter postcard campaign.

Many thanks to film-maker

Phillip Johnson and those who took part: Bruce Johnson, Fa Ngalue, Geoff Thompson, Jeni Parker, Phil Smith, Colleen Geyer and Paul Walton.

Journey was also awarded a bronze award for its website, particularly for its integration with multimedia resources and links to social media.

These awards were among 14 won by Uniting Church publications nationally at the event. Congratulations to all!

View the award-winning media at journeyonline.com.au



Uniting Church communicators. Left to right: Peter Bentley, *ACCatalyst*; Penny Mulvey, *Crosslight* (VIC/TAS); Mardi Lumsden, *Journey* (QLD); Deb Bennet, *Crosslight*; Caryn Rogers, *New Times* (SA); Marjorie Lewis-Jones, *Insights* (NSW/ACT); Chip Henriss, *Crosslight*; Stephen Webb, *Insights*; Heather Dowling, *Revive* (WA); Bindy Taylor, *New Times*.

Down Under

By Dave Andrews, Mosaic Press, 2012, RRP \$24.95

Reviewed by Rev Duncan Macleod

DAVE Andrews's book *Down Under* gathers together insights from his experience as a community worker based in West End, Brisbane, as well as work with TEAR Australia, The University of Queensland, Community Praxis Co-op and Servants for Asia's Urban Poor.

Andrews argues that Australia needs people and organisations who are committed to investing themselves in community. He's talking about creating gracious spaces that have the potential to embrace all human beings in a strong but gentle, undeniably beautiful sense of belonging.

Amateur, radical and revolutionary activists, in Andrews's book, recognise

the limitations of a professional, detached approach to community work, and focus on people rather than bureaucratic concerns and issues.

Andrews issues the challenge for us to choose projects with the most disadvantaged people, even if they are difficult and inconvenient for us.

The section on persistent and resilient rebel practitioners begins with an acknowledgement that our community work is often set in a world dominated by growing government and non-government bureaucracies.

To avoid being consumed by short-term measuring of outcomes, community organisations and workers need to build their capacity to recognise and deal with institutional systems.

Andrews provides a broad range of strategies for staying the distance.

Down Under finishes with a set of stories from Andrews's own experience in West End, focusing largely on the work Ange, his partner, does with refugees.

Down Under can be used as



a resource for community workers, community organisations, people studying community development, and anyone looking for inspiration for deepening their engagement with the local community, in Australia or beyond.

The book draws occasionally on practices and writings from Christian and Jewish traditions, and many authors, but remains accessible for people without religious convictions.

Pilgrimage

By Jacinta Halloran, Scribe Publications, 2012, RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Rev Lyn Burden

THE word "pilgrimage" evokes many images of journeys – primarily, for me, of people walking along a dusty trail with their backpacks.

Throughout the ages millions of people have ventured out on pilgrimages to distant places, very often for religious reasons.

Thus have Lourdes, Mecca and Santiago become household names as pilgrim destinations.

When Patricia discovers she has incurable motor neuron disease, she declines the doctor's offer of participating in a trial for a new drug and announces to her daughters that after seeking the advice of her

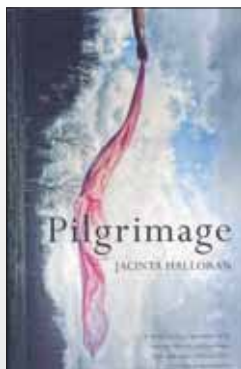
priest, she should journey to remote Nicula in Romania, where there have been many people cured after the visitation of Our Lady.

And she would like her two daughters to accompany her on this pilgrimage!

Her paediatrician daughter Celeste is aghast at her mother's lack of interest in medical assistance. Reluctantly, however, she agrees to accompany her mother, who has never travelled outside Australia and will definitely need her experience and wisdom.

As the journey of the three women towards Nicula unfolds, so does the story of their lives, and we are taken into the intimate places and secrets of a family, told particularly from Celeste's point of view.

The pilgrimage through her childhood memories uncovers the many buried conflicts that Celeste has stored away, and reminds us of the numerous ways love is expressed even within imperfect families.



