

MORE DEPTH, MORE STORIES AT journeyonline.com.au

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Simplify

Ainslie and Rob Bos

THERE are no roads in Seghe. There is no electricity. No television. No supermarket. No refrigerator. No air-conditioning or fans for the unrelenting heat and humidity.

It was disconcerting and unsettling at first.

We had come to teach at the theological college of the United Church located in this small outpost at the eastern tip of New Georgia in the Solomon Islands. Our days were full: teaching, preparing lessons, marking assignments, preparing food, washing, learning local customs and language, resting.

For the students and their families, the days were even fuller: getting children off to school, attending daily church services and classes, writing assignments, growing food, collecting firewood, cooking, hauling water, washing clothes and bodies.

Yet there was a satisfying rhythm about it all. Everything was done at a measured pace and with good humour, even contentment.

We came to appreciate the gentle tempo of life, the sounds of unfamiliar birds, the daily rainshowers and the ever-present tranquillity of Marovo Lagoon – even the flying foxes squabbling through the night and the roosters crowing from three in the morning.

We had time to sit, to ponder, to be. The presence of the spirit of God was palpable.

We certainly did not miss television, traffic jams, the anonymity of opulent shopping centres, or the compulsion to check emails several times daily.

We had lots of questions. Where can we buy food? How will we cope with the heat? What do we need to do to prevent malaria? Is the water safe to drink? How will we dispose of rubbish? Where can we get the gas bottle filled, so we can cook? What will we do if the rainwater tank runs out?

Our Solomon Islander neighbours were friendly and helpful. They patiently answered our questions and solved our problems.

Tuesdays were market days. People came by canoe from

surrounding villages to sell strange vegetables and cooked fish. Without any way to preserve it, food will not keep. So, on other days, students brought us surplus from their gardens and occasionally fish from the lagoon.

The food was nutritious, organic and always fresh.

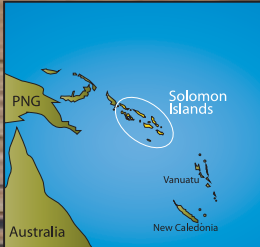
Like Paul at Philippi, we discovered within ourselves a contentment that had little to do with our circumstances (Philippians 4:10-14).

Like the blind man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-25), we had seen vaguely, but our time at Seghe taught us to see more clearly.

We saw that what we thought of as essential was not essential at all.

Ainslie and Rob Bos were recently appointed by UnitingWorld to work with our partner church in the Solomon Islands.

Main photo: Sunset in the Solomon Islands.
Photo by Russell Shakespeare
Map created by Holly Jewell. Ainslie and Rob Bos in Seghe.
Photo courtesy of Ainslie and Rob Bos.
Market stall in the Solomon Islands. Photo by Russell Shakespeare



MONTHLY PRAYER

Creator God,
Thank you for the gift of life.
Teach us to tread gently on the planet
as we walk together on the way following
Jesus.
Amen

Sifting wants from needs

WE'RE all in it together, human nature being what it is: the compulsion to consume and the belief that bigger, and more, is better.

We know that we are looking in the wrong places for what will truly satisfy us when we over-accumulate, overeat, overspend and over-leverage – and then complain about the service.

In her story on page 9, *Journey* writer Tara Burton explores the health problems of the developing world, and shares a link to a video called *First World Problems*.

It's hard to watch without feeling spoiled by privilege as a series of trivial but uncomfortably familiar complaints are voiced by people whose problems are truly worthy of the word.

This week I read some reporting of the US presidential campaign that described a hotdog-eating competition in New Jersey. I also read that one in five children in developing countries is underweight, prompting Millennium Development Goal (MDG) no. 1, to eradicate hunger by reducing by half the vast numbers of people affected.

As Dr Richard Denniss, Executive Director of The Australia Institute, comments on page 16, Australians enthusiastically committed to the MDGs but have less enthusiasm for the sacrifices required to reach them.

But I may not be the only one detecting some sense of change. Alongside signs like the government figures showing household deleveraging in the few years since the GFC are the people and communities, such as the one Paul Moore describes on the Sunshine Coast on page 10, who are committing to sustainability in ever-deeper ways.

Many of us, like *Journey* writer Dianne Jensen on page 7, have found liberation and even a sense of accomplishment in trimming our lives of an excess of possessions.

And there are signs of change, too, in the development of the Australian National Development Index (ANDI) project, which seeks to put an index of wellbeing and true quality of life alongside existing measurements of economic production and transaction.

UnitingJustice Director Rev Elenie Poulos shares some news about ANDI on page 8, including its long-term goals of community participation and public policy-making that better serves the common good.

Together, we can make a difference. Let's be on our way.

Kate Indigo, Editor

Expressing your love extravagantly

Kaye Ronalds

AFTER Lorna moved into a unit in a Blue Care village she instructed her family, "If I can't eat it or wear it, I don't want it."

It was nearly Christmas and she had spent most of the year culling her possessions to fit into her new home. She kept some furniture and small precious things.

The process exhausted her. She had started her married life with only the things she had put in her "glory box".

Strike up a conversation with older people about Christmas traditions and it is not the trips to the shopping centre that they talk about.

This is the time of the year when we are bombarded with advertising about things that we didn't know we wanted. Some feel pressured to buy things they cannot afford.

Bible verses warn against such

materialism: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on Earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal."

A study of the parables of Jesus will bring us to the fool who built bigger and bigger barns.

If we read about the people of Israel in the wilderness, we are reminded that manna was a provision made fresh each day and people who tried to hoard it found it spoiled.

Indigenous people have lived gently on the earth for generations. They taught their children that if they discovered a nest of eggs they must leave some to hatch.

For Western Christians, it can be difficult to avoid being drawn into a culture that encourages

spending to the point of putting it on credit.

Friends told us that when their four children were small there was not much money for presents. So they went to the local library and chose four

books for each other. They wrapped the books, put them under the tree, and spent the summer reading their partner's thoughtful choices.

Gary

Chapman, in his book *The Five Love Languages*, claims that not everyone receives every present as an expression of love.

He suggests that five kinds of giving nourish different kinds of people. He names the five "love languages" as quality time, words of affirmation, touch, acts of service and gifts. If you buy your

This is the time of the year when we are bombarded with advertising about things that we didn't know we wanted.



child the most expensive gift and their love language is sharing quality time, then they will not experience the gift as topping up their love account. You might as well have bought a balloon and spent the afternoon tossing it around the house together.

Even combing the nits from a child's hair can be experienced as a loving gesture of quality time.

A home-made gift voucher for a car wash, a cuddle or breakfast in bed might make an appropriate present.

While I recognise that business owners need to make a living, we could do some alternative gift-giving this year. I know one minister's wife who gives a jar full of home-baked biscuits at Christmas time. Another friend gives cuttings from her garden and someone else finds cute things in op shops and attaches a note. A phone call to an old friend may be just what is needed.

I am a bit of a hoarder so my gift to myself is to empty some cupboards and donate good quality pre-loved clothes and books to a Lifeline store.

If you and your friends have all you need, make a donation to help someone feed their family or educate their children.

Giving expression to the extravagant love of God need not cost a lot of money.

Rev Kaye Ronalds is the Moderator of the Uniting Church in Queensland



Australian Army cadets practising team building at the annual cadet camp at Greenbank, 25 September. Photo by Kaye Ronalds

Snap that!

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

This month's *Snap that!*, a familiar scene of suburban over-abundance, was taken by David Freeland.

December theme: *Joy to the world – the Lord has come.*



Where's the Moderator?

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

8 November

Blue Care Staff Recognition Night, Brisbane Convention Centre, Southbank, Brisbane.

9 November

St John's Anglican College Night of Celebration.

11 November

The Downs Presbytery, Toowoomba.

15-16 November

Moderators gathering with the President, Sydney.

1 December

Calvary Presbytery, Cairns.

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Being the body of Christ

Andrew Dutney

EASY ecumenism stood out on my visit to the Presbytery of North Queensland.

Big public events like Stable on the Strand in Townsville or Carols by Candlelight in Atherton involve a range of denominations astonishing to a southerner. Everyone seems willing to get on board for the sake of witnessing to Christ – Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Catholic, Churches of Christ, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, and numerous independent local churches.

The same is true of the street chaplains serving Townsville's nightclub strip. It's a demanding, year-round ministry dealing with people of all kinds who are far from their best at three in the morning – and almost all the denominations are involved.

And there are other ways that North Queensland's easy ecumenism shows itself. At a presbytery women's meeting in Tully, I was surprised that so many people had no idea who I was or what a "president" might be. (I'm only just getting used to everyone seeming to know all about me when I walk into a Uniting Church gathering.) But it was because many of them weren't from the Uniting Church.

One woman was Lutheran and had fellowship there because there was no Lutheran congregation in the area. Everyone was excited for the Anglican women about the rebuilding in Cardwell of Anglican buildings destroyed by Cyclone Yasi. The guest speaker was an Assemblies of God pastor, who discussed changes in the ministry arrangements of the Uniting Church congregation.

And I'm guessing there were others, too, without any formal link to the Uniting Church, who found themselves welcome and valued as members of the one body of Christ.

I was very moved when a minister told me about support she'd received during a serious illness. She'd asked the pastor of a nearby independent church whether he could preach for her while she was on leave. In response, he and his whole congregation simply moved to the Uniting Church congregation for three weeks, to worship and minister with them during a difficult season. And this was a congregation that had left the Uniting Church in that painful time after the 10th Assembly. Half a dozen other ministers of all different denominations had also called to offer any help that was needed. She said, "It's not



Andrew Dutney preaching at Townsville Central Uniting Church, October 2012. Photo by Richard Hosking

about them or us. It's about being the body of Christ".

They make ecumenism look easy in North Queensland.

Rev Dr Andrew Dutney is the President of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Detained refugees thrown a lifeline

PRESSURE from refugee advocates and churches including the Uniting Church in Australia has contributed to the Australian Government setting up a review process for refugees who wish to contest adverse Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) findings.

The Uniting Church Assembly issued a press release on 5 October calling for the government to address the issue. Uniting Church President Rev Dr Andrew Dutney described the indefinite detention of refugees as "unacceptable".

"We still see vulnerable people who have been determined to be refugees given a potential life

sentence in detention facilities that are known to cause serious negative physical and mental health issues," he said.

The introduction of a review for negative ASIO assessments follows a recent High Court decision to overturn a regulation that had enabled the indefinite detention of a Sri Lankan asylum seeker.

Currently, claims for refugee status entail two stages. The first, conducted by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), determines whether claimants are genuine refugees in need of protection. The second, which begins once a person is deemed to be a refugee, is a

security assessment conducted by ASIO.

Refugees are then either released into the community, or, if they receive adverse assessments, kept in indefinite detention.

Fifty-seven people currently in legal limbo will now have the right to have their assessments reviewed by former Federal Court judge Margaret Stone. They will also have the right to have negative assessments reviewed every 12 months.

According to Attorney-General Nicola Roxon, speaking on ABC 7.30 program on 15 October, if the review decides that a finding was wrong, it will be referred back to ASIO, the Immigration Minister and the Attorney-General.

Speaking at a Senate committee hearing a day later, ASIO chief David Irvine said that he will retain the final say over branding refugees security

threats, and that refugees given an adverse assessment will not always be told the reasons why ASIO considers them a threat.

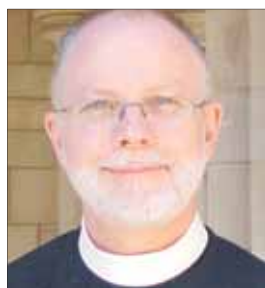
fast facts

| | |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7338 | People in immigration detention facilities (including alternative places of detention) |
| 694 | Children in detention facilities |
| 1403 | People in community detention |
| 1037 | People who have been in detention for over 12 months |

Numbers at 31 August 2012. Department of Immigration Statistics Summary.

57 Refugees facing life in detention due to adverse ASIO assessment

Senate Estimates, 21 May 2012.
Sources: www.asrc.org.au/resources/statistics
www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=legcon_ctte/estimates/bud_1213/index.htm



The Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt, President of APCV. Photo courtesy of St John's Anglican Cathedral

New voice speaks up

CONSERVATIVE Christian lobby groups no longer have the only public Christian perspective on political and social issues in Australia.

Anglican Dean of Brisbane, the Very Reverend Dr Peter Catt, launched A Progressive Christian Voice (APCV) in August not just to put an alternative ecumenical Christian voice into the public space but also to counter Sydney-centrism.

"We've got membership nationally," he says. "APCV started in Brisbane but it's not got a Brisbane focus."

"A bunch of us in the mainstream churches felt that in the public square the Christian voice had become monolithic, so we decided it was important to ensure that there was at least one other voice representing a different Christian viewpoint," he says of the origins of APCV.

"We realised that the media are heavily Sydney-centric. So when powerful figures like George Pell and Peter Jensen are based in Sydney, and the media that tends to look for comment is also in Sydney, that skews it even further."

The new organisation already has runs on the board, having attracted national attention with their statements calling on the federal government to implement the Gonski educational reforms, and on marriage vows and equality. The next step to cement its national presence will be a website, which Mr Catt believes

APCV now has funding for.

"When the [Anglican] Diocese of Sydney introduced its new wedding rites, the reports I heard on the ABC were that the Anglican Church had a new wedding rite. There was no distinction made that it was one diocese out of 23 which had a new wedding rite."

