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Applications close on **Wednesday 15 April** and should be addressed to:

The Wesley Hospital JNC C/- Secretary of Synod Placements Committee
Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod GPO Box 674 Brisbane QLD 4001



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The Uniting Church in Australia
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Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

Presbytery of Tasmania is seeking a Presbytery Minister Leadership Formation to work in the Presbytery Ministry Team. The Presbytery's vision is to be a community of faithful followers of Jesus.

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- Coaching and mentoring communities of faith, leaders and potential leaders;
- Planning and leading educational and formational events.

Enquiries can be made to the Secretary of the Placements Committee of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania at
placements.secretary@victas.uca.org.au

Applications close 8 May 2015.

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The position is open to Ministers of the Word of the Uniting Church in Australia. The successful applicant must hold or be willing to apply for Working with Children Check clearance. Only people with the right to work in Australia may apply for this position.

Inquiries and Congregation Profile:
Max Woodward, t: 0452 196 485
e: mcwoodward51@gmail.com

Applications to:
Rev Jane Fry, Synod Associate Secretary
e: janef@nswact.uca.org.au

The position is currently vacant, but the commencement date is negotiable. Closing date for applications: **30 April 2015.**



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Lest we forget

This month marks 100 years since the landing at Gallipoli; a critical moment in Australia and New Zealand’s history that is burned into the national psyche of both countries. Dawn services will take place around the world, paying tribute to the sacrifice made by those a century ago and all who have served and died since.

The red poppy is a symbol of remembrance for those who have died in war and is used in wreaths laid at war memorials on Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. The Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, covered with red poppies, is a very special sight. On the cover of *Journey* this month there is also a white poppy, a symbol for peace. Together they honour the sacrifices made in the past while hoping for a peaceful future.

On page six there is a feature about conscientious objectors in the 100 years since Gallipoli. The Uniting Church ministers to the armed forces through military chaplains, and honour rolls are a common sight in our church halls, but it also has a history of conscientious objection and pacifist action. It’s a fine balance which the red and white poppies together capture beautifully.

On another note, I would like to draw your attention to page 18, which has details of how to donate to the UnitingWorld appeal to support communities devastated by Tropical Cyclone Pam. There is also a local appeal to support communities affected by cyclones Lam and Marcia in Australia, which we talk about on page five.

Until next month,

Rohan Salmond
Cross-platform editor

Contents



6 Standing up for peace



12 Postmodern evangelism



15 Resurrection renewal

- 4 Moderator’s message
- 5 Cyclone Marcia
- 8 Mission possible
- 9 Mission Shaped Ministry
- 10 Mardi Gras
- 11 Suicide prevention
- 14 Centenary celebration
- 16 Review: Simply Good News
- 17 Five weasel words
- 18 Wesley Choices
- 19 Fast news and letters

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Closing date for editorial and advertising for May *Journey* is Monday 13 April. The next issue of *Journey* will be available on Sunday 3 May.



Monday Midday Prayer

*God of new,
surprising beginnings, fire our
imaginings by your spirit to see
how we can be agents of your
purpose in the world.*

Amen

Moderator's highlights

19 April

Guest preacher at Emmanuel
Uniting Church, Enoggera

21–23 April

Longreach visit, Central
Queensland

25 April

Anzac Day parade, Brisbane

Our larrikin God

Around 1990 my New Testament professor, in referring to the encounter of Moses and the burning bush, spoke of Moses encountering “the larrikin God of the desert”. The God that Moses encountered was nothing like the gods of the empires of the ancient Near East. This God was about covenant, freedom and human society organised to a completely different economy than the established order.

The larrikin God of the desert enjoins with Moses, the wannabe, run-away, failed revolutionary leader, to have another crack, to face his failures and to go back and tell Egypt to “let God’s people go”. So the salvation story starts a new chapter.

Easter Day always reminds me of that appellation for how God reveals Godself to be in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Easter Day is the day of a new chapter in the salvation story.

A larrikin God; a God of surprises. When John Shelby Spong asked rhetorically, “How can 21st century Christianity expect my daughter, an engineer and a

helicopter pilot, to believe in a physical resurrection?” William Willimon replied, “Well, is she capable of being surprised?”

Easter Day is the day of the great surprise when, even though the disciples had been prepared for it, none had obviously believed it. Maybe when Jesus talked of it they put it with some of his more extreme teachings that will get left behind when the revolution happens!

But the revolution happened to them, and to everyone.

God raised Jesus from death.

So nothing can now be the same; all the ways we thought the world operated have been found wanting. The securities we build for ourselves have been revealed as unjust and, eventually, futile. The way of Jesus finds a vindication that is incontrovertible.

So this larrikin God of the desert comes now to mess with our heads, just when we had things comfy and sorted.

Rev David Baker
Moderator, Queensland Synod

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Damage at Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island.
Photo: Rev Dr Stephen Robinson

Cyclone damage bill mounts

Uniting Church emergency aid and relief has begun to arrive in Central Queensland after Tropical Cyclone Marcia tore through the Capricorn Coast in February this year. **Ashley Thompson** reports.

The Queensland Synod's Risk and Insurance team has been contacted by 14 sites which sustained varying levels of insurable damage from Cyclone Marcia, totalling an estimated insurance cost of \$517 000.

Those damaged included four congregations, eight Blue Care and two UnitingCare Community sites.

"The most significant damage that has been reported so far has been at the Capricorn Coast Uniting Church, Emu Park site where large portions of the roof were blown off, and the torrential rain had drenched internal surfaces and contents," says Risk and Insurance manager David Munro.

In reference to the freak cell-storm in late November last year, David says that the past 12 months have resulted in an estimated combined insurance repair bill of over \$3.3 million and will therefore likely impact the premiums applicable to the Queensland Synod's property insurance program which is currently under negotiation.

After Moderator Rev David Baker's three-day visit to Biloela, Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast immediately following the cyclone, the Queensland Synod Disaster Response and Recovery Committee pledged additional support for cyclone-affected communities. Pastoral care for those in specified ministry has been increased and extra funding has been provided

to extend ministry work in the recovery phase. This support comes as a reprieve to the Central Queensland Presbytery which has been struggling with a lack of people in specified ministry.

Central Queensland Presbytery minister Rev Brian Gilbert reports there are only 2.25 full-time equivalent ministry agents across the affected area. "This goes back to my report to Synod last year that we don't have [enough] ministers in Central Queensland," he says. Central Queensland Presbytery has applied for Assembly funding for further recovery phase ministry.

