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Journey



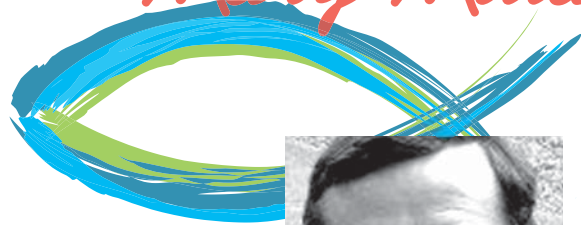
The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

TRADING FAIR WHAT WE BUY MATTERS

**BLESSED
ARE THE
CARERS**

**PENTECOST
DISCIPLESHIP**

Norman and Mary Millar Lecturer



The 30th Synod welcomes

Catholic Deacon Gary Stone

to present the Norman and Mary Millar Lecture.

Explore discipleship through the experiences of an army and police chaplain.

Saturday 25 May, 7.15 pm–8.30 pm

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30TH SYNOD
24 – 28 MAY 2013



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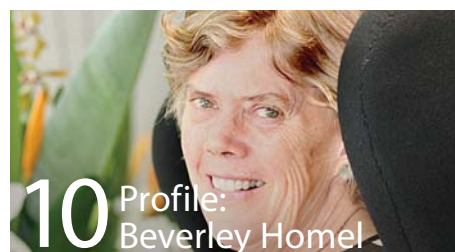
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Journey

Cover: Traditional Peruvian dolls at a market in Pisac village, Sacred Valley, Peru. Photo: Bartosz Hadyniak

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Closing date for editorial and advertising for June *Journey* is Monday 20 May. The next issue of *Journey* will be available on Sunday 9 June.



Selflessness, sacrifice and the still small voice

This edition of *Journey* is all about celebrating those who put others before themselves. From prison chaplains (page 14) to volunteers who work tirelessly for a cause or organisation they believe in.

The Uniting Church is full of these people. Sometimes they are up the front urging people to understand the difference we can make in the lives of others; sometimes they are lobbying their local Member of Parliament; and sometimes they go faithfully about their work without drawing attention. We need all these people.

This month we celebrate Mothers' Day by hearing about the work of Beverley Homel, president of the volunteer organisation Sands (miscarriage, stillbirth and newborn death support) Queensland (page 10), and a little shop that is helping women escape the cycle of poverty (page 12).

We reflect on the unpaid carers who enrich the lives of those whom they support (page 6).

In all of these stories the work of the Spirit is clear. As we celebrate Pentecost (19 May), reflect on what it means to use your gifts and talents in service.

The June edition of *Journey* will be released on the second Sunday of June to enable us to keep you up-to-date on all the news from the 30th Synod meeting (24 – 28 May). Keep an eye on journeyonline.com.au and our Facebook page for news and updates from the meeting. The June issue will also be the first for our new editor, Rohan Salmond. Talk about a baptism of fire!

Mardi Lumsden
Editor-in-chief



Reclaiming the Holy Spirit at Pentecost

I find it difficult to write about the spirit of God, particularly as prose. My words want to dance into poetry and metaphors prance around the page. Gusts and breezes, breath and mist, intuition and wonder, hearts on fire strangely warmed. My words will simply not behave! Settle down and form sentences.

The Scriptures suggest the Spirit was there at creation brooding over the chaos and then made episodic appearances in a bush that refused to burn, in a still small voice after a storm and as inspiration for the powerful, disturbing words of the prophets.

In the Christian Scriptures the Spirit impregnates a maiden, rests upon the head of Jesus at his baptism and sits with a child visiting a temple. It comes in fullness at a Jewish festival called Pentecost. It turns out to be just as Jesus promised – a comforter that comes alongside us in life.

The Holy Spirit resists being defined in a theology class and may seem like an afterthought in conversations about the triune nature of God. In the Old Testament, the Spirit is given the feminine gender and is more often discerned than defined. It is the rich fragrance of God at work.

I cannot imagine my life as a disciple of Christ without the Holy Spirit to enliven, encourage, empower, enable, enthuse and energise.

At times I have been put off by the excesses of some of the wackiest Pentecostal preachers. Some use the same collection of psychological tricks that are effective even without reference to God or Christianity.

The work of the Spirit in our lives will not always feel comforting. It may be disturbing or even painful.

In his book *More Surprises of the Spirit*, Uniting Church minister and founder of Barnabas Ministries, Rev Ross Kingham, reminds readers that: "The gospel reality of resurrection assures us that darkness and fire offer the possibility of transformation, and that our deepest encounters with the Spirit frequently occur in times of agony and disorientation."

He attributes to the Spirit invitations to stretch and grow, to stir us along, prompt, nudge and convict.

When I read Paul's letters to the church in Corinth two things become clear. Firstly, the gifts of the Spirit are for the building up of the people of God and not for the benefit of the individual who exercises the gift. Secondly, I am reminded that right after talking about the gifts of the Spirit, Paul reminds them of the kind of love they should share – kind, patient, humble love.

The Holy Spirit is an essential part of the equipment of a pilgrim disciple on the way. Holy Spirit, burning fire, gentle dove come into our lives.

Rev Kaye Ronalds
Queensland Synod Moderator

Monday Midday Prayer

*Come Holy Spirit,
make your home in us that
we might be comforted,
confronted, convicted and
empowered to serve, as you
continue your work in and
through us as disciples on the
way with Christ.*

Amen

Moderator's diary

8 May
UnitingCare executive staff orientation

11 – 12 May
Blackall Uniting Church centenary celebrations

20 May
Trinity Theological College farewell worship service for Rev Dr Geoff Thompson

24 – 28 May
30th Synod meeting of the Queensland Synod



Bridging the divide

Mining touches the lives of rural people in a very different way to those in cities. **Katie Lewis** reports on an organisation bringing the two groups together.