"But having said that, it is also because other voices haven't ventured into the square."

Visit the APCV Facebook page: "A Progressive Christian Voice Australia".



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Boarding: Years 5 to 12

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

Somerville House

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Boarding: Years 7 to 12

(07) 3248 9200 www.somerville.qld.edu.au

Sunshine Coast Grammar School

Co-educational day school Prep to Year 12

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

Kids' art explores discipleship

Tara Burton

WITH 2013 as the year of discipleship, 58 young people

from around Queensland submitted artwork for the 2013 Calendar Art competition exploring what it means to be

Winners

Joshua Bornman
Cloe Yu Garmin
Shae Godfrey
Alistar Gomersall
Hamish Gomersall
Emma Hill
Jacob Hill
Finn Jewell
Ho-Se Kim
Adrian Leonard
Brielle Powell
Alexander Simpson
Julia Von Berk

Charity

St Paul's Drop-in Centre
Operation Christmas Child
Timor Children's Foundation
McGrath Foundation
Cancer Council Australia
Southport Uniting Church KidzArt
Southport Uniting Church KidzArt
RSPCA
Southport Uniting Church KidzArt
Southport Uniting Church KidzArt
TEAR Australia
RSPCA
Frontier Services

a disciple of Jesus in the 21st century.

Judges Moderator Rev Kaye Ronalds, artist Rev Geraldine Wheeler and Art from the Margins coordinator Tony Anderton were impressed by the thought and the creativity behind the entries.

Ms Ronalds observed, "The artwork captured some of the important elements of discipleship – learning Bible stories, thinking about behaviour and celebrating God's love in worship".

One winner, eight-year-old Adrian of the Southport Uniting Church Kidzart club, said that being a disciple meant being a follower of God.

"My artwork represented helping others and following God."

Fellow club member Jacob says, "We didn't know much about art and we came here to learn."

"I'm really excited that I won!" Mr Anderton says that choosing just 13 artworks from so many wonderful entries was a



Emma, Adrian and Jacob with their winning artworks.
Photo by Holly Jewell

challenge, but an enjoyable and rewarding one.

The judges congratulate all entrants.

"The calendar gives us a chance to celebrate the voice of children and young people," says Ms Ronalds.

"Once again they have chosen

a charity to support with the prize money.

"In 2013, use this calendar as you plan and record the many opportunities you have to be a disciple of Christ and to invite others to be in on that great adventure."



Laurette and Barry McLaren.
Photo by Sue Hutchinson

Reviewing taxi subsidies: what will it mean?

Sue Hutchinson

LAURETTE and Barry McLaren, members of the Emmanuel Uniting Church congregation at Enoggera, Brisbane, have relied on taxis to go about their daily lives for many years. Mrs McLaren has cerebral palsy and Mr McLaren has frequent seizures. They can't go anywhere without taxis.

The Queensland Government is reviewing the Taxi Subsidy Scheme and other funded transport schemes. The initial intention to cap taxi subsidies at \$400 per person per year was met with community outrage, because of the implications for

the 20 per cent of the scheme's beneficiaries like Mrs and Mr McLaren whose use exceeds that amount.

Transport and Main Roads Minister Scott Emerson stated on 11 October that "While an annual \$400 cap was previously proposed, the panel will be asked to explore other viable options for the scheme going forward". The expert panel will include disability representatives as well as taxi operators, and will report in mid-2013.

Mrs McLaren's mobility is affected by her condition, and she needs to travel everywhere with her walker, which is too large to fit into most cars. Mr

McLaren has several times come out of a seizure at the end of a bus route, to find that he has missed his stop and been robbed.

The taxi subsidy scheme enables them to do their shopping, go to church, keep medical appointments, do voluntary work and visit Mrs McLaren's mother in a nursing home.

Their lives would be severely restricted by limits to their taxi subsidies.

"Doctors say to be active and get involved with life," Mrs McLaren says. "It will slow our lives right down. And it will just land people more quickly into a home. It's making people get old

before they are."

Interested people will be able to make submissions to the review in coming months.

View Minister Scott Emerson's statement from 11 October at statements.qld.gov.au/Statement/2012/10/11/taxi-scheme-review-underway.

Participate in the Queenslanders with Disability Network survey of members of the Taxi subsidy Scheme: www.qdn.org.au/news/taxi-survey-subsidy-scheme-survey.

Budget cuts will bite

Katie Lewis

THE Queensland State Budget delivered on 11 September announced funding cuts to the community services sector. Community service providers

and unions say Queenslanders should expect widespread effects as programs providing vital services in health, education, tenancy advice, job placement and training, and youth and family support are cut or have

fast facts

14 000 Jobs lost in Queensland Public Service

UnitingCare Community services cut by:

10% Funds over \$100 000 for neighbourhood centres funded @ ≥ \$100 000
3.75% Child safety services
1% Foster care and out-of-home care

\$7-8m to be found by UnitingCare Community in efficiencies by June 2015

their funding reduced.

CEO of UnitingCare Queensland Anne Cross commented on the impacts: "The budget will mean cuts to a range of UnitingCare Community programs as part of the government's plan to reduce the state's deficit."

"The actual impacts on our services are now being worked through, but the Queensland community services sector will face cuts of \$259.7 million over four years," she says.

Bob Gilkes, Executive Director of UnitingCare Community, reports that the third year of cuts (2014-15) will have the most impact. At the end of December this year, neighbourhood centres across Queensland and community development services in north and central Queensland will have their funding cut by 10 per cent after the first \$100 000. Other services will be cut by smaller amounts. The closure and

funding cuts to neighbourhood centres will mean a loss of services that play a vital role in supporting vulnerable families, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families.

These cost-cutting measures will also negatively impact Queensland's marginalised young people, with organisations providing youth-at-risk and youth support programs affected. The Queensland Council of Social Service says that removing Youth Support Coordinators will put 16 000 young people at risk of disengaging from their education and limiting their employment prospects.

The youth sector faces further threat with the decision to cut all funding to Youth Affairs Network Queensland (YANQ), the only peak body for the youth sector in Queensland, by 31 December 2012. YANQ provides essential services to a wide network of non-government youth services that will now be left without

network support and advocacy on youth issues.

The Uniting Church in Queensland will continue to monitor the issues and inform communities and individuals about their implications.

An online petition has been launched by YANQ, requesting that the Minister for Communities, Tracy Davis, restore their funding.

Sign the petition at www.change.org/en-AU/petitions/campbell-newman-restore-funding-to-the-youth-affairs-network-queensland#.

Visit www.rooftopqld.org to express your concerns about these changes in the community sector, anonymously if you wish.



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Encountering diverse India

Sue Pickering

A GROUP of 13 people representing Trinity Wilston Uniting Church, Brisbane, returned recently from our second visit to our partner church, the Church of South India.

The party was made up not only from the church congregation but also from community members and local business people, giving a great opportunity for people from the wider Wilston community to see the gospel in action and what a church can actually be and do.

After spending two weeks staying with the Church of South India, Diocese of Madras, and the opportunity to visit numerous projects set up and supported by the church, we made fleeting visits to Varanasi, Delhi and Agra.

So much was crammed into two weeks! We visited hospitals, schools and childcare centres; and villages, towns and the slums of Chennai.

On occasion, the fleeting nature of our visits made some of us feel challenged that we were

“not doing anything” to help – as the stories we heard, the sights we saw and the people we met confronted us with the harsh reality of life for so many people in India.

But out of it came the recognition that it isn't always about what we do, but rather about being present and engaging with people.

The chance to engage enabled us to see beauty within the darkness.

We gained confidence during our visit to Chennai, so that our visits to Varanasi, Agra and Delhi were enriched. We didn't fear the onslaught of hawkers, we spoke with them. We didn't hide our faces from the people begging on the streets, we fed them.

We became a little more knowledgeable about Hinduism and its worship practices, especially as we were in Varanasi at the time of the festival of Lord Shiva.

The gospel message is a radical one that calls us to be the prophetic voice and prophetic presence in the world. Our visit to India, I believe, has helped to equip us to be and do just that.

It isn't always about what we do, but rather about being present and engaging with people.



Trinity Wilston Uniting Church member Becky Hughes with children at Ikkadu. Photo by Sue Pickering

Yes, conversion is an aim there, but in a very different way to the Western church. In his sermon, the Bishop of Madras saw conversion as liberation from the oppressive caste system. The support offered by the Church of South India is open to people of the Hindu, Muslim, Jain, Buddhist and the other faiths in India, with no-one excluded or judged.

This is a great witness to Christ and the gospel message.

We live in a global village and cannot ignore the plight of our neighbours – and the people of India are our neighbours. In the consumerist and materialistic world in which we live, I believe that we are called to consider our ethics and values. We need to be aware that our brothers and sisters in our partner churches live in the midst of oppression and exploitation.

The team was an amazing group of people thrown together

for this trip to India, who worked with each other, supported each other and, whether they proclaim themselves to be a person of Easter faith or not and whether they attend church or not, witnessed the radical nature of the gospel message.

A daily blog was kept during the trip. To read more, visit revthreads.wordpress.com.

If the hat fits, wear it

Dianne Jensen

AT Camp Cobbold, people wear different hats. The city kids wear baseball caps, and the country kids wear big old Akubras. Some kids have never played cricket, and some have never mustered cattle using a helicopter.

Both groups have travelled a long way to reach this idyllic spot in the Cobbold Gorge, six hours drive from Townsville.

The mothers from remote properties have driven hundreds of kilometres along dusty roads, dealing with burst tyres and pint-sized passengers; the city folk have travelled 2000 kilometres in a convoy of cars and trailers.

It's a meeting where the deep divisions between urban and rural Australians are challenged, and, for a week, the seeds of community are sown.

Camp Cobbold is a week-long social development program run by Scripture Union Queensland (SU) volunteers and staff, providing families from remote properties in far north Queensland with the opportunity to experience social interaction,

receive training, and access mental and allied health services.

For the children, most of whom study by distance education, it's a chance to do things that city kids take for granted, says Simon Gomersall from Toowong Uniting Church, which sent a team of 20 people to Camp Cobbold in October. Activities as ordinary as team sport, drama, face-painting, art, and learning to swim are all on the camp program.

The program for adults is equally diverse, this year offering practical sessions on topics ranging from internet technology to making a halter, and opportunities to access emotional and spiritual support.

The Gomersall family first attended Camp Cobbold last year, when SU invited Selena Gomersall to provide her services as a psychologist. They returned with a new understanding of the effects of isolation, natural disasters and ongoing debt, and of the massive social needs of people in the bush.

The Gomersalls shared their story with the Toowong

congregation, who responded with enthusiasm and generosity, sending a convoy of vehicles packed with resources to this year's camp.

The Toowong team provided logistical and practical support to the 180 parents (mainly women) and children who attended, helping with the crèche, providing sessions for adolescents, running sports and leading camp sing-alongs. They even set up a café, complete with home-baking, tablecloths and music.

The contingent included an occupational and a speech therapist, who provided informal assessments and advice to parents, and a professional photographer, who offered a rare opportunity for a family photo.

Along with the camaraderie of travelling and working together, the Toowong team returned with a fresh perspective about life in the bush, and a new understanding of what it might mean to serve others – “with no agenda attached,” says Mr Gomersall.

“There were a lot of tears, as



Bush and city children take part in activities at Camp Cobbold. Photo by Ben Reid

we were touched by individual people and their stories,” he says.

“I think the team felt we were participating in something larger than just us caring for people, but that God was able to be at work through that ... there was a sense of presence, of being the embodiment of God's love in a place.”

For SU, the church support

helped enrich the camp experience for everyone.

“Scripture Union has always treasured our partnership with the churches to minister to kids and their families,” says CEO Peter James.

For more information about Camp Cobbold visit toowongunitingchurch.org.au.

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Frontier Services hits a century

Matt Gees

FRONTIER Services celebrated a century of outback mission work last month in a major event at the Dallas Brooks Centre in East Melbourne.

The general assembly of the Presbyterian Church appointed Rev John Flynn on 26 September 1912 as the first superintendent of a new outback mission organisation, the Australian Inland Mission (AIM). As successor in the Uniting Church to the original AIM, Frontier Services, has continued to sustain this mission work.

Among the special guests were former National Assembly President and Chairman of the John Flynn Foundation, Rev Gregor Henderson, who led the worship; the National Chairman of the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Major General

Michael Jeffery; National Chair of the UAICC, Rev Rronang Garrawurra; Minister for Regional Australia, the Hon Simon Crean – and many people whose lives have shared a connection with the ministry.

Also present were staff who have served or are currently serving in the variety of activities that Frontier Services undertakes

When people across remote Australia are ministered to through Frontier Services, the love of God is made real.

– from health and aged care to patrol ministry – as well as representatives from the wider reach of the Uniting Church.

Joy Wandin Murphy, elder of the Wurundjeri people, the Indigenous

people of the Melbourne area, gave the welcome to country. As representatives from the regions served by Frontier Services brought water to symbolically fill a tank set up on the stage, she greeted them, acknowledging this action as a way of “bringing people together”.

Former Australian Ambassador to the Holy See and Patron of Frontier Services, the Hon Tim Fischer AC, commented that the spirit of John Flynn was certainly alive as he officially welcomed people to the celebration. He spoke of the way that Frontier Services has a “4P” approach – practical, positive, pastoral and proactive – to what they do, and how John Flynn’s vision continues in this work.