UnitingCare Community has appealed for funds to support their community recovery officers providing psychological first aid on the ground, while in response to both Cyclone Marcia in Queensland and Cyclone Lam in the Northern Territory, Uniting Church president Rev Dr Andrew Dutney has launched the National Cyclone Relief Appeal.

UnitingCare Community was among four major charities to receive \$250 000 from the state government for cyclone relief in the week following Cyclone Marcia.

Tax deductible donations can be made to the UnitingCare Community appeal at mycause.com.au/events/lifelinecommunityrecoverytropicalcyclonemarcia and to the National Cyclone Relief Appeal at assembly.uca.org.au/donate

If your congregation has damage resulting from these events and has yet to report or lodge a claim, please contact the Risk and Insurance team as soon as possible on 3377 9941.

‘... large portions of the roof were blown off, and the torrential rain had drenched internal surfaces and contents’

David Munro



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Blessed are the peacemakers

On the centenary of the Gallipoli landing, take time to honour the Christian witness of those who took a stand against war. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

Thomas Roberts was only 16 years old when he was sentenced in 1914 to solitary confinement on half rations in the Queenscliff Fort for refusing to attend military drill. The Quaker was among thousands of youngsters prosecuted under the Defence Act of 1909 mandating military instruction for boys between 12 and 18 years.

More than 50 years later in 1968, postman John Zarb became the first conscientious objector to the Vietnam war to be imprisoned in Australia.

As we mark the centenary of the dawn landing by Australian and New Zealand troops at Gaba Tepe (later named ANZAC Cove) on 25 April 1915, the spectre of lives lost and shattered by war is front and centre. A less familiar story is the witness of those who spoke out for peace or refused to bear arms.

A voice in the wilderness

Christian pacifism during the first world war is generally associated with the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), and while Christians from all denominations supported the peace movement, most mainline churches echoed the jingoistic fervour which gripped Australia after war was declared in 1914.

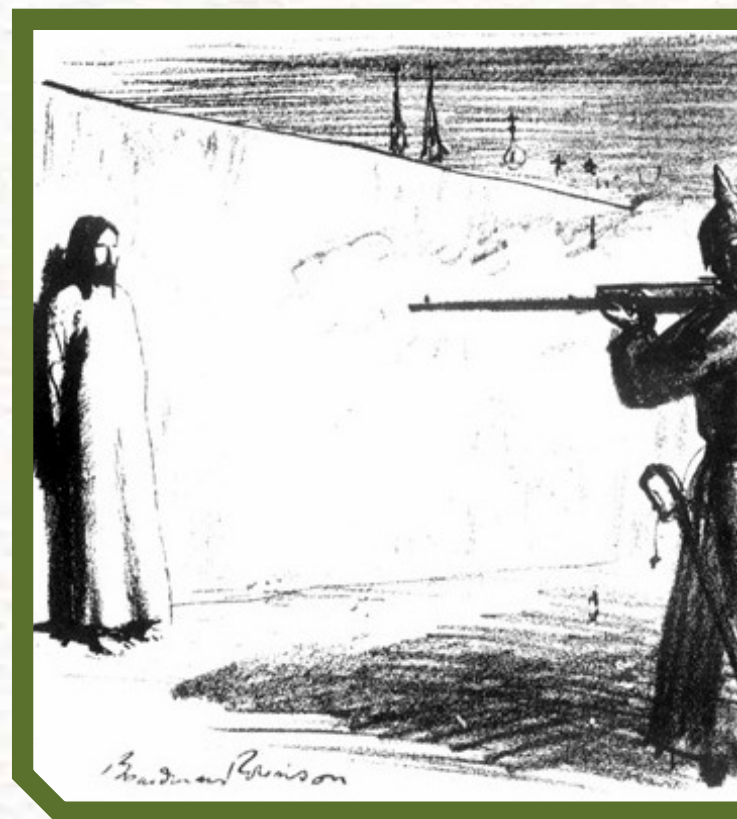
Quakers such as Margaret Watts campaigned tirelessly for peace, speaking at hundreds of meetings. She was publicly abused and even thrown out of some places, although many women took her aside privately to express their support.

The *Journal of the Religious Society of Friends in Australia* reports that Margaret sought an interview with the Anglican Canon Rowland, a fervent supporter of the war, and asked him why the church was being transformed into a recruiting agency.

Rowland replied "I have no time for you—our present business is to kill every man of the enemy."

In spite of a protracted campaign which divided the nation, Australians rejected Prime Minister Billy Hughes' plebiscites in 1916 and 1917 to introduce conscription.

When he still refused to take up arms Baxter was subjected to the brutal Field Punishment Number One, tied for hours to a gun wheel or fence post in a crucifixion position



But across the ditch, the New Zealand government reacted to declining enlistments by simply introducing legislation requiring military service in 1916.

Only Quakers and Christadelphians, whose tenets specifically excluded them from warfare were exempted, although a number of Quakers served in non-combatant roles as stretcher-bearers.

Archibald Baxter, who recorded his experiences in *We Will Not Cease*, was denied an exemption and found himself among a small group of Christian pacifists forcibly dispatched to the front line. When he still refused to take up arms Baxter was subjected to the brutal Field Punishment Number One, tied for hours to a gun wheel or fence post in a crucifixion position.

Warrior for peace

Rev Dr Sir Alan Walker was only a child during the first world war, but the threat of a new conflict ignited his passionate commitment to peace, says his son Rev Dr Chris Walker, Uniting Church Assembly National Consultant for Christian Unity, Doctrine and Worship.

“My father and mother went to the United Kingdom in 1938 to visit leading Methodist ministers and their churches. He travelled to Europe and was very conscious of the Nazi threat. He was especially challenged by Donald Soper (later Lord Soper) who was a pacifist. On the ship returning to Australia my father paced the deck, and finally concluded that he would affirm a pacifist position.”

Once the second world war began, Alan Walker’s public stance caused problems within his local community

of Cessnock which supplied coal for the war effort, says Chris. His criticism of the dropping of nuclear bombs on Japan was equally unpopular.

Compulsory military service for duty within Australia was revived in 1939, with a bill passed in 1943 redefining “Australia” to include New Guinea and the adjacent islands. Some of the 2800 men who registered as conscientious objectors accepted non-combatant duties and others served six months or more in jail.



The Deserter (1916) by Boardman Robinson.
Image: Public domain via Wikimedia Commons

After the war, the destabilisation of Europe and the emerging nuclear threat plunged the world into the cold war. Alan Walker was among many Christians who spoke out against the escalating military paranoia.

