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Contents

Listen to the still, small voice

The award-winning film *Spotlight* left viewers wondering why the voices of those who were systematically abused by priests in the Boston archdiocese were not heard for so long.

This is a reminder that mainstream voices can easily shout down those who do not fit our preconceptions of what is normal and desirable. This edition has a lingering theme of acknowledging our past, learning from it and looking towards the future.

Our profile person (page 6) Everald Compton, the outspoken champion of older Australians, would certainly agree. At 84 years, Everald is taking politicians to task over issues such as accessibility to technology and raising the pension.

Another often overlooked minority in the church is single adults; people of all ages and life experiences who are often pushed to one side while the church focuses on families. These people also have something to say in this issue of *Journey* (page 14).

Some of the voices in our feature on the sad realities of post-apartheid South Africa are unsettling (page 12). The news is not what Uniting Church members who were part of the anti-apartheid campaign in the 1970s want to hear. Yet again, we are called to listen and to respond to the cry for justice.

The heartfelt generosity of congregations in response to the devastation caused by Cyclone Winston in Fiji (page 5) underlines the strong links between the diverse groups which make up the Uniting Church. We can be proud of the way that our church, with the support of many congregations and individuals, is supporting the Methodist Church in Fiji through UnitingWorld.

As the world responds to yet another act of terror, we need to learn from our past, listen to our elders who are the keepers of our collective history (page 9) and prepare our young people to lead the church now and in the future (page 8 and 11).

Mardi Lumsden
Editor-in-chief



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Everald Compton



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Journey



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Closing date for editorial and advertising for May *Journey* is Monday 11 April. The next issue of *Journey* will be available on Sunday 1 May



Pioneers for God

Monday Midday Prayer

*Loving God,
This month as we remember lives
given in the service of others,
open our hearts and minds to the
possibilities of service around us.
Amen*

“Looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.” Hebrews 12

“Pioneer” is a bit of an ambivalent descriptor these days. As a nation, we still have not come to terms with the British Empire’s arrival, even though the intent at first was probably just to find a place to dump cast-offs from society and develop a base to fight other European powers. Whatever the first intent, the colonialist spirit had been let loose, and we are still dealing with the good and the bad in the aftermath.

But pioneering—the exploration of new space—with the change that comes with it, is at the heart of the Christian faith.

The life of Jesus of Nazareth was a pioneering one. Jesus took seriously the vision of God’s establishment of a people to be a light to the nations, and sought to explore what that meant. In time, he discerned that the realisation of the Kingdom of God entailed for him the way of the cross; that was a pioneering journey like no other.

God raised Jesus from the dead, and so another pioneering journey begins—for Jesus, and his return to God, and for the community of believers, whose lives are now about exploring what the resurrection of Jesus means for humanity.

Jesus’ resurrection spilled out into the world and transformed people’s views of themselves, their neighbour, and their world—both tangible and

metaphysical. Eventually, it influenced philosophy and government.

In the story of the church, we have to recognise that when a hegemonic and dominating spirit—always the shadow of a universal faith—was let loose, this pioneering became destructive and harmful. Yet that spirit is not unique to Christianity; it’s a mark of our fallen humanity.

In some ways, particularly in western Protestantism, the fear of that dominating spirit has resulted in a loss of the desire to explore and share the good news of the resurrection.

The rise of the nation state also suppressed the exploring spirit of Christianity; we became tamed and domesticated.

Yet now we live in a world of competing ideas, of tremendous disruption, of being brought close together by the technology of the Internet, and of travel. The idea of the nation state, once thought to be almost the end of history, is no longer completely unassailable. This is disturbing to much of Western Christianity, because we have accommodated ourselves to it, yet this disruption provides opportunity for this radical idea, the resurrection of Jesus, to be explored again. The marketplace of ideas is open; some who now dominate it want to exclude Christian faith—but how will we as the church, with this radical idea of the resurrection, engage in it?