Two new worship songs were written especially for the occasion. Rev David McGregor, writer of “Cross this Land Tonight” said later, “When people across remote and outback Australia are ministered to through Frontier Services, they go to sleep knowing that the love of God is made very real to them through that work”.

President Rev Dr Andrew Dutney, reflecting on the 100 years since Flynn first began the work with the AIM, also encouraged the gathering to reflect on their own participation in God’s lifelong ministry. “I ask you to honour John Flynn and



Rev Gregor Henderson prays over the offering and dedicates banners at the Frontier Services centenary celebration. Photo by Matt Gees

the AIM by seriously considering the question, To what is God calling me within this mission of the ‘reconciliation and renewal ... for the whole creation’.

A spirit of togetherness and the vast reach of the Uniting Church in serving God in Australia was evident in the celebrations. Through worship, prayer and reflection, as well as

celebration and thanksgiving, the role that the AIM and its successor Frontier Services have played over the past century was championed, but also recognised as challenged by communication, connectiveness and loneliness.

God calls and equips us to do this work.

Visit frontierservices.org.

UnitingCare lines up financial aid

UNITINGCARE Community operates a program providing counselling and advice free of charge to any Queenslanders in financial distress.

Over the past two years Queensland has seen an increase in the cost of living, job losses, and repercussions of the GFC and natural disasters.

UnitingCare Community’s Financial First Aid counsellors can provide support over the phone or in face-to-face consultation.

The team helps clients make the most appropriate choices for

their situation.

“UnitingCare Community’s Financial First Aid delivers a high-level, reliable service to provide the community with information about rights and responsibilities in relation to credit and debt issues and makes referrals,” says UnitingCare Community Financial Counselling Senior Practitioner, Suzanne Hough.

“Financial First Aid financial counsellors are seeing more people struggling to make ends meet for various reasons,” adds Ms Hough.

Demand for the Financial First Aid Line service has risen by more than 30 per cent over the past two years, and is now at more than 300 calls per week. Average call time has increased by 33 per cent in the past year, due to increasing complexity in the clients’ financial and emotional state at the time of the call. This indicates a bi-directional link between financial stress and mental and emotional wellbeing.

The financial counselling service reached over 32 000 Queenslanders last financial year through face-to-face financial counselling, Financial First Aid Line and financial literacy workshops. That it is a holistic service is demonstrated by the more than 2900 referrals financial counsellors have made to other support services.

The increase in number of clients and referrals highlights the escalation in financial hardship being experienced by Queenslanders, and the rising need for this service.

UnitingCare Community’s Financial First Aid Line is available 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. Call 1800 007 007 or email ffa@ucccommunity.org.au.



A financial counsellor with a couple in a face-to-face counselling session. Photo courtesy of UnitingCare Community

We’re rapt in this gift catalogue!

FROM support for anti-trafficking programs to resources for ministry training, the 2012 *Everything in Common* gift catalogue produced by UnitingWorld offers 30 creative ways to support the work of Uniting Church partners in Asia, Africa and the Pacific.

“We’ve provided a range of gifts that are not only about sharing material resources that help overcome poverty but are also providing training for the future,” says UnitingWorld National Director Kerry Enright.

“That includes equipping young leaders in Zimbabwe to cope with HIV/AIDS and conflict resolution. We’re partnering with the church in South Sudan to train midwives, desperately needed in a country with one of the highest rates of maternal mortality in the world. And we’re offering theological training in the Pacific and Africa.”

Everything in Common includes gifts from \$10 to \$250 in the three partnership regions.

Congregational gift ideas at \$2000 are also suggested. These include a well for a community in Zimbabwe,

support for a new Pacific women’s project and resources for the anti-trafficking program in India.

For more information, visit www.everythingincommon.com. To run an *Everything In Common* gift stall at your church, contact Stephanie at UnitingWorld on 02 82672332.



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Not waving, drowning – in abundance

Dianne Jensen

ADRIFT in a sea of stuff, we were about to sink below the surface with a helpless gurgle.

When an adult child returns to the family home and discovers that her former bedroom is being used as a defacto dumping ground, there are, as the censorship board warns, disturbing scenes.

We needed to do more than de-clutter our house, we had to free ourselves from both the weight of too many possessions and from our unregulated stewardship of the past – items we had stored because we might need them someday, or we found a replacement, or to remember the person who had worn it or made it or given it. They were buffers against want, and tokens of love and loss.

Rev Dr Andrew Dutney picked up on Australians' love affair with stuff in the 13th Assembly theme, *Life Overflowing*.

"We've become used to having or wanting an abundance of stuff – an abundance of the things we want as well as the things we need ... We throw away as much as we can just to replace it with even more," he told delegates.



A tsunami of stuff

De-cluttering is a bit of a fad; you can buy how-to books, subscribe to blogs, and even engage someone to come to your house.

In our case, events forced our hand.

We discovered enough school backpacks to outfit the Von Trapp family, a tsunami of tennis racquets on a top shelf, a cumulative total of 36 years of school assignments, and we were just beginning ... most discouraging was the mountain of electronic gadgets and technological waste.

Although we dived into this project without much forethought, de-cluttering experts suggest a number of steps.

First, establish goals, and make your own rules about what goes and what stays. Second, give yourself time to achieve the goals, or you may become stuck in the middle of a worse mess, and end up tossing everything out or dumping it back into the cupboard in tears. Third, take a break, because you need to deal with the inevitable anxiety and sadness, and to be able to make good decisions.

And finally, remember to organise the useful items that remain and to appreciate the precious mementoes that can

now shine like the revealed treasures they are.

Farewell, my lovely

How did we do it?

Our first stop was the local op shop. We dropped off eight bags as a kind of preliminary skirmish. Emboldened, we went back and found more. Some things were easy to farewell. Clothes that were too small, boring books, unwise purchases, and anything that belonged to another family member were disposed of with hardly a backward glance.

Next, we used the resources of GIVIT, an online portal for targeted giving, set up by Brisbane resident Juliette Wright in the wake of last year's floods. The site connects people with items to give away (or who would like to donate towards a specific need) with local charities.

Our surplus single bed was exactly what a nearby Uniting Church charity needed for a parent and child transitioning out of homelessness. And yes, they could use the doona, blankets, sheets and pillowcases, and they could pick it all up on

Friday.

Dodgy items such as a rusty pogo stick and broken chairs were reserved for the annual council pickup.

Last year, in a commendable example of neighbourhood recycling, almost everything we put out for collection by the council was gone before the truck arrived. I won't mention what I picked up outside other people's places.

E-waste was collected for recycling, through a local business that recycles electrical equipment, metals and plastics including CDs and DVDs.

Of course, the personal mementoes were the most difficult to sort. The advice of Debra Dane, who writes the *Home Life Simplified* blog, is useful.

"Having 20 boxes in your garage serves no purpose at all. It does not honour someone who left you their things ... Often it brings you stress and heartache over how to handle it all," she says.

More than just a mess

As the season of Advent rolls around, and the subject of gift-giving appears on the horizon, Dr Dutney's reflections echo the prophetic call to live simply, so that others may simply live.

"Australians know about the kind of abundance that leaves us cluttered, bloated and burnt out, at odds with each other and entwined in unjust, unsustainable economic systems," he says.

On the surface, our clutter is a first-world problem. But the roots of thoughtless consumption and accumulation run deep in the sustainability of our world. And our inability to let go of the things that we think bring meaning to our lives, or will shield us from want, imprisons us behind bars of our own making.

A new Lifeline shop has recently opened in Tewantin on the Sunshine Coast, stocked with books, bric-a-brac, manchester, and clothing. Photo supplied by Lifeline

What to get when you don't need a thing

Buy a product from a charity gift catalogue

UnitingWorld is the Uniting Church in Australia relief and development agency, engaging with Australian and overseas partners to combat poverty and injustice. You can support their work through *Everything in Common – The Gift Catalogue*. See page 6 for details. Christmas cards can be sourced from Uniting Church agencies such as Frontier Services. Contact the national office on 1300 787 247 or visit frontierservices.org/frontier-shop/christmas-cards.

Buy ethically sourced products

Shop at stores such as Oxfam and The Trading Circle, where goods are sourced from co-ops, sheltered workshops and self-employed artisans, often using recycled materials and providing training and employment for disadvantaged people. Narana Creations is a not-for-profit organisation run by an Indigenous community. Visit narana.com.au.

If you don't have access to a specialty store, read labels and check provenance on supermarket items. Remember that consumers have the power of choice.

Check out op shops for pre-loved treasures

Your local charity store is home to treasures such as silk scarves, crystal vases, unusual jewellery, old sheet music and retro sewing patterns.

UnitingCare Community has over 130 Lifeline shops across Queensland, the proceeds from which help fund the Lifeline 24-Hour Crisis Counselling Line, face-to-face counselling, and community recovery and support programs.

The National Association for Charitable Recycling Organisations (NACRO) reports that in 2008–09, Australians donated over 250 000 tonnes of items to charity stores.

- 90 000 tonnes were reused by the community – either given away by charities or sold through opportunity shops
- 20 000 tonnes were recycled
- 55 000 tonnes of goods graded for export were sent to developing countries
- 88 000 tonnes were unusable and disposed of in landfill – the cost of which was borne by the charities.

Looking for your closest op shop? Visit www.dosomethingnearyou.com.au.

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Love and loss

Tara Burton

TWO years ago a close friend of mine passed away from cancer. At just 21 years old she lost her



Tara and Zoe sharing happy moments – and mementoes. Photos courtesy of Tara Burton

battle. I was devastated that she could be taken so young.

On my last visit she had emptied out her wardrobe because she had lost too much weight to fit into her clothes. She insisted that I take any items that I wanted as she no longer needed them. Reluctantly, I took a few things, kissed my friend on the cheek and told her I would visit again soon. I never got that chance because in only a few weeks she was gone.

All I have left of her now apart from my memories are pictures of us together, a crystal angel that dangles in my car, and those items from her wardrobe.

I have mixed emotions about these clothes. Sometimes I want to wear them so I can feel close to her again. And at other times I feel they are far too sacred to wear, and I might tear or stain them. So they hang in my cupboard, where instead of their original purpose they serve as treasured mementoes.

On the rare occasions I've worn them, I think of her constantly, which is why it is so hard to put them on. These items of hers remind me of the days when she wore them. But instead of my memories being happy ones, I think of the pain of losing her and feel my grief over again.

I regularly clean out my cupboard and sell items that I no longer wear, whether on eBay or at markets or clothes-swapping parties. Yet although I ruthlessly spring-clean my regular wardrobe I look at my friend's clothes fondly, knowing I could never give them up.

This got me thinking about our attachments to things – particularly items that have been given to us from relatives or close



friends. Such "stuff" can hold so much meaning. I'm sure you must know what I mean. These might look like regular tracksuit pants and matching jacket to strangers, but strangers would have no idea what they mean to me. They're purple, her favourite colour.

Strangers wouldn't notice my pain when I wear them nor that the memories come flooding back.

I sometimes wonder if there will ever be a day when I will wear them without feeling guilty – that I took something of hers, that I'm here wearing something that belonged to her.

I don't know if that day will come but I do know that I treasure those items. Along with my photo albums, her clothes would be one of the few things I would grab in a house fire.

I will never part with them.



Wellbeing joins the bottom line

Kate Indigo

AUSTRALIA'S progress can't just be measured in dollars says UnitingJustice Australia Director Rev Elenie Poulos.

Participation, progress and better public policy are important long-term goals of the Australian National Development Index (ANDI), a collaboration of 40 leading community organisations, church groups (including the Uniting Church), businesses and universities to develop a national wellbeing index.

Journey asked Ms Poulos how ANDI will make a difference.

"The point of ANDI is to provide an alternative to GDP [Gross Domestic Product] as a view of Australia's progress – one that is based on indicators of wellbeing rather than that sort of gross measure, which is all about consumption and spending," she said.

The Global Financial Crisis (GFC) changed the way a lot of

Australians view money and the outward trappings of success.

"The GFC highlighted for people that the system wasn't working. It kind of woke us up. The fact that there are banks that are too big to fail, I think, came as a shock."

The international movement to develop alternative measures of wellbeing and progress is not new.

"In fact, it probably goes back a couple of decades," says Ms Poulos.

"The OECD [the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development] has a long-

standing program, and is one of our partners in the ANDI project.

"The partners are varied and range from the Uniting Church in Australia to the

Australian Bureau of Statistics, as well as the Australian Conservation Foundation and the Australian Council of Social Service – what you might call the usual suspects – to business groups like Bendigo Bank."

On the way together

"One of the things that's special about ANDI is that it aims to be a participatory project that engages Australians in a conversation about what matters to them.

"Once we get past the pilot and the organisation is set up, the ANDI will begin to look at how Australia is progressing in certain broad areas of life, such as health, education, finance, the economy, the environment and happiness."

Ms Poulos says there are many long-term outcomes.

"One is community engagement: a national conversation that takes place regularly in local contexts and also online. Local community groups can log on to a website to get ANDI data and statistics for their region, which will be good information to which they can add their local knowledge to make good decisions."

Building a decent society

"Another outcome of ANDI will be a national conversation both in the media and on the ground.

"Eventually, ANDI will probably be a single number, so that as we now say the GDP's gone up 2% for the quarter, once every three months ANDI might release its own wellbeing index which might be, say, 2. Plus, every quarter might also see more detailed results released on a particular domain, such as health or education.