A very readable book, it explores themes of life and death, faith and disbelief, love and grief.

Pilgrimage features intriguing cover artwork which captures the theme and invites the reader to delve into its pages.

Take the dive – I hope you will not be disappointed.

Out and Out

By Dave Andrews, Mosaic Press, 2012, RRP \$28.95

Reviewed by Rev Duncan Macleod

DAVE Andrews has written *Out and Out* in response to the questions he's been asked by Christian community workers around the world.

He lays out a vision for Christian mystic community work, the framework that inspires, shapes and sustains the Waiters Union inner-city community network he founded in West End, Brisbane, in the early 90s.

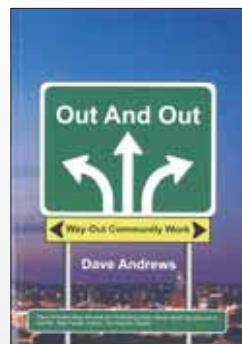
Andrews is what I would describe as a down-to-earth lover of people with the capacity to challenge unhelpful thinking and practices, as well as present alternative ways to live.

In this book written for the Christian community, Andrews critiques both other-worldly spirituality and the growing popularity of what has been called the "Neo-Monastic" movement.

What we can learn from the early monastics, Andrews suggests, is how they combined contemplation with practical action.

We can learn to be aware of the dynamics associated with power.

We can allow space for solitude that empowers availability to God and provides a catalyst for community development.



We can take lessons from Jesus in how we pray with people.

We can witness in ways that do not seek to convert.

Andrews takes us into the origins of the Twelve Step Movement and Initiatives of Change (Moral Re-Armament).

He points out that now more than ever we need movements that transcend religious tribalism, exploring some of the lessons he's learned in forming dialogue, prayer and action between Christians and Muslims since the September 2001 bombings.

The book finishes with a chapter by Ange Andrews, reflecting on her experiences of offering and receiving radical hospitality in India and Brisbane.

I found *Out and Out* challenging, inspiring, and a practical tool for rediscovering the Christian mystic in me.

Sinning Across Spain

By Ailsa Piper, Victory Books, 2012, RRP \$29.99

Reviewed by Dr Shirley Coulson

CONTRARY to what the title might lead you to believe, this book is not about having a great sinful time walking through Spain!

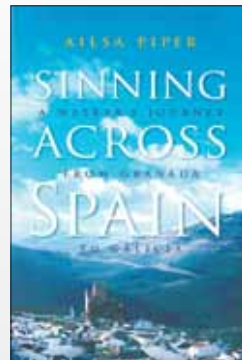
Rather, it is about the remarkable journey of Ailsa Piper, an Australian writer and actor, who offers to "walk off" the sins of others on a pilgrimage.

The transformative experience of completing the Camino Francés (the Way of St James across northern Spain) led Piper to research the medieval practice of pilgrimage, in particular the paid carrying of sins for another, leading to absolution.

Her original fascination with pilgrimages became an obsession and, after advertising for sins to carry, Piper set off from Granada in southern Spain to walk the 1200km Mozarabe pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostella in the north.

The book chronicles her journey – a journey in which she discovers, explores and conveys palimpsesto "layers of story and life crowding on top of each other".

With her engaging style, Piper brings to life the people she encounters – Herr T, the young German theologian, the amici Leonardo and Ricardo, the fit elderly Italians Il Capitano and his Soldato,



the humble women in the villages who gift her with food and wisdom.

For Piper, walking the land "revealed layers of self" – but this is not a self-indulgent treatise.

Scattered among the vivid descriptions of the pueblos and countryside are her insightful gems – reflections on sin, life and God.

This book is an easy read and yet has many palimpsesto of its own – you can read it as a travelogue, a personal discovery journal, a reflection on sin, a delightful characterisation of the mystery of human relationships!

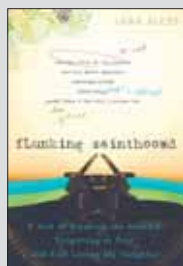
I thoroughly enjoyed reading and re-reading this book.

