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QUEENSLAND SYNOD

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POSITION VACANT

Mission Education Officer, Moreton Rivers Presbytery

Full time position (1.0 FTE)

Moreton Rivers Presbytery takes in the CBD and Northern Suburbs of Brisbane, encompassing 45 congregations.

The Mission Education Officer would join a team from the Presbytery dedicated to resourcing the congregations and ministry agents within its bounds.

The Mission Education Officer would be responsible for delivering education through the Presbytery's "Learning for Living" program as well as assisting congregations to develop their mission plans.

For more information or a position description contact the Presbytery office via email office@moretonriverspresbytery.org.au or call 07 3366 0236.

Applications close 15 August 2014 and should be addressed to:

Presbytery Mission Education Officer JNC
C/- Secretary of Synod Placements Committee
Uniting Church in Australia (Qld Synod), GPO Box 674
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We are looking for a person with appropriate skills and enthusiasm for church and community to coordinate the development of an emerging project that aims to integrate Church and Community in a way that puts vitality into local churches.

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Expressions of interest and a request for an application form to:
Dr Paul Inglis, psinglis@westnet.com.au
or Rodney Eivers, eiversrh@telstra.com



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Applicants must be willing to attain a valid "Working with Children Check Number" and have the right to work in Australia. For further information regarding the position please contact Rev James Annesley at griftonuniting@bigpond.com Applications should be sent to Jane Fry at jane@nsw.uca.org.au

Closing date for applications is Friday 5 September 2014.



POSITION VACANT

Pastoral Care Manager/Chaplain St Stephens Private Hospital, Hervey Bay

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UnitingCare Health is seeking a Pastoral Care Manager/Chaplain (0.5 FTE) at one of Australia's most innovative private hospitals, St Stephen's Hervey Bay, in supporting patients, families, staff and volunteers.

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For more information or a position description contact
Lisa Lewis, Executive Support, on (07) 4123 8540,
0408 232 613, or lisa.lewis@uchealth.com.au

Applications close Thursday 31 July 2014.



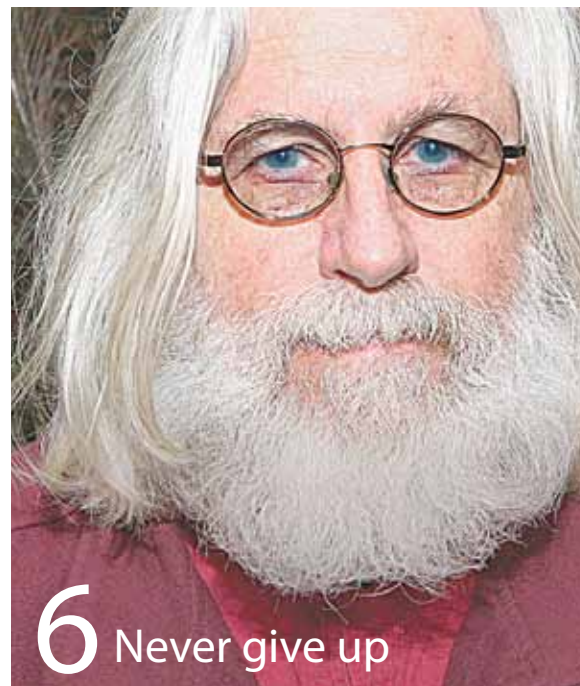
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Journey

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Closing date for editorial and advertising for August *Journey* is Monday 14 July. The next issue of *Journey* will be available on Sunday 3 August.



Keep it up!

You know that feeling you get around the beginning of July? A creeping realisation which suddenly hits with a bittersweet epiphany—the year is half over! How did that happen?

The previous six months might feel like they've flown by, but there's so much more to do before the end of year break. How do you keep the zeal you had at the start of the year when everything was shiny and new?

Church can feel this way. There's been a lot of effort put toward aid, evangelism and social justice, but sometimes it's hard to see the results. The enthusiasm fades and it can become a real grind. On page six we talk to some social justice activists about what has fuelled them over so many years of passionate work.

Sometimes we run the risk of thinking of the church primarily as a service provider or social justice watchdog. But church is much more than that: we are a worshipping community.

On page ten we talk about community and church with John Green, the author of *The Fault in Our Stars*. Recently John made a YouTube video about the poetry of Sylvia Plath. In it he talks about an ineradicable hope available to everyone: we are called to attentiveness even when it is painful.

Things happen which seize the attention of church communities and drive them to activism, and working towards a promised end can sometimes be painful. What sustains our work and our community through this pain? It is an even greater hope—the hope in the promise of God.

Rohan Salmond
Cross-platform editor



Together on the way

July is a month when lots of sport happens—rugby league, World Cup soccer and the Commonwealth Games. At our house we will be watching the classic three week cycling event, the Tour de France.

People draw life lessons from sport and at times it provides some metaphors for life in the church. The apostle Paul wrote about running the race set before us with patience and persistence.

The early church fathers likened the church to an ark or ship, and more recent writers on mission claim that it is more like a flotilla of boats.

But I like to compare the church with the peloton of a great cycle race.

The peloton is the group of riders who travel the route together. Travelling closely together saves energy. It creates a spectacle of colour and movement to see so many riders in team colours bouncing and rolling through the countryside.

The cyclists work together to take turns at the front and will expend much energy making sure that their best riders are in a good position to make a podium finish. If there is an accident or a mechanical failure team members will drop back to support their rider until they are back in contention.

Collegiality is strong. The relationships are strengthened by being on the journey together and sharing the struggles of each day. This seems like the best of life in congregations and presbyteries where people of faith bond with one another in prayer and communion with Christ.

From time to time, a few riders will break away to try to gain a few extra seconds or points in a mountain climb. At those times allegiances may be made with other teams, just as we might collaborate with other denominations in response to disasters or to advocate for an issue of social justice. In rural areas churches have discovered that collaboration is fruitful even though people are wearing a different team jersey or the support car sports a different logo.

Cycling, like the church, has its scandals and champions may disappoint, but that is when it is important to work on putting in place policies and responses that seek to protect vulnerable ones, such as we have done in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

We aren't infallible but by seeking to live out our Vision 2020 in all the messiness of life, we are working towards a common vision for the church in Queensland; a vision that touches the community as much as it does our churches.