"We anticipate this feeding into public policy, with the

outcome of better public policy in Australia, developed from our values and dreams about building a decent society, rather than on our economic bottom line.

"I think Australians are ready to hear policy conversation that is about how we make a better country, not just who can be a better manager of the economy.

"Both parties joined forces in October to reduce the single parenting payment. Single mothers are now going to be forced onto Newstart, which is just not enough. People who live on Newstart live in poverty in this country.

"The reasons are about balancing the budget. Now, balancing the budget is important and we need to act responsibly economically, but Australia is a very wealthy country and we have a lot of money to spend.

"ANDI will provide a good basis for discussions such as: What do we want to spend our money on? Do we want to spend our money on more submarines? Do we want to spend our money on growing our defence forces for imaginary wars? Or do we want to give it to people who struggle to put food on the table and give them a hand to get out there and find ways of participating in society?"

"It's been very sad to see the polarised debate in this country on often really marginal issues that have become highly politicised – whereas we actually share a whole lot of values.

"Whether you're a unionist or

a business person, or a church person or an atheist, when you say, 'What kind of society do we want to be?', it is amazing and brilliant how common the answers are.

"They're about people being able to raise their family in comfort, educational opportunities for their kids, good quality and accessible health care, an environment that's not plundered but one that's sustainable and can actually meet our needs, and also contributes economically to our wellbeing."

To find out more, visit andi.org.au.



Director of UnitingJustice Australia, Rev Elenie Poulos. Photo courtesy of Uniting Church of Australia Assembly

state of the synod

How are we, the Uniting Church in Queensland, travelling towards our Vision 2020? This is a good question to ask at just over a year since we gathered for the 29th Synod meeting.

THE role of Moderator provides me with an opportunity to visit many places. Some places have enthusiastically embraced the call to be Uniting in Christ, acting with love, living with hope, witnessing in faith, and working for justice.

As I journey around the Queensland Synod I tell stories of the variety of ways different parts of the church are implementing our Vision 2020. It becomes a two-way process as I listen to people share their stories and initiatives.

In the Mary Burnett Presbytery, the Central Burnett congregation identified that their members are already engaged in building authentic community relationships. Gayndah runs an op shop, Central Burnett hosted a day camp with the help of the Redlands congregations and in Mundubbera a congregation member organises a monthly market day.

I like to think of our current five priority directions set by the 29th Synod as hat hooks for the work of God.

When Synod Standing Committee meets we ask how each decision fits with these priority directions.

Collaboration between Trinity Theological College and the Synod office has continued the Stretching Faith young adult theology events. Moreton Rivers Presbytery is now hosting a monthly Stretching Faith event. This contributes to forming active and accountable disciples of Jesus who are confident in sharing their faith and complements what is happening in local congregations.

Blue Care has developed a state-wide property strategy and the UnitingCare Board is currently recruiting new members.

Some congregations have not yet explored how the *Together on the way* journey can help them with their local mission planning and how they are connected with the whole of the Uniting Church in Queensland. I invite you to make the link between what you are already doing and the Vision 2020 captured in the wheel above.

A church council might ask:

How are we promoting a discipline of prayer and spirituality and what are we doing locally to be sustainable in our mission?

Oxley Uniting Church used the *Together on the way* balloons in its anniversary worship celebration to highlight the call statements.

Bald Hills Bracken Ridge Uniting Church has begun exploring what it means to be *Together on the way, enriching community* as part of their season of intentional interim ministry with Rev Lynne Davis.

A member of Middle Ridge Uniting Church in Toowoomba crafted a stunning patchwork banner depicting the five call statements: Uniting in Christ; acting with love, living with hope, witnessing in faith, working for justice. She caught sight of the vision held within the call statement and then worked to understand it in a way that she could communicate it to others through her craft.

What could you do in your context?

Kaye Ronalds

Rev Kaye Ronalds

Moderator, The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod

 **together on the way**
enriching community



key decisions

What is happening with some of the key decisions made by the 29th Synod?

Elected decision makers

MEMBERS of the 29th Synod meeting adopted a re-invigorated model for the Synod Standing Committee to help the Queensland Synod be better organised for mission.

Formerly called the Council of Synod, the Synod Standing Committee is the decision making body for the Queensland Synod between Synod meetings.

Membership of the Synod Standing Committee is made up of regulated ex-officio members (the Moderator, ex-Moderator, Moderator-Elect, and General Secretary), and Synod-determined ex-officio members: the Chair of the Finance, Investment and Property Board, Chair of UnitingCare Queensland board, Chair of Board for Christian Formation (BCF), a nominee of Congress in Queensland and, as of last Synod meeting, the Chair of the Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee (GNRC).

The Synod in Session also elects 10 members according to their gifts in congregational leadership, community service and evangelism as well as expertise in areas including theology, finance, governance, law, and understanding diverse social and cultural perspectives.

Elected ordained members are David Baker, Linda Hamill, Garry Hardingham, Lu Senituli and David Won Kim. Elected lay members are Greg Adsett, John Agnew, Geoff Batkin, Allan Hanson and Roberta Stanley.

The new Synod Standing Committee is refining how they work strategically and are engaged in development activities around governance (developing a healthy organisation) and risk. They now meet in the chapel of the Uniting Church Centre in Auchenflower, a reminder of the purpose of their work.

Moderator Rev Kaye Ronalds says the changes have been welcome.

"We are still getting distracted by issues and operational matters but that is a cultural change which will take time," she says. "The smaller group enables us to be more engaged. Everyone has a voice – no-one sits back."

key decisions continued

Exploring governance

THE Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee (GNRC) was created after the last Synod meeting. The committee is working closely with chairs of boards to develop and implement recruitment processes and procedures (including actively seeking members, their formation and induction), selection, and appointments to Synod boards, committees, commissions and other entities such as schools and tertiary colleges which have Uniting Church representatives.

Chris Barnard is interim chair of the GNRC in this establishment phase. The Moderator and General Secretary are ex-officio members. Other current members (appointed by Synod Standing Committee) are Prof Myles McGregor-Lowndes, Tim Longwill and Glenn Poole.

Members of the committee are drawn from the wider Uniting Church with gifts, skills and experience in the following competencies: governance and legal experience; talent identification and recruitment; senior management experience; networking and high level communication skills; congregational perspectives and theological reflection.

Two governance appointments have been made. Anne Osbourne and Silvio Angelucci will begin work at the Synod office on 5 November and will provide governance advice, undertake research, draft governance documents and provide administrative support to the General Secretary and the chairs of the FIP Board, the GNRC and Synod Standing Committee.

Youth and young adult event funding

MEMBERS of the 29th Synod (held in October 2012) requested Standing Committee to consider, as a matter of priority, providing a pool of money to fund regional children, youth and young adult ministry events.

Through the budget process this year presbyteries were asked to consider synod-presbytery and presbytery-presbytery partnerships to promote priority mission activities in their area.

Each presbytery within their operational and strategic budget submissions had the opportunity to promote youth and young adult events.

Synod office staff spend time on administration and marketing support for some youth and young adult events.

Re-imagining presbyteries

WHAT makes a functional and resourced presbytery?

This key question was explored by Synod Standing Committee and presbytery ministers in their budgeting process after the 29th Synod asked the Standing Committee to consider different presbytery structures.

At the request of Standing Committee, the General Secretary, Dr Shirley Coulson, undertook a budget processes review. The outcome of this was presented at the August Standing Committee meeting.

The result was reflected in a change from block grants to funding based on strategic projects.



The interim TB ward in Daru Hospital in Papua New Guinea. Photo by Michael Wightman / AusAID

TB clinics in Torres Strait close as funds withdrawn

Sue Hutchinson and Katie Lewis

A MOVING proposal presented to the 29th Synod encouraged people to lobby the Australian Government to maintain tuberculosis (TB) clinics in the Torres Strait that were under threat of funding cuts. Since then the clinics at Sabai and Boigu, conducted by the visiting TB teams from Cairns, have been closed.

At the time, treatment was being provided for people with TB from Papua New Guinea (PNG) through the visiting clinics. The proposers, Pastor Jan Bryde and Rev Bruce Cornish, expressed grave concern about Queensland Health's plan to stop the clinics before PNG was properly able to provide those services themselves. Also noted was the prevalence of multi drug resistant strains of TB, which raised concern, not only for the people themselves, but also for Australians.

The proposal urged people to contact their federal and state members about this issue. Following the state election in March, Moderator Rev Kaye Ronalds wrote to the new Queensland Premier drawing this issue to his attention.

Through AusAID, the Australian Government is providing \$8 million over four years (2012–15) to strengthen the TB program in the Western Province of PNG. This funding will provide additional staff and drugs; a purpose-built sea ambulance to support mobile health clinics along the coast; a new TB unit at the Daru Hospital, with a temporary ward being set up in the meantime; and will provide the hospital with upgraded equipment and facilities.

World Vision has started a three-year program called Stop TB in PNG's Western Province in partnership with AusAID, the Western Province Health Division and the National TB Program. Similar programs in other parts of PNG have improved detection rates and successfully cured many people.

The situation for people from PNG's Western Province with TB has changed significantly.

The intention is that all treatment for patients is conducted within the Western Province. If they are very ill they are sent to the Daru Hospital.

Many people who were being treated in Australia have been sent back to PNG for the completion of their treatment. When new TB patients from PNG travel to the general health clinics in the Torres Strait,



Research Officers Katie Lewis and Sue Hutchinson. Photo by Holly Jewell

they are sent back to PNG for treatment, unless they are too ill to travel.

The success or otherwise of this approach will not be known for some time. There are many potential pitfalls. The Uniting Church will watch developments with great interest.

Speaking out for justice

MEMBERS of the 29th Synod requested the General Secretary and the Synod Standing Committee, in implementing the *Together on the way, enriching community* priorities, to consider the role of one Synod office staff person being directed towards resourcing and supporting the Moderator, General Secretary, and the wider church in fulfilling the commitment to the pursuit of justice, peace and a sustainable environment.

To this end, a research officer position was created within Uniting Communications.

From a high-quality pool of applicants Sue Hutchinson and Katie Lewis were appointed to the position in a job-share situation and began in September.

In their new role, Ms Hutchinson and Ms Lewis have commenced work in a number of areas including: assisting the chaplaincy department by researching the effects of the resources boom on communities; support for asylum seekers and refugees; and child safety – mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Both Ms Hutchinson and Ms Lewis moved to the Synod office from UnitingCare Social Justice and have extensive experience.

Ms Hutchinson's professional background is as an occupational therapist working with people with disabilities. She worked at UnitingCare Social Justice for over four years, where her major focus was in public policy.

Ms Lewis worked as a community development worker for a not-for-profit organisation, supporting people with a disability to fulfil socially valued roles. At UnitingCare Social Justice she worked on projects including the Criminal Justice Network, reconciliation and impacts of the resources boom.

To contact either Sue Hutchinson or Katie Lewis phone 3377 9774 or email researchofficer@ucaqld.com.au

priority

How are the five Priority Directions being lived out across the whole Uniting Church in Queensland?

Sharing the vision

Priority Direction A – Enabling a demonstrated commitment to the shared Call and Vision.

Sharon Kirk

I HAVE encouraged congregations in the Downs Presbytery to use the Vision 2020 wheel (shown on the front page of this lift-out) as a tool for reflection on their life together in worship, witness and service.

The Vision 2020 wheel was developed to illustrate, at a glance, the call and mission priorities that will focus the Uniting Church in Queensland's attention as we continue on the *Together on the way, enriching community* journey. It represents the kind of church we imagine ourselves to be.

I ask: "How might the Vision 2020 relate to your congregation's vision statement and mission goals?" or "Can you find yourself, your passions or area of giftedness on the wheel? Where do you fit?"

In The Downs Presbytery, we use the Vision 2020 wheel in intentional conversations with ministry agents. Ministers are invited to name and discuss areas of the wheel their congregation/s are focusing on during annual pastoral dialogues with the presbytery minister and to report on the priority directions in annual reports.

The development of the congregational profile is another place where the mission of the congregation is intentionally reviewed in relation to the Vision 2020. During presbytery meetings, agenda items and areas of work are often identified in relation to the priority directions.

The *Together on the way* wheel has captured the imaginations of people in this presbytery.

An activity was developed to encourage individuals to place themselves on the wheel identifying the sections that best give expression to their gifts, strengths and focuses for mission activities. Gaps are identified and people are asked how these might provide opportunities for exploration, learning and growth? This is a fun way to introduce the Vision 2020 wheel to a church council or congregation meeting.

Each congregation was given the instructions and parts for this activity, and other *Together* resources, in their congregation pack at the 29th Synod meeting last October.

Download the Vision 2020 wheel at together.ucaqld.com.au

Sharon Kirk is The Downs Presbytery Minister

direction updates



Promoting prayer

Priority Direction B – Promoting a discipline of prayer and spirituality (individual and corporate).

Bob Harriman

THE Mary Burnett Presbytery asked congregations to adopt being “a prayerful listening church” (part of the Vision 2020 for the whole church) as part of their vision in 2011 and beyond.

As a result, many new prayer groups formed and existing prayer groups reinvigorated.

Into this increased prayerfulness three questions were asked: Who are we? Where are we going? And how are we going to get there?

We know that there is no definitive permanent answer to these questions, but this year the Mary Burnett Presbytery declared that “We are called to be salt, yeast and light in God’s world”.