Bridging the Divide is a non-profit organisation established late last year to create communication and support networks amongst rural, regional and urban communities impacted by coal and coal seam gas mining.

Founder, Annette Hutchins, says she envisaged the Bridging the Divide project as playing a broad role in improving the wellbeing of all Australians through greater urban-rural understanding. The project organises bus tours to areas touched by coal and coal seam gas mining such as Cameby, Wandoan, Tara, Rosewood, and Acland to provide an opportunity for people to see what is happening and hear people's stories.

With collaboration from professionals, academics, residents, farmers, and community groups Ms Hutchins has expanded the project to include facilitating, organising and fundraising for independent health and environmental testing programs in the Western Downs region.

Ms Hutchins hopes to extend the project to include other areas such as organising social and sporting events (urban-rural "mixers") and Expert Advice Resource (EAR) and buddy systems (professional support) between farmers and people with specialist skills in areas such as health, environmental science and law.

Arnold Rieck, Green Officer for Bremer Brisbane Presbytery and chair of the Rosewood Development Protection Organisation, says it is vital that people in the city should hear about what is happening in rural communities.

He says there are many coal developments west of Ipswich and across Queensland and the information doesn't always reach people in the



The first Bridging the Divide bus tour. Lock the Gate Alliance members and local residents near Tara. Photo: Bridging the Divide project

cities. As a Bridging the Divide tour guide for the Rosewood area, Mr Reick is passionate about mining issues.

"Our land is precious; we cannot afford to have open cut and coal seam gas mining in the South East corner," he says.

There are many Uniting Church members living in rural areas of Queensland who are being significantly impacted by mining. Rev Brian Kickbusch, minister with the West Moreton Group (Fernvale-Lowood, Ipswich North, Haigslea, Rosewood and Walloon), says there is a real need for people in the Uniting Church to hear the voices and stories of those affected by the resources boom. "Those who are affected need encouragement that the rest of the Uniting Church is standing with them," he said.

Katie Lewis
Uniting Communications Research Officer

For more information visit
bridgingthedivideorg.wordpress.com

Impact of mining on communities and the environment Q&A

The 30th Synod will feature a seminar on the impact of mining on communities and the environment 26 May, 4 – 5.30 pm, at Alexandra Park Conference Centre. Participants include Rev Dr David Ferguson, Clermont-Capella Uniting Church and Central Queensland Presbytery Mining Impact Task Group convenor.



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Blessed are the carers

For they will see God

Dianne Jensen looks at the role of carers and their contribution to the fabric of our lives.

Carers are at the heart of our community. They are the folk struggling with wheelchairs at an intersection, waiting for prescriptions at the pharmacy, or grasping the hand of a disabled, frail or confused person as they navigate crowded stores.

Their lives bear daily witness to the power of love lived out through service.

The experiences of the 2.6 million Australians who provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends are rarely in the news, yet they make an invaluable contribution to our social fabric and make a profound difference to the lives of individuals.

Sometimes barely in their teens or themselves quite frail, carers perform tasks ranging from domestic duties and nursing care to medical and legal advocacy.

They provide full or part-time support to people living with disability, medical conditions, alcohol and drug issues, and frailty.

As Carers Queensland Inc notes, caring is a short-term commitment for some, whilst for others, "it is a role that literally lasts a lifetime".

Although their role may be "just doing what comes naturally", as one woman described caring for her husband, caring is physically and emotionally exhausting.

When the medical condition is degenerative or terminal, the impending loss exacerbates the sheer busyness of caring, says one carer with an elderly parent.

“You become swept along by the rapids, meeting each new crisis. There is pressure on both partners, an awareness of the changing roles”



"You become swept along by the rapids, meeting each new crisis. There is pressure on both partners, an awareness of the changing roles ... some people drop the ball."

The road can be challenging, complicated and fraught with angst, "but it is also a time where we can truly cherish life and God's wondrous love," she adds.

The cost of caring

There is little doubt that carers are the glue which keeps the disability and aged-care systems from falling apart, with Deloitte Access Economics (2010) estimating the replacement cost of informal care in Australia at \$40.9 billion.

The Australian Government currently provides a Carer Payment (single \$733.70, couple \$1066.20 per fortnight) and a Carer Allowance (\$115.40 per fortnight), depending upon assets. Some people are eligible for annual supplements and Health Care Card benefits.

If this seems like a paltry amount, Carers Australia, the national peak body, can attest to the fact that carers are often socially isolated, more likely to experience poor health, and inclined to suffer from increased financial and emotional stress.

Some issues have been acknowledged in The National Carer Strategy, delivered in August 2011 as part of the National Carer Recognition Framework. The six priority areas for action include recognition and respect, information and access, economic security, services for carers, education and training and health and wellbeing. The first evaluation report will be delivered in 2015.



Each day, 2.6 million Australians provide unpaid care and support to family members and friends.
Photo: istockphoto.com

While welcoming the recognition that these initiatives represent, Carers Australia is concerned that the new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) may enshrine the current subsidisation of the health, disability and aged care system.

Their 2013–14 federal budget submission, *From Recognition to Action* noted that “the packages offered under the NDIS will inevitably be built around the amount of unpaid care already provided to many of those covered by the Scheme”.

For carers and the persons for whom they care, the current focus on the overarching principles of the national disability system, and the framework which will deliver services, represents an opportunity for generational change.