Rev Kaye Ronalds
Queensland Synod Moderator

Monday Midday Prayer

Son of God,

warm our hearts, thaw our thinking, stir our souls and wrap around us when we are weather beaten and worried.

Amen

Moderator's diary

30 June – 4 July
President's Ministers' Conference, Charleville

8 July
World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women's South Pacific Area Seminar—Opening Service, Emmanuel College St Lucia

20 July
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SU Queensland CEO and National School Chaplaincy Association spokesperson Peter James addresses media.
Photo: SU Queensland

High Court challenges model, not chaplains

The 19 June High Court decision that the funding model of the national school chaplaincy program is unconstitutional may not mean what you think it does. **Mardi Lumsden** explores.

The High Court decision to overturn the current funding model for school chaplains is not a criticism of the program itself, said Peter James CEO of Scripture Union (SU) Queensland, Australia’s largest provider of school chaplains.

“We believe that this decision will enable the Government to put in place an appropriate funding model that meets the court’s requirements, securing chaplaincy for the future,” said James, who is also the spokesperson for the National School Chaplaincy Association.

“With the government behind the program and, in fact, bipartisan support for the program, I’m confident that some form of funding will be put in place,” he told the *Sydney Morning Herald*.

The High Court decision handed down on 19 June was about whether federal funds can be paid directly to chaplaincy providers, or whether the funding should be through state/territory grants.

In Toowoomba resident Ron Williams’ original High Court challenge in 2012 it was discovered that the federal government funding agreements in state schools was unconstitutional. The court did not find that the government shouldn’t fund a specifically religious program. This second decision was again related to the funding model.

While Williams’ campaigns focused on the separation of church and state, this was not the outcome of either challenge. According to *The Australian*, the landmark ruling may, “cast legal doubt on more than 400 commonwealth spending programs and could force the Abbott government to overhaul the way it funds everything from private schools and universities to hospitals and local roads”.

Attorney-General George Brandis has played down the impact of the decision on other

government programs. “The court did not decide that any other commonwealth program was invalid,” he said.

Within hours of the decision being handed down Prime Minister Tony Abbott reiterated his support for the national school chaplaincy program, the National School Chaplaincy Association has welcomed this support.

Mark Fletcher of theguardian.com wrote on 19 June that the decision has more to do with state freedoms and is less about the presence of chaplains in state schools.

“The states were in no way interested in joining the secular crusade against god botherers in primary schools; they were only interested in protecting the states from Commonwealth interference.”

The National School Chaplaincy Association said funding was guaranteed until December.



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Never give up



Dianne Jensen talks to Dave Andrews, Charles Ringma, Lin Hatfield Dodds and Sue Hutchinson about why they keep working for social transformation.

“Many people start out with the fire in their belly to set the world alight when they are young; but very few people still have the fire in their belly when they are old,” says Dave Andrews.

The social activist veteran knows personally that working to bring about the kingdom of Heaven on Earth can be a costly road for those who truly open their hearts to the pain of the world. He suggests that the question is not why some falter, but how others keep their passion and faith alive on the journey.

Dave and his wife Ange have lived in Christian communities in Australia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal for more than 40 years, pouring their energy into living and working alongside the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

“To me the primary issue in following Jesus is to have a sense of vocation, a commitment to love God and love my neighbour, and then the secondary issue is how I can work that out within the context of location, profession and way of life,” says Dave.

These days Dave lives with his wife Ange and their children and grandchildren and others in a joint household in West End, Brisbane. He teaches and trains students and church leaders in community work as well as working with the Waiters Union Christian community network. His books include *Christi-Anarchy*, the *Plan Be* series, *Building a Better World* and *Not Religion, But Love*.

Dave believes that at the core of every Christian activist who survives to fight another day there is an ongoing, intimate encounter with God, grounded in a deep connection to community. And throughout their life, he and Ange have set aside time for reflection, prayer and renewal.

“We try in our own community to demonstrate a daily rhythm of rest and work and a weekly rhythm

of involvement and withdrawal,” says Dave. “In this community we have our 6.30 am Monday morning meeting where we have a time of meditation, prayer and reflection before we start the week, and we emphasise the importance of those spiritual disciplines to sustain people for the struggles.”

Life on the margins

Rev Dr Charles Ringma, director and founder of drug rehabilitation program Teen Challenge, came face to face with those living on the margins when he felt called to serve as a volunteer street worker in the 1960s. Through Lifeline he developed a drug rehabilitation program based on extended households which provided a support base for young people within a family setting.

“People did what we now call radical hospitality,” says Charles. “The whole idea was to try to keep it as de-professionalised as possible and to think more of it not as a job or career but as a vocation and as a way of living a Christian life.”

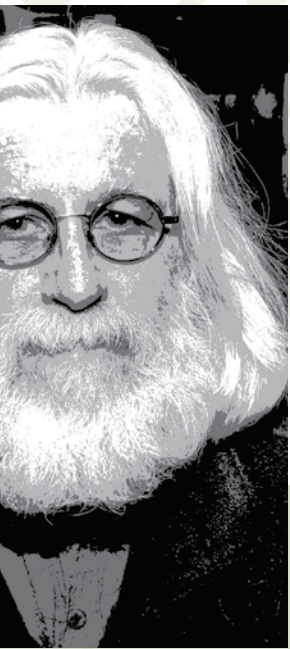
Twenty years later, when Charles moved to take up academic appointments in the Philippines and then Canada, the Ringmas continued to seek out inclusive Christian communities and to invite others to share their life.

“I believe in the spirituality that comes out of service ... doing things together with family and friends that bring shalom, that build human community, that give people hope or help them on their journey is very life giving,” he reflects. “It is a theological, spiritual sense of calling that being a Christian means that one should be this kind of a person. I think that is probably the guts of it, the heartbeat of it, otherwise to do that just doesn’t make any sense.”

Along the journey, Charles has found inspiration from mentors both contemporary and ancient such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thomas Merton and

“In the face of despair, I have to keep coming back to why am I involved with this, remembering that it is God’s work, not mine”
Sue Hutchinson

(L-R) Dave Andrews, Christian community worker and social activist; Sue Hutchinson, Research Officer for the Queensland Synod; Rev Dr Charles Ringma, writer, academic, and founder of Teen Challenge. **Photo:** Holly Jewell Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director of UnitingCare Australia. **Photo:** supplied



the medieval mystics. His books on Christian spirituality include *Whispers from the Edge of Eternity* and *Catch the Wind*.