“During the Mission to the Nation in the 1950s he became well known for his preaching, including speaking on social issues. He was known as a pacifist and a public figure; therefore he was suspect,” says Chris Walker. “A large ASIO file was developed on him over the years.”

Make love not war

The Vietnam war galvanised a new generation of conscientious objectors who refused to take part in a conflict which they considered to be immoral.

Compulsory national service was re-introduced by the Liberal/Country coalition in 1964, and amended a year later to enable national servicemen to serve overseas. Conscripts were selected on a lottery system; a person proven to be a pacifist could lodge a conscientious objection but those who refused to be conscripted served a two-year jail sentence.

Rev Dr Bill Adams, former New South Wales moderator and superintendent minister of Wesley Mission Brisbane, worked alongside Alan Walker at the Central Methodist Mission Sydney during these years. He remembers vigorous debates on the subject of Vietnam.

“There was always the danger of being called left wing, or pinko or communist, and anyone who stood up strongly for peace had to be willing to wear that,” he recalls.

“In the first debates in the Methodist Church those who called for the church to speak out against the Vietnam war were in a minority and they were regarded with some suspicion, but then the tide turned and before the end of the war all the churches were carrying motions condemning Australia’s participation.”

Bill recalls that the Palm Sunday marches across the nation gained real momentum at this time, and Protestant churches came together to form the Canberra Vigil outside Parliament House.

The road to peace

Bruce French, a young Baptist whose birthday came up in the conscription lottery was determined not to take up arms. Refusing the option of seeking total exemption, he registered as a non-combatant.

“I said I am happy to serve my country, I am not shirking responsibility ... it is just that I think there are far better ways of making a genuine contribution to the peace of the world than dropping bombs.”

Once in the army, Bruce refused to do any weapons training in spite of ongoing pressure from his peers.

“In training they are never allowed to say, ‘there is a person over there, shoot them’—you have to say, ‘there is the enemy coming’. You are not allowed to use personal terms.”

Bruce’s stand set the course for his life passion—supporting subsistence farmers by documenting the edible plants of the world through his organisation Food Plants International.

“It made me more determined to try and do something positive and good rather than be a negative reaction,” says Bruce, who recently retired as a Baptist pastor. “Let’s do something useful when kids are starving—let’s not sit around and argue politics.”

Bruce still takes every opportunity to encourage Christians to act as peacemakers.

“It is only when the issue comes on our agenda—whether it is Korea or Vietnam or sending troops to Afghanistan—that people talk about it. But the best time to think clearly is before the issue comes up, so you are ready to make a stand.”

Chris Walker adds the codicil that Christian commitment to non-violence requires both public witness and grassroots action to confront evil and oppression.

“We need people who work behind the scenes seeking justice, especially for those who are marginalised, and also people who are able to speak effectively to challenge public policy and offer a Christian perspective ... Christians need to be looking to the way of Jesus and seeking to follow his example, empowered by his Spirit.”



(L to R) Eylania, Lazarus and Tullia
Photos: Supplied

Making mission possible \$10 at a time

Funds raised through the \$10 for 10 appeal have been distributed to students to make sure they have what they need to learn. **Rohan Salmond** reports.

Three Indigenous students have received the first round of grants through the Synod's \$10 for 10 appeal to help them achieve their dreams for the future.

Tullia Wilson and Lazarus Edwards from Shalom Christian College and Eylania Naawi from Clayfield College received the Uniting Church Foundation Indigenous Learning Pathways Grant in March after successfully completing a thorough Schools Commission selection process.

"I'm keen on completing a course in design fundamentals and photography so I can study business at university. This grant will provide the necessary camera equipment I need to complete the course," says Eylania.

Tullia wants to take an external vocational course in retail services as well as completing her high school certificate.

"I come from Mornington Island which is a small community where I would be unable to study retail. The course I want to do isn't offered at my school, but this grant means I can still pursue my chosen career. The grant will also provide a laptop so that I can study online outside of school hours."

Lazarus will be able to enroll in a welding course using his funds.

"I live in Wyndham in Western Australia and I want to work as a diesel fitter in the mines in Perth. This grant will give me the opportunity to take a welding course so I can pursue my dream of working in the mines, especially working on the big trucks," he says.

The \$10 for 10 appeal kicked off in August 2014 with the goal to support an Indigenous year 10 student with a minimum \$10 donation. Indigenous education is one of the Queensland Synod's core mission areas. Raushen Perera is the Queensland Synod's marketing and fundraising manager.

"Because of everyone's support, a humble \$10 donation has grown into a fundraising total of over \$10 000 so far," she says. "It's a great way to kick-start the Uniting Church Foundation's Indigenous Learning Pathways project. Of course, the more money we raise, the more students we can assist."

A second round of grants will be distributed once the funding becomes available.

For more details on how to donate to \$10 for 10, please visit missionpossible.ucaqld.com.au

'Because of everyone's support, a humble \$10 donation has grown into a fundraising total of over \$10 000 so far'
Raushen Perera



Thinking outside the square

What might communities of faith shaped by contemporary culture look like? **Dianne Jensen** reports on the Queensland launch of Mission Shaped Ministry.

Rev Dr Robert McFarlane and Rev Beth Nicholls are on the Mission Shaped Ministry team.
Photo: Holly Jewell

Fresh Expressions is the trademark concept of Mission Shaped Ministry (MSM) and it means exactly that—creating new faith communities in non-traditional settings and re-imagining the shape of the contemporary church.

The ecumenical program originated in the United Kingdom and will be piloted in Brisbane by the Uniting Church presbyteries of Moreton Rivers and South Moreton with a six-month course commencing in April.

South Moreton Presbytery Mission project officer Rev Beth Nicholls says that the initiative will provide a framework for congregations to think creatively about new and different approaches to mission.

“There are a lot of people in our synod who have been doing Fresh Expressions-type things for ages, but this is a way of helping our churches to get their head around the process and to think outside the square ... MSM will help us to re-imagine church and to have a go at being a church that connects with non-members.”

Beth says that the course will help churches evaluate the effectiveness of their ministry and whether they are meeting their mission goals.

“We are coming to the pointy end—while some of our churches are growing, many are in maintenance mode or are declining. Are we content to meet just the people who

are coming through our doors at present, or are we called to make disciples in a broader context? I think God calls us to do more.”

