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Grant applications are now open

Redcliffe Uniting Church is seeking applications to their **Neil James Grant Bequest** from Uniting Church congregations and agencies for works, projects and programs that extend the mission of God in Queensland.

Application forms can be downloaded from www.redcliffe.unitingchurch.org.au
 Grants from \$1000 – \$5000 will be considered.
 Closing date for applications is 10 October 2014 for distribution late 2014.

For more information call Rev Paul Clark on 3283 4066



Redcliffe Uniting Church
At the heart of the Peninsula

What's inside >>



9 Marriage consultation



10 Profile:
Dr Dayalan Devanesen



12 The worship gap



15 Dads and church



6 What is stewardship?

5 Children in detention

8 A cultural return

14 Kangra Girls' Hostel

16 Review: *Undivided*

17 Trusting God

19 Men's Shed horses

Journey

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What have you got?

Stewardship is a little bit like eating a Pop-Tart for breakfast.

Let me explain.

One morning I skipped the most important meal of the day (I know, I know; I'm trying to be better) and instead ate a Pop-Tart from a packet I had squirreled away in my desk at work. On Twitter I wrote,

"A Pop-Tart is not a complete breakfast JSYK [just so you know] but sometimes you just have to work with what you've got."

I realise this story does nothing to dispel the myth that social media is only used to talk about what you had for breakfast, but bear with me; I'm going somewhere with this.

I printed out that tweet and stuck it to my desk as a humorous way of reminding myself that even if things aren't perfect, sometimes you just have to get on with it. It's better to take stock of what is available to me, and what I can do with it, rather than sitting around thinking about all the things I could do if I had this or that.

I think stewardship is like this. Parables about investing wisely are often used in sermons on stewardship, as is the story of Adam and Eve looking after creation. Does that mean it's about finding things to do to help? Or cultivating extra resources to help the kingdom?

I think it all starts with working out what you've got right now, before you do anything else.

So what have you got? It might not be ideal, but God can work with that.

Rohan Salmond
Cross-platform editor



Give from God's providence



I had a delightful conversation with a senior student from one of our Uniting Church schools. He is considering spending a gap year to support a community in a developing country. He thinks he would like the challenge of a cross-cultural experience. Together we chatted about options for volunteering with an Indigenous community, UnitingWorld or another community organisation.

He explained that for him this is an ideal stage of life to spend a year in this way because he has no money but also no responsibilities.

A year is a generous gift of time.

My hunch is that even when he is earning an income and has some professional qualifications Harry will still be generous.

Generosity is a life habit.

I remember a cartoon used in a stewardship campaign that said simply, "There is never a convenient time to give." The pictures showed a young couple with small children and a large mortgage, a person in middle years paying for children at university and an elderly person trying to make their life savings last.

In our western culture the attitude of many people can be summed up as, "I worked hard for this, I earned it, I deserve it".

In another era when people had fewer possessions people sometimes talked about providence. It is the notion that God provides what we need to live. We are not owners but rather stewards or caretakers of all resources.

That notion of providence shifts our way of thinking about what we have—our time, talents and money. Instead of thinking about stewardship as giving a tenth of what we have to the work of God and then doing what we like with the nine tenths that we keep for our own use, we start to consider how we spend each minute, each skill and each dollar.

Stewardship is a way of life, rather than a tax to be paid to the church.

Sometimes the generosity of God's people surprises me. I was at a Presbytery meeting and the treasurer was nearly in tears as he reported that someone had gifted \$50 000 for the work of God. Last week I met a lady who had been assisting with the day camp in Bundaberg for decades. Some folk take time every week to visit the residents at the local Blue Care centre.

This month have a conversation about how you exercise stewardship of the resources at your disposal.

Stewardship is caretaking the household of God.

Rev Kaye Ronalds
Queensland Synod Moderator

Monday Midday Prayer

Lord Jesus,

teach us to be stewards of all that we have, to live simply and give generously as we participate in your mission.

Amen

Moderator's diary

12 September

Induction of Rev Barry Cox, Presbytery Minister Administration, North Queensland Presbytery

20–27 September

Australian Army Cadets Camp, Greenbank

29 September

Police Remembrance Day Service, Brisbane City Hall

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Children of all ages are still held on Nauru.
Photo: Department of Immigration and Border Protection

Kids in detention: good first step

While asylum seeker advocates are celebrating the announcement that some children and their families will be released from detention, they warn that there is still much to do. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

The Uniting Church in Australia has welcomed an announcement by the Minister for Immigration and Border Protection Scott Morrison that some children in detention will be released into the community.

The initiative applies to children under the age of ten years and their families who arrived before 19 July 2013 and are currently being held in immigration detention on the Australian mainland. It will affect around 150 children and their families, leaving an estimated 414 children in onshore detention centres and 331 children (some unaccompanied minors) on Christmas Island and Nauru.

Queensland Synod research officer Sue Hutchinson says that the fate of those children remaining in detention is deeply concerning.

“While we celebrate any steps forward, there will still be significant numbers of children of all ages who have been shunted away to remote places, removed from public and professional scrutiny. The damage which is being inflicted on the mental and physical health of these vulnerable young people is an unfolding tragedy.”

Ms Hutchinson is the Synod representative on the the Brisbane Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support (BRASS) Network which aims to coordinate support services and to advocate for asylum

seekers. She warns that without the right to work and proper support the newly released families will find themselves in dire straits.

Rev Elenie Poulos, the National Director of UnitingJustice Australia also has expressed concern about those remaining in detention.

“This group of asylum seekers was always going to be released. What about those children who are suffering on Nauru and Christmas Island? And what about children over the age of ten?”

UnitingJustice made a submission in June to the Australian Human Rights Commission national inquiry into children in immigration detention, outlining concerns about the inappropriateness of the existing facilities as well as the lack of transparency and oversight.

“The wealth of evidence-based literature ... suggests that the longer a child is detained, the more severe and long-lasting the negative mental and physical impacts of their detention,” said the submission.

In March this year the Uniting Church in Australia’s offer to provide sanctuary for all children without parents on Christmas Island was refused by the Australian Government.