Charles is a Companion of the Norththumbria Community Brisbane, a Christian community rooted in Celtic spirituality, and a facilitator at Stillpoint, a centre for personal and spiritual growth.

“We need to take time aside for retreats and time for reflection and prayer, time for doing nothing, practicing Sabbath. My experience has been that I have been nurtured in both the retreat part of my life and in the actual service or giving side,” he says.

Passion for change

Both vocation and community are key drivers for Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director of UnitingCare Australia. Her commitment to the Uniting Church as a transformative social movement is undiminished after 12 years at the helm of one of the largest non-government providers of community services in Australia.

“I am passionate about UnitingCare being all about the dignity of each person, the interconnectedness of all people, the importance of thriving communities, and commitment to quality services,” says Lin.

And there’s no space for anything less than whole-hearted commitment in such a visible position, she adds.

“In a role that involves influencing you need to bring intellect and heart and evidence to it; you need to be able to live and work with people in a way that doesn’t impose or expect but invites and encourages and enables.”

Lin and her family are actively involved in a Uniting Church congregation in Canberra and are deliberate about taking time out from their hectic schedules.

“I think there are practices around how you retain your energy and passion. I try to have a rhythm in my life that works,” says Lin. “For example, for at least 10 years my family and I have been camping once a calendar month. That has been a household discipline that we have kept to [in Canberra] through summer and winter.”

Lin believes that the keystone to persistent hope and action is an active sense of vocation. “Someone said to me many years ago that vocation is where your deep joy meets the world’s need. That’s how I feel about working with UnitingCare.”

Faith to carry on

For every person who tries to make a difference, the pace of change can seem agonisingly slow.

Sue Hutchinson, Research Officer for the Uniting Church Queensland Synod, has worked with a range of people passionate about social justice. She knows that emotions can run high.

“I think sometimes when you are very moved by something it is hard to pull back from that emotion and not to get overwhelmed,” says Sue. “I have seen people become so embedded in issues that they seem to almost lose perspective.”

“People can quite easily get burnt out; they will be very engaged for a time then become so frustrated and angry and it becomes too hard.”

Sue became involved in advocacy when she was working as an occupational therapist in the area of disability services. Her current role supports the Queensland Synod and the wider church to speak out on issues such as asylum seekers and refugees, criminal justice, disability and mental health.

“I think that we have to accept in life and in social justice that there are things that happen that we can’t change, and rather than continue to focus on that and be angry about that, to turn it in another

direction,” she says. “We need to consider what is in my power to do, what I can change and to try and focus on the possibilities.”

“In the face of despair, I have to keep coming back to why am I involved with this, remembering that it is God’s work, not mine, and looking back at the times when advocacy campaigns have actually changed policy that was thought to be unchangeable.

“I have to remember that I cannot hold the responsibility in myself for changing the world or for making this thing right. I can only do my part.”

We need to remember, adds Dave Andrews, that most of the things to which we aspire are beyond our control.

“Everything that we desire for the world in terms of peace and justice are beyond our capacity to deliver, but all our actions are a form of embodied prayer for God to do the things that we cannot.”

Find out more about the Uniting Church’s position on issues of social responsibility at ucaqld.com.au/social-responsibility



Teachers at Marcelo II School, Dili, using laptops donated to them by Glebe Road Uniting Church.
Photo: Noela Rothery

Bridging the Timor Gap

A partnership between two churches in Ipswich and East Timor is helping change lives in both places. **Mardi Lumsden** reports.

Glebe Road Uniting Church in Ipswich, west of Brisbane, has a long partnership with East Timor. When members, including Noela and Noel Rothery, experienced Timor for themselves through a UnitingWorld InSolidarity trip in 2010 they understood how a partnership could enrich both communities.

“We have learnt that we are two totally different cultures ... but through our partnership we have bonded together through the same God,” says Noel.

In 2011 Glebe Road Uniting Church and Ekaristi Church in Dili, East Timor, signed a memorandum of understanding consolidating their relationship. A key project for Ekaristi is their school, Marcelo II Eskola, which educates around 500 children in five classrooms over three sessions each day.

Ekaristi members and teachers Leocadia de Jesus and Isac Pinto de Jesus spent ten days in Ipswich in May with Glebe Road Uniting Church.

Leocadia, says education is essential for the future of East Timor.

“When Indonesia left Timor Leste a lot of children couldn’t get an education because they were too poor,” she says. “With a good economy and education they [children] can be good for the country and find jobs.

“Australia is very advanced compared to Timor Leste, but if I can learn the good things from here it is very useful for us in the future.”

Isac not only teaches at the school while attending university, he starts work at 4 am each day to sell bread to support his family, including ten siblings. The 26-year-old is also an elder. He is a great role model for his students.

“I want to teach the children all the school material but also about good behaviour to prepare them to be good people in the future,” he says.

Noel says the partnership works because it is based on personal relationships.

“If we had just sent money to something over there and had never met them it wouldn’t be the same. It really has changed me.”

Glebe Road minister Rev Peter Arnett says a number of Glebe Road congregation members are concerned about social justice issues facing their Timorese friends including gas reserves in the Timor Gap and the “perceived injustice of the Australian government taking more than their fair share of that resource” and controlling processing.

“For all that the Australian government has done which has been positive in terms of that journey to independence it seems that they feel as if they have earned the right to take advantage,” Peter says.

Indeed, the future of East Timor lies in the inspiration and education of its people.

The Glebe Road congregation is attempting to raise \$40 000 for the Ekaristi church and community to build two new classrooms. For more information visit gleberd.com.au

A time to remember



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Pursuing Sabbath equity

Sabbath is more than just time off; it's a holy day that strengthens a relationship. But not everyone has the privilege of observing the Sabbath, writes **Rev Peter Lockhart**.

It can be argued that the first story of the Bible is centred not on the act of creation but on establishing the importance of the Sabbath. The seventh day bears no alignment to the movement of stars or seasons but sets up a rhythm of existence in which God is recognised as the Lord over time itself.

The invitation from God to humanity is to share in the seventh day; to rest in God's presence. This rest is not a simple reposing in lethargic ambivalence or luxurious abandonment but in an awakening attentiveness to the nature of our being created in the image of God.