Rev Dr Robert McFarlane, the new mission and education officer for the Moreton Rivers Presbytery, says that congregations often want to do things differently, but simply don’t know how.

“The thing that will make the MSM course most effective is if the minister and some key lay leaders do it together. It’s not going to work if it’s just a couple of people going away and reporting back to church council—it’s got to be focussed on what is going to transform the congregation and that means getting shared leadership between lay and ordained and a shared language so that people can talk about their hopes.”

Reshaping local ministry through the lens of mission helps congregations move beyond simply maintaining traditional structures, he says, especially where current models are not sustainable.

“This is not about attracting people to church, but engaging them—inviting people into an opportunity to have a transformational experience. And for churches to invite people to be transformed, they themselves have to be open to transformation.”

For more information visit msmqld.com or call 07 3366 0236.

‘Are we content to meet just the people who are coming through our doors at present ... I think God calls us to do more’

Rev Beth Nicholls

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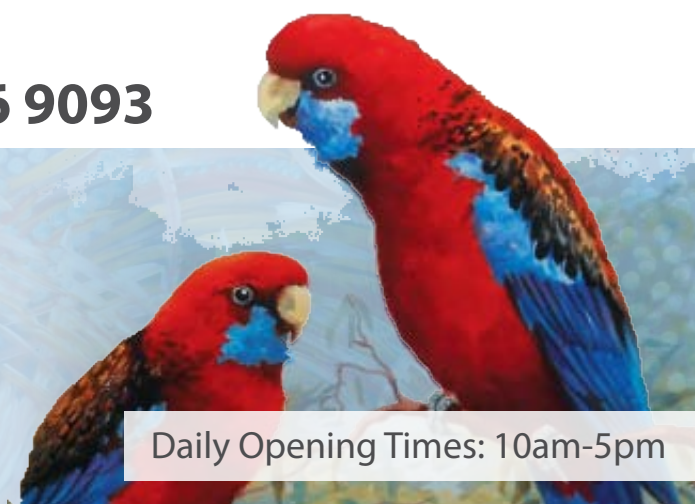
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Uniting Network march in support of LGBTIQ refugees at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.
Photo: Andrew Hill

Uniting Church marches with pride

Over 100 Uniting Church members and UnitingCare employees were among the thousands of people marching at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade. *Journey* reports.

Two separate Uniting Church-affiliated groups marched in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras parade this year.

Uniting Network, a national network of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) members of the Uniting Church and their friends and families marched for the first time since 2003. Uniting Network's parade entry was themed *Our Passion for Justice*, in support of LGBTIQ refugees. Many LGBTIQ refugees seeking sanctuary in Australia continue to face adversity—particularly in offshore detention centres in Papua New Guinea and Nauru where homosexuality is criminalised.

The Uniting Network contingent differed from many of the other floats in the parade. Instead of dancing to disco music, participants marched to the beat of a fifteen-person drumming corps. Participants wore black Uniting Church t-shirts and held lanterns as a symbolic way of bringing light to the human rights abuses occurring in detention centres.

"We see this as an opportunity to minister to the hundreds of thousands who line the streets, some of whom have been burnt by churches that reject LGBTIQ people and their families," says Curtis Dickson, co-organiser of Uniting Network's float.

Rev Nicole Fleming, minister with Balmain Uniting Church says, "It is wonderful to see so many people of all ages from the church—LGBTIQ and straight—participate in the float. The large number of younger people involved highlights the much-needed generation shift occurring within the Uniting Church."

UnitingCare NSW.ACT formed a separate contingent, marching for the first time ever to show support and commitment to LGBTIQ communities and LGBTIQ residents in their aged-care facilities.

"This is an exciting first for UnitingCare NSW.ACT with close to 80 staff and supporters marching to show our support for LGBTIQ seniors who are perhaps the most vulnerable group within LGBTIQ communities," says director of UnitingCare Ageing Steve Teulan.

Acceptance of homosexuality and same-sex marriage remain polarising issues in the Uniting Church, so the presence of Uniting Church members at the parade could be controversial. But Pitt Street Uniting Church minister Rev Dr Margaret Mayman says marching is the right thing to do.

"We are participating in the parade because sexual and gender diversity are part of God's plan, part of the fabric of creation woven by God. Inequality and injustice are an affront to gospel values," she says.

Uniting Network plans to march again in 2016.

‘It is wonderful to see so many people of all ages from the church—LGBTIQ and straight—participate in the float’

Rev Nicole Fleming

Uniting Church Schools supplement 2015



Christian education:

a unique opportunity in an ever-challenging world



The Uniting Church is blessed to have a ministry arm directed at providing Christian education, university residential opportunities and chaplaincy support to a range of communities throughout Queensland. The Uniting Church Schools Commission works directly with these school and college boards, their senior leaders and partner associations to ensure the right processes and structures are in place to provide well-run organisations, programs and services.

Uniting Church schools receive support from the Schools Commission to further the mission of Christ in their context. This occurs through the recruitment and selection of boards of governance, the building of relationships with the local and wider church and the development of Christian communities with a mission focus. The Schools Commission also seeks to support boards through training and by developing network and in-service opportunities for school executives and chaplains.

Uniting Church schools offer a wide and varied range of services. Christian schools provide a unique opportunity for students to be able to come together, grow and develop in a safe and supportive environment and openly share their faith journey. Currently there are some 12 000 students in Uniting Church schools around Queensland.

In each of these contexts, students are able to hear the gospel in relevant and contextually appropriate ways. Students are able to develop and grow, individually and corporately. But most significantly, students have regular opportunities to share their own faith and develop their Christian thinking for a better world. Ultimately, it is the goal of these Christian schools to send out students who can put their faith into action by being of service to the church and broader community.

The importance of Christian schools in our modern society has become pivotal as there are increasingly fewer places

and spaces available for genuine community to be built and for eternal truths to be shared and lived. The Uniting Church is privileged to be able to have ministries and programs available to support young lives at each of the formative stages of their development. In Uniting Church schools such opportunities not only exist, but are encouraged and nurtured.

I would invite you and your family to familiarise yourselves with the Uniting Church schools in your area and discover how these significant ministries may be able to positively support and encourage your child's development and educational and spiritual journey.

Dr Daniel Pampuch
Executive officer, Schools Commission

Together we are so much more

You don't have to look far to realise that the Brisbane Boys' College (BBC) community, be it teachers, students or parents, are outward thinkers, dedicated to serving for the greater good.