Find out more:

The UnitingJustice submission to the national inquiry (June 2014) and the associated *Children in detention* paper (August 2014) are available at **unitingjustice.org.au**

The Australian Churches Refugee Taskforce recommendations *Protecting the lonely children* (July 2014) is available at **australianchurchesrefugeetaskforce.com.au**



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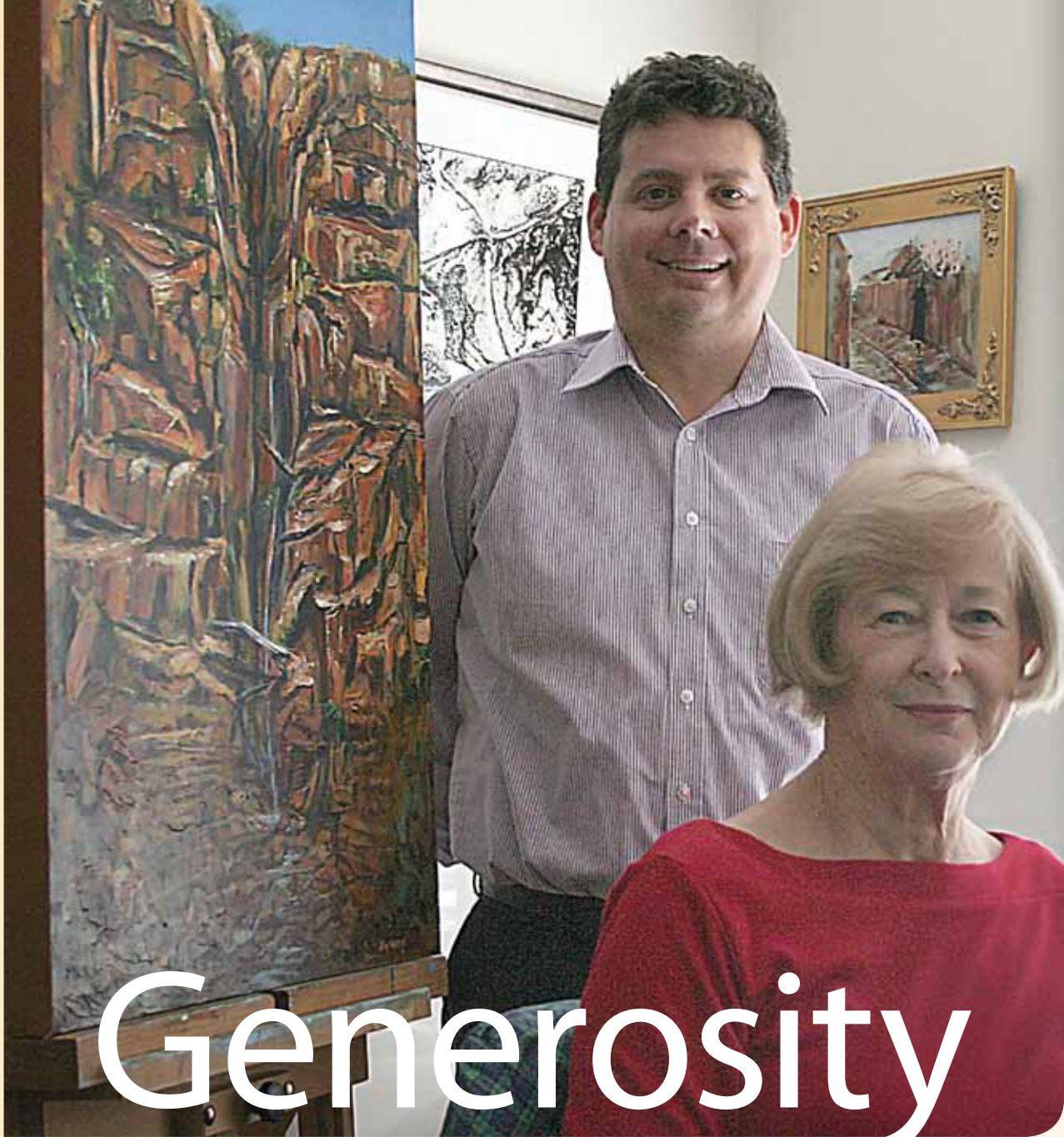
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Generosity meets mission

The call for humans to care for creation—to be good stewards—goes back to Adam and Eve. As the Queensland Synod marks Stewardship Sunday (5 October), **Mardi Lumsden** explores how the modern church is living generously.

“As you give there is a flow on that happens that may not directly come back to you but in terms of the kingdom of God, builds and grows”

Rev Anne Harley

So often, the word stewardship is underpinned by the need to fix the church roof or upgrade technology. Queensland Synod Moderator-elect Rev David Baker says stewardship arises from an understanding that humans are created to “bear witness to the presence and purpose of the creator.”

“Stewardship is the shaping of our lives (and all that we have) to reflect the purposes of the kingdom,” says David. “I know that sounds incredibly religious, but it is the question: ‘Am I exercising what I have been given to be a blessing or am I hoarding for myself and for those immediate to me, wealth which one day rust will destroy and moths will eat?’”

David says the biblical understanding to give ten per cent of your income to the church doesn’t quite hit the mark.

“I think we rather need to see the New Testament as speaking about a generosity of life that is way beyond ten per cent and be very careful about the idea that we give God a certain percentage and thus believe we have fulfilled all righteousness.

“The really difficult thing the vision of the kingdom lays upon us ... is the responsibility to look at all that we could name as ours and ask ourselves how it is being deployed for the sake of the kingdom.”

Living stewards

Redcliffe Uniting Church, in Brisbane’s north east, is one community attempting to live that call. The congregation was gifted a large bequest and is in the fortunate position to focus that gift on new mission activities rather than core business. In the past few years the church has given away over \$100 000.

Redcliffe Church Council Chairperson Greg Adsett says the congregation had been talking for

a number of years about how they could be more sustainable and not totally reliant on gifts.

“If we begin to rely on that type of stuff then there is no challenge for people in the congregation to give,” he says. “Back in history we were given a much smaller bequest ... and over the course of three or four years that money was gone.”

The congregation decided they could have used that money better so were focused on ensuring the long-term benefit of the new bequest through building the bequest itself and funding missional projects within their church, local community, the wider Uniting Church and overseas.

“We’ve always looked at it as ‘How can we be the best stewards’? Framing it in a legacy story, a good news story, really helps that,” says Greg.

“Stewardship is both time and money. I think it is using the gifts that God has given you wisely and knowing your limits and acknowledging that in various parts of your life we have varying capacities to give.”

Beyond the basics

When minister Rev Paul Clark was called to Redcliffe Uniting Church and heard about the bequest, his first response was “Oh no!”