The temptation for those of us who live in the wealth of the Western world, or have the privilege of a five day working week, is to consider the Sabbath as a holiday we are entitled to, rather than a holy day that reminds us of our proper relationship with one another, God and creation.

Yet when we look honestly at the idea of the Sabbath rest, like many things, it is something restricted to those who are privileged enough to

enter into this time of rest. For many who struggle hand to mouth, day by day, resting can only be viewed as luxury. Until all humanity can share in the Sabbath rest we are constantly reminded that there are issues of injustice that we must all face.

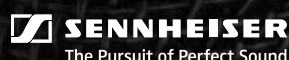
With this in mind, as people who live on the other side of the resurrection, we are invited to view the hope of this coming time of justice being realised now. Drawn into God's life in Christ we worship on Sunday, the first day of the week, the day after the Sabbath, as a sign and hope that we have already encountered the re-creation of all things and that the promise of the eternal Sabbath is nigh.

So, as we come in, and are sent out, each week we are left with the troubling question: "How do we live as people of the new creation and enable others denied this privilege to share the promised eternal Sabbath rest now?"

Peter is minister with St Lucia Uniting Church and chair of the Board for Christian Formation.

*Find more grow faith resources by registering at **abigyear.net***

“Until all humanity can share in the Sabbath rest we are constantly reminded that there are issues of injustice that we must all face”



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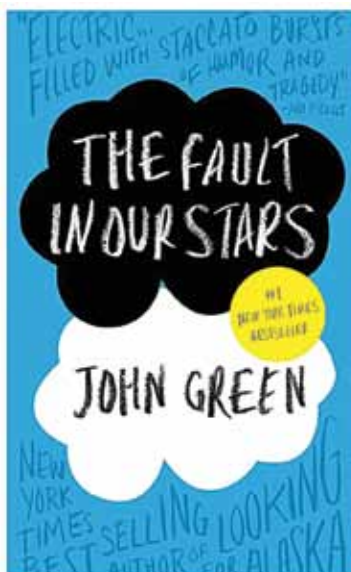
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Imagine me complexly

John Green honours the many facets of “us”

Following John Green’s inclusion in this year’s *Time* 100 and the adaptation of his latest novel into a blockbuster movie, Rohan Salmond talks to him about church, community, teenagers and the universe that wants to be noticed.

“I find that teenagers are tremendously intellectually curious and thoughtfully engaged”



There are thousands of John Greens in the world, including lawyers, teachers, politicians and even a Bigfoot expert. But John Green the novelist from Indianapolis is truly unique and, according to *Time* magazine, one of the 100 most influential people in the world.

It is almost impossible to name all the projects to which John directs his considerable creative energy. He is best known for writing young adult fiction. His latest novel *The Fault in Our Stars*, has sat comfortably in the *New York Times* bestseller list for nearly two and a half years, and last month was adapted into a movie starring Shailene Woodley and Ansel Elgort.

But John’s ability to foster community through the internet and his thorough understanding of young people has also made him something of a digital mogul. Along with his brother Hank, with whom he runs the Vlogbrothers YouTube channel, John either co-owns or co-runs about a dozen internet-related projects, including VidCon, the largest online video convention in the world, and The Foundation to Decrease World Suck, a registered charity which raised nearly US\$870 000 in a 48 hour digital fundraising drive last year.

The meaning of existence

Questions about the meaning of existence fascinate John, and it is a little-known fact that he is Episcopalian. Before writing his first novel *Looking for Alaska*, he intended to become a priest. He enrolled at the Chicago University Divinity School and spent five months as a chaplain at a children’s hospital, but ultimately switched to studying religion and literature at a liberal arts university.

John rarely talks theology on the internet because “I find a lot of the conversation about religion online really, really boring” but theological concepts pepper his books and videos, and he speaks fondly of the community he has in the Episcopal Church.

“One really interesting question to me is whether there is any meaning in human life and whether that meaning is constructed or derived: Do we make meaning, or should we discover the meaning that already exists?” asks John.

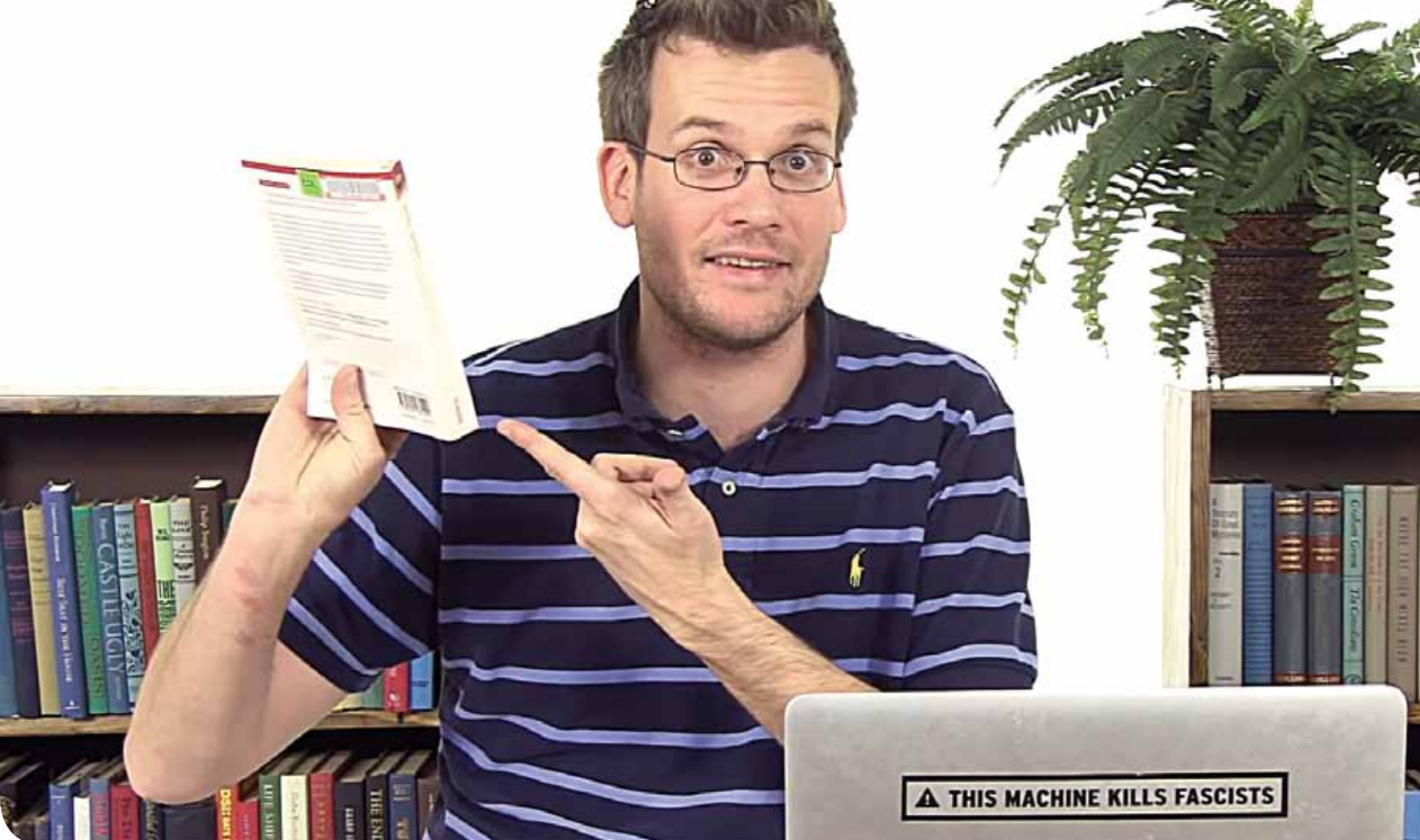
Given his multi-faith readers and viewers, John shirks strictly Christian theological language and opts for more secular, philosophical concepts to explore deep questions with his audience.