For the next five years our vision is to become a prayerful listening church (reaffirmed), and be organised for mission.

The plans and practicalities of how we are going to get there are the subject of ongoing prayer, listening to God, listening to each other, listening to the community, and listening to our personal call.

There is growing excitement about what God is doing among us.

Rev Bob Harriman is Mary Burnett Presbytery Minister

Getting organised for mission

Priority Direction C – Developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the Church in Queensland.

Shirley Coulson

THERE has been a lot of work both within the Synod office and in the wider Queensland Synod on this priority direction.

Synod staff and presbytery ministers have been developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the Uniting Church in Queensland. This needs to happen for the church to best use our God-given resources to enable God’s work.

In the Synod office, the FAPS marketing team and the Communications Services Unit became one revitalised team – Uniting Communications.

Presbytery ministers identified a framework for functional and resourced presbyteries.

Conversations with presbytery leaders around budget proposals have led to a clearer understanding of how each presbytery can contribute to the whole synod. For example, Bremer Brisbane has long been a lead presbytery for supervision of ministry agents.

As a strategic project the South Moreton Presbytery created the new position of Project Officer – Mission. The purpose of this role is to increase capacity across the South Moreton Presbytery in areas specifically relating to mission planning, church planting, youth and children’s ministry.

Not only has the makeup of Synod Standing Committee changed, as approved by the last Synod in Session, but so too has its format. We no longer simply receive an activity report. Instead, reports are made about how the priority directions are being addressed.

Building capacity is a significant component of being sustainably organised for mission and a number of new appointments (redirecting funds from redundant positions) will enhance our ability to continue this journey.

Dr Shirley Coulson is the General Secretary of the Queensland Synod



Renewing leadership

Priority Direction D – Facilitating renewal of leadership for the mission of the Church.

Malcolm Coombes and Neil Thorpe

TRAINING existing leaders and fostering new leaders (succession planning) continues to be critical for the life of our church.

The Trinity faculty is engaged with Pilgrim Learning Community in the delivery of Pilgrim courses to facilitate the development of leadership across the Synod. They are also seeking accessible ways to improve offerings for continuing education for leaders.

One exciting possibility for Pilgrim Learning Community is the development of digital courses accessed online at times suitable to the learner and not necessarily limited by the availability of presbytery or synod staff to lead them.

The Synod’s Board for Christian Formation (BCF) is undertaking a strategic review that will result in some exciting initiatives for leadership education. The BCF has oversight of the work of Trinity Theological College and Pilgrim Learning Community, as well as other responsibilities. This review arose from work on Priority Direction D of the *Together on the way, enriching community* journey.

The BCF is exploring having an extra team member in apologetics and evangelism as a resource not just Trinity Theological College units but for congregations and other agencies across the synod, particularly in the area of leadership in evangelism.

Also being considered is how the services of Trinity Theological College and Pilgrim Learning Community can be shaped to provide high-quality leadership education that meets the needs of congregations.

Trinity Theological College proposed a new faculty position description in practical theology – Director of Studies in Mission, Ministry and Leadership. Dr Aaron Ghiloni was appointed to the role in August this year and is engaged in developing leadership resources.

Within the Synod office, Rev Mark Cornford will begin as Christian Formation Project Officer in December, and Scott Guyatt will begin as Mission Engagement Project Officer in January.

Rev Dr Malcolm Coombes is Trinity Theological College Acting Principal and the Director of Studies – New Testament. Neil Thorpe is Director of Pilgrim Learning Community

Enriching community partnerships

Priority Direction E – Engaging in opportunities for intentional, open community connections and partnerships.

John Cox

THE social impacts of Fly-in, Fly-out (FIFO) work on workers, families and local communities continue to be a concern of the church.

At the time of the 29th Synod meeting, the Chaplaincy Commission had begun exploring the idea of resourcing chaplaincy into communities directly affected by the resources boom.

We entered a research phase, exploring the issues specifically related to FIFO work and its impacts.

The Commission connected with the Central Queensland Presbytery to explore the impacts of mining on the local communities, and to hear first-hand the experiences of people living in those communities.

We recognised the needs of families who live in feeder communities and the impacts of extended absence of a family member due to work.

A number of models of providing chaplaincy were explored, and while not yet finalised, a preferred model has been developed. This model recognises the need for support for communities, workers and their families around which FIFO work occurs.

The Chaplaincy Commission is best placed to identify how we might be able to offer chaplaincy within the mining workforce, and has developed an initial model from which conversations with stakeholders might be resourced. At the same time, two presbyteries are looking at models for resourcing congregations to make intentional and open community connections and partnerships within affected communities and we are exploring how to effectively support families in feeder communities.

UnitingCare Queensland is also exploring issues of disadvantage, particularly those related to mining communities, and how provision of services might be maintained.

We are grateful for opportunities to share information, partnership prospects, and look forward to working together in the future. This work also includes Uniting Communications Research Officers.

Rev John Cox is Synod Ministries Coordinator

finance update

The Synod’s financial situation remains stable but is still a serious issue that affects the whole Uniting Church in Queensland.

AT the 28th Synod in 2010, a capital injection of \$20 million was requested through the transfer of beneficial use of property to the Synod. That is, congregations, presbyteries and agencies were asked to assess if their properties were being used to their full potential. Underutilised property was sold to assist the whole Uniting Church in Queensland’s financial position.

As of 15 October 2012, the Synod office had received \$8.4 million in the sale of underutilised properties with a further \$400 000 pledged. These are needed gifts for the church but fall far short of the \$20 million requested.

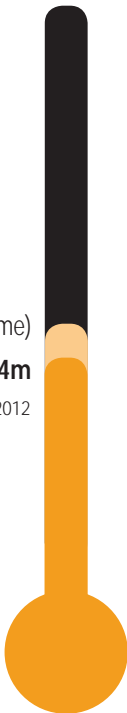
In the Synod office there is a particular focus for developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the Church in Queensland. New budgeting processes reflect strategic mission priorities, prioritising funds to reflect the Call to be Uniting in Christ; acting with love, living with hope, witnessing in faith, and working for justice.

Ask \$20m
(at the 28th Synod in 2010)

\$0.4m pledges (still to come)

We have received \$8.4m

as of 15 October 2012

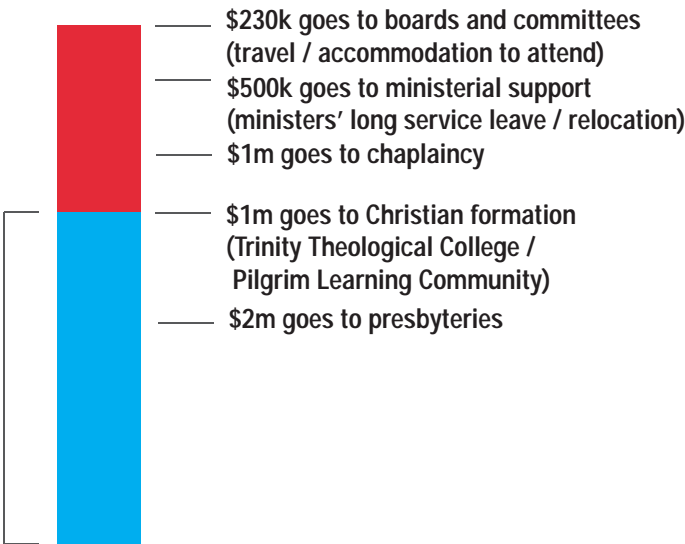


Congregational contributions

CONGREGATIONAL contributions to Synod finances equate to \$3 million per year. \$2 million goes to support the presbyteries operational and strategic projects; \$1 million goes to Christian formation (including Trinity Theological College and Pilgrim Learning Community); another \$1 million supports chaplaincy; \$500 000 pays for ministers’ long service leave and relocations; and \$230 000 funds official Synod boards and committees. So \$3 million in becomes almost \$5 million back to congregations and presbyteries to assist in their mission and ministry.

Congregational contributions to the Synod also assist the work of Assembly agencies (including Frontier Services and UnitingWorld) and specific projects like church planting and new expressions of ministry.

contributions from
congregations = \$3m



state of the synod



together on the way
enriching community

How blessed are the poor?

Tara Burton

FIFTY per cent of the world's population are living on less than \$2.50 a day. That's 3.5 billion people.

A child dies from hunger every six seconds. That's six million children every year.

As Christine Hunt, Campaign Leader for Maternal and Child Health at World Vision Australia says, "It's equivalent to ten buses fully loaded with children crashing every hour every day – and killing all aboard. In a country like Australia, nobody would stand by and allow it to happen!"

"Australia is the lucky country," she continues. "We have access to food, clean water, universal healthcare and education."

"In the great lottery of life, we won the jackpot. But millions of children around the world miss out on even the most basic of services, simply because of where they were born."

Karalee Health Matters doctor Conrad Mourze points out that it is difficult for people in Western countries to understand what poverty really is.

"We don't suffer the simple hardships that they do in Fiji or Africa, without basics like running water."

Mr Mourze commends volunteering as a way for people to get perspective.

"I think as a Christian you can't turn a blind eye. Volunteering is important, especially for people who have been born and raised in Western countries."

In addition to volunteering, how else can we act?

John Beckett, National Coordinator for Micah Challenge Australia, says that Voices for Justice enables Christians to work together through supporting the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Australia joined 189 countries in signing the MDGs in 2000, which aim to reach specific goals for reducing poverty and improving health in the developing world by 2015.

"Each year 300 ordinary prophets come to Canberra for Micah Challenge's Voices for Justice Conference."

"In their meetings this year with more than 130 members of parliament and senators they focused on the need for Australia to increase aid spending on health."



Mother and child on the streets of Jeswang, Gambia. Photo courtesy of iStockphoto

Mr Beckett says that the injustice between poverty-stricken countries and the Western world is astonishing.

"One of the areas where the difference is most striking is with regard to maternal health."

"Ninety-nine per cent of all maternal deaths occur in developing nations."

"Yet global spending for the 1 per cent of deaths in developed nations far outweighs that on saving women dying in developing nations."

Rob Floyd, Associate Director of Relief and Development at UnitingWorld, also cites terrible maternal health statistics.

"In Papua New Guinea, a woman has a 10 in 10 chance of dying in childbirth."

And according to Christine Hunt, "Becoming a mother is actually one of the most dangerous things a woman in

the developing world can do – because many are simply too poor for childbirth."

"They cannot afford hospital fees and are forced to give birth at home, without skilled help, putting their life and the life of their baby at risk."

"In more extreme cases, women have borrowed money or sold assets to purchase healthcare."

"Compare that with the entitlements Australian parents can enjoy – a family allowance, paid parental leave or a baby bonus – which, for some couples, simply means extra cash for a new plasma TV or baby moon."

Mr Floyd reminds us that extreme differences in child and maternal health are right on our doorstep.

"In Timor Leste, the most common reasons for visiting a doctor or health facility are

malaria, malnutrition (especially in infants and young children), diarrhoea and pregnancy."

"These health issues may seem strange to us because we are rarely exposed to them."

"Even stranger to us is the fact that all these conditions are easily treatable and preventable."

For Australians, continues Christine Hunt, it certainly can be hard to believe that every year over 7 million children under five die from diseases that have been largely eliminated in the developed world.

"A fifth birthday party is something we take for granted," she points out. "We worry about what cake to buy, what party games to play, what lollies to fill our party bags with."

"But millions of children around the world born into poverty will simply not live to celebrate it."



WATCH

Poverty Anthem.

[youtube.com/watch?v=3AGD5fEJfK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3AGD5fEJfK)

First World Problems Anthem.

[youtube.com/watch?v=fxyhfiCO_XQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxyhfiCO_XQ)



WEB

World Vision Child Health Now. Visit

childhealthnow.com.au

Acting locally, caring globally

Marguerite Marshall

CLIMATE change is a moral issue.

Those least responsible for creating the problem will be the most affected.

Every scientific academy in the world says consumption using fossil fuels, which emit greenhouse gas (GHG), is causing extreme weather known as climate change.

The culture of the developed world assumes a right to ever-higher standards of living and consumption. By contrast, the aspirations of the developing

world centre on basic needs for health, nutrition and education.

God has given us clear direction on how to live. We are to care for his creation, the poor and our neighbour as ourselves.

The Uniting Church says we have a moral duty to act – and urgent action is needed.

We cannot ignore what scientific experts say, that if GHG emissions, in particular carbon dioxide, aren't quickly reduced, severe consequences of climate change will ensue: flooding, desertification, famine, water shortages, climate refugees and human conflict.

In Queensland, for example, the Great Barrier Reef and coastal settlements are at risk.

People need clear incentives to change. A carbon price on fossil fuels is an incentive to invest in renewable energy, and is the most effective and cheapest way to cut GHG emissions, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

To assist poor countries tackle climate change a United Nations Green Climate Fund will begin in 2014.

And in further encouraging news, this year world investment in clean renewable energy has outstripped investment in fossil fuel for the first time, according to Australian Chief Climate Commissioner Tim Flannery, as reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 4 August.

Christians know that when we obey God's commandments, God gives life abundantly.

Minimising climate change is an enormous challenge. But Christianity teaches us with the story of David and Goliath that we can succeed even against huge odds.

What we can do:

1. Buy green power.
2. Visit, telephone or write to your local Member of Parliament, the Prime Minister and the opposition leader.