Each individual act of kindness is admirable but the collective impact these initiatives have on people from throughout the community, if not the globe, is commendable.

The school is underpinned by strong Christian faith and values, particularly evident in the community service initiatives BBC contributes to each year.

In 2014 alone the school supported a number of charities including the Wesley Mission Brisbane, Children's Cancer Institute, Cure Brain Cancer, Red Cross, Salvation Army, Access Outreach Street Vans, Hope Foundation, Street Swags and World Vision to name a few.

This year BBC plans to provide continued support to a wide range of charities in addition to contributing to a plethora of community service projects, including their Country Service project in Miles and St George as well as ongoing work with Harvest Cambodia—a non-profit charity organisation that works with Cambodian communities to provide growth through education.

Last year a group of staff and students visited the village of Kok Thnort to assist Harvest Cambodia with building critical infrastructure.

The College has been working with the charity since 2011 and continues to fundraise by selling coffee at various events, with several students undertaking a professional barista course in support of this.



According to BBC's Chaplain Graham Cole these initiatives not only support the Christian ethos of the College, they provide invaluable opportunities for students' spiritual growth and development.

"Contributing to our community, both locally and globally, enables our students to discover the joy of giving and serving," said Rev Cole.

"These experiences can be incredibly transformative for students and assist in providing an holistic education, enabling boys to develop a global understanding of a very complicated world of which they are a part," he said.

"It highlights what can be achieved through care and compassion and empowers students to make a difference and respond to Christ's call to serve."



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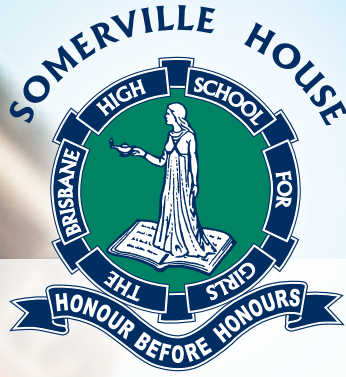
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Rev Leslie Baird, coordinator and teacher for the Indigenous Mental Health (Suicide Prevention) certificate at Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, with 2014 students.
Photo: Wontulp-Bi-Buya College

Indigenous students tackle mental health management

A small group of Indigenous students has embarked on an innovative Queensland course aimed at combating the devastating rates of Indigenous suicide. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

Like all new students, the 2015 intake at Wontulp-Bi-Buya College in Cairns turned up to the first day of class with a mix of excitement and trepidation. The 35 students enrolled for the Certificate IV Indigenous Mental Health (Suicide Prevention) have come from across Australia to undertake the 12-month course which is breaking new ground in equipping Indigenous people for community-based mental health management.

Now in its second year, the Certificate IV is funded for two years by the federal Department of Health and coordinated by Rev Leslie Baird. Wontulp-Bi-Buya offers a range of nationally accredited courses in theology, ministry and community development and is supported by the Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran and Uniting Churches in Queensland.

College principal Rev Victor Joseph says the course is designed to facilitate grassroots action in consultation with community members, traditional owners, elders and government agencies.

“It enables students to develop a community-wide strategy for early identification and prevention of suicide,” says Victor. “We are not saying anything negative about the professional services that come into the communities for a couple of days and then fly out, but we’ve got to give the community the tools to face this.”

The core units reflect the holistic approach to ministry at the heart of Wontulp-Bi-Buya, exploring the role of spirituality in bringing hope and healing as well as providing professional skills in mental health management in an Indigenous cultural context.

“For far too long our Indigenous people have been hurt and their spirituality has been suppressed or damaged, and we need to get that right,” says Victor. “Sure the government can pour thousands of dollars into programs, but if you can’t address the spirituality of an Indigenous person then that will always be missing.”

Students are encouraged by the participatory teaching model to share their own journeys.

“The students teach themselves because they come to study with their own life skills and experiences and this becomes a learning tool for others. They may have been in a situation where they have contemplated [suicide] or a family member has gone through this, so they are trying to make that positive change within themselves.”

Several 2014 graduates already have found employment, and with federal funding running out in June, Wontulp-Bi-Buya is urgently seeking financial support to continue the program in 2016.

For more information visit wontulp.qld.edu.au

‘[Students] may have been in a situation where they have contemplated [suicide] ... so they are trying to make that positive change within themselves’

Rev Victor Joseph



Beyond modern

Living the gospel in a postmodern world

What is postmodernism and what does it mean for the life and witness of the church?

Rohan Salmond explores how to live and share the gospel in a rapidly changing cultural landscape.

‘I don’t think it’s a reshaping just of the Sunday service, it’s a total rethinking of the whole of life’

Danica Patselis

Forget everything you think you know; we no longer live in the modern world. We’re over it, or beyond it or whatever. Anyway, the Age of Reason is so 18th century—we’re postmodern now.

Postmodernism. It’s a hairy, scary idea that’s been lurking at the fringes of Western thought for a long time, but has now radically changed the way people relate to the world and one another. To a certain extent everyone is familiar with postmodern philosophy, architecture and art—Andy Warhol’s *Campbell’s Soup Cans* is a good example. It’s a cultural undercurrent irrevocably changing the whole of society, including the church.

But what, exactly, is it?

“It’s a critique of modernism,” says Danica Patselis, Big Year Out coordinator at Uniting College in the South Australian Synod. “It’s a critique of past ideologies rather than a stand-alone philosophy. That’s why I think it’s so hard to define.”

Rev Dr Wendi Sargeant, lecturer at Trinity College Queensland, expands further.

“The ideas of modernism were that science and our knowledge and humanity will progress and get better and better ... technology and medicine would make us a kind

of super race of people and we would all be gods or something like that.

“The problem came in the first and second world wars when people realised—oh no!—these breakthroughs aren’t making us better at all ... So people started to go back prior, earlier in our history when we were much more interested in wisdom and looking at less of a divide between secular and spiritual,” she says.

Fewer divides is the key. Postmodernism self-consciously borrows from earlier periods and deconstructs the barriers between them. The whole modernist, compartmentalised view of the world is torn down and integrated, making the lines that separate our ideas of sacred and secular, good and evil, high culture and popular culture practically useless. That’s not to say anything goes, but nothing is quite as clear cut as it was.

This makes truth claims tricky. Postmodernism proposes that the Enlightenment idea of an objective, discoverable, capital “T” Truth was never actually real. Instead personal and cultural context must be taken into account to interpret the claim. In this way truth is actually abstract and subjective, and nobody, not even the church, has an exclusive hold on it.