“We live in a very secular world but I worry that it doesn’t think a lot about that question [of meaning]. It’s busy fluttering about doing all the things that one does in one’s very busy life rather than pausing to reflect and engage.

“There is a character in *The Fault in Our Stars*—Hazel’s father—whose theology is very close to mine. I sort of snuck myself in as him I guess. He believes that the universe wants to be noticed—it wants to be apprehended. I think a lot of the meaning we find in human lives is the pleasure and challenge observing and being aware of the astonishing beauty and diversity of the universe.”

Teen whisperer

John’s YouTube viewers—called “Nerdfighters”—number in the millions, and the vast majority of them are teenagers and young adults. *Time* even went so far as to call John a “teen whisperer”, but it is probably more accurate to call him a teen advocate. Young people are incredibly important to



New York Times bestselling author John Green teaches literature via YouTube.
Photo: CrashCourse

John, and not just because he makes things for them for a living.

"I find that teenagers are tremendously intellectually curious and thoughtfully engaged," says John. "I think they are too often dismissed by adults because their ways of asking the big questions are different from the way we ask them."

This may come as a surprise to those used to hearing stories about disengaged, cynical youth, but John's enthusiasm for young people is infectious. He says teenagers shouldn't be patronised; feeding them simplified messages is actually counterproductive.

"Ultimately I think in many cases teenagers are asking those big questions better than adults are asking them. They ask questions about the meaning of life and why suffering exists and what our responsibilities are to other people," he enthuses.

"They ask those questions without irony ... I find that tremendously appealing."

There is no "them"

Despite his own brand of bookish charisma, John lives with anxiety and is an incorrigible introvert—his current star status is a challenge. But interacting with other people is an indispensable part of his worldview. John often talks about "imagining others complexly" which is a pivotal theme in a number of his books and videos.

"Even though you are the centre of your own story it is really important not to think you are the centre of the bigger, universal story. That is hard for me but it is important to me," says John.

"The Fault in Our Stars says that people living with serious disabilities are not 'other', they are people. Their lives are richly complex and full of hope and humour and anger and everything else that is the human life.

"Any time we imagine people as fundamentally other, we dehumanise them. We take away their personhood and I think that is one of the least generous, cruellest things you can do to someone. It is really important to me to try to use fiction as a way into others, a way into imagining others as fully human and also to use stories as a way of claiming the fullness of life."

It is a profoundly empathetic application of the Golden Rule. John began to learn this philosophy through his family at first, but later via a much broader sense of community through church and the internet.

"That is a big part of the role that the church plays in my personal life," says John. "One of the knocks on churches in the 21st century is that they are antiquated—we don't need them the way that we used to; they don't serve the social or political functions that they used to. But for me church has always been a place where I am not only free from judgement but where I am asked to turn outward.

"It is so hard to be pulled out of yourself and think about other people. I will take that anywhere I can get it."

The right audience

There are things churches can learn from the way digital communities grow and organise themselves. They are, after all "not that different", says John.

"They are both communities." In John's experience, growth is a by-product of authentic, inclusive community.

"American churches sometimes focus on attendance as a metric for success, but the real signs of success are about the changes that you make in people's lives and the changes that you make in your communities.

"If we focus all of our resources on trying to get people to come to church I think that we miss out on the tremendous opportunity of trying to do the actual work that we have been called to do.

"Hank and my strategy or tactic with [our videos] has always been to try to talk about stuff we care about with people we care about and to assume that as long as we are talking openly and authentically with our audience, we will have the right audience.

"We may not have the largest audience, but we will have the audience that we want."

John's website is johngreenbooks.com
The videos he makes with his brother Hank can be found at youtube.com/vlogbrothers

Prepare to meet your maker

Are you prepared to die? New research shows Australians are dropping the ball and not planning ahead. **Ashley Thompson** explores the world of life before death.

“Families have not been prepared because some doctors will say you don’t want a person to lose hope so let’s not talk about it”

Rev Heather Allison

Twelve years ago palliative care at Brisbane’s Wesley Hospital did not exist. Today, Ward 4A buzzes with nurses and chaplains committed to journeying with patients through the end of life phase. UnitingCare Health, Blue Care and local congregations across Queensland together represent the church’s commitment to ministering to those in palliative care. What should be a time of peace and resolution however is often tainted by unpreparedness for death.

In a survey conducted by Palliative Care Australia earlier this year, data revealed only 50 per cent of people surveyed had a will, 20 per cent a power of attorney and only 5 per cent an advanced care plan.

Everybody dies

“A lot of lawyers would argue that making a will is a civic responsibility; we should all do it because none of us can tell the time of our death,” says UnitingCare Health chaplain, Rev Heather Allison.