Ask them to:

- ratify the Kyoto Protocol to reduce our GHG emissions to 5 per cent of 2000 levels by 2020
- reduce use of fossil fuels and increase use of non-nuclear renewable energy sources.

Marguerite Marshall is a Uniting Church member, AI Gore-trained environmental leader in The Climate Reality Project, and a presenter of *Beyond Zero Emissions*. Visit acfonline.org.au/be-informed/climate-change/ and beyondzeroemissions.org.

fast facts

Australia emits more GHG than any developed country per head of population.

European Commission's Joint Research Centre and the Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. Readers 20 July 2012

For a safe climate, GHG emissions must peak by around 2016.

www.worldenergyoutlook.org

20 000 Number of jobs in Australia's fossil fuel industry

75 000 Number of jobs that would be created by developing the wind and solar power industries

beyondzeroemissions.org

fast fact

\$1 not spent before 2020 = \$4.30 spent after 2020 on clean energy investment because of increased emissions

es.org/index_info.asp?i=2393



Left to right: Tony Windsor, Independent Member for New England, Santiago Arias, Technical Director of Torresol Energy, Professor Ross Garnaut AO, economist and author of the Australian Government commissioned *Climate Change Review*, Matthew Wright, Executive Director of Beyond Zero Emissions, and Jayne Garnaut at the Torresol Gemasolar plant (concentrated solar tower) in Spain. Photo courtesy of Beyond Zero Emissions

Changing Times

Kate Indigo

IT has never been easy to live gospel values in the contemporary world.

Given today's difficulties, it is helpful to be reminded that it was no easier 40 years ago.

Many Queenslanders have fond and enduring memories of the intentional Christian community known as the House of Freedom that formed 40 years ago in inner-city Brisbane. Those with enduring memories of this community might be surprised that it continues today, through small regular gatherings of original members in Brisbane's West End.

In some respects the House of Freedom was a timeless response to an ageless call. In others it was a very particular manifestation of time and place. The ecumenical House of Freedom was formed by Baptist theologian Rev Dr Athol Gill in response to the challenge posed to him by his students at Brisbane's Methodist Theological College. Practising the ministry of Jesus in the gospels didn't seem possible, they argued, given the structures of the church.

Coinciding with the Aquarius festival in Nimbin and ignited by the election of a new government in 1972 after decades of conservative rule, the fledgling

community drew in young people exploring the relationship between the values of early Christianity and present society.

The House of Freedom was a meeting place for people without the "noise" of an institutional arrangement, recalls member Dr Trevor Jordan.

"Many saw that the early Christian movement wasn't about culture but about counter-culture.

"It was very critical of the social, cultural and political structures of the day.

"Many people who feel called to mission feel confined by institutions," he continues. "They want to go into new areas and try new things.

"From the beginning we were always interested in training and discipleship, and not only Athol but others as well from the colleges and churches trained us in biblical studies. Hans Spykerboer came regularly and taught the Old Testament and Bob Griffiths would talk about mission."

Gayle and Roger Shaw recall that the training was not limited to the theological but also included talks by legal and medical practitioners.

The House of Freedom attracted many who went on to ministry, including President Rev Dr Andrew Dutney, who joined

Top: A performance at the Charlotte Street, Brisbane, coffee shop.

Centre: Rev Dr Athol Gill (centre) leading a discussion at the House of Freedom in Gertrude Street, Highgate Hill, Brisbane, with (from left to right) Ross Munro, Dave Hunnerup, Marita Munro, David Murphy and Hilda Parker.

Bottom: The House of Freedom, Gertrude Street, Highgate Hill, Brisbane.

Photos courtesy of Trevor Jordan

as a teenager and still counts some members among his closest friends.

Paul Moore joined the community in 1973 within six months of its beginnings. He explains that to be a member in the early days required good standing in one of the Christian denominations, and participating in training and outreach work through the coffee house in Brisbane City's Charlotte Street.

Through the House of Freedom, many also discovered a richer tradition of Christians living together as an expression of faith, with some sharing their income and possessions in a common purse.

Although the community was far from alone in its "intelligent, thoughtful ways of doing Christianity", as Ms Shaw puts it, and had contemporary counterparts in Sydney and Melbourne, its legacy has been enduring.

Dr Jordan expands. "Many churches in the decades since have seen value in having their young people



live in households committed to their local congregation and also reaching out."

Paul Moore and others with House of Freedom (and Uniting Church) connections, including Rev Evan and Moira Jones, Dr Fran Guard and Rev Bob Philpot, have built five houses on group title property in the Sunshine Coast hinterland with individual spaces and common areas.

"The community legacy lives on how we think about property and lifestyle," Mr Moore says.

"We are heavily engaged in environmental matters and caring about the earth."

According to President Rev Dr Andrew Dutney, change happens from the fringes.

"That's one of the many things I learnt by being part of the House of Freedom. The community modelled it. They got me involved in it. And they've encouraged and supported me as I've tried to live it for nearly 40 years."



Board Members

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

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

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

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

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



Motivating for good

Tara Burton

ACCORDING to Az Hamilton, founder and director of Just Motivation, some of the greatest work being done in the world today for God is actually done by non-Christians.

"A lot of aid organisations and celebrities are actually raising huge money to feed the poor."

"It's something that's resonating within the hearts of people no matter what their belief systems are."

However, he says, social

justice is at the very heart of God.

How did it all begin?

"I remember sitting in a café for about six weeks," Mr Hamilton says, "and writing down everything that I am passionate about."

"Motivational speaking came out as my real passion and that's where Just Motivation started."

He wanted Just Motivation to ignite young people towards social justice and to promote change.

"This is because they understand that as a society we

should all be contributing to making this world a better place."

Mr Hamilton says that Just Motivation is not about proselytising or trying to convert non-believers.

"It is a movement that is relatable and allows young people to connect and do good in a world where good doesn't very often exist. It is more about relationship-building."

When Christians push Jesus, people can disconnect, he says.

"I've been reminded time and again how important it is

to connect with people and not stay inside our church walls where we're not really making an impact at all.

"Essentially that is why Just Motivation has been a mainstream project."

For more about Az Hamilton and Just Motivation, visit justmotivation.com.au

Mr Hamilton will be the guest speaker at Summer Madness, the Queensland Synod youth camp, to be held at Alexandra Park Conference Centre from 18 to 21 January 2013.

Registration is now open. Visit summermadness.com.au.



Just Motivation leader
Az Hamilton.

Photo courtesy of Az Hamilton

stuff kids ask

If God takes care of all our needs, why do I still have to try my best at school, or do anything at all?

Answered by Rev Alison Cox, youth, children's and families coordinator, Presbytery of Moreton Rivers.

SOME people have the idea that following God will make life perfect. We can just sit back and relax and life will be fine. Unfortunately that's not how it goes. Life will rarely if ever feel perfect. But God does promise that even when life is toughest, we will never be alone. God walks beside us and in front of us and behind us. God's got our back.

When we're part of God's family we watch out for

each other. We care for one another. In hearing our call from God to follow Christ, we also hear the call to live with others, and for others, and to meet each other's needs. We work together to make life better.

So why do I need to do my best? Because God asks us to step up and be the best we can be. God doesn't tell us we have to be the best in the world, just the best that we can be ... for God and for others. So trying hard at school might give us the greatest opportunities in life. This might then mean we can do even more for God.

God has given us many gifts, and we need to use them to care for each other and God's creation.

There's a great verse in Matthew chapter 6 where Jesus talks about the things we get worried about. He says we don't have to worry about tomorrow – about what we'll eat and drink and wear – we need to seek God's kingdom first, so we can get on with living life and following God's call to love God and each other.

We can do our best knowing that God's got our back.

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

Believing in people

Tara Burton

CHRISTOPHER Wayne, dubbed Australia's Celebrity Magician, says that most people can connect with magic in one way or another.

"The Bible talks about the importance of having faith like a child. For me, the best analogy for that is the excitement a child feels for a magic show; the unchallenged belief that anything is possible."

"I like to use my art to remind people of the importance of that, in both life and faith."

Mr Wayne says his humble beginnings as a factory worker at Arnott's Biscuits shaped him.

"Every single day is a highlight when I get to do what I love and encourage people on their life's journeys."

"The last seven years since I first began have been incredibly hard work, but I've been so fortunate with performing opportunities, and I have met so many amazing and loving people."

Mr Wayne says it is rare for his audience to confuse reality and entertainment.

"I've performed in front of literally millions of people. In just one or two situations people have approached me afterwards and

life circumstances.

"Every day is a new day and God has made us all different, with different dreams, goals, and purposes."

"I love to encourage people to get excited about life, love and God, with the same excitement a kid has for a magic show."

Visit Christopher Wayne's website at gospelmagic.com.au



Christopher Wayne, Australia's Celebrity Magician.
Photo by Kris Woldt, Thru A Lens Media

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Director of studies in Systematic Theology

Trinity Theological College, Brisbane
The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod

Trinity College invites applications from suitably qualified people, lay and ordained, women and men, for the above position. The Queensland Synod will make an appointment to the above position from 1 July 2013, or as soon as possible thereafter. The Synod reserves to itself the right to make all decisions with regard to the appointment. Trinity College is the Uniting Church in Australia's theological college in Queensland, with responsibilities for training for ordained and lay ministries.

The College's formation program contains academic, field and integrative components. Its core academic program is taught within the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy of the Australian Catholic University (ACU) within the parameters of an affiliation between ACU and the UCA (Qld Synod).

The person appointed would be expected to participate in the preparation of students for a variety of ordained and lay ministries, and in the preparation of students for Degrees and Diplomas at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. An interdisciplinary approach to teaching is encouraged.



Trinity Theological College
Formation in Worship,
Witness and Service

Enquiries should be made to the General Secretary of the Queensland Synod, GPO Box 674, Brisbane Qld 4001, or by email at gensec@ucaqld.com.au

Applications should be lodged by 4pm on Friday 21 December 2012.



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

4 NOVEMBER – 2 DECEMBER

"Art, Music and the Spirit", Vera Wade Gallery, Saint Andrew's Uniting Church, Ann St., Brisbane City. Group exhibition by Kerry Holland, Geraldine Wheeler, Marion McConaghy, Craig Watson, Janelle Bray, Julie Price, Miriam and Ken King, Glenine Hamlyn, Ros Virisheff. Contact Marion McConaghy on 3870 8460 or marion.mcconaghy@bigpond.com.

4 NOVEMBER

Please pray for Cleveland Uniting Church, for:

- our new minister, Rev Peter Smale, as he seeks to lead and guide us in worship, witness and service
- Rev Beth Nicholls, as she continues to work with Day Camp, Go West, YaSki and the youth groups
- CCC and the leaders who endeavour to inspire our children to an understanding of Christ
- our Christmas Light team, as they prepare for our outreach to the community during December
- those planning a Men's Shed to give men of all ages in the community a place to meet, work and socialise.

4 NOVEMBER 4pm – 5.20pm

Canticum Chamber Choir presents "Glimpses of Heaven" at Brisbane Grammar School Great Hall. Choral classics from the last 500 years to the present day, including Allegri's "Miserere", Barber's "Agnus Dei" and Meador's "Ubi Caritas", commissioned for the wedding of Prince William and Catherine Middleton. Tickets at the door or book at 4mbs.com.au/ticketing. \$25/\$18 concession; children under 12 free. Contact Libby Schmidt on 3857 3678 or contact@canticum.org.au.

8 NOVEMBER 7pm – 8pm

One God Many Voices, Multi-Faith Centre, Griffith University. Abrahamic Faiths Concert. Annual Evening of Jewish, Christian and Muslim Sacred Voices, followed by a Kosher-Halal supper from 9.30pm. Free entry; all welcome. Free parking after 7pm in the Ridge carpark. Contact Ricky Lashand on 3735 7052 or mfc@griffith.edu.au.

9 NOVEMBER 6.30pm – 9pm

Christmas Bazaar, Broadwater Road Uniting Church, 481 Broadwater Rd, Mansfield. Christmas shopping; stalls include Partylite Candles, Phoenix Trading, Positively Charmin', Intimo, Journal Addiction, Mary Kay Cosmetics, Creative Memories; and craft. \$5 entry includes 5 lucky draw tickets. Supper available. Contact Karen Stehbins on 0407 890 644 or stehbos@bigpond.com.

11 NOVEMBER

Please pray for Dayboro Uniting Church's thriving community welfare program, which covers conventional scriptural exposition and putting the gospel into practice by meeting material needs. Please pray that:

- we find or are given resources to help a growing crisis of poverty in the town
- we have wisdom to know when to call in others such as mental health professionals
- we continue to take the lead in ecumenical relationships in the town and at Mt Mee, where there is a single covenant congregation of Anglicans, Catholics, Lutherans and Uniting Church folk
- we always keep clearly in mind that it is the love of God in Christ which motivates us
- our Year 12 young people, who contribute so much to our church's worship, will be blessed as they go on to tertiary education or take gap years.

16 – 17 NOVEMBER 8am – 1pm, both days

Garage sale, Wheller Gardens, Uhl Hall, 930 Gypmie Rd, Chermerside (opposite Westfield). Preloved clothes, appliances and homewares; books, crafts, knick-knacks. Support Wesley Mission Wheller Gardens Auxiliary for aged-care facilities. Contact Barbara Wood on 3359 7010.