UnitingCare Australia National Director, Lin Hatfield Dodds, in welcoming the passage of the NDIS, reminded Australians that almost half of all people living with disability live on or close to the poverty line.

“A number of people with disability live isolated, vulnerable lives on the fringes of society ... People with a disability who are themselves parents, and the burgeoning number of people with a lifelong disability who are ageing are also increasingly at risk of joining this group.”

People in these cohorts often lack the skills to advocate for themselves, she added.

Blessed are the carers and those for whom they care. Let's not let them down.

Visit: *Uniting for change*, UnitingCare Australia's new online social advocacy and discipleship platform.

Resources: ndis.gov.au, fahcsia.gov.au, careaware.com.au, uccommunity.org.au, carersaustralia.com.au, carersqld.asn.au

Marion's story

My father longs to come home where he feels safe and loved.

Marion's father lives in a high-care facility. After a series of falls and mini-strokes, the onset of dementia and epilepsy, it became impossible for her mother to look after him at home.

For four years, she and her mother have visited almost every day, assisting with his daily needs and spending time with him. They and other family members focus their energies on normalising his situation, aware that he feels isolated and lonely.

She describes the aged-care system as “both supportive and testing”, and says although the staff generally do their best, it is apparent that without a personal advocate many residents receive very little individualised attention.

“He is one of many, part of the assigned carers' routine. They are often very busy and find it difficult to attend to his needs unless they fit in with this routine.”

Marion's father still recognises family members.

“The moment he sees any of us, his face lights up and he relaxes. ‘Here are special people I love and who love me,’ I imagine him thinking. I tell him I love him every day. He tells me he loves me and often thanks me. I feel honoured to be his daughter.”

Together they share moments of laughter and prayer.

“It is easy to underestimate and dismiss a person with dementia, especially as they do experience lucid moments,” Marion says.

“Being in a place where God is in the present moment creates a dynamic approach to communication with those who struggle with memory loss.

When we say the Lord's Prayer together, it is as though it is the first time. Yet its familiarity comforts him and his faith is affirmed. He reminds me to approach my faith this way.”



Laidley Uniting Church members help rebuild the community after flooding. Photo: Euan McDonald

Exactly two years, two months and two days after the terrible floods of January 2011, the people of Laidley, west of Brisbane, were inundated once again. But while the flood waters swept away so much, they couldn't take the community's spirit. Laidley Uniting Church minister **Euan McDonald** reflects on the months that followed.

Our church still has many reminders of the floods, but with faith in God's help and goodness, and reaching out to neighbours in the community, we are looking forward to a better future.

Despite the terrible situation and loss experienced by so many, a great community spirit came to the fore

The community spirit in this town was terrific.


Despite the terrible situation and loss experienced by so many, a great community spirit came to the fore. Strangers, young and old, turned up to offer a hand, not just for one day but day after day. Contractors gave their time day after day without charge to shift the mud and debris. The local fire brigade was boosted by fire crews and trucks from many of the surrounding areas to hose out houses and buildings that had dirty silt and debris in them.


Our church gave out flood packs which consisted of a bucket full of goodies including rubber gloves, chocolates, vouchers and water bottles. Groups donated goods and clothes and our church has also received various amounts of money for distribution and we are still helping people.

There will be long-term effects with property values decreasing, insurance premiums skyrocketing, and the effects of depression due to long waits for repairs.

Some residents in the area have even taken up the offer of a land swap to the high ground developed at Grantham after the devastation of the 2011 floods. Moving to a new area without the support of friends and neighbours may be a short-term fix and possibly lead to other social problems.

Rev Euan McDonald
Laidley Uniting Church
laidley.unitingchurch.org.au





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Preparing for the discipleship journey

The Year of Discipleship is part of the Uniting Church in Queensland's Vision 2020, focusing on the call to form active and accountable disciples of all ages. **Linda Hamill** implores people to embrace their discipleship gifts this Pentecost.

Discipleship is about being disciplined in what we do. At Pentecost, the first disciples of Jesus made a stand for what they knew to be truth. In the face of condemnation (and a mob!), Peter stood up and told the story of Jesus: died and risen. Peter's brave action took discipline or, said in another way, his action demonstrated discipleship. His past experiences ensured that when the time came he would not be afraid to speak out.

I spent 21 years in the US Air Force. I cannot tell you how many ditches I dived into with heavy protective gear and a gas mask on when there was no danger. We practised these actions and many more over and over so the people who depended on me and the people on whom I depended were certain that all of us could do it when there was danger.

Discipline is continuing the mundane, boring, hearing of the stories that we have already heard again and again, so that at that moment when the Spirit moves you will have the confidence you need. The church depends on your being so practised at your particular gifts that you can respond at a moment's notice.

Often I hear people with strong gifts of one type, who consistently perform their tasks well, say, "I wish I could do something more exciting for

God". I believe this thinking misses the mark of discipleship.

Mother Theresa is quoted as saying, "Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies". The people who reliably and consistently use their gifts are mentors in discipleship. You cannot get a more exciting job than that.

Be encouraged! Peter, the Rock, stood firm in a difficult place. Be rock solid using your gifts. And you all have them. In the Uniting Church in Australia's foundational document, the *Basis of Union*, the Uniting Church affirms that every member of the church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant.

So if your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, serve; if it is teaching, teach; if it is to encourage, give encouragement; if it is giving, give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:6b-8 TNIV).

Remember, I depend on you and your gifts as much as you depend on mine. Have an amazing Pentecost!