Transitioning from working in cardiology unit to Palliative Care this July, Heather has recently

immersed herself in studying the emotional, spiritual and legal end of life issues. Death is often seen by medical staff as failure or defeat and the staff of 4A are fighting hard to change the perception that palliative care is only for final days.

“Sometimes a [patient] handover will happen literally days or even hours before a person dies and it’s terrible. Families have not been prepared because some doctors will say you don’t want a person to lose hope so let’s not talk about it,” says Heather.

An unwillingness to talk about undesirable topics like death and the work it entails has created a culture of fear and prolonged suffering.

“All of the time there has been this carrot of cure, treatment, treatment, treatment and then finally it can be quite devastating when the doctor has finally said those critical words ‘I can’t do anything for you.’ You feel very abandoned then,” says Heather.

Karen Gower, Blue Care Nurse Practitioner and former clinical nurse manager of the Wesley

UnitingCare Health chaplain,
Julie MacKay-Rankin, with a patient
in the Wesley Hospital's Palliative
Care unit Ward 4A.
Photo: Supplied

Hospital's Palliative Care unit Ward 4A, agrees with the benefits of introducing palliative care earlier.

"Palliative care is end of life care, yes, but a palliative approach is the overarching umbrella," says Karen. "So we look at it as three stages: symptom control, terminal care and end of life care—some people might be in that palliative approach for up to two, three or even four years."

According to Karen and Heather, a specialist's frankness can free up a patient to attend to unfinished business.

The work of dying

Figures from Palliative Care Australia show that one in four Australians do not believe their loved ones have enough information to carry out their wishes and only half felt confident they could carry out their family member's wishes.

Coined by Dr Ralph McConaghy, the Wesley Hospital's director of palliative care, "the work of dying" refers to the legal, financial and relational tasks a person undertakes close to death. Family reunions, holidays and legacy planning top the list of pursuits by those choosing to make the most of their final days. However, for those who have left their legal and financial affairs unattended, less pleasant undertakings await.

"The statutory legal requirement in Queensland is for an advanced health directive—it is the only legal document that the ambulance will take notice of, and then there's Common Law where you have your advanced care plan and statement of wishes," explains Karen.

"However, if you've got someone who doesn't have the capacity to complete an advanced care plan or an advanced health directive then they'd need to have done an enduring power of attorney for someone to be able to state their wishes."

Considering how you may like to spend the final weeks of your life may not sound like fun but it is an important conversation to have in order to lift the burden of decision from your next of kin.

"What do you want for your funeral? Do you want to be cremated, do you want to be buried? Have you got a funeral plan, those sorts of things. Where are your documents, where are all your passwords of all your bank accounts?" asks Karen.

Heather Allison says once free from these responsibilities there are many other fulfilling end of life activities.

"Sometimes people will go on the best holiday of their lives—literally do the bucket list. They will say this is my last caravan trip so let's go in this window of time I have," she says.

"Others like to write their story, organise photos or make a family tree. Sometimes it's just thinking ahead, such as 'I am not going to see my daughter finish high school or get married' or 'I am not going to be around when she has her first child' so literally they write letters to be opened on an 18th birthday," says Heather.

Helping hands

Rev Dr David MacKay-Rankin, Minister with the Holland Park Uniting Churches and husband of Julie Mackay-Rankin Chaplain in the Palliative Care unit at the Wesley, has lived through a loved one's death.

David's first wife, also Julie, died 12 years ago of liver disease at the Wesley Hospital before palliative care had its own unit. In spite of this, Julie received excellent care and left David with peace of mind regarding her wishes. Then widowed with two teenagers, his local church, Oxley Uniting, was essential in caring for David and his children in the immediate aftermath of Julie's death.

"We ate casseroles for six weeks," says David, "in fact we had to ask them to stop in the end. I was a bloke with two teenage kids and although my daughter and son are quite capable, I couldn't cook for my life.

"If you're a person of faith who is a member of a congregation, then the support the congregation offers is critical. Sometimes it's simply a matter of presence. There's no limit to the ways in which people can be helpful but it's about balancing being helpful but giving the person space," says David.

The privilege of sharing the end of life journey is not something Heather, David or Karen will forget.

"I think that it takes a lot for people to allow someone to come in at a time when they're very vulnerable and I find it is important to recognise that and that it is their journey, not my journey," says Karen Gower.

"People change their focus from living for the next ten years to living out the day that they have and we can all only live one day at a time. None of us know if we're going to wake up the next morning."

For more information on Palliative Care at the Wesley Hospital or to donate to this invaluable service, visit wesley.com.au

The Synod Bioethics Committee's book, Emotional, spiritual and ethical end-of-life-issues, is available at ucaqlld.com.au/social-responsibility/ethics

“What do you want for your funeral? Do you want to be cremated, do you want to be buried?”

Karen Gower



5 taboos the church needs to talk about

1

Suicide

Everyone knows someone who struggles with their mental health, but how often do we talk openly and honestly about it? Community groups like A Nouwen Network are working to connect people and break the stigma that surrounds mental health issues, but there's still a lot of work to be done.

2

Doubt

It's a big, pluralistic world out there. With so many ideas jostling for attention, there's bound to be folk in your church community who aren't sure what to believe anymore. How do they explore these doubts with integrity? Hopefully with the faithful support of a church family; but that can't happen if people don't feel safe to voice their doubts in the first place.

3

Sexuality

Statistically speaking, if your congregation has 25 people in it, there is at least one lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) person worshipping with you. It might seem like the Uniting Church talks about sexuality an awful lot, but do LGBT people in your community feel comfortable making themselves known and sharing their experiences? When your church discusses LGBT issues, are LGBT people encouraged to take part?

4

Abortion

It's a hairy issue that gets a lot of airtime in mainstream media, but there's a belief that talking about abortion in church is unnecessarily divisive. It's good to be sensitive of others, but the lack of open dialogue breeds shame and fear. The exact number of abortions in Australia isn't known, but a 2011 South Australian Government report stated that one third of South Australian women will undergo an abortion in their lifetime. If someone in your church needs to talk about abortion, would they feel comfortable to do so?