17 NOVEMBER 9.30am – 2.30pm

Australian Christian Meditation Community Queensland community day at The Fort, Passionist Centre, 219 Fort Rd, Oxley. Sr Monica Cavanagh to share insights from her spiritual journey. Books, CDs and DVDs on sale. Morning tea and BYO lunch. Suggested donation \$10. Contact Gabby Nelson on 3711 4227 or toga@bigpond.net.au.

18 NOVEMBER 10.30pm – 12.30pm

Peachester Uniting Church 90th Anniversary. Beerwah - Kilcoy Rd, Peachester. Join us to celebrate our 90th anniversary with a service and luncheon. Contact Joan Kropp on 07 5494 9521.

18 NOVEMBER

Please pray for West End Uniting Church, an open, welcoming community of faithful people who seek to live and worship beyond denominational borders. Please pray for:

- the covenantal relationships we honour with local Indigenous ministries and the UAICC congregation at Zillmere
- our ecumenical and interfaith relationships, particularly the interfaith Christmas celebration in November
- our inclusive all-age worship, with young families, elderly people and hostel residents whose love of God shines through the care they have for one another
- the progressive spirituality studies, philosophy group, Taizé prayer and Bible studies each week.



29 NOVEMBER 7pm – 9pm

Women Today. Moggill Uniting Church, cnr Kangaroo Gully Rd and Moggill Rd. Women Today end-of-year celebration with singers, dancers and Christmas feast with jubilant chorals to honour the season. Dress code: evening wear. Contact Iris Marais on 0432 067 227 or iris@irisconsult.com.au.

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

A Short History of Christianity

By Geoffrey Blainey, Viking (Penguin), 2011, RRP \$45

Reviewed by Gary D Bouma

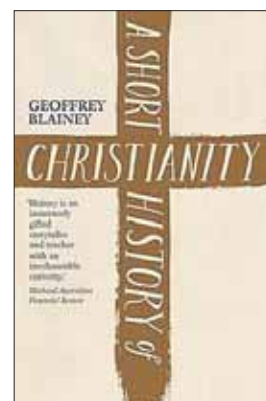
AUSTRALIAN historian Geoffrey Blainey has provided with his latest book a clear and dependable history of Christianity. This is not a scholar's reference work, but a very accessible, engagingly readable story. It combines organisational detail and theological controversies with the sense of what it was like to be a Christian in the different contexts over 2000 years. His history has a richly human quality without sentimentality or, for that matter, "side-taking" in the debates and conflicts reported.

Stories are always told from a perspective, and so is this one. This is a history of Western Christianity, though with refreshingly frequent references to Eastern Christianity. The nods to the Orthodox churches, to Maronites, Copts and others, make a great improvement on earlier histories and serve as a reminder that Christianity is more diverse and more widely spread than the familiar Protestant/Catholic divide. Nonetheless, this history has a European focus, with the weight of detail focusing on the West and, after the Reformation, on Protestant Christianity. Blainey might argue that the weight of historical evidence supports this – until recently the majority of Christians lived in Europe or were of European origin.

The need for a book like this is enormous in an age when ignorance about religions and Christianity is rising to a point where meaningful discourse about religion, faith, and belief is nearly impossible. I recommend it to each and all. Those who are not Christian would benefit from this balanced and unvarnished account of a monumentally influential religion. Christians would benefit from what only a study of history can bring: a counter to the ignorance which predisposes us to repeat past errors.

Blainey's history is descriptive. This allows readers, if they wish, to form their own judgments. Yes, the fortunes rise and fall again and again, but there is little attribution of cause. Readers may discern patterns, but Blainey's history does not.

Nor is this history an account of current events. As a historian, Blainey is careful in his handling of current changes in the churches and the resurgence of the Eastern church following the demise of communism. As told by Blainey, this interesting story is far from over, and should provide great caution to those predicting the



disappearance of Christianity due to secularisation.

I have read many histories of Christianity, both detailed accounts of specific periods and overall sketches. This one drives a confident line through the varying explanations and debates within the many competing accounts. Blainey's account is not misleading; it is not hagiographic; nor does it preclude debate or suggest consensus where there is none.

I do have some quibbles. First, Blainey decided to refer to Jesus the Christ as "Christ" throughout. I found this jarring. I would have preferred "Jesus", especially in reference to Jesus of Nazareth. Second, one of the contrasts between the Roman and Eastern churches was not as developed as it might have been, even within the concision required by a "short" history. The Greek title *theotokos*, bearer of God, is ascribed to Mary and continues to inform the attitude toward Mary in the East. However, the Latin translation, *mater dei*, mother of God, gives a very different dimension to this title, which is reflected in the Marian theology and devotion of the West. Third, he maintains the image of Islam as spread by the sword, while the spread of Christianity – no less spread by the sword, cannon, and imperial power – is described much more irenicly.

If you want to know the story of (Western) Christianity, start here. Questions raised can be pursued elsewhere, but there is much richness and enjoyable reading in these 600-plus pages.

A Short History of Christianity won second prize in the 2012 Australian Christian Book of the Year awards.

Gary D Bouma is Emeritus Professor of Sociology, Monash University, and UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific.

You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving Church ... and Rethinking Faith

By David Kinnaman with Aly Hawkins, Baker Publishing Group, 2011, RRP \$21.95

Reviewed by Vicky Balabanski

THIS is a very important book for anyone concerned about the disconnect between young people and the church.

Author David Kinnaman draws on extensive research carried out in the US between 2007 and 2011 with 18 to 29-year-olds from Christian backgrounds. The findings are also instructive for Australians, and cross denominational bounds.

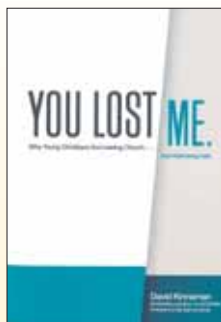
The key thesis is that the speed and scope of cultural change over the past 30 years have been so great that our culture is "discontinuously different" from all that has gone before. Young people born between 1984 and 2002 (dubbed "mosaics" to reflect their eclectic relationships and thinking styles) have grown up

during a massive cultural shift.

Kinnaman analyses the changes of the past decades, exploring the nearly symbiotic relationship between young adults and digital media. The extended circuitous path to adulthood since the 1960s means that only a minority are "settled by 30"; and young people are alienated from cultural institutions generally, not just the church. Traditional sources of authority such as the Bible have made way for peer-driven, tech-savvy ways of drawing together ideas.

Although he emphasises that every story is unique, Kinnaman distils the trends. A minority of young people are rejecting God consciously and actively ("prodigals"); the majority are either drifting ("nomads") or finding no place for their discipleship journey ("exiles").

The reasons young people give for their disconnection from the church include both the expected and the less obvious, such as overprotectiveness.



Kinnaman offers "humble recommendations for some ways the body of Christ can respond in love and on mission".

The book concludes with some wise and practical thoughts about how we can rise to the challenge. There is wisdom and godly optimism here, which concludes with "fifty ideas to find a generation" written by an array of contemporary thinkers.

You Lost Me is important for anyone wondering what God is doing in our time and how the Christian faith can speak into our culture with integrity, depth and courage.

No Fixed Address: Faith as Journey

By John Bodycomb, Spectrum, 2010, RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Noel Preston

THE cover blurb of *No Fixed Address* justifiably claims, "Fifty-four years ordained, with nothing to prove or to fear, Bodycomb answers questions many have been afraid to ask." The author addresses these questions in a readable, engaging and scholarly style, combining autobiographical reflections with well-researched theological argument. The book has five parts: I Born to Dissent?; II The Falling Edifice; III The New Age of Discovery; IV God, Humanity and Cosmos; V The New Mystics.

John Bodycomb has been a parish minister, a Director of Christian Education, Dean of the Uniting Church Theological Hall in Victoria, and ecumenical chaplain at the University of Melbourne. His career positions him well to criticise how theology is presented in most Australian theological colleges. Citing Paul Tillich as the most significant theologian of the twentieth century, he argues that systematic theology has become "ossified" and a "pseudo-science".

Bodycomb was ordained as a Congregationalist – a fact which enriches this work



and enhances its significance, as it provides something of a record about one of the traditions which spawned the Uniting Church in Australia. It also partly explains his independent and critical approach to orthodoxy and ecclesiology, and why he numbers himself with those whose Christianity is inclusive and progressive, challenging certain traditional beliefs.

As I read the book, I found myself longing to hear more of his own spirituality; finally it is revealed as he writes in the final pages about "the intentional use of silence" and his confessed affinity with Quakers.

No Fixed Address is written for a wide audience. It could be used as a text for study groups; there are "questions for consideration" provided with each chapter. I hope it is read by students of the Synod's Trinity Theological College. To assist in that aim, this reviewer's copy will be donated to the college library.

Jesus Freaks

Director AO Days, Circle of Belief Productions, 2010, DVD RRP \$29.95

Reviewed by Fa Ngalaufe

JESUS Freaks traces a journey of spiritual transformation in the wake of tragedy.

On 9 December 2007, the Colorado dorm of US organisation Youth With A Mission (YWAM) woke to a gunman opening fire, killing two and injuring two others.

Although *Jesus Freaks* doesn't detail this event, it opens and ends with one of the deceased speaking about why she chose to come to YWAM discipleship training.

Under the guidance of visionary youth leader John Murphy, the YWAM "boot

camp" attracts young people interested in developing their faith and taking it outside their comfort zone to do mission worldwide.

They come with little in common but God and snowboarding. The training confronts them with their own lives (past and present) as they wrestle with authority, substance abuse, religion, dysfunctional relationships, death and more.

I believe this documentary does two things. First, it lets the world know that despite this tragedy during their discipleship training, John Murphy and his team continue to do God's work to train and equip the young people who come to them.

Second, *Jesus Freaks* demonstrates the intensity of this training. And it doesn't just showcase the mountain-top moments, but gets in close enough for us to understand



the struggles and challenges, financial, emotional and spiritual, of these young people in the course of this very confronting discipleship training.

This documentary is raw, very real, and even if a little repetitive is still a very good resource for youth groups seeking to begin a conversation about theodicy, as well as faith-sharing.

Not a Fan

City on a Hill, 2011, DVD RRP \$24.95, Kit (forthcoming: visit notafan.com.au) RRP \$69.95

Reviewed by Harlee Cooper

NOT a Fan is a whole-of-church study resource that could just as easily be used by individual home groups.

It's a six-week program with a feature film followed by small-group studies in weekly episodes. Each is focused on "encouraging individuals to journey from being a fan of Jesus to becoming a completely committed follower".

Once I got past my scepticism about its polished mega-church origins, I found that *Not a Fan* has a lot to offer.

The film deploys "cinematic storytelling" in an interesting, and surprisingly effective, blend of drama and teaching by Pastor Kyle Idleman, a pastor at Southeast Christian Church. This format is engaging and works well.

The plot follows Eric Neilson, a fictional member of Pastor Idleman's congregation. Although Idleman is a character in the story, from time to time he addresses the viewer directly to teach.

Not a Fan seeks to unpack Jesus' teaching in Luke 9:23, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me".



When released, the kit will include a range of resources including small-group guides, a personal journal and sermon notes. Only the film and the six small-group studies were available for review, but overall, *Not a Fan* seems to hit its mark.

James would be proud of the way Idleman drives home the idea that faith without works is dead. The film does a great job of exploring some of the stumbling blocks to taking up your cross daily.

My only concern would be a subtle undercurrent of fear to the teaching ("What if you died tomorrow? Where would you go?"), although it never takes over.

I reserve my opinion until I see all the resources, but so far I would recommend *Not a Fan* as a great resource for any congregation.

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

The Art of Tentmaking: Making Space for Worship

Edited by Stephen Burns, Canterbury Press, 2012, RRP \$89.95



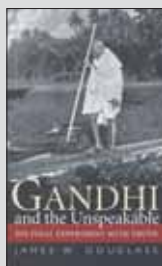
Home

By Nathan Lee and Mark Hadley, Growing Faith Sydney, 2012, RRP \$9.99



Gandhi and the Unspeakable: His Final Experiment With Truth

By James W. Douglas, Orbis, 2012, RRP \$24



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.

Geeks gain grace

WHAT does *Harry Potter* and *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* have to do with Christ's sacrifice and the crucifixion? More than you would think as Rev Dr Avril Hannah-Jones, left, explained at a sci-fi themed service at Centenary Uniting Church, Brisbane, in October. Enthusiastic participants in the Church of the Latter-Day Geek service dressed as their favourite sci-fi character. Reading from popular sci-fi stories showed how the story of Christ is echoed in popular culture. Photo by Mardi Lumsden



Longreach celebrates a tasty legacy

UNITING Church members in Longreach have helped celebrate the anniversary of a community service established with congregational help more than 30 years ago.

Longreach Meals on Wheels Inc (MOW) was first officially mentioned in the minutes of a meeting of the Elders Council of the Longreach Uniting Church in 1979, led by Rev Graeme Adsett, says Elaine Britton, a church member

and a MOW committee member with many years of volunteer service.

A feasibility study indicated that 15 people would use the service, and a committee was established in 1980. Currently, the service provides around 150 meals per week.

"Many members of our congregation have delivered and several are still delivering for this wonderful service," says Ms Britton.



Back row, left to right: Irene Harvey, Elaine Britton, Anne Brown, Gwen Genninges; front row, left to right: Irene Cottam, Aldyth Strang, Kit King.
Photo by Jeanette Gillam

Esk Bush-Bashers revealed

Frank Grigg

WHO are the Esk Bush-Bashers? A Uniting Church (Esk) bush band who came together 20 years ago and are amazed that they are still having fun some 380 church groups later.