Rev Linda Hamill
Granite Belt Uniting Church
granitebeltuniting.org.au

‘Discipline is continuing the mundane, boring, hearing of the stories that we have already heard again and again, so that at that moment when the Spirit moves you will have the confidence you need’

Positions Vacant – Committees, Commissions and Boards

The Uniting Church is seeking expressions of interest from young professional people with skills in management, accounting, finance, investment, law, human resources, property and corporate governance who are interested in serving on Uniting Church committees, commissions or boards.

Vacancies currently exist in a wide range of governance bodies across the spectrum of church activities.

Enquiries or resumés outlining gifts, skills and experience can be directed to Anne Osborne, Governance & General Counsel, Synod Office.

Email: governance@ucaqld.com.au | Phone: 3377 9768
Closing date for applications 30 May 2013.

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The Uniting Church in Australia
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In the shadow of death I am comforted

The theme of National Volunteer Week from 13 to 19 May is “Thanks a million”. Our profile this month is **Beverley Homel**, president of the volunteer organisation Sands (miscarriage, stillbirth and newborn death support) Queensland. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

A life, however brief, is still a life, and deserves to be acknowledged and remembered.

These words on the Sands website speak straight to the heart of every parent who has suffered pregnancy or early infant loss. Over 400 babies die every day in Australia through miscarriage, stillbirth and newborn death.

Sands is a grassroots community group which supports families, and advocates for care and understanding of bereaved parents in the health system.

Uniting Church member Beverley Homel, a Brisbane solicitor with four adult children, has been president of Sands Queensland Inc since 2010. She served an earlier stint as president (from 1993 to 1996) and has been a committee member for many years.

The organisation was established in Western Australia in the early 1980s and in Queensland in 1983. The state office is in Brisbane, with regional groups in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, the Sunshine Coast and Toowoomba.

Services are provided through local support groups, newsletters, telephone support, and online, including a burgeoning Facebook community.

As with most members and volunteer parent supporters, Ms Homel is herself a bereaved parent.

“I joined Sands WA after our daughter Rosalie was stillborn in 1989. For the first nine months after Rosalie died the monthly Sands meetings were my lifeline. Sands was the only place where I was known as Rosalie’s mum, where I could tell her story as often as I needed, hear other people’s stories and learn from their experiences.”

Newly arrived in Perth, the family of five had left behind friends, extended family, and their supportive church community in Sydney. Few people knew about their loss, and on the surface, everything was fine.

“I was desperate to talk to other people who had lost a baby, who would understand how I felt – the overwhelming gut-wrenching feeling of loss and longing. To an outsider I would have appeared to be coping quite well, but I can still remember the relief of being able to let the facade drop at Sands and talk about how I really felt.”

Finding a safe place to tell your story, among people who have travelled the same path, is the first step toward healing, she says.

“When you haven’t had very long with your baby the memories of that brief time are very precious and any physical reminders of the baby are treasured ... Parents want to talk about this huge awful thing which has happened to them, they want to say their child’s name and to hold on to the reality of that baby who was gone so soon.”

Taking time to grieve

While much has changed from the days when mothers were discouraged from seeing or holding their babies, pregnancy and early infant loss is still minimised by medical staff, family and friends, she says.

“We are uncomfortable with grief in western society, and we allow bereaved parents very little time and very few opportunities to show their grief,” says Ms Homel. “After the funeral, parents are expected to move on. Families often worry about a mother who is crying, looking at her baby’s photos, and is disinterested in her usual activities.”

“Sands was the only place where I was known as Rosalie’s mum, where I could tell her story as often as I needed, hear other people’s stories and learn from their experiences”



Beverley Homel,
president of Sands
Queensland Inc.
Photo: Holly Jewell

“We are uncomfortable with grief in western society, and we allow bereaved parents very little time and very few opportunities to show their grief”

They want her to be ‘better’ and suggest that she go to a doctor for medication or see a counsellor to get over her grief.”

In the dark days which followed Rosalie’s death, Beverley Homel says that it was her faith that kept her from despair. She was also sustained by those who prayed for and with her family.

“The teaching of the Westminster catechism, that the chief end of Man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, reminded me that the fundamental purpose of my child’s life was not frustrated by her death. She took only one breath in this world but she will still glorify and enjoy God. That was the most wonderful comfort – the darkness does not overcome the light.”

She also has a strong sense that God has led her to walk alongside other grieving parents.

“When Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan it was in response to the lawyer’s question ‘Who is my neighbour?’ The lawyer wanted to confine his obligations – if you define your neighbour, then you can identify your non-neighbours too! Jesus, though, turned the question around, making the lawyer identify who behaved as a neighbour in the

story, and then telling the lawyer to go and do the same – to be a neighbour to others in need. Sands is where God is telling me to be a neighbour.”

Becoming a volunteer and taking on leadership roles was a natural progression for a woman with a strong sense of civic duty and a willingness to jump in where she sees a need.

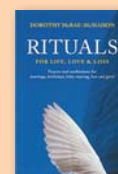
“When we moved to Queensland in 1992 I joined Sands Queensland because I wanted to give back, not just to the organisation, but to be able to support other bereaved parents in the way I had been supported.

“Sands has given me so much – hard work, frustrations and never-ending problems to solve, certainly, but also the honour and privilege of sharing so many stories and remembering so many little ones whose parents love them so deeply.”

Beverley Homel is a member of Indooroopilly Uniting Church, Brisbane.

More information: If you have lost a baby, recently or in the past, or you know someone who has lost a baby, Sands can provide support and resources. Visit sandsqld.com for a list of services including face to face, telephone and online support.