It lives up to its promise: a joyous celebration of the call of the road.

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

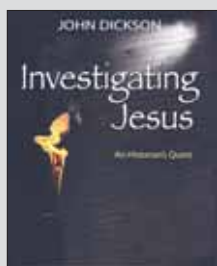
Flunking Sainthood

By Jana Reiss, Paraclete Press, Massachusetts, 2011, \$25.95



Investigating Jesus: An Historian's Quest

By John Dickson, Lion (Oxford), 2010, RRP \$29.95



The Faith of Generation Y

By Sylvia Collins-Mayo, Bob Mayo, Sally Nash and Christopher Cocksworth; Church House Publishing (London), 2010, RRP \$34.95



Books available from ...

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

Korean children sing

The Crossway Korean Children's Choir performing at Wesley Winterlude, Wesley Mission Brisbane, Albert Street Uniting Church, Brisbane City, as part of the 35th anniversary celebrations of the Uniting Church.
Photo by Rev Kaye Ronalds



Compassion goes global

THE 21st century global village provided the theme to this year's Sea of Faith in Australia (SoFiA) 2012 conference, held on the Gold Coast in early September.

Imagining and awakening to the future and to the challenges of finding community in our multifaith world were threads running through the conference, which was attended by members of the SoFiA network from around Australia.

A movement rather than a church, SoFiA was founded in the United Kingdom in 1984 in response to philosopher and theologian Don Cupitt's book and television series, *Sea of Faith*, with the Australian network forming in Brisbane in 1998. Taking its name from Matthew Arnold's poem *Dover Beach*, in which the poet compares the retreat of faith to the ebbing tide, the movement includes people

from all faiths, including many from the Uniting Church, as well as welcoming those with no religious affiliation.

This year's conference featured keynote presentations from Adrian Pyle, Peter Kirkwood and Rev Dr Noel Preston AM, and a Q&A multifaith panel responding to "Adapting to the Global Village: Religious Pluralism, Human Rights and Social Cohesion".

Peter Kirkwood in his presentation, "The Quiet Revolution: The Emergence of Interfaith Consciousness", drawing on his book of interviews with world-leading exponents of the interfaith movement, asked the audience about the watershed moments in their own faith journey that changed their own way of seeing things. We all learn the basics of our own faith to begin with, but as we read more widely and encounter the experience of other people it can lead to a broadening of our outlook and a more inclusive theology, where ultimately we may see God in everybody.

Dr Steven Ogden, Principal of St Francis Theological College, Brisbane, and author of *Love Upside Down: Life, Love and the Subversive Jesus*, gave a talk titled "What's Normal: Foucault, Freedom and the Spirit" in which he took from Foucault's exploration of the history of madness the idea of the socially constructed "boxes" by which we include or exclude people. Dr Ogden says that one of the most moving

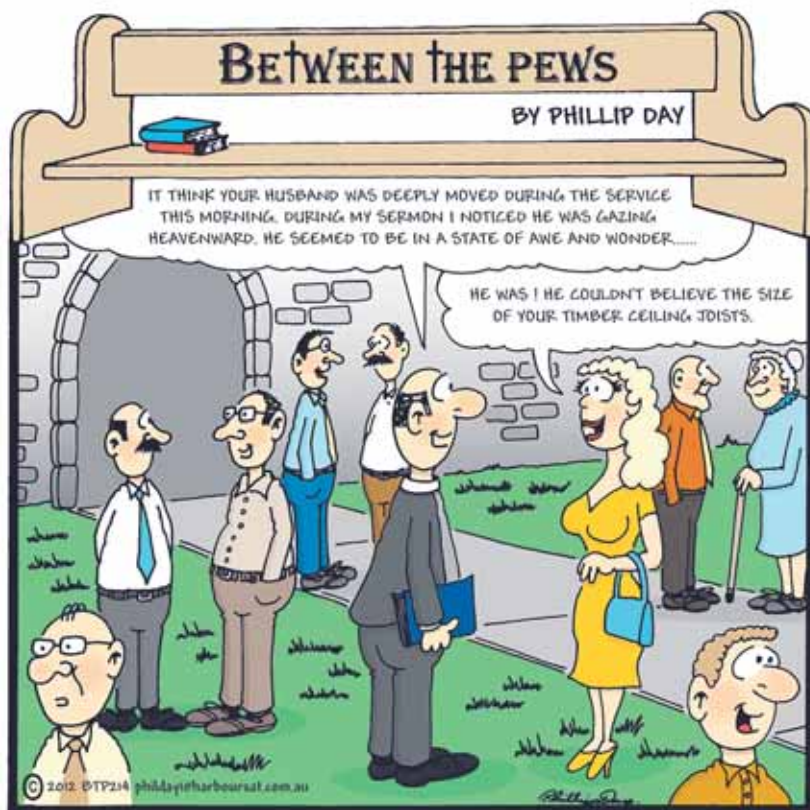
stories in the New Testament was that of the woman who was considered "unclean" because she haemorrhaged, but who was taken back into the community by Jesus, who healed her and called her "daughter".