“I know churches fight about money,” says Paul. “It is such a huge responsibility!”

He was glad that the Redcliffe congregation had made a commitment to fund new mission rather than core business.

“I’ve got a healthy parish in the first place that can pay its bills but I understand that if I was in another parish where they were struggling to pay the bills, it would be a big temptation to say, ‘we need to get afloat so we can go somewhere’.”

Paul’s experience of running stewardship campaigns in various churches has not been particularly fruitful for long-term mission.

“But when the focus is changed to mission, that changes everything. People get excited saying, ‘I want to be part of what God is doing in the world,’” he says. “People don’t give to a sinking ship. They want to give to something that is going somewhere.”

Paul says committing to fund new initiatives forces his congregation to think missionally and get out into the community. One activity is an art competition. Last year’s competition drew artists from throughout the Redcliffe community to paint depictions of stories from Genesis to Jesus. Paul says some of the artists were not from church backgrounds and it gave the church a way to connect with them and the artists a way to connect with the Bible.

More than money

Stewardship is not just about money. Giving time and using particular talents is equally important; something Townsville’s Stable on the Strand founder Rev Anne Harley knows well.

The ecumenical Christmas celebration, now in its thirteenth year, runs for five days and requires a large amount of money to run, and also around 1000 volunteers.

“Around 14 per cent [of volunteers] indicate they don’t go to church, which is just amazing,” says Anne. “It obviously catches the imagination of people who aren’t Christians.

“I think they see it as helping the community ... and I think it is relationships.”

The project has built strong relationships between the 60 churches involved as well as with the local council and businesses. But giving time at Christmas must be difficult for people.

“People believe in it and see the value of it as an outreach,” says Anne.

“I say to them, ‘This is an act of worship, you are giving of your life for these five days and you’re giving it to God’. As the churches come together there is an atmosphere that is created that is far more powerful than we even understand. Some of the value is not necessarily measurable. People say, ‘There’s a good feel down there’. I think they are feeling the presence of God.

“As you give there is a flow on that happens that may not directly come back to you but in terms of the kingdom of God, builds and grows. If we can capture that and the spirit of generosity and the effect that that can have, amazing things can happen.”

Mission possible

In August, the Synod Standing Committee approved a new direction for the Uniting Church Foundation and four exciting mission areas developed to help make more of God’s mission possible: faith and families, Indigenous education, people in crisis and tomorrow’s church.

Along with the launch of the first Foundation fundraising campaign for many years (\$10 for 10, raising money for Indigenous education) this marks the first step in a new journey for the Uniting Church in Queensland.

David Baker says it is time for the church to reflect on its mission priorities.

“The challenge for the church is the dialogue we need to have with ourselves around where are we really called to be,” he says.

Like Redcliffe Uniting Church, the Uniting Church Foundation aims to provide funds for new mission initiatives rather than core business.

“Are we going to seek our lives lived as Christian communities as lives lived for the other and in service to our community?” asks David.

“What are we called to do now, in the state we are in now, to bear fruit with all we are given?

“Are our Christian communities being structured, led and grown as communities of disciples or are they simply religious communities of like-minded people who look after themselves? That is a deep challenge for us all, but that is a question of stewardship.”

For David, the act of giving money, time or talents is an acknowledgement of faith.

“If you are going to give, give generously and with a sense of confidence that God is able to multiply a blessing in ways that we can’t imagine.”

For Stewardship Sunday (5 October) resources or more information about how to make more mission possible, visit the new Uniting Church Foundation website missionpossible.ucaqld.com.au



(L-R) Teddy Barkley (Cultural Advisor), Philemon Mene (Napranum Mayor), Irene and Stuart Scott.
Photo: Brooke Prentis

Weipa welcomes cultural return

The return of irreplaceable artefacts to the Weipa community has been welcomed by the decendents of Old Weipa Mission. **Brooke Prentis** reports.

Four woomeras, a dilly bag and some pieces of lacework taken from Old Weipa Mission have been returned to the Weipa community by grandchildren of the missionaries who worked there almost 100 years ago.

On 8 July 2014 a special gathering took place at the Napranum Aboriginal Council where Stuart and Roxane Scott, grandchildren of Presbyterian missionaries Herbert and Florence Mayer, along with Stuart's wife Irene Scott, made the journey to return the artefacts which, due to their age, are now very rare and an irreplaceable part of the cultural identity of the area.

The Old Weipa Mission, also known as "20 Mile", operated from 1898 to 1932 with Herbert and Florence Mayer as the missionaries from 1921 to 1928. In 1932 the mission was relocated to Jessica Point in the township of Napranum. The bell from the Old Weipa Mission now stands in front of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) church in Napranum.

In Roxane's reflections she said of her grandfather, "Herbert Mayer was a fascinating man—as a

grandfather, he told the best stories and as a man he lived what many would say was the life of a dreamer, an inventor, an adventurer, a philosopher, and a man of God. Florence, his wife, was a gentle lady who supported her husband through all his endeavours. In her own quiet and capable way she made a huge contribution to the success of the mission and later in life."

After the passing of their mother in 2012 the Scott family felt it was important to return the artefacts to where they belong after they had long been displayed in their mother's lounge room.

Napranum mayor Philemon Mene said that while it was a small ceremony, it held a strong story in the hearts of the local people. A stirring moment was when Aunty Mary-Ann Coconut sang in Thanikwith language "Welcome to Weipa" *"Ikki ikki bar thom a Waypa"*.

Rev Davui closed in prayer along with Aunty Mary-Ann who prayed in Thanikwith language.

The mayor said the artefacts would be restored and kept in the new library.

Stuart and Irene are part of Stanthorpe Uniting Church and Roxane is a teacher in Boonah.

“While it was a small ceremony, it held a strong story in the hearts of the local people”

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Let's not divorce over marriage

In the midst of the Uniting Church Assembly's consultation on marriage, Central Queensland Presbytery Minister **Rev Brian Gilbert** encourages the Uniting Church to pursue unity in Christ, even amongst differences.

My wife Margaret and I have been married for over 36 years. In that time we have always agreed on everything—we live in perfect peace and harmony.

Actually, this is not really so. We do disagree, but have found that we can still live together, and we agree on that point at least.

The discussion paper about marriage is really going to test how much people can disagree yet still stay in relationship with one another within the church. This is because on this issue there will never be consensus on one particular understanding. Some proposals—if accepted by formal majority—could easily cause division, making people feel alienated, angry and even unacceptable.