“There’s a suspicion, a skepticism, on anyone’s claim to truth, and I think that’s important to acknowledge. We have to engage with that, we can’t shy away from it,” says Danica.

So what was old has become new again, except it’s been mashed up and re-appropriated in ways you probably don’t recognise.

Who the hell do you think you are?

“If you’re going to build a bridge from point A to point B across a river, you don’t find the widest stretch!” laughs Rev Dr Robert Brennan. “You find the easiest bit first, which means you’ve got to know what the other bank is like.”

Rob is minister with Graceville Uniting Church, a congregation in Brisbane’s western suburbs which meets in an elaborate, Gothic-style cathedral. The beautiful building makes Graceville Uniting a popular venue for weddings and baptisms, and many of the couples have never set foot inside a church before. It’s a great opportunity to evangelise, despite the challenge of witnessing to people who hold a radically different worldview.

“A Baptist friend was telling me the other day, this old school evangelicalism which says, ‘Preach the law until conviction comes, and then preach grace until conversion,’ that doesn’t work anymore. And you know, he nailed it,” says Rob.

“A lot of the old methods of proclaiming the gospel are about convincing someone they’re a dirty rotten sinner, but these days if you tell that to a postmodern—in whatever polite way you can say that— they’re going to look at you and say, ‘Who the hell do you think you are?’”

The postmodern worldview may be skeptical of truth claims generally, but claims made by elite organisations like churches and governments are particularly suspect. These powerful institutions have historically imposed their worldview on others through coercion, control and colonialism, so they are no longer seen as trustworthy. To overcome this skepticism, trust must be built relationally, person-to-person.

Rob’s unusual ministry placement has prompted him to research what makes people with a postmodern worldview tick. His article, “What does evangelism mean in a post-modern society?” appeared in the July 2014 edition of *ACCatalyst* magazine, and his research continues.

“When you’re sharing good news with people you have to think about what they think is important,” says Rob. “You really have to connect with the people around. That’s really at the heart of where I’m at.

“If you pick up issues of fairness and justice, that’s what a lot of the younger generation are about.”

Into the wild

It’s an unfamiliar landscape for many churches, which for more than 200 years have grown accustomed to the respect previously afforded to institutions, and the power that gave them to set the cultural agenda. But Wendi says the postmodern cultural landscape gives opportunities as well as challenges.

“I think in a postmodern world many, many more people are much more interested in faith than we think. Back in modernity you were either in or out, but now there are a lot of people who might be a little bit in, a little bit out—they are interested. They could be engaged.”

Adapting is hard, but it helps churches rediscover parts of Christian faith that fell out of favour during the modernist era. Danica Patselis describes her experience exploring ministry with young adults with a postmodern worldview.

“In my experience, they really do believe that we need to take our faith outside of church, take the altar into the community, and that we actually create places of mission and ministry outside of the old frameworks, so outside of Sunday, outside of those places.

“They want everything to be integrated. They want it to be authentic. They want it to be transparent. They want to do ministry every day, in their workplace, in their school—they’re seeing those as sacred places, and sharing the

message of Jesus and the hope and love that he brings.

“It’s taking it out, doing what Jesus did and going out into different contexts and gathering people around to listen to their reflections as well.

“So that’s where I see postmodern ministry. I don’t think it’s a reshaping just of the Sunday service, it’s a total rethinking of the whole of life.”

And yet, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

“It’s not that our core doctrines change,” says Wendi. “It’s our way of presenting those doctrines, or the way we tell the story. It’s going to be necessarily different because of the difference in the world.

“I guess I would embrace postmodernism—not necessarily all of it—but I think God is bigger than our philosophical categories.”

Danica says, “The centrality of who Jesus is, is really important. In this postmodernism, and when I talk to my non-Christian friends, I think that’s one thing I don’t want to be confused by.

“I think if we centre ourselves on Christ, it doesn’t matter what the thought or philosophy or new era of being is, Christ will always be the greatest revelation amongst that.

“We can firmly proclaim that Jesus is the Incarnation, the head of the church and the best example of someone who took the altar out into the community and listened.”





Loving her community 100 years

Lorna Rickert.
Photos: Supplied

Lorna Rickert's commitment to her local Eastern Downs congregation is so great she has served it almost as long as it has been open. **Ashley Thompson** writes.

Born in Toowoomba hospital the year of the Anzac (1915), Lorna Jane Rickert grew up in the town of Nobby—a community of barely 400 people.

‘Lorna has been an exemplary community citizen who also was instrumental in recognising Sister Kenny’s work with polio in our community’

Julie Earl

“I married my neighbour—that is what kept me in Nobby all of my life!” explains Lorna. “I married Frank Rickert and we have had a family of five and were very happily married.”

A rarity in today’s fast-paced and scattered society, Lorna’s life is one of simplicity and considered communication built on a love of God and family. Indeed, beyond her five offspring, Lorna and Frank’s legacy lives on in their nine grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

“No, I have no regrets,” says Lorna about her choices in life. “I am very happy with my family and my grandchildren and I don’t know if I would have been any happier in any other field.”

While considering nursing at an early age, Lorna has never questioned whether her life’s plan was not God’s will. Surviving her husband’s passing at age 89 and those of many dear friends and relatives, Lorna’s faith in God remains unshaken and is now “deeper than ever”.

Despite turning 100 last month, Lorna is not defined by her age and was celebrated by her community with a Medal of the Order of Australia “for service to the community of Nobby and to the Sister Kenny Memorial Fund”.

“Lorna has been an exemplary community citizen who also was instrumental in recognising Sister Kenny’s work with polio in our community,” reiterates friend and Eastern Downs Uniting Church member, Julie Earl.

Beyond her extensive involvement at church Lorna is not your average retiree: as lucid as a twenty-year-old and with hardly a day to spare.

“Of course I have heaps of hobbies,” says Lorna, “I am an artist, a [former] wood carver, I play golf and I am interested in the County Women’s Association—I carry out whatever they are doing as well as church work.”

Lorna’s lessons from the simple life are wise yet unassuming:

“Take time to contemplate because everyone’s always rushing madly around thinking you’ve got to do this and you’ve got to do that—but it’s all the got-to’s and the have-to’s pushing people and it’s time to reflect.”



Resurrection and renewal

Resurrection is at the core of Christian faith. Rev Dr Anita Monro reflects on how this dramatic part of the Easter story means renewal for our lives.