The band is composed mainly of blokes on piano, accordions, bass guitar, mouth organ, bush bass (an old tea chest) and lager phone (think bottle tops) together with singers.

We haven't advertised in all that time; word of mouth has ensured the bookings.

Clubs come from as far afield as Murwillumbah, Nambour and Toowoomba to enjoy our country style entertainment – good music, singing, Aussie ballads, jokes and bush poems – all with audience participation around our camp-fire. The clubs

that come are various, but mainly over 50s, and we would welcome more church groups. Groups of 45 to 55 people join our fellowship group from 11am to 2.30pm for lunch, including soup in winter.

Our Rev John Hooper shares the love of our Lord with a blessing, and our guests are sent off singing "Till we meet again", and finally "Show me the way to go home".

After the first concert, we asked a coach company to bring a group to Esk for us to entertain, and with God's guidance and blessing they are still bringing them.

Good news though: we have a few vacancies for next year.

For information and bookings, call 5424 1564.

TUCA Box caters to Toogoolawah

Doris Guldbransen

AT the TUCA Box (Toogoolawah Uniting Church in Australia Box), the ladies of the Toogoolawah Fellowship Guild cater for more than 100 people at each fortnightly cattle sale, with that number doubling at each of the weaner cattle sales in 2011.

The TUCA Box may be new, but the traditions are long-standing. For over 60 of the 85 years of the Methodist and later Uniting Church in Toogoolawah, regular cattle sales have been held in the town.

And since 1958, when Shepherdson & Boyd started conducting the cattle sales, the ladies of the Toogoolawah Methodist Guild and later the Fellowship have been serving refreshments at the saleyards, at first from open fires and tents in the paddock, then a corrugated iron lean-to, and from 1972 until 2008 from an unsecured Besser



brick upgrade to the lean-to.

Catering at cattle sales provides vital funds for our Lord's work in this little corner of our country, so we pray that

the ladies of the Toogoolawah Ladies Fellowship will be able to continue the good work that began over 54 years ago.

Reverends mark 50 years

MODERATOR Kaye Ronalds joined the party at Aspley Uniting Church, Brisbane, on Sunday 14 October to help six Queensland reverends celebrate a half century since their ordination.

Reverends (left to right in photo above left) Garth Read, Arthur Lane, Keith Turpin, Ted Hutton, Len Forrest and Neil Jones had plenty to smile about on the day.

Arthur Lane was ordained in Western Australia although he trained with the others at Kings College, and Neil Jones was ordained in New South Wales.

The photo below right was taken in 1962 at the ordination of the others, and shows (left to right) Ken Hooper (resigned), Keith Turpin, Ted Hutton, Rex Smith (deceased), Garth Read, Len Forrest and Bill Cowan (resigned).

Both photos were taken by Mr Read's son-in-law, Russell Williams.



More Jesus in Journey

THERE were lots of interesting articles, people's news and so on in October *Journey*. Keep up the good work.

I do sometimes wonder just what value Uniting Church people place on having Jesus Christ in our lives.

We're good at talking about caring, compassion, justice, spiritual journeys, and so on. But anyone who is not a

Christian can talk of these things.

We're not so good at talking about witnessing for Jesus Christ to those who don't have him in their lives.

Jesus did say, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except by me."

Beth Clarke
Bongaree



Whose will be done?

THE front page of your October edition proclaims "Seeking holy ground" and says Christian theology, from creation to incarnation, resurrection to ascension, affirms the body.

Romans chapter 1 states God's opinion on the matter, and chapter 12 states that we should present our bodies to God as "a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service".

In John 10, Jesus said that his sheep hear his voice and follow him, and that involves self-denial.

It seems that people now want "My will be done"

instead of "Thy will be done".

In the letter titled "In their shoes", a mother is concerned about the hardship of her daughter and others who have chosen same-sex partners, and expects the church to approve their choice.

As the saying goes, "sitting in a garage will not turn you in to a car" – and neither does growing up in a church make you a Christian.

When we receive Christ as Lord of our life, he empowers us by his Holy Spirit to live in obedience of his Word.

Deanne Stack
Toowoomba



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President's speech at Frontier Services Centenary

Called by God and participating in God's work. Thank you, God.

Michelle Cook

World Homeless Day

The Kingdom of God is a place for all. One of the Kingdom ministries is to eradicate this crisis and allow people to live with dignity and respect.

Devadosan Sugirtharaj

Social Justice Sunday

Challenged the faith community to welcome the stranger ... take care of the marginalised and vulnerable ... see through the anti-family policy that will keep family men seeking protection from persecution held on Nauru for up to five long, idle years, separated from their wives and children ... their loved ones.

Frederika Steen

Where the Hell is God? review

Highly recommended; it is a great read.

Neil Storey

Log in and have your say now!

Aussies open doors to international students

Brisbane Uniting Church families are invited to join a program connecting international students with locals. Aussie Family Mates is already up and running at

UQ, providing opportunities for students to experience Australian culture. Find out more in December *Journey* or visit uq.edu.au/student-services.

Emmaus College shows the way as ecumenical stewards

Luke Watts

MODERATOR Rev Kaye Ronalds joined an ecumenical line-up of church leaders in an opening and blessing of new facilities at Emmaus College

in Jimboomba on Friday 19 October.

Emmaus is an ecumenical college, in which the Uniting, Lutheran, Anglican and Catholic traditions work together to provide a rich faith-based

education for students from prep to Year 12. The opening and blessing celebrations were part of the college's tenth anniversary celebrations.

Ms Ronalds was joined in the ritual by Rev Noel Noack, President of the Lutheran Church Queensland District, Bishop Geoffrey Smith, Auxiliary Bishop of the Southern Region of the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane, and Bishop Joseph Oudeman, Assistant Bishop of the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Local pastors brought forward water from their local communities, which was mingled together and blessed by the heads of the four traditions. In an aspersion ritual, this water was then sprinkled on the crosses that will adorn the new classrooms to bless them.

The college community of nearly 1100 people sang and prayed together in a vibrant liturgy, during which Ms Ronalds gave the sermon. She spoke about people building community in the places they gather in, and the challenge of being good stewards of the facilities that the college has been blessed with.



Left to right: Rt Rev Geoff Smith, Rev Noel Noack, Rev Kaye Ronalds and the Most Rev Joseph Oudeman after the blessing of the crosses. Photo by Lani Pickard

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

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Curing affluenza

Mardi Lumsden
THE great Australian dream is destroying families, communities and the environment, says Dr Richard Denniss, Executive Director of The Australia Institute, economist and co-author of the best-selling book *Affluenza*. He says exponential economic growth is possible; but questions for how long, and to what end.

"People who think that exponential growth will solve things like poverty have to be able to simultaneously explain why the last doubling of GDP didn't eliminate poverty and why they think the next doubling of GDP will."

"History suggests that the vast majority of the benefits of rapid economic growth accumulate to those at the top not at the bottom."

"Australians on average have experienced real wage growth over the last 20 years, but we seem to notice the cost of living far more than we seem to notice our pay packet going up."

"Most people are far more attuned to the fact that petrol used to be 80 cents and now it is \$1.50 a litre."

Keeping up with the Joneses

The desire to want what your neighbours have is not new. But keeping up with the Joneses has gone global.

"Once upon a time people might have compared themselves to the biggest house on the street or suburb. Now that we live in a global village, people living in multimillion-dollar mansions feel poor when they see on television how big Bill Gates's house is."

"I often say Australia's Struggle Street has become so crowded that it's driving up real estate prices! Everyone wants to believe they live on Struggle Street."

Australia's Struggle Street has become so crowded that it's driving up real estate prices!

"We are encouraged to believe we're missing out, because then hopefully we will work harder and spend more money. If you were trying to sell stuff to people, what could be better than a population that feels they are only one purchase away from happiness?"

"I mean, Alan Jones called himself a battler!"

Making people think

One of the key messages in *Affluenza* is the cyclical and self-perpetuating nature of over-consumption, overwork and debt.

"People who work really long hours don't have time to socialise with people who don't," says Dr Denniss. "They feel tired and stressed, so they spend a lot of money on take-away food, getting the house cleaned and maybe ducking off to the South Pacific for a four-day getaway – then coming back and feeling poor."

How then do we solve the underlying problem?

"The main thing is for people to take a deep breath, step back, and ask themselves what is important."

"There aren't many people who come back from a five-week holiday committed to spending more time worrying about work and less time with friends and family."

"I don't think there is a right and wrong answer ... but individuals should understand that there is very weak evidence that doubling their income will double their happiness."



Richard Denniss, Executive Director of The Australia Institute. Photo courtesy of The Australia Institute

"Do you really want to spend your life spending money you don't have, to buy things you don't need to impress people you don't like?"

Challenging consumption

Dr Denniss says anyone who thinks the whole world can consume at the rate of the average Australian is mad. With a small proportion of the world engaging in what he calls conspicuous consumption, we are already placing enormous pressure on the environment.

"Eight billion people can't buy clothes they don't wear, food they throw away and a new fridge when they want a different colour in their kitchen. Only a small percentage of the world's population can be that wasteful."

Dr Denniss encourages us to ponder how much we need to consume and whether buying new things has become an important part of our identity and perception of happiness. He also questions the role of advertising in Australian society.

"We need to keep talking about why it is that other people want us to consume as much as we do," he says.

The recent landmark legislation requiring blank cigarette packaging in Australia – and the lengths tobacco companies went to oppose it – is evidence that such battles are important.

"If something as simple as the labelling

of a packet is so important for those who want to sell something, imagine the importance of the billion dollars a year the big banks spend [in advertising] suggesting that the most expensive home loans are actually the cheapest."

"Why would we allow someone to spend a billion dollars confusing the public?"

Missing targets

The 2015 deadline for the UN Millennium Development Goals is fast approaching, and while a lot has been achieved, it is safe to say that extreme poverty will not be eradicated in the next two years.

"As with most big challenges, we were more enthusiastic about committing

to them [the Millennium Development Goals] than we were about making sacrifices to achieve them."

"The reality is the developed world continues to put its interests ahead of the vast majority of humanity."

"Similarly, our determination to do virtually nothing about climate change will impose far more costs on poor people in developing countries than the trivial costs of the carbon price that we have complained so much about."

"The average household, if they receive no compensation, would spend less on the carbon tax than they do on chocolate and pet food. But in fact, most people will be 100 per cent compensated."

Time to go home

The Australia Institute will host their national Go Home On Time Day on 21 November.

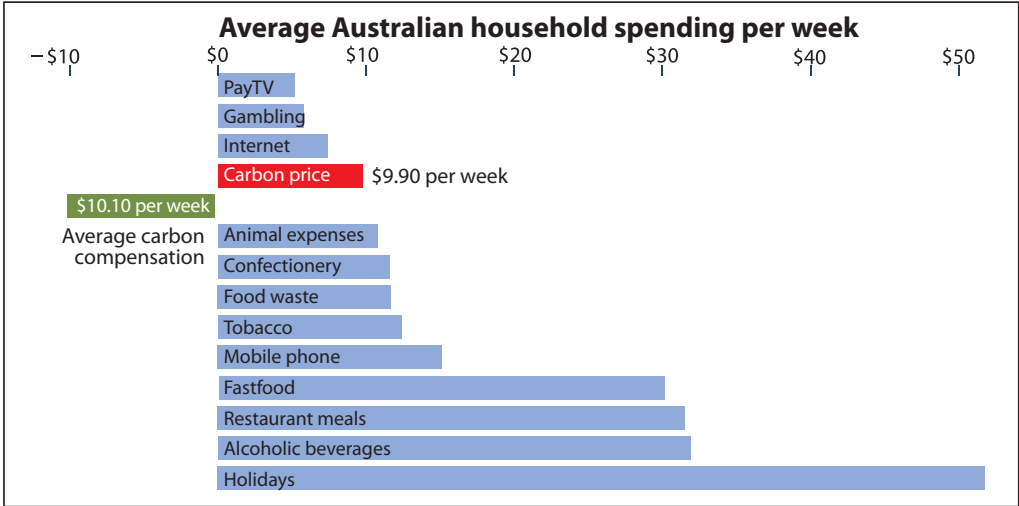
"We did a lot of research into work hours and people were effectively saying, 'Yes, I work long hours but I think I am supposed to'."

"When we pressed them on what they meant by 'I think', it turned out they didn't actually know."

Workers are encouraged to register to participate. Around a third of those who sign up for the event don't end up leaving work on time, and this is part of the problem, says Dr Denniss.

"If you said you were going to go home on time just once and you couldn't, that is telling us something."

For information on Go Home On Time Day visit gohomeontimeday.org.au. Visit The Australia Institute at tai.org.au.



Original graphic by The Australia Institute and altered with permission by Uniting Communications.

Sources:
Household expenditure data comes from:
ABS 6530.0 - Household Expenditure Survey, Australia: Summary of Results, 2009-10
abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6530.02009-10?OpenDocument

Carbon price cost, compensation and number of households compensated comes from:
Clean Energy Future (2011) What a carbon price means for you
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Baker et. al (2009) What a waste: An analysis of household expenditure on food, Policy brief no. 6, The Australia Institute, November
tai.org.au/index.php?q=node%2F19&pubid=696&act=display

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