5

Domestic violence

The leading cause of death and injury in women under 45 isn't cancer or alcohol or cars—it's domestic violence. More than one woman per week is murdered by her current or former partner and more than one million children are also affected. Churches place a high value on family, but congregations seem to be leaving it up to church agencies and charities to prevent domestic violence. The right conversation or support at the right time could save somebody's life.

What taboos do you think the church needs to address? Join the conversation at journeyonline.com.au

Nominations now open for 2014 Moderator's Community Service Medal

Do you know a volunteer who has made an outstanding contribution? The Moderator's Medal is one way to honour them.

This year we are looking for nominations that truly reflect the UnitingCare Queensland mission:

As part of The Uniting Church, the mission of UnitingCare Queensland is to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities as we: Reach out to people in need; Speak out for fairness and justice; Care with compassion, innovation and wisdom.



Nominees must:

- be a volunteer, past or present
- have exhibited outstanding service over a number of years
- be involved in community service work other than congregational work (e.g. UnitingCare Community, Blue Care, UnitingCare Health hospitals, Wesley Mission Brisbane or community service agencies outside the Uniting Church)
- not be or have been in paid employment connected to their volunteer work



Nominations close **Friday 22 August 2014** and should be submitted electronically via the UnitingCare Queensland website www.ucareqld.com.au



Rockhampton South Uniting Church members and facilitators of the Grief Recovery Program Debbie Carige and Kath Hooper.
Photo: Supplied

Learning to say goodbye

Rockhampton South Uniting Church is reaching out to the community through a program helping people to deal with grief. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

Dealing with the death of a loved one is one of the toughest things we ever face. When members of Rockhampton South Uniting Church heard about training for the Grief Recovery Program offered by Blue Care Gold Coast, they knew that this was an opportunity to respond to an ongoing community need.

Two years later, trained volunteers from the church have provided six programs to small groups, each running for seven weeks. The free program is offered several times a year and is supported by donations.

Aurilea Augustine, one of three current facilitators (with Debbie Carige and Kath Hooper), helped set up the initial program. As a veteran volunteer with the Cancer Council and a cancer survivor, she was drawn to the concept of providing a safe place for people to share their grief experience.

“It is an area that not many people feel comfortable talking about,” says Aurilea. “The strength of the program is the ‘compassionate group’ which gently listens and allows time and space for participants to tell of their loss and what they are experiencing.”

She says that educating people about the physical, emotional and mental manifestations of grief and providing activities such as journaling enables participants to travel at their own pace to a place of acceptance and hope.

“The main benefit of this program is for people to come together and realise that yes, they aren’t going mad, it is quite normal to feel this way.”

The program is well supported by the congregation, and some participants have expressed interest in setting up similar programs in their own churches. Aurilea says the outreach is a practical opportunity for lay people to share the compassion of Jesus, and to walk beside people experiencing the pain and isolation of loss.

“I think it sits very neatly with the mission of the church. We feel humbled to be part of their lives, and it is wonderful to see how far most people travel within those seven weeks and what a difference it makes.”

The next Grief Recovery Program at Rockhampton will be held in September. For more information contact 4922 6414 or rockysth@tpg.com.au. For information about facilitator training contact Sue Burgess (Blue Care Gold Coast) on 5532 0588.

“The strength of the program is the “compassionate group” which gently listens and allows time and space for participants to tell of their loss”



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Peculiar
things we do:

Conferences

This September, women around Australia will gather for the first *UnitingWomen* conference in Sydney. Photo: Supplied

Why travel to Sydney when you can watch a webinar? **Ashley Thompson** explores.

In Australia, many Christians wait in anticipation for annual gatherings. We go to great lengths, spending precious leave and flying interstate to listen to keynote speakers whose content is often easily accessible online or in their latest book.

We attend conferences for a variety of reasons, such as professional development, networking and the excitement of visiting a new environment. But there are other less obvious reasons to meet our peers face to face. Consider the creative offbeat conversations that take place over morning tea and the unexpected friendships that may arise. People can surprise us and making ourselves vulnerable can open our eyes to another perspective.

Karen Schloss, a member of Logan Uniting Church south of Brisbane has attended Hillsong Conference in Sydney 19 times.

"I believe when we position ourselves deliberately in conference opportunities, God opens our eyes to what he is doing across the universal church," says Karen.

One of the biggest criticisms of conferences like Hillsong's however, is the suggestion they create a "spiritual high" that doesn't last.

"I have a fairly strong view about people applying this type of label to any conference," says Karen.

"I believe that when people limit their view to that of a 'spiritual high' and use this view as a reason for not attending a conference, then they are robbing themselves of an opportunity for God to work deeply in their lives and in turn lessen their potential impact in their community for eternity."

Rev Melissa Lipsett, Executive Minister at Newlife Uniting Church on the Gold Coast, believes people should spend their conference dollar wisely. Newlife chooses to host to Willow Creek Association's Global Leadership Summit, a two-day event presented via videocast at sites throughout Australia.

"Experiential conferences can provide a great opportunity for people to bond and get to know each other but we host the Global Leadership Summit because we believe empowering leaders is one of the greatest impacts we can make not just in our own community but for the kingdom," says Melissa.

This year the Uniting Church hosts many different conferences including the Basis of Union conference, Catalyst for Renewal; Preaching for Transformation, UnitingWomen, Queensland's Synod in Session and the Presidents' Minister's conferences.

‘I believe when we position ourselves deliberately in conference opportunities, God opens our eyes to what he is doing across the universal church’

Karen Schloss



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What makes the church grow?

Following the release of the Uniting Church census data, **Rev Paul Clark** offers some of what he has learned while ministering with churches that bucked the downward trend.

In a previous parish an “expert” came through and said, “If you preach the gospel, the church grows”. I challenged him on that because it implies most churches are not preaching the gospel! When our culture was warm towards Christianity, preaching, sacraments and visiting might have been all you needed to grow, but in a hostile culture it takes more than that.

First, there’s a bunch of things you can’t do much about: location, population decline, wider culture, brand reputation, resources, life cycle. Sometimes no matter what we do a congregation won’t grow in size. Churches go through seasons, and if you’re stuck in winter, you’ve just got to get through! “Winter” ministry is very important and some have great gifts for it. It can be tough but remember, one day the sower and the reaper will celebrate together!

Second, hope! We hear so much about church decline that it seems there is no hope for the church. Don’t believe it. The greatest thing I bring to my congregations is a belief that the best is yet to come! I won’t sugar coat it: It’s going to take change and effort. But God still changes hearts and the church is still growing.