Jesus' dramatic story has several acts. It's not just about birth and death, it's not only about healing and teaching, it's also equally about resurrection. But what does that act of the drama signify? Why is it there? Isn't the triumph of the remarkable death victory enough? Isn't the resurrection just a denouement, a tying up of loose ends, a way of getting the divine person back to the heavenly place, and not stuck in an earthly grave?

The *Basis of Union* is adamant that we are commissioned for mission by a "Risen Lord" (paragraph one); and that we preach "the risen crucified One" (paragraph three). The resurrection is integral to the work of Christ: "In raising him to live and reign, God confirmed and completed the witness which Jesus bore to God on earth, reasserted claim over the whole of creation, pardoned sinners, and made in Jesus a representative beginning of a new order of righteousness and love" (paragraph three).

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." (John 11:25) His resurrection is a foretaste and promise of the renewal of the fullness of life. It is the beginning and the precursor of the renewal of the whole creation—spiritual and material, psychic and physical. The dramatic act of the resurrection of Jesus is the powerful proclamation that all

things are made new by God and everything in its totality is renewed in Christ. Renewal of the whole creation is the dramatic end and purpose envisaged by God, and brought about in and through the work of Christ.

The third paragraph of the Apostles' Creed proclaims "I believe in ... the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen." This part of the Christian story to which we as followers of Christ give our allegiance reminds us that the gift of God in Jesus is about the renewal of the whole of life. It commits us to the welfare and wellbeing of the whole of God's creation; and it asks us to take seriously the fullness of the promises of God for material as well as spiritual life.

What then does living out the commission of the risen Lord really mean in the face of Jesus' life, death and resurrection? All of life is being impelled towards renewal in the person and work of Christ; and when we are gathered into that work, which is the mission of God, we are compelled to act in and for the whole of God's good, flawed, redeemed, wounded, loved creation. This is God's gift and this is God's promise—resurrection life.

Anita is principal of Grace College, Brisbane.

‘The dramatic act of the resurrection of Jesus is the powerful proclamation that all things are made new by God and everything in its totality is renewed in Christ’

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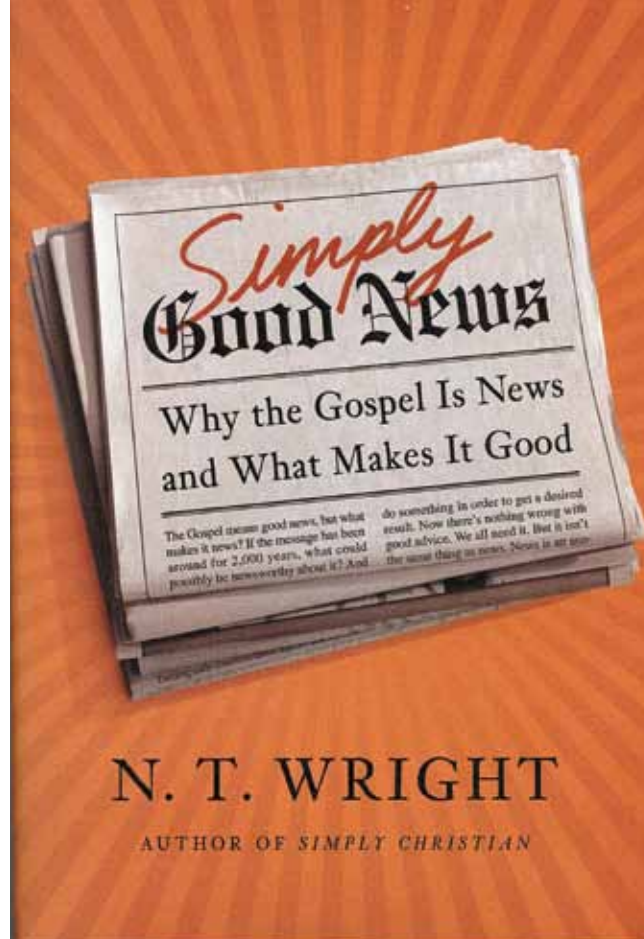
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‘This is the down-to-earth, eminently accessible NT Wright many Christian readers have grown to love’

NT Wright has been affirmed as a prolific biblical scholar and “the most important apologist for the Christian faith since CS Lewis”. Since retiring as Anglican Bishop of Durham, Wright has become Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at St Andrews University in Scotland.

His credentials in New Testament scholarship and as an experienced church leader are apparent in the integrity and user-friendliness of *Simply Good News*. Beginning with the first chapter, where Wright asks, “What’s the News?” we are challenged to clarify exactly what is meant when we talk about the gospel or good news of Jesus Christ. As Professor Wright notes, “Over many centuries, Western churches have got the story wrong. They have forgotten what the backstory is”.

Because of this, Wright suggests that, “in many churches, the good news has subtly changed into good advice: Here’s how to live. Here’s how to pray. Here are the techniques for

helping you become a better Christian, a better person, a better wife or husband, and in particular, here’s how to make sure you’re on the right track for what happens after death.”

Wright discusses the effect of news. He looks at news with reference to Paul’s writings, especially 1 Corinthians 1:23. I was hooked by his analogy about Jonny Wilkinson leading England to victory over Australia in the 2003 Rugby World Cup, as being good news to the English, scandal to the Australians and foolishness to the Americans (in the hotel where Wright was staying at the time!) This is the down-to-earth, eminently accessible NT Wright many Christian readers have grown to love.

Simply Good News is no dry academic deconstruction, decrying evangelism done poorly. It concludes with Wright offering useful teaching on the Lord’s Prayer, inviting readers into practical engagement with what it means to share the gospel.

Rev Dr Wendi Sargeant
Lecturer, Trinity College Queensland



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Photo: Cecil Sanders

5 weasel words to watch out for

Like most organisations, churches love to use words which give the impression of being intelligent and inclusive whilst smoothing over potential discord. But these deliberately ambiguous words can be as evasive as weasels, containing no actual meaning. Keep a close eye on these lest they give you the wrong idea.

1

Unchurched

This word was coined as tactful way of describing those who don't know a lectionary from a moderator, but it doesn't actually reflect reality. It lumps together everyone who isn't part of a formal church community, a category which includes Marilyn Manson, Julia Gillard and the Dalai Lama. And anyway, are the "churched" and "unchurched" really that fundamentally different? Who exactly are we talking about again?

3

Dialogue

Like "stakeholder engagement", dialogue is a word much favoured by organisations with a burning agenda. It implies that everyone has had their two cents worth, everyone is in broad agreement and it's now time to move on. It is also employed as a euphemism for more dramatic words like "debate", "argument" or even "barney". What actually happened during this "dialogue"?