Resources



Rituals for Life, Love & Loss:
Prayers and meditations for
marriage, birthdays, baby
naming, loss and grief
Dorothy McRae-McMahon
Jane Curry Publishing 2010
RRP \$24.95



*Liturgies and Prayers Related
to Childbearing, Childbirth,
and Loss*
Church Publishing 2010
RRP \$26.95



The Sound of Silence:
Journeys through
miscarriage
Mostly for Mothers 2011
RRP \$24.95

Reviews available at
journeyonline.com.au



Trading fair What we buy matters

On the eve of Fair Trade Fortnight (4 –19 May) **Mardi Lumsden** explores the pros and cons of Fair Trade.

Last International Women's Day, the Prime Minister, The Hon Julia Gillard MP announced a new whole-of-government strategy to "reinforce ethical behaviour in procurement so that no firm providing goods or services to the Commonwealth is tainted by slavery or people-trafficking anywhere in the supply chain".

This statement reminds us that the purchases we make in Australia have a ripple effect around the globe as the developed world blatantly takes advantage of those who are trapped in a cycle of poverty.

"We know slavery or people-trafficking are becoming a greater issue as the global economy becomes more interlinked," Ms Gillard went on to say. "I'd hate to see a single cent of public money go to any entity involved in this vile trade."

In 2012 the International Labour Organisation estimated nearly 21 million people were victims of forced labour across the world, trapped in jobs which they were coerced into and cannot leave.

"The Asia-Pacific region accounts for the largest number of forced labourers in the world – 11.7 million (56 per cent) of the global total, followed by Africa at 3.7 million (18 per cent) and Latin America with 1.8 million victims (9 per cent)," the report says.

Australian shops are flooded with products made by taking advantage of people or the environment. The most common goods to use forced labour in production include cocoa, bricks, pavers, cotton clothing and fabric, carpets, rice, palm oil, tinned fruit and vegetables, fruit juice, prawns, cat food and embroidered textiles.

Fair Trade on the rise

In recent years organisations like Oxfam have helped educate people on the importance of Fair Trade and in one little shop in the inner Brisbane suburb of Paddington, a group of volunteers works hard to improve the lives of women living in poverty.

Founded in 1995 by the Sisters of the Good Shepherd, The Trading Circle is a not-for-profit

“I'd hate to see a single cent of public money go to any entity involved in this vile trade”

The Hon Julia Gillard MP

ethical Fair Trade organisation directly importing and selling 100 per cent Fair Trade products across Australia and New Zealand.

Brisbane store manager, Chrissie Sayer, is a passionate advocate for Fair Trade being part of everyday life.

"I just think it is the most logical thing to do," she says. "Fair Trade is about making positive changes to our future.

"It is respect, it's dignity, it's human rights! Everyone is entitled to the same opportunity. I am just very fortunate that I was born in a country that allows me, as a woman, to have an education, to have a job and to have a say and to vote.

"Fair Trade is about giving these people in marginalised communities, and anywhere in the world, the same right to be paid a fair price, to be treated with dignity, not to have to work 14 hours a day, not having to give up an education, not having to sell their children, their souls, or their bodies to make a living.

"We are all about empowering women, abolishing exploitation and trafficking, and treating these women with respect. We all deserve that, irrespective of who we are or where we live."

Information is power

Ms Sayer says educating people on the importance of purchasing Fair Trade products is the biggest challenge, but she has noticed a shift in awareness of the issues over the last 16 years. She says education will happen by living and breathing the values of Fair Trade.

"It is talking about it over the dinner table. It is about talking about it at every opportunity, and not necessarily with placards in the street because people often think, 'there is another protest; there's another petition'. It is in everyday conversation."

One of the common barriers cited for not purchasing Fair Trade is cost.

"Actually it is not a lot more expensive. You are getting a quality product, it is an ethical trade, and it is good for the conscience. It is knowing that your purchase is doing the right thing by another human being and not crippling the human race or another community in Australia or overseas.

"Economic times are tough at the moment. People do think long and hard about what they are buying, why they are buying it and the impact it has on their purse. However, the more we talk about social justice issues and human rights issues I think people are starting to think, 'OK, maybe I won't buy six blocks of chocolate; maybe I will just buy two blocks of Fair Trade chocolate because it is better quality, ethical, organic'."

Creating a false economy?

Commodities such as tea, coffee and chocolate are perhaps the most identifiable Fair Trade products because they are regulated by the World Fair Trade Organisation. Fair Trade accreditation allows use of the Fair Trade logo on approved products. But that logo comes at a price. There are those who argue that the cost of accreditation prices many Fair Trade businesses out of the market.

"There is a concern that the growers and producers are having to pay exorbitant fees and charges for their product to be accredited," says Ms Sayer.

"That does concern me and makes me wonder if some people do miss out on the opportunity to sell their product because they can't afford to go through the accreditation process.

"Having said that though, to be accredited means that you go through a monitoring process and if I am going to buy a Fair Trade product I need to know that it is ethical.

"I need to know there is a watchdog out there, but does the watchdog need to charge the price it does is my question."

The Fair Trade logo we see on consumables like chocolate, does not extend to other products like clothes, giftware and homewares.

"The system is just not set up for that. It is just too difficult. However the producers themselves will be an accredited producer of that product, so there is a monitoring process to ensure their workers are treated fairly, with dignity, and within the guidelines of certain working hours and conditions."

Empowering consumer research

Ms Sayer encourages people to do the research into their favourite products and to ask companies about their production processes.

"Googling is man's best friend these days to do the research and ask the questions when you are shopping. Don't be afraid to ask the retailer how ethical that purchase and their business actually is.

"They [retailers] will highlight when it is a Fair Trade, ethical product or an organic process so if it is not highlighted, you need to assume that it is not."