Third, you’ve got to go! You’ve got to get out of your building and tangibly engage the community in service and evangelism. Don’t just talk about it from the pulpit: go. Show and tell the good news. It’s contagious, and it changes the perception of the church in the community. Jesus called us salt, but the world doesn’t care about our “purity” ministry until it’s tasted our flavour.

Finally, contemporise your worship. Jesus came to a time and place and spoke their language. We must do the same. If you believe your current worship is timeless you are wrong. It was developed for a culture. We cannot escape culture, it’s part of the human experience. Jesus comes to culture, then transcends it.

Paul is minister with Redcliffe Uniting Church.

‘Jesus came to a time and place and spoke their language. We must do the same’



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(L–R) Member for Solomon Natasha Griggs, UnitingCare Queensland CEO Anne Cross, ARRCs Director of Services Mark Diamond, ARRCs and Blue Care Executive Director Robyn Batter and Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield at the ARRCs launch in Darwin.
Photo: Supplied

Matthew Tyne joins UnitingWorld

UnitingWorld has appointed Matthew Tyne as Associate Director for Relief and Development.

Matthew has nine years' experience in international development and over 20 years' experience in the community and health sectors. He has significant experience in project management with community and government agencies in health, community development, human rights and advocacy. Most recently Matthew worked in international programs at the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations in Sydney and Bangkok. This has involved travel to in-country project sites across South East Asia, PNG and the Pacific.

Queen's birthday honours

Several Uniting Church members in Queensland were awarded honours at the Queen's birthday celebrations in June.

Elizabeth Fritz was admitted as a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia (AM) for service to the homeless, as was Emeritus Professor Graham Jones for his contributions to the field of mathematics.

Three members of the Uniting Church in Queensland were awarded Medals of the Order of Australia General Division (OAM): Stanley Collard for his service to politics, Pamela Dalrymple for services to the community through aged care and Keith Young for service to youth through the Boys' Brigade movement.

ARRCS launches

A new entity has been established as a service of UnitingCare Queensland to operate the aged care services in the Northern Territory previously operated by Frontier Services.

Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARRCS) was launched on 13 June by Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield, Assistant Minister for Social Services at a function in Darwin.

After many months of working with Frontier Services, the federal government, local communities and staff of the services, ARRCs officially took full responsibility for the services on 1 July. It now operates eight residential care facilities and 11 community care programs in Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Mutitjulu and Docker River, including services specifically for Indigenous Australians.

North Queensland Presbytery minister splits

Two new presbytery ministers have been appointed to the Presbytery of North Queensland in order to replace Rev Bruce Cornish after nine and a half years in the role.

Former patrol padre Rev Garry Hardingham was elected as Presbytery Minister and Chairperson, while Rev Barry Cox was elected as Presbytery Minister Administration.

Townsville's Christians walk and witness

Over 100 Christians participated in the Walk of Witness in Townsville to begin the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in June. People from many denominations and local and state government representatives walked the streets of Townsville praying for the city, its leaders and the unified witness of Christ to the city.

The walk covered the Anglican cathedral, the Council Chambers, Uniting and Presbyterian churches, the Youth with a Mission base and the Catholic cathedral. Prayer and singing were offered at each location and a renewed commitment to the United Nations millennium development goals was made. The walk concluded with a tribute to the late Catholic bishop of Townsville Michael Putney for his commitment to ecumenism in the city.

Executive Officer Mission Resourcing

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

The task embraces the functions of:

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

The successful applicant will have:

- a passion for the mission of God through the Uniting Church
- exceptional visionary leadership

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

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



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Uniting Church SA

A full information pack and Position Description is available from Tracey Bost, Executive Assistant to the CEO/General Secretary, 08 8236 4232 or tbost@sa.uca.org.au

Applications close 4pm Thursday 31 July 2014.

Please forward applications to:
CEO/General Secretary,
GPO Box 2145, Adelaide SA 5001
or gensec@sa.uca.org.au

Give a real welcome

We read with interest the six ways to be a welcoming church (*Journey*, June 2014, page 15).

We have recently moved to Brisbane and were really looking forward to joining another church family after having left a great congregation in regional Queensland. Our experience has not been very positive, so there is one more point we would like to add—maybe in number one position.

When a visitor comes to your church and they are genuinely looking for a church home, they will tell you so. At this point it is important to connect in a real way so they can get to know you. Invite them to the local coffee shop after the service for a bite of lunch, or to someone's house.

We have attended six Uniting churches within a 10km radius of our home, over a six-month period, and still have not got past discussing the weather or worse still, merely participating in the somewhat embarrassing “passing the peace” during the service.

Name withheld

More depth, please

On Tuesday last I attended an ecumenical worship and prayer service for the Gold Coast as a representative of Mudgeeraba Uniting Church. One of the issues raised at the meeting was the place and importance of the media in our society. It was with some disappointment that I read the June issue of *Journey*. I feel we need more insightful discussion on the economy (page 5) and how to provide a sustainable budget and still accommodate the needs of all Australians.

In regard to the *Racial Discrimination Act* (page 19), we need more in-depth discussion. It is not a simple issue of limiting vilification. I'm reminded of Martin Niemöller's famous quote, “Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me”.

Media has a responsibility, let me know how I can help.

Graham Williamson
Mudgeeraba Uniting Church



Christians united for justice

I am writing to you after reading your magazine *Journey* whilst visiting the Wesley Hospital. I really enjoyed several of the articles. The story about Rev Alastair Macrae and Rev Dr Brian Brown was particularly inspiring and I wish to applaud them for taking a stand. It gives me hope to discover that Uniting Church clergy are engaging in social activism.

It is my view, that the Christian ethos is a model for living and doing. True Christianity surely implores direct action when we see injustice.

I noticed that you also published an article about farmers suiciding due to drought. However, drought is not the only issue causing mental health issues for farmers and landholders. Coal seam gas and other forms of mining are also destroying the livelihood of hundreds, if not thousands of Australians. My prayer is that all Christians will unite as one and say enough is enough!

I thank you again for the calibre of information in your magazine.

Sincerely,

Debbie Clement
Meerschaum Vale, NSW

Submission guidelines for letters to the editor can be found at journeyonline.com.au/contact/submit

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