5

Share

Be careful with this word—it has nothing to do with playing nicely. In modern usage, sharing is a ploy to unload criticism under the guise of concern ("I want to share my feelings about your sermon") or can be an excuse to convey the unsavoury details of your own or someone else's life, also known as "over-sharing" or "gossip". Remember: sharing is caring. Is that what's actually going on here?

2

Discern

When it comes to figuring out where the church should be heading, no one (at least in the Uniting Church) wants to be accused of hubris. Discernment is an important word for Christians, and has a specific theological meaning, but it can be misused to smuggle specific

4

Relevant

We all want to be this, whatever it is. There's no actual measure for relevance, so just claim it and somebody, somewhere is bound to agree with you. It really means "pertinent to the matter at hand",

Wonderful Memories



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Clinical Nurse Manager Janine Porter-Steele and volunteer Sandra Morris at the Wesley Hospital's new Choices cancer support and wellness centre in Auchenflower.
Photo: Holly Jewell

Wellness centre opens its doors



A grand old house located at the Uniting Church Centre in Brisbane has undergone a transformation into the Wesley Hospital's new Choices cancer support and wellness centre. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

‘When people have chemotherapy, radiotherapy and other treatments they may have some side effects that can affect their quality of life. Wellness is about mitigating those effects’

Janine Porter-Steele

The massive front door is open for visitors at the heritage-listed brick residence at the heart of the Queensland Synod office and Raymont Lodge Residential College in Auchenflower, Brisbane. Drysllwyn, built by mining entrepreneur William Davies in 1904-1905, was vacated in 2014 by Trinity Theological College and is now the home of the Wesley Hospital's Choices cancer support and wellness centre.

With the help of Choices volunteers, the spacious rooms and wide verandas have been furnished with an eclectic mix of artwork, antiques and comfortable furniture to provide support services for women and men affected by cancer. The facility offers specialist nurse support, emotional support, post-surgery and treatment rehabilitation and a variety of complimentary therapies and peer support.

Clinical nurse manager Janine Porter-Steele says that the decision to broaden the scope of the Kim Walters Choices Program was a natural development after almost 18 years of supporting women affected by breast and gynaecological cancer.

“We realised that the support we were offering was beneficial regardless of the type of cancer. We were also very aware that this comprehensive support was not being offered elsewhere.”

The centre focuses on promoting wellness through and beyond cancer treatment, says Janine.

“Research shows us that when people have chemotherapy, radiotherapy and other treatments they may have some side effects that can affect their quality of life. Wellness is about mitigating those effects. Also, generally after a diagnosis of cancer people want to reduce the risks of it happening again and the risks of other chronic disease or illness, so a large focus is on physical health through good nutrition and appropriate exercise and emotional and mental wellbeing.”

Survivorship issues go beyond medical outcomes, she adds.

“Survivorship covers a wide range of topics, but in short it's about ensuring people have control over their lives and have choices about how that occurs. Choices aims to help achieve this by connecting them to people and programs that enable them to talk openly about their diagnosis and the after-effects of treatments.”



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Uniting College's Indigenous students and friends group, NARA with Brooke Prentis and the Big Fella Boss Cross. **Photo:** Supplied

Uniting Church school hosts Indigenous Christian artwork

Unity College in Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast is hosting a unique piece of Indigenous art: the Big Fella Boss Cross.

The artwork was prepared by Melbourne painter, Safina Stewart, who is a Kurri and Torres Strait woman. The 185 centimetre tall timber cross hung on a wall in the Ashgrove Uniting Church building for 80 years, until Safina and two other women noticed it during renovations.

Along with Ipswich Indigenous youth worker, Brooke Prentis, Safina stripped back the decades of dark varnish to create a new story on this peculiar "canvas".

The school's Indigenous students and friends group, NARA along with youth ministry trainees and teaching staff, have all used the cross for learning and prayer. It will be a central feature at the year 12 retreat.

UnitingWorld and Uniting Church launch Cyclone Pam appeal

UnitingWorld and the Uniting Church in Australia have launched a national appeal to support the communities devastated by Tropical Cyclone Pam.

Thousands of people across Vanuatu are homeless after the Category 5 cyclone. The Uniting Church's partner in Vanuatu, the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, is providing much needed shelter with 10 churches set up as evacuation centres.

Uniting Church president Rev Dr Andrew Dutney urged church members and supporters to back UnitingWorld's appeal.

"Our thoughts are with our brothers and sisters throughout the Pacific who have experienced the devastation caused by Cyclone Pam," said Dr Dutney.

Cyclone Pam travelled the full length of Vanuatu, leaving almost no community untouched.

Secure, tax-deductible donations can be made at unitingworld.org.au or by calling 1800 000 331.

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Image: Thibault Le Mer

To the editor

God is like an onion

I really enjoyed the last edition of *Journey*, especially the profile of Dr Joel Corney ("A quantum leap of faith" March 2015). I found it reassuring that a quantum physicist discussed the uncertainty that is the reality of life on planet Earth. Even though God is a certainty, there are plenty of things that are still left as mystery, which I think is great! It's reassuring because I can only place my faith in Jesus, not in the order of creation or the stability of human knowledge. It's very simple and that's beautiful, like Joel said.

Even though we can enjoy investigating the systems that God has created, I still like the thought that he has so many layers (like an onion!) and we'll never even begin to fully grasp all that he is and does. I'm sure he doesn't mind that we want to know as much as we can find out, but the main thing is that we want to know Jesus better and serve him.

Susan Harriman
Acacia Ridge

There's no single truth

Thank you for the excellent article, "A quantum leap of faith" (March 2015) and for the article on theological education in the previous *Journey* ("Shake, rattle and roll", February 2015). Just as the biblical writers did their theology within their very different cultures and worldviews, we need to ensure that what we say theologically today is believable in today's scientific world. Dr Joel Corney's willingness to integrate his faith with his experience and knowledge is not only a message for us all, but makes for much more exciting reflections than trying to fit contemporary experiences into tribal desert and medieval monastical understandings.

There has never been one truth, despite what people claim. Theological ideas have waxed and waned through history, taking conflicting turns with changing leaders, contexts and political forces. As many people walk away from churches building even more fortresses around the ancient stories rather than facing the contemporary questions, congratulations to *Journey* for showing us that it is possible to find a faith that fits for today.

Dr Val Webb
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