John Wesley acknowledged there are four elements which influence a person's thinking on any issue, and each of these will affect people in the marriage discussion which the Assembly is asking congregations to have. These are scripture, tradition, reason and experience.

The first of these is recognised as normative—but the way that people understand and use the biblical witness varies. Traditions change over the years and there is no single Christian tradition of how marriages are confirmed and celebrated. Reason is often discounted by some, even though the *Basis of Union* does commit its members to be open to an informed faith. Individual experience often challenges long-held views and attitudes.

Out of all this, there are bound to be contradictory responses to the three documents that have come before us. It is unlikely we will come to a statement on marriage about which we can "... think the same and cordially agree" to quote a Charles Wesley hymn.

The questions for us may well be, "How open are we to accept that people hold different views? How willing are we to listen and understand the story and belief of others?" Scripture, tradition, reason, experience—these will be in tension and influencing people in different ways.

Late last year, I was privileged to be part of a Uniting Church group which went to China. A theological conference in Nanjing centred on the theme, "One Flock, One Shepherd" and the China Christian Council (CCC) told the story of threats to unity in the Chinese church. These came from within—by groups which thought they had sole knowledge of the truth, and from outside China, by denominations which wanted them to go back to how things were in the missionary days.

The CCC's desire was to hold to Christian unity in response to the prayer of Jesus in John 17 because they all seek to follow Jesus, albeit in different ways. Their unity in Christ is seen as much stronger than the differences which might tear them apart.

There are differences already within our Uniting Church in a whole range of areas. When we have finished discussing this present issue, the question will be, "Are we able to follow the Chinese example and recognise our unity in Christ is stronger than our differences?"

Find the marriage discussion materials at assembly.uca.org.au/marriage



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Discovering Doctor DD

Servant leadership rooted in love for the other can make a radical difference. **Rohan Salmond** spoke to Mudgeeraba Uniting Church member **Dr Dayalan Devanesen AM** about loving action, bicultural healthcare and community empowerment.

Dr Dayalan Devanesen AM began his medical career with a blessing.

“When I was 12 I happened to meet Dr Ida Scudder, who founded Christian Medical College, Vellore,” he recalls. “She was 80-odd years old, and passed away the following year ... she was bedridden by that time.

“When she saw [my brother and me] she called us over and said, ‘Son, what would you like to be when you grow up?’ I said, ‘I want to be a doctor’, so she made me kneel down and she put her hands on my head and said, ‘Son, be a good doctor’.”

Throughout his career as a doctor and public servant Dayalan, who is known as “DD”, has had a profound impact on the field of community health in Australia, particularly for healthcare in Aboriginal communities. Between 1973 and 2003 he worked in the Northern Territory, first as a Flying Doctor and later as Director of Indigenous Health in the Northern Territory.

The road to Alice

Five years after his blessing from Aunt Ida, DD was accepted as a student at Christian Medical College, where he developed his passion for a community approach to healthcare.

“That medical school on the one hand did rural work because that is what Aunt Ida, the founder, wanted. But on the other hand it is a trailblazer for modern science. It did the first renal transplant in Asia, things like that.

“Many of the students get carried away by the glamour of more modern medicine but I was always attracted by the community health side of things. I wrote a paper as a student saying God calls us out of the hospital to join him on the dusty, sweaty roads of India to serve the people where they live. This has been my theme throughout: delivering health care but working outside hospitals and institutional walls,” sasy DD.

After graduating, DD moved to Nagari to work in a remote mission hospital operated by the Church of South India. It served a population of 100 000 poverty-stricken people with a team of just a handful of doctors. The workload and emotional toll proved to be too much.

“After six months I had a nervous breakdown. I had an ulcer and was vomiting—very sick—but I was working night and day. Six or seven women would come to the hospital every night because they were having complications delivering their babies. It was very hard work. Children would die every day of preventable diseases like malnutrition, diarrhoea and tetanus.”

DD’s father came to visit after delivering the 1972 Cato lecture at the Methodist General Conference in Australia and suggested it was time for a break.

“He said, ‘Son you can’t solve the problems of India all on your own. Why don’t you take a break and think about life? I’m going to try and get you to Australia. Go for a year and do the public health course at Sydney University.’”

Six months into his course, a lecture on Aboriginal health left the usually jovial DD extremely disturbed.

“Infant mortality, 200 per 1000 live births; high rates of tuberculosis; leprosy; malnutrition; diarrhoeal diseases; pneumonia—these were so shocking to me.

“I thought, my gosh! This is what I tried to leave behind! That night I couldn’t sleep, and I knew my life had changed because I was running away, obviously. The prayer I had that night was, ‘Here am I, please send somebody else!’

“When I came down in the morning and looked in the newspaper there was a half-page ad desperately seeking doctors to work in Aboriginal health in the Northern Territory, so that was it. I put my hand up, completed the course and ended up in Alice Springs.”

‘Look, people are the solution, not the problem, and the people have the answer to their problem’

Power to the people

The passion DD brings to his work is obvious; he is never afraid to learn and try something new. When he worked in the Northern Territory he brought a whole new collaborative approach to healthcare in central Australia.

“There was an initial advantage to coming from outside of Australia to work with Aboriginal people, but it was really all about attitude,” says DD. “It was partly my great desire to learn from Aboriginal people, you know? I wanted to be a learner as well as a teacher, and being a learner had huge advantages.”

DD is almost giddy with excitement as he tells stories about his former patients and the things he learned from them: bush tucker, bush medicine and traditional art and storytelling.

Healthcare professionals in central Australia had previously written off traditional healers as witch doctors, but DD saw something valuable in the holistic, spiritual approach they brought to health. Together they introduced “two-way medicine” which combines traditional and western health care strategies and traditional healers were eventually employed by the Department of Health. This led to development and training of Aboriginal health workers by the Northern Territory government, the first program of its type in the world to register Aboriginal health workers alongside doctors and nurses.

“The solution at the end of the day is not the white solution. In fact the present solution has become the problem. It’s the Aboriginal solution that we’re looking for,” he says, “Unless you can allow Aboriginal people to assert themselves to be empowered to do things their way—even if they make mistakes it doesn’t matter, they’ll learn from it—we won’t ever find a working solution to the problems facing Aboriginal people.