Hopes for Australia's commitment to Fair Trade

"Australia is changing. It is a slow process but what I have seen in the last 16 years has really been quite remarkable and very positive.

"The school system is really embracing the social awareness of Fair Trade and ethical trade," says Ms Sayer.

"I'd like to see universities and more corporates take it on board; I'd like to see the government talk about Fair Trade and ethical trade.

"I'd like to see more Fair Trade goods in the major retailers [like Myer and David Jones], even if it is just an area that is dedicated. Once they see that customers will shop with them, and the difference it does make, I believe they will see the importance of it in their business."

For more information on The Trading Circle visit thetradingcircle.com.au. For more information on Fair Trade visit fta.org.au or fairtrade.com.au.

“Actually it is not a lot more expensive. You are getting a quality product, it is an ethical trade, and it is good for the conscience”

Chrissie Sayer

Prison Ministry coordinator Beatriz Skippen (front left) with chaplains, including Richard Cassidy (right). Photo: Holly Jewell



Ministering in dark places

The biblical charge to visit those in prison is perhaps one of the clearest calls to ministry. **Tara Burton** attended the 2013 prison chaplains' conference in Brisbane in April.

Prison chaplains from all over Queensland gathered for their annual conference in April to support each other and to empower, encourage and equip people to work in the field.

“I am being called to all of God’s people regardless of their own personal circumstance”

Richard Cassidy

UnitingCare Community Prison Ministry coordinator and senior chaplain Beatriz Skippen said the conference was unique, as it was an open forum for everyone who wants to help or understand how to make a difference in the prison ministry context.

“Everyone in our society is affected by crime, not only individuals but our community as a whole,” says Ms Skippen.

The 2013 conference was designed for anyone who wanted to learn how to help or work in the area of prison ministry, including legal and health workers, community members, prison chaplains and those affected by crime (including families).

The guest speakers were community worker Dave Andrews, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice Ross Homel, Trish Jenkins, author and international motivational speaker, and spiritual direction specialist Anne Fry.

Prison chaplain Rev Richard Cassidy says he enjoys the challenges of ministry.

“I am being called to all of God’s people regardless of their own personal circumstance. We are embarking on this journey which is in response to God’s calling and one’s life.”

Mr Cassidy says one of the benefits of being involved in prison ministry is encountering people from all walks of life.

“While we may speak the common language of English we are all from different walks of life.

“Our stories are a different language but we can actually come together for a common cause. What we do relies heavily on God and the Holy Spirit.”

Mr Cassidy noted that prison ministry is not just about ministering to the inmates but to their families and their communities.

“It’s a holistic way of doing things ... thus enabling me to shift my focus and also engage with communities and relevant organisations.

“It can create more work but I think the outcome in the longer term can be quite fruitful.”

The issue of 17-year-olds in adult prisons is one the church has been vocal on for many years. Ms Skippen says it is a complex issue.

“We need community involvement and support to reduce crime. One of the ways to provide support is an intentional engagement with young offenders, providing programs, keeping them occupied, resourcing,” she says.

“Young offenders, women, Aboriginals, and mentally ill offenders are a priority for the department, and the best outcomes will be achieved by working with Corrective Services.”



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Chinchilla/Brigalow Uniting Church: organised for mission

The progressive and dynamic town of Chinchilla is located in the Darling Downs region of Queensland. The Chinchilla/Brigalow Uniting Church enriches its local community in a variety of ways. **Tara Burton** spoke with congregation member **Jill Covington**.

Who makes up your congregation?

We have an ageing congregation, between 50 and 90 years old. There are a few young families starting to attend each week with their families. Sunday School has recommenced with the dedicated help of four young people. The attendance numbers vary weekly but we are hopeful for numbers to improve. We attempt to hold services to please all age groups. Our talented musicians provide uplifting music before, during and after each service.

What is your mission statement?

As part of the Uniting Church in Queensland, the Chinchilla/Brigalow Uniting Church is engaged in the revitalisation journey, *Together on the way, enriching community*. We are committed to Uniting in Christ; acting with love, living with hope, witnessing in faith, and working for justice. Chinchilla/Brigalow Uniting Church members share in God's mission in the world. We will be guided by the values that derive from and give expression to God's reconciling action in Jesus Christ.

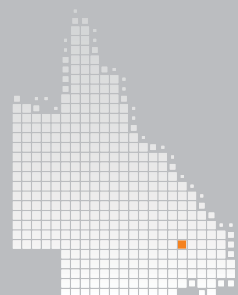
What does forming disciples mean for you?

With the diversity of our rural town, forming disciples means that we have to move outside the church walls, away from the Sunday morning time slot and enter the new and exciting mission field presented by our district. In the name of Christ, we are now challenged to meet people from different cultures as well as those who hold different ethics and values. Discipleship is moving away from the pulpit and out into the community and taking the message of salvation to where people are.

What is your vision for the future?

Our vision for the future is one of change whilst acknowledging the traditions of our ancestors. It is a vision of mediation and understanding, of moving forward and greeting others with Christ at the head of all our decisions and directions. While living in a rapidly changing district due to the diversity of the mining and energy sectors, we are challenged as Christians to be models of Christ – of a loving, understanding, thoughtful and compassionate being who greeted everyone in the name of love.

Chinchilla/Brigalow Uniting Church



Fast Facts:

Community:

- > population 6700
- > Chinchilla is on the most northerly point of the Condamine River
- > a mix of gas exploration, a power station development project, extensive feedlots, cotton growing and broad-acre farming.