Dr Preston introduced the screening of the TED prize-winning video of British former Catholic nun and writer Karen Armstrong discussing her *Charter for Compassion*. He described it as a testament to the truth distilled from her years of exploring religion – that for all the differences among the world's religions and ethical traditions they each emphasise above all else compassion and the Golden Rule to treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves.

The *Charter* has been translated into 30 languages and has city, organisational and individual partners worldwide.

Next year's SoFiA conference, with the theme "Religion and Sex", will be held from 13 to 15 September 2013 in Toowoomba, Queensland.

Visit www.sof-in-australia.org



Get in early for Christmas volunteering

EVERY Christmas, Wesley Mission Brisbane provides a big old-fashioned sit-down lunch and entertainment for people who are homeless and disadvantaged right in the middle of King George Square.

But what's unique about the Wesley Mission Christmas Day lunch is that it's for everyone – a place and time for "streets" and anyone else who lives in Brisbane to share a meal and a laugh and celebrate together.

Brisbane City Council provides the space for the meal and staff to help set up and clean up, but the event would not be possible without many donations and the willing hands of over a hundred volunteers.

The cut-off date for registrations is 31 October as being a volunteer involves training, so register now for yourself or a group from your church with Angela King at christmaslunch@wmb.org.au.

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In their shoes

PICTURE yourself now:

- Madly in love and engaged to be married, you come from a loving home and have a wonderful relationship with family and friends.
 - You have grown up in the church and gone to Sunday school, youth groups and church camps.
 - You have a car and a dog; you love going to the theatre, reading, walking, going for picnics and watching DVDs.
- Sounds like a perfect life, doesn't it? Now picture this:
- In the shopping centre you have to let go of your fiancé's hand as people stare and make rude comments to you.
 - You are the butt of people's jokes.
 - Some people feel that they have every right to be abusive to you – and they are!
 - You cannot be legally married.
 - You read in the paper and hear on the news that it is mostly the Christian factions of "pro-family"

groups that are outspoken against you.

- You feel that society is telling you that you are not acceptable as a valuable member; that you are unable to be a loving, stable partner and parent to a child.
- You are frustrated and disappointed that the church that nurtured you as a child is seemingly afraid to stand up for you.

I am the mother of a wonderful daughter who is gay and who suffers (along with many others) as a result of the prejudices of both society and church.

While I applaud the fact that the Uniting Church is looking into this issue, the recent announcement that a discussion paper be circulated and brought to the 14th Assembly in 2015 is disappointing in that the length of the process will prolong the difficulties and hardship for our daughter, her partner and many other same-gender couples.

Lyn Blake
Brisbane



Surveying the lay preacher landscape

IT was refreshing to read about Accredited Lay Preachers and Christian education for young people in September *Journey*.

Accredited Lay Preachers are trained in worship leadership and are keen to help shoulder the ministry of the church. However, without a centralised tracking system it has been difficult to provide information about their availability and location.

The problem of their under-utilisation has been reflected in the responses to the current survey commissioned by the National Assembly, which has received so few submissions that it has been extended to the end of October.