“My approach has always been to follow servant leadership; you serve the people even if you are a leader ... This is basically out of my Christian upbringing, wanting to serve rather than wanting to just go in and do marvellous things. Serving means getting to know who the other person is and getting to appreciate what it is they want to do.

“Look, people are the solution, not the problem, and the people have the answer to their problem. Our job is to listen to them, it’s not to go out and say, ‘Do this, do this, do this!’ but to ask, ‘What is it you usually do, and can we support that?’”

Empowerment is key

Now 68 years old and retired, DD is Vice-president of Roofs for the Roofless, an Indian non-government organisation founded and operated by his 99-year-old mother in Chennai.

“So I’ve gone full circle—I’ve left India and at the end of 30 years working in Aboriginal health I’ve retired and I’m working as far away as possible, back in India,” says DD.

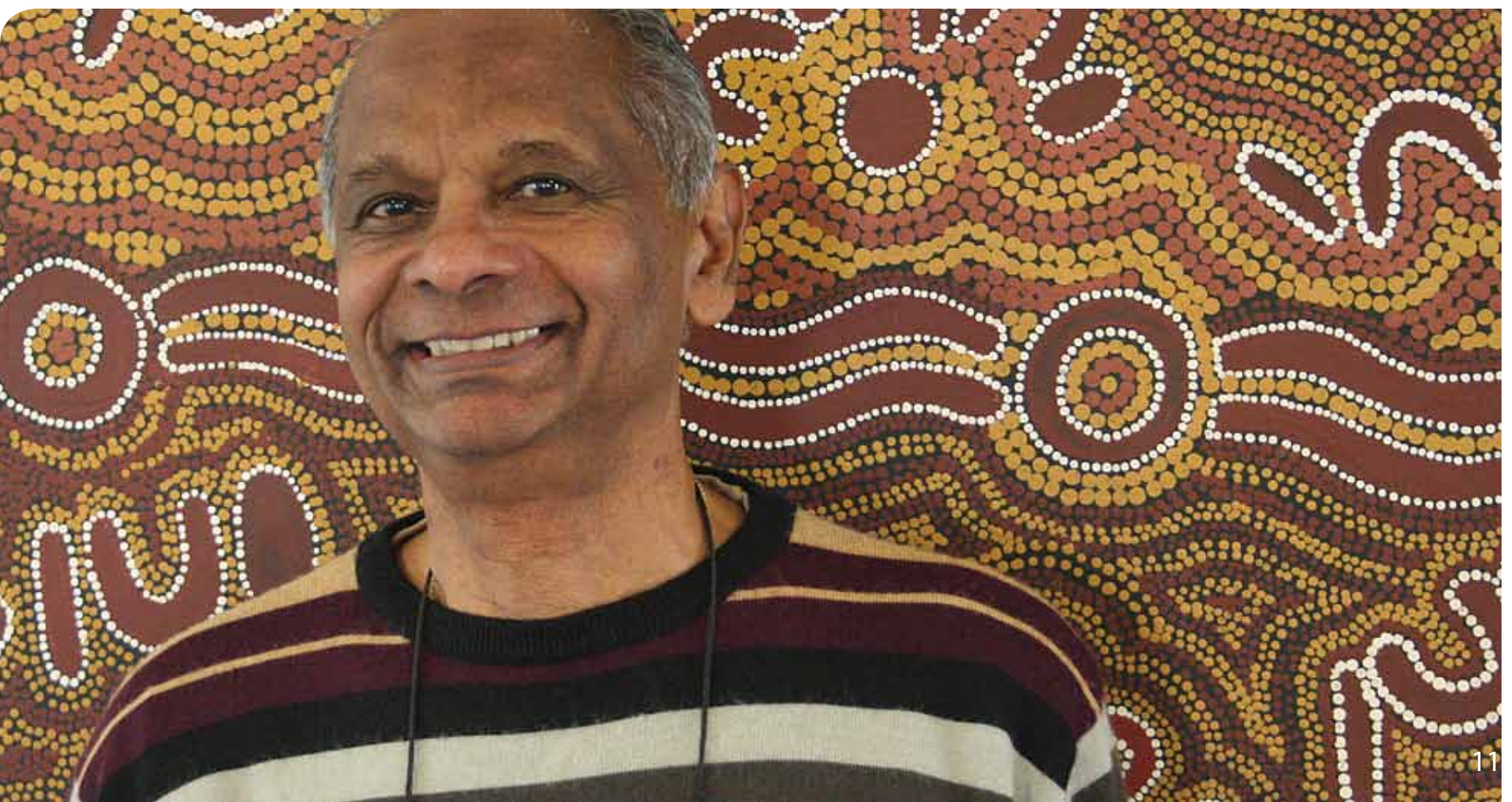
Roofs for the Roofless has a community approach just as comprehensive as DD’s work in central Australia. Programs include a day care centre for children whose parents work in the fields, a respite centre for the elderly, a centre for women’s empowerment and a vocational skills college for young people who failed high school.

“Empowerment is the absolute key word. There are no handouts as such. It’s called Roofs for the Roofless because we started by building houses, but it’s not a handout—they had to make the bricks!—but it was a solid house.”

DD now spends several months in Chennai each year because, “How can I fully retire when my mother is 99 and is still working?” After 30 years of operation, Roofs for the Roofless is on the cusp of financial self-sustainability.

“Roofs for the Roofless doesn’t go out preaching the gospel, but we live the gospel through what we do. The people know we are Christians because of our loving and compassionate action.”

Dr Dayalan Devanesen
Photo: Rohan Salmond



Generation whatever

Bridging the worship divide

Whenever two or three gather together in God's name there will be at least that many views on how to worship. Add different generations into the mix, and being one in the Lord is a challenging task for any worship team. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

We know that there are big differences between age cohorts, but why is it so difficult to design a worship experience which engages and sustains the whole family of God?

Rev Josie Neuendorff is a member of the Assembly worship working group, dividing her time between the Centenary congregation in Brisbane and the Presbytery of Bremer Brisbane.

Her experience as a young Uniting Church member sparked research into how different generations approach and participate in worship. Those insights were used in a series of Living Generations workshops for Bremer Brisbane and South Moreton Presbyteries conducted by Josie earlier this year.

What makes us tick

Josie suggests that understanding the generational divide is the first step towards identifying who's missing from our congregations, and why.