Gospel Values:

- > Faithfulness
- > Compassion
- > Humility
- > Truthfulness
- > Justice

What's happening:

- > a new play group for mothers new to town
- > a prayer group for people to pray quietly, contemplate and share problems
- > in 2012 the inaugural International Dinner focused on connecting with the growing number of South Africans moving to town to work in the mining industry
- > regular fellowship group meetings.

Social media:

- > facebook.com/ChinchillaUnitingChurch



Chinchilla Uniting Church members Lana, Connie and Tasmyn at their confirmation service. Photo: Chinchilla Uniting Church



What the new Pope means for Protestants

The world watched in fascination as Jorge Mario Bergoglio was elected Pope of the Roman Catholic Church in March 2013. Leader in Catholic/Protestant dialogue and past Uniting Church President **James Haire** explores why Protestants should care about Pope Francis.

Since 2002 I have been a Member of the International Commission for Dialogue between the World Methodist Council and the Vatican. In fact, our annual meeting was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, last year where Cardinal Bergoglio had been Archbishop, Auxiliary Bishop and Superior of the Jesuits. His ministry had been entirely in Argentina. His election has been greeted with universal joy.

A number of factors from his election augur well for Protestant churches committed to Christian unity.

First, he has the reputation of having had very cordial relations with Protestants. The Argentine Protestant evangelist, Luis Palau, indicated that as Archbishop he had the warmest of relationships with Protestants. The Archbishop's financial manager was an Evangelical Christian, whom he also regarded as a friend.

When I was in Argentina for the Dialogue, the Methodist Bishop regarded the Archbishop's relationship with Methodists as excellent. He sought common ground with the Protestants on the central issues of the faith, in a country where relations between the two traditions have been difficult with the growth of Evangelical churches. He has also had respectful interfaith relations.

Second, he has been a person of great humility and holy simplicity throughout his life. He has lived in a modest apartment and not the Archbishop's palace. Since becoming Pope he has chosen to live not in the papal apartments but rather in the Vatican guest house, in another part of which I stayed during dialogue between the Vatican and Methodists, Anglicans, Lutherans and Reformed in 2010. He sees himself primarily as chief pastor of the Catholic Church rather than as head of the Vatican State.

Third, he is a Jesuit, an Order committed to mission and justice.

All this bodes well for deepening dialogue between Protestants and Catholics. However, we should remember that the Catholic Church, like the Uniting Church, is guided by the decisions of its councils and not by the whims of individuals. Vatican II decided to engage seriously with Protestants, and has consistently carried this out for over forty years. On the basis of this, the goodwill of Pope Francis, and more deeply our trust in the hope given to us by God in Christ, we go forward, despite our theological differences, in our search for authentic Christian unity.

Rev Professor James Haire AC
Executive Director, Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture
Director, Public and Contextual Theology Research Centre
Professor of Theology, Charles Sturt University
Past President, the Uniting Church in Australia



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Song for Marion

Director: Paul Andrew Williams

Stars: Gemma Arterton, Christopher Eccleston, Terence Stamp

Rated: PG



***Song for Marion* is a genuinely affecting story of love, friendship, heartache, persistence, hope and redemption.**

For fans of *Quartet*, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* and *Calendar Girls*, this warm-hearted movie, even if predictable, will delight and move you. Marion (Vanessa Redgrave) is a lively grandmother, thoroughly enjoying every opportunity life brings. Her grumpy husband Arthur (Terence Stamp) is the opposite: desperate to hold onto life as he knows it.

Marion and Arthur's life is a story of enduring love and respect. Marion adores her husband and loves him as he is, while holding strongly on to what is important to her – the joy of singing and participating. Arthur is devoted to his wife, ultimately doing everything in his power to make her happy, even if he has to be manoeuvred and pushed into doing it.

At the local community centre a group of old-age pensioners come together under the voluntary directorship of Elizabeth (Gemma Arterton). An assorted collection of wonderful characters, they sing, dance and enjoy themselves. Elizabeth chooses varied and unexpected styles of music, frequently with hilarious results. When the opportunity to enter a national choir competition comes up, Marion is determined to take part,

despite her increasing frailty. Arthur does not understand her outlook on life and is most reluctant to support this.

Elizabeth, the young choir director, finds being involved in this venture is very much a two-way street. She remains patient and persistent with Arthur, putting up with his cantankerous outbursts and building trust between them. When heartbreak strikes, Arthur has to rethink his approach to life and relationships in general. Eventually he realises it is never too late to change and reaches out to the son he pushed away for many years.

Watch out for the granddaughter, whose love and admiration for her grandfather are straightforward and encouraging. Director Paul Williams loosely based the characters Marion and Arthur on his grandparents. He wrote the script after the death of his grandmother from cancer.

Rated PG, *Song for Marion* bridges the generation gap. We thoroughly enjoyed the movie and found it touched themes in our own lives. A word of warning is necessary: don't forget your tissues!

Sue and Kate Hutchinson
Mother and daughter

Reviews available at journeyonline.com.au



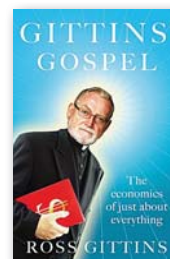
Blue Like Jazz

Director Steve Taylor

Based on a book by Donald Miller

Heritage HM

Rated PG-13

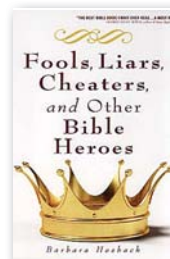


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Undies Drive bestows first new knickers

Savairo, 5, with Louise Edwards as they enjoy handing out new pairs of underwear to children in Fiji.
Photo: Louise Edwards

One Brisbane Uniting Church congregation will never take the simplicity of being able to afford new underwear for granted again. **Louise Edwards** explains.