We encourage interested people to visit <http://assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/650-uniting-church-survey>.

Lack of communication is the largest problem in any organisation and the Queensland Synod Lay Preacher's Association seeks to be part of the solution by communicating the gospel message to the world and by supporting to the church as a whole.

Wendy Keeble,
Vice President, and
Grahame Tainton,
Secretary, Queensland
Synod Lay Preacher's
Association



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

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

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Facebook comments

2013 Calendar Art Comp

Feel the urge to upgrade my art skills as I'm feeling very intimidated by the talent I'm witnessing by this artwork! Time for me to go back to school!

Michael Barlow

Looks great. Keep it up kids!

Jane Moad

Impressive pictures.

Devadosan Sugirtharaj

Journey wins Creativity Award

Awesome.

Philip Johnson

Well done, Mardi Team! Keep up the great work :).

Priscilla Raepom

Well done. Great video. Congratulations to all who produced it.

Nalda Brett

Congratulations.

Graham Slaughter

Aaron Ghiloni and Jason LeCureux book launches

Sorry I couldn't be there, Aaron – frantic day at work – but I'm sure it was an excellent event.

Inari Thiel

Congratulations Jason!

Tim Hein

Log in and have your say now!

Unity thanks Alcorn

WHEN Caloundra's Unity College sent students to its sister school in Tonga, Peteli Middle School, in 2011 the Alcorn Fellowship Trust met costs for Campus Minister Phil Smith.

"It's one thing to talk about 'developing nations' in a classroom," he says, "but another for students to meet people from other cultures and share their daily life."

Celebrate 75

NORTH Rockhampton Uniting Church has celebrated the 75th anniversary of its first service on the present site at Berserker Street by launching a book last month about the church, *Celebrate 75*.

To purchase a copy for \$15 plus postage, please contact David Horton at david.horton7@bigpond.com

Aussie Family Mates

WANT to reach out to an international student and teach them a few Australian traditions?

Visit www.uq.edu.au/student-services/Aussie%20Family%20Mates and read more in our November issue.

Trinity: where are the women?

RE the Facebook comment by James Hyams in September *Journey*, one could also ask, looking at the photo on page 10 of that issue, "Where are the women theologians/teachers at Trinity Theological College?" Does it matter?

A. Bell
Central
Queensland



St Marks swags the homeless

Rev Jock Dunbar

"HAVE you noticed that the more we choose to give away, the more we seem to make at the garage sales?" asked Leah McIntyre, Church Council Secretary at St Marks Uniting Church in Mt Gravatt, after our most recent effort.

For many years, St Marks has held garage sales twice yearly. The March 2012 sale supported the Moderator's Fund for flood victims in Roma and the surrounding region.

For our latest effort on 1 September, we felt challenged to increase the usual donation of 10 per cent of proceeds to 50 per cent, to fund the purchase of Street Swags for the homeless.

Along with the usual bric-a-brac, electrical items, furniture, clothing, plants, toys and baked items, a physiotherapist gave massages, and face painting and a jumping castle kept the young at heart happy.

Our aim was to purchase 30 of the \$60 Street Swags, and we were thrilled to purchase 38, thanks to our most profitable garage sale ever.

We believe God wants us to be more generous with our gifts. When we obey, others are encouraged to be generous too. God is good.

For more information about Street Swags, visit streetswags.org.au.

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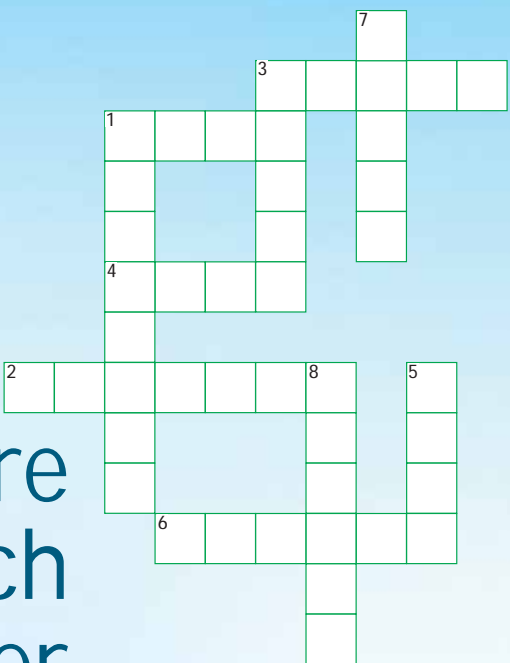
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www.bethelfunerals.com.au