In brief, social researchers use the following classifications: Builders (born before 1946), Boomers (1946–1964), Gen X (1965–1979), Gen Y (1980–1994), Gen Z (1995–2009) and Alpha (born 2010 and after).

Many of the attributes are self-evident. Builders, overshadowed by the hardships of the Depression and World War II, understand the importance of duty, industry and thrift. Boomers are both hard working and idealistic—remember the Jesus People? They are used to responsibility and are the ones in charge at most churches.

Gen X, the first generation to experience two working parents, value work-life balance and are often suffering financial stress. They are seekers of truth. For Gen Y, social awareness and friends are a priority, and commitment can wait. Both these groups are generally tolerant of diversity, especially in terms of sexuality.

As for Gen Z, these are the most educated generation in Australia and they know it. They have a high level of self-centred individualism, and although worldly wise are averse to risk.

To discover how these attributes affect our approach to worship, Josie looked at the ways in which young people engage with each other and the world. As a Gen Y, she suggests that the broad difference between older groups and under 40s is around the “heart head hand” approach.

“Services which are more alert to generations might unpack a Bible reading, think about how that might look in our world right now, and help create space for people to be able to respond. This is ‘heart head hand’: something emotional, something intellectual and then something about how do I respond, what can I actually do about this, and how will I be different when I leave this place?”

The desire for “authentic community, not just another social network” runs strongly in both Gen X and Gen Y, she adds, as does the desire to contribute.

“Gen Ys and Xs want to engage and participate and lead; different styles of worship are helpful in that they get to have conversations or to participate in different ways other than just hearing. Builders would much rather just receive and that is how they participate and engage—it is much more passive.”

And rather than getting caught up in church politics, both Gen X and Gen Y are “voting with their feet” says Josie. “If church is not meeting their needs and those of their family then they are happy to go somewhere else.”

How we worship

Some churches have responded to the generational challenge by tweaking their regular service to include some child-friendly segments or adding a few contemporary songs.

Rev David MacGregor, a well-known songwriter and longtime member of the Assembly worship working group, cautions against confusing children's or youth services with intergenerational worship.

David is minister at Wellers Hill-Tarragindi Uniting Church in Brisbane and one of the team which collaboratively wrote and sourced *Uniting in Worship 2*.

“I have been in worship where if a child reads or you have the Sunday school get up and sing, people will applaud. That is not quite what worship is about, it is not about performing”
Rev Mel Perkins



Worship is hands-on at Burdekin Uniting Church, where the congregation enjoys coming together across the generations. **Photo:** Burdekin Uniting Church

“There needs to be some ‘connection points’ for the various ages and generations present. Whether it is a song or hymn, a prayer, some ritual movement, folk need to have those components in the worship which are familiar,” says David.

“This should apply to all worship, but it’s vital to factor in the variety of ways people across the generations engage with faith and worship—learning and spiritual styles, multiple intelligences, personality types and so on. Above all, to ensure that the intergenerational worship is indeed worship ... not just a series of concert-style presentations or items.”

Rev Mel Perkins, Adult Faith Educator at Trinity College Queensland adds that worship which is truly participatory goes beyond a token involvement of different age groups.

“I have been in worship where if a child reads or you have the Sunday school get up and sing, people will applaud. That is not quite what worship is about, it is not about performing ... we don’t applaud when an adult gets up and reads.

“Intergenerational worship is something far more intentional where you are actually respecting that all of the people of God, no matter what age they happen to be, have something to offer to each other. And that has to be reflected across everything that that group does, so you see younger people involved in leadership, all ages involved in mission, and older and younger people coming and spending time with each other.”

Open hearts and minds

Rev Greg Rankin is the minister at Burdekin Uniting Church, with worship centres at Ayr and Home Hill.

Like many congregations, Burdekin has a strong contingent of retired folk and a smaller group of parents with older children and teenagers. Professionals posted to the area are frequent attenders along with local young families.

It’s a church where the concept of intergenerational worship has been welcomed.

“There is an acceptance of exploring creative ways of doing worship and more contemporary ways of putting together a service,” says Greg. “There is a sense that although I may not enjoy this particular part of a worship service, there are others that find it really meaningful and engaging.”

He suggests that the key to exploring new forms is to strip worship back to its essential elements, tailoring each service around the basic framework.

“Through a service the idea is that you are touching people in different ways; you don’t have to touch people in every way in every service—as long as in each service there are slightly different points, ways of people connecting with the message and with God, and that you don’t do it the same way every service,” he says.

“For example, there are so many different and creative ways to do prayers, such as popcorn prayers or having different people or a family organised to pray about specific things ... if we have got a topic and there are different elements then we might have different people around the church who get up and pray.”

Getting together

Many churches have chosen to deal with intergenerational differences by offering a range of worship options, says Josie Neuendorff, and there are good reasons for doing so.

“Don’t feel sad if Gen Ys meet in a separate place most of the time and have their own sense of community. It is okay to have more than one service to cater for more than one generation, but it would be great if at times you could bring those together so that you have the whole people of God.”

She suggests that the bottom line for every generation, no matter how we worship, is an encounter with God that moves our hearts, our souls and our minds.

“The truth is a young person will sit through worship using an organ and old style hymns if the service is something that feeds them and engages them in how to live their faith and how to grow their relationship with God.”

Tips for intergenerational worship:

- form an intergenerational worship team
- understand the basic worship framework outlined in *Uniting in Worship 2*
- identify the different generations in your congregation
- build on your strengths
- avoid making sweeping changes
- open up opportunities for people to feel that their presence and gifts are valued.

Girls singing at St James' Church of North India, Kangra
Photo: Frances Guard



Friendship builds future

“The hostel is a place for families who are otherwise unable to send them [their girls] to school”

Laura McGilvray

Relationship, not finance, is king in church partnership. **Ashley Thompson** talks to UnitingWorld and Maleny Uniting Church about their unique relationship with the church behind the Kangra Girls' Hostel ministry in northern India.

“[He said,] ‘We don’t want your money. Please don’t just go back home to Australia after your time here and send money to us’,” Paul Moore of Maleny Uniting Church writes, recalling his first encounter with Bishop Samantaroy of the Diocese of Amritsar, Church of North India back in 2005.

It would take five years of relational development and the onset of the Global Financial Crisis—resulting in the sudden withdrawal of a German church’s support in 2009—before Bishop Samantaroy would let his friends from the Uniting Church in Australia assist the Kangra Girls’ Hostel financially.