I have visited the village of Qeleni in Fiji for 12 years as the leader of the Schoolies in Fiji trip. I had the opportunity to visit one of the ministers, Rev Loame, and his family in their new village last October.

As sometimes happens in conversations, you reflect and think, how did we get there? This was the case with a conversation centred on underwear.

Sai (Rev Loame's wife) was telling me they had saved up to get their 10-year-old daughter, Buna, two new pairs of undies for her birthday as she had never had new undies.

Buna was so excited; when she went to school she proudly showed her new undies to the girls in her class, who in turn told their parents they too would like new undies for their birthdays.

Sai told me new undies are very expensive so they usually wear second-hand or none at all.

I was quite disturbed by this. What we take for granted is a luxury to others. I told this story to my congregation (Broadwater Road in Mansfield, Brisbane) and we decided to have an Undies Drive.

When I headed to Fiji for the schoolies trip last November I took with me 564 pairs of new undies which I distributed to two villages.

One night as the children gathered in the minister's house, we brought out the bag containing the new undies. The looks on their faces as we opened that bag and their excitement was something I will never forget. The squeals of excitement as we told them the undies were for them were amazing. Such a small thing for us is huge for them. There was so much noise coming from the house that night: excited chatter and laughing, all over a few pairs of new undies.

The news spread very quickly over the village about Louise and her friends bringing new undies for the children and for many days after I was thanked by parents and other adults for our very generous gift. The children of Qeleni were very excited and wore their new undies with pride.

Rev Louise Edwards
Broadwater Road Uniting Church
bruc.org.au

For more information on the Fiji schoolies trip
email edwardslj@hotmail.com

‘There was so much noise coming from the house that night: excited chatter and laughing, all over a few pairs of new undies’

Royal Commission: on the way to healing

Uniting Church President Rev Prof Andrew Dutney says he hopes the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is an opportunity for healing, justice and reconciliation.

"This reinforces for us the importance of the Royal Commission and the way in which it's enabling people who are survivors of sexual abuse to have their pain and suffering acknowledged and their concerns heard publicly," says Prof Dutney.

"Child sexual abuse is abhorrent. Our Church has a strong commitment to justice and reconciliation and we are committed to working openly and transparently with the Royal Commission.

"We want to reflect our Christian principles by making sure the Uniting Church is the safest possible place for children, and that means paying close attention to any learnings that may arise in the course of hearings."

The Church has established national and synod response task groups with Rev Allan Thompson appointed Executive Officer of the National Engagement and Response Task Group. In March the Assembly Standing Committee approved a Values Statement in relation to the Royal Commission.

For more information visit assembly.uca.org.au/rcvalues

Celebrate chaplains

Chaplaincy Sunday will be held on Sunday 2 June 2013. Please consider celebrating the work of Uniting Church chaplains in your services that day. Resources will be out in May and available at the Synod meeting.

For more information contact Marjorie Griffiths at Marjorie.Griffiths@ucaqld.com.au or 3377 9727

Council purchases Camp Constable

Moreton Bay Regional Council has purchased the former Camp Constable site at Mt Glorious.

The former Uniting Church campsite closed its doors in 2011 after 42 years of helping create an environment of fun, friends and fellowship.

In the 1960s the congregations of Ashgrove Ave, Ashgrove West and The Gap had the vision to create a place where people could gather together to learn, share and grow which came to fruition in 1968 with Camp Constable officially being opened.

Since its closure, the Synod Property Resources team has been working with the congregations and the Moreton Rivers Presbytery to identify the best opportunities for the property, with a particular focus on continuing to honour the community benefit which the property had provided for many years.

The Council's purchase is an exciting opportunity for the site to continue to enrich the community, through access to community amenities and the preservation of the beautiful rainforest which has always been a feature of property.

National Reconciliation Week

National Reconciliation Week will be held from 27 May to 3 June. Reconciliation Week is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements. Queensland Churches Together is facilitating a number of reconciliation worship services in Daisy Hill, Ipswich, Brisbane and North Rockhampton. St Andrew's Uniting Church in Brisbane City will host the Brisbane service on 3 June.

For more information qct.org.au

Making government 'slavery free'

At an International Women's Day breakfast, the Prime Minister announced a commitment to "reinforce ethical behaviour in procurement so that no firm providing goods or services to the Commonwealth is tainted by slavery or people-trafficking anywhere in the supply chain".

To ensure the best possible outcome, a letter-writing action has been commenced by the Uniting Church in Australia. It urges the government to implement a range of measures, including placing the requirement on suppliers to guarantee their goods are free of slavery and human trafficking, committing to public research and introducing appropriate legislation.

For more information contact Sue Hutchinson on sue.hutchinson@ucaqld.com.au or phone 3377 9774

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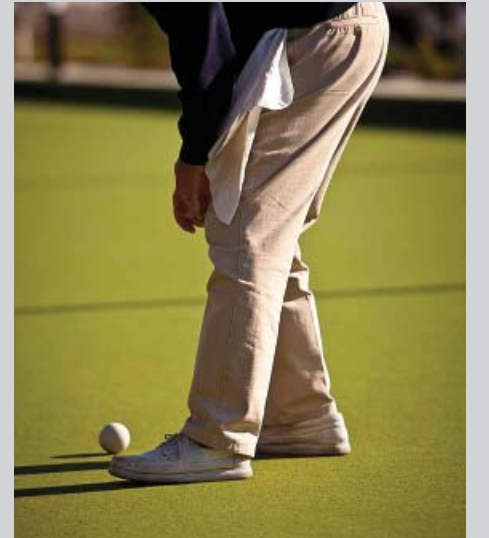
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