Rev Jock Dunbar in a Street Swag.
Photo by Tim Allen of New eden Photography

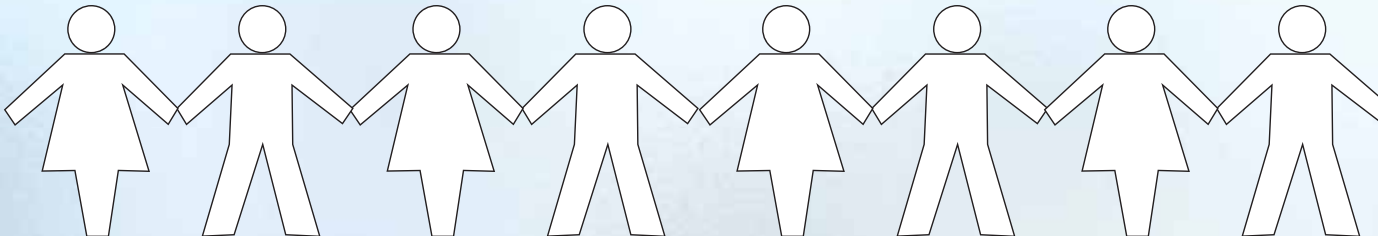
We are the church together



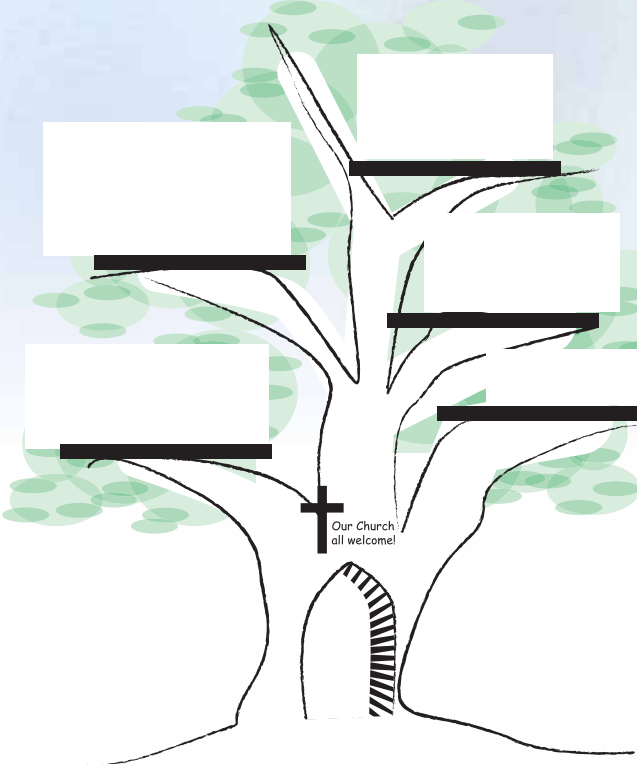
Complete the crossword

- Down
- 1. boys and girls
 - 3. to be useful and helpful
 - 5. to enjoy or take part in a game
 - 7. to move to music
 - 8. give thanks and _____ to the Lord
- Across
- 1. to look after someone or something
 - 2. to adore God in all we do
 - 3. to divide and distribute
 - 4. Jesus tells us to _____ one another
 - 6. a group of people closely related

love family play worship praise
serve share care children dance



Draw in the details of the people in your church.



What if church was in a tree?

Colour and complete the five-storey church in a tree. Include places to play, worship, pray, eat, serve and welcome. Then draw in the people who make up your church family tree.

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