“The hostel is a place for families who are otherwise unable to send them [their girls] to school. It gives them a home, a good meal and somewhere to be based during the school term,” explains Laura McGilvray, UnitingWorld’s Experience Program Coordinator.

“In India in particular education is not prioritised for girls,” says Laura. “Where a family has had an opportunity to educate their children, boys will take the precedence. However there’s lots of research that says when you educate girls it has a broader impact on society.”

Maleny Uniting Church members Paul and Lyndall Moore are the driving force behind the Sunshine Coast Dostana Group who, with the help of Uniting

Church congregations across Australia, have together raised \$350 000 in four years. It’s an amount calculated to generate sufficient interest for the permanent funding of 50 places at the Kangra Girls’ Hostel.

The group’s name Dostana, suggested by Bishop Samantaroy, is Hindi for “deep and abiding friendship”.

Maleny Uniting Church Minister Rev Ian Stebbens stresses the importance perpetuity had in the funding strategy and that relationship, as expressed by Bishop Samantaroy, was core to the partnership.

“It was critical to overcome the use of the dependency approach where people in India perceive themselves at the receiving end of project funding and therefore inferior,” says Ian.

Through countless events, appeals and street stalls, the 50th place was fully funded in June this year and celebrated with a thanksgiving service at Maleny Uniting Church.

“Paul [Moore] never dreamed that we would reach the target so quickly ... it certainly has been a movement of God’s spirit through the whole church both in Australia and in India that this dream has become a reality,” says Ian.

The group is currently overseas visiting Bishop Samantaroy in north India.

If your congregation is interested in connecting with or supporting a partner church project, contact UnitingWorld on 02 8267 4267.



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5

things my father taught me about the church

Fathers teach us a lot of interesting stuff about life, faith, and taking one for the team. Here are a few thoughts from the writers at *Journey* about what fathers teach us about the church.

1

There's always room for one more

Fathers invoke the theological principle of hospitality each time they turn up at dinnertime with stray colleagues suffering food allergies or distant relatives who got stuck at the airport. These people can be as vexatious to the spirit as outsiders who sit in your pew and loudly intone an alternative version of the Lord's Prayer. The same rules apply: move over and make space or go to your room.

2

Never sit in the front row at church

Unless every family member can maintain a straight face and attentive demeanour under scrutiny, don't be tempted by the space and the unimpeded view. You are better off tucked away where fathers have the opportunity to demonstrate the justice of Solomon alongside the parable of the loaves and fishes. They may even sneak in a few minutes of meditation during the sermon. Church is a sanctuary—why add unnecessary stress?

3

The big guy has a sense of humour

Fathers demonstrate this on a regular basis when they sit straight-faced through beginner violin concerts or allow themselves to be caught in the slips by junior bowlers. If you don't think that God appreciates a joke, read the story of Sarah and Abraham. Laughter and tears bind us together, as long as we share them.

4

Stories matter

You might never be as stoic as Frodo of Middle Earth or as gallant as Matthias of Redwall, but your story is surely just as worth telling. Everyone has a story and testimony is a crucial part of the Christian faith so it's important to know how to tell it. Dad read out his favourite books by doing all the voices. When you share about your journey with God you don't have to do the same, but it might help.

5

Love rules

Fathers in the Old Testament might have been a bit hasty but in their patriarchal way they loved their kids and really wished they would get a job and stay out of trouble. The knowledge that you are worthy of love is the most important gift that a parent gives their child. We affirm the principle from 1 John 4:19 at every baptism: We love, because God first loved us. PS: Dad, I can explain about everything. Call me.



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Undivided: Closing the faith-life gap
Graham Hooper
Intervarsity Press, 2014
RRP \$14.99

Beyond Sunday morning

The easiest way to tell what anyone believes, what they value, is to look at how they behave and how they spend their time and money.

It becomes uncomfortable when, through either our own realisation or by someone else pointing it out, our external behaviours don't match up with what we say we value. The problem is worse for those of us who would call ourselves Christians.

Undivided by Graham Hooper is a book about what we do with these contradictions in our lives, both individually and corporately. These reflections are offered from one who has worked to connect his "sacred" faith with his life and "secular" work as an engineer. This is important as sometimes the gulf between church on Sunday and work on Monday can be absurd, yet it is an absurdity that isn't too hard to become comfortable with.

As he engaged with a broken world, Jesus didn't simply offer stoic indifference, nor validation of things as they are, he offered hope through

God's reconciliation and renewal of all creation. *Undivided* offers the challenge of asking what it can look like for us to live out an authentic faith when confronted with everyday experiences like success, failure, temptation and tough decisions.

Are our communities places where we remind one another of our identity in Christ? Are they places where we can be authentic as we journey through faith and life with others? Are we those who refuse to be satisfied with the way things are and seek God's vision for ourselves, our community and our world?

The book not only offers a challenge for how we live individually but also how we live together as God's people. It is a reminder of the importance of keeping sight of the big picture and being shaped by God's hope for both ourselves and the world. It is also a good reminder that the most important parts of our ongoing discipleship happen outside of Sunday worship.

Rev Stephen Rothery
Youth and children's minister,
Cleveland and Victoria Point Uniting Churches

Wonderful Memories



They say that most of the tears at a funeral are tears of joy, whilst remembering just how wonderful someone was and how special a role they played in our lives. Often it's the stories, photos and favorite songs incorporated into the funeral that trigger wonderful memories that we can share with family & friends. It's an important part of saying farewell and you can trust Alex Gow Funerals to be there to guide you through and ensure everything is perfect.

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Trust propagates faith

Just as people must trust each other in order to live, trust in God is essential in order to grow in faith, says **Rev Noel Kentish**.

A woman waits on the Darwin hospital verandah, looking across Doctor's Gully. The baby stirring within her will soon emerge into a hot tropical world. She trusts all will go well for the birth and that the child that will soon emerge will be whole.

At home, too, her husband waits, briefly consigning to the back of his mind the challenging cares of a demanding ministry, he wants to do something with his hands. He, too, trusts that all will go well with the birth. He takes a bucket of water, enjoys its coolness and wetness and washes their Triumph 7 in the cool embracing shade of a Poinciana tree, ensuring it will be ready to transport their newborn infant home in triumph.

Of all creatures, we humans are creatures of trust. We remain dependent on other humans before and after birth. Dependence is gradually replaced by independence. Trust in others grows. Among the significant others we trust is one whom we know as God, but we learn intuitively so much at the hands of parents.

I cannot speak of a concept like "trust" or a name like "God" without using concrete terms. Neither is an abstraction in my life. I can speak only in terms

of those aspects of my life that are compelling and real to me. It may not be the same for others, I readily admit.

That is why "God" to me is not an abstraction but one whom we humans can see and relate to in the person of Jesus Christ, who walked the dusty roads and byways of this world with us and for us.

Because of trust in Jesus as a fact—a person—I know within myself that I am never alone, that divine guidance is available to me at all times. I know, too, that I am part of a fellowship without number, a huge support network of loving, caring souls on a similar journey. This inner knowing that sees God and knows God and trusts God in the whole of life is the foundation of faith.

Through Jesus Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, I continue to trust God, supported by the loving companionship of a committed partner who shared with me the privilege, joy and pain of generating within our own physical being, new lives, very much as my own parents did on a hot Darwin November night in 1935.

‘Because of trust in Jesus as a fact—a person—I know within myself that I am never alone, that divine guidance is available to me at all times’



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Left, A young participant experiences horses up close at Mackay RDA. **Photo:** Supplied
Above, Chris McAdam's horse-shaped saddle rack "Woody" created for Mackay RDA. **Photo:** Supplied

Chaps help kids giddy-up

The Iona West Men's Shed in Mackay is helping a local charity saddle up to overcome disadvantage. **Ashley Thompson** reports.

Iona West Men's Shed Coordinator Chris McAdam recently handed over one of six horse-shaped saddle racks to the Mackay Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA). The association works to develop ability and enrich the lives of disabled people through relationships with horses.

‘Not all the men that come in here will pour their soul out to you but some have just been waiting for someone to listen to them’
Chris McAdam

Run out of the Iona West Uniting Church, this neighbourly attitude is at the heart of the congregation's outreach. Other projects run by the shed include easels for the Whitsundays Anglican School and hobby horses for needy kids, all made out of recycled or donated timber.

“We first started up as somewhere for men who didn't have a shed of their own, now pretty much anything that comes along, if we are able to do it, we will be happy to help out,” says Chris.

The Men's Shed Association offers more than free materials and carpentry guidance, sheds provide the opportunity for men with skills and enthusiasm to make a valuable contribution to society.

Mackay Riding for the Disabled committee-member Amaryllis O'Hara was at the receiving end of their kindness.

“One of our members had an idea to make some sort of saddle stool to use for us as a bit of a novelty

and it sort of snowballed from there to turning into more of a therapy tool,” says Amaryllis.

“It is more of a seat and a way for people to use for stretching before they ride. Some disabilities mean the muscles are hard so they need to stretch them before they get on the horse. They are also able to use it as a teaching tool like how to clean and look after a saddle—the sorts of things that are harder to do on a real live moving horse,” she says.

The partnership between these two organisations has seen men empowered to help the disadvantaged and opened up doors between the church and the community.

Not a church-goer himself, Chris journeyed through depression before a professional suggested he look into using his carpentry skills at the local Men's Shed.

“Not all the men that come in here will pour their soul out to you but some have just been waiting for someone to listen to them.”

At the 31st Synod meeting in October the Queensland Synod will launch a new resource called Stats have Faces designed to help congregations engage more effectively with their community.

mensshed.org



Leaders of many faiths gathered at Lakemba Mosque to express support for Australia's Muslims. Photo: Uniting Church Assembly

Interfaith support for Australia's Muslims

Uniting Church leaders from across Australia joined interfaith and ecumenical friends on 22 August in a statement of solidarity with Australia's Muslim community.

Uniting Church in Australia President Rev Dr Andrew Dutney is one of more than 150 faith and community leaders who has signed on to a declaration that "We'll Love Muslims 100 Years".

The statement is a reference to the banner headline in the Weekend Australian on 9 August "We'll Fight Islam 100 Years".

"Recent public statements and media coverage about Muslim-Australians in some sections of the Australian media have been inflammatory and divisive," said Dr Dutney.

Signatories to the Love for 100 Years statement declare that, "We believe people of Muslim faith are being unfairly smeared in the eyes of the Australian public by both subtle and overt links to violent extremism in political and media discourse."

The full text of the statement and current signatories can be found at lovefor100years.com

Art from the Margins delivers record entries

Wesley Mission Brisbane's art program for disadvantaged artists has recorded its biggest number of entries for the Brisbane Festival exhibition.

This year's Art from the Margins' Brisbane festival exhibition has received over 450 entries which will grace the walls of Brisbane's iconic Brisbane City Hall during the festival.

Art from the Margins Manager Anthony Anderton said this is the largest response from their artists in the seven years they have been involved with the festival.

"The exhibition will be vibrant, colourful, original and challenging and includes paintings, prints, photography, sculpture, drawing, installations and craft work. The free exhibition is not to be missed."

For more information visit artfromthemargins.org.au

Summer Madness announces keynote speaker

Pastor of BELLS faith community, Caloundra, chaplain at Unity College and ABC radio announcer Phil Smith is the keynote speaker of Summer Madness, the Uniting Church in Queensland's camp for young people in grades 7–12.

"Summer Madness is committed to providing a quality event for young people to engage their faith and Phil brings a wealth of depth and experience as a journalist, chaplain and church planter" says Camp Director Mark Cornford.

"Phil speaks with passion, humour and a wealth of personal stories to bring alive what following Jesus means in today's world," he says.

Phil can be heard at Summer Madness 2015, 16–19 January at Alex Park.

For more information visit summermadness.com.au

To the editor Carbon not a problem

The one paragraph of the article "Australia loses credible climate voice" (*Journey*, August 2014, page 5) that all Christians can agree on is the last. The rest appears outdated. Since 2001 there has been no warming, despite continuing carbon dioxide emissions, and we know there are other causes of temperature change. We have come to realise that carbon dioxide is not a pollutant, but a gas essential to life; it is a fertilizer and satellite observations have shown the resulting greening of the earth.

"Renewable energy", except hydro-electricity, wastes resources for other than very specialised uses—such as roadside solar-powered emergency telephones—costing far more than energy supplied from coal, gas, and even nuclear power plants. That electricity authorities should be forced to subsidise "renewable energy" through the renewable energy target is evidence of this.

In fact, the Australian government is leading the way for the rest of the nations to follow.

Dudley Horscroft
Banora Point Uniting Church

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



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