Rev David Baker
Moderator, Queensland Synod

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A pastoral service on 20 March at Broadwater Road Uniting Church in Brisbane for those affected by Cyclone Winston.
Photo: David Busch

Rebuilding shattered lives in Fiji

Fijian Australians and Uniting Church congregations across Queensland have opened their hearts to communities in cyclone-devastated Fiji. *Journey* reports.

Fijian-Australians could only watch and wait over the weekend of 20 February as news filtered through about the impact of Fiji's worst cyclone.

Particularly hard-hit by Cyclone Winston were the north and north western coast of Viti Levu, the south coast of Vanua Levu and maritime communities in the east and central regions. More than 40 people across Fiji were killed.

UnitingWorld partner the Methodist Church in Fiji (MCIF) is working with the national Disaster Management Council to coordinate relief and recovery.

"MCIF will provide clothes, bedding and kitchen cooking/eating utensils. In some locations it will also provide some food items," says Michael Constable, UnitingWorld emergency response coordinator. "If resources permit, longer term assistance will most likely be directed to rebuilding school facilities.

"UnitingWorld in partnership with the MCIF will be supporting a 'build back better' approach to the longer term recovery effort."

In addition to financial aid UnitingWorld has provided community recovery training for 55 people through a workshop organised by the MCIF in Suva in early March, led by Assembly national disaster recovery officer Rev Dr Stephen Robinson.

"There was a real hunger from the group to learn, and clearly a great need," reports Stephen.

"About seven of those present have been heavily affected themselves and face returning to a very tough situation. One minister spoke of seven churches/villages in his area which were wiped out by the tidal surge of the cyclone.

"This will be a long, slow task ahead—particularly in the maritime areas where the level of loss, compounded by isolation is so profound."

So far, the Synod has heard from 14 Queensland congregations that have responded to the UnitingWorld appeal. These include St Andrew's in Mt Isa, which took part in a community event that raised \$12 000, and the youth group at Northside Mackay which will donate the profit from their first scented Compassion candles sales.

Buderim Uniting Church donated \$3701, and St Mark's, Mt Gravatt will donate over \$3000 from the proceeds of their garage sale. The Burdekin Uniting Church is donating funds for a generator for a village in Fiji. Many small congregations across the state have also responded generously.

Multicultural congregations and Fijian Australians have been quick to act, with both the Fijian Uniting Church in Annerley and the Kangaroo Point Uniting Church in Brisbane sending containers.

A pastoral service on 20 March at Broadwater Road Uniting Church in Brisbane raised an offering of \$3761 for the Cyclone Winston appeal.

For more information call UnitingWorld on 1800 998 122 or visit unitingworld.org.au/unitingworld-launches-emergency-appeal

“This will be a long, slow task ahead—particularly in the maritime areas where the level of loss, compounded by isolation is so profound

Stephen Robinson



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Larger than life

As one of Australia's largest providers of aged care services, the Uniting Church has a huge investment in ageing ... and rightly so, given our demographic profile. **John Harrison** talks to an 84-year-old Uniting Church elder out to make a difference.

His febrile Twitter handle says it all: @EVERALDATLARGE. At 84 years of age, Aspley Uniting Church elder Everald Compton is a tireless advocate for older Australians. He's particularly passionate about addressing the barriers seniors face in adapting to and adopting new technologies.

“

Prodigal Son
was lesson at
#Church today.
Our world
exacts revenge
& punishment
while ignoring
forgiveness. Time
to reverse that
human error

Not only a regular in the Twittersphere, he's featured a few times in David Curnow's *Eat the week* segment on 612 ABC local radio Queensland.

Last month, when Canberra was convulsed by Niki Savva's book about the inner workings of the Abbott government and the prospect of a double dissolution, Everald was there for 37 meetings across three days with members of parliament from all parties. He wants them "to commit to a Minister for Longevity and upgrade of the age pension".

In 2011 Everald was appointed by the Rudd government to head the Advisory Panel on Positive Ageing, with funding of \$4.7 million over four years. In November 2013 Tony Abbott sacked the panel, six months before it finished its work, saying it was "not focused on the government's policy priorities". With help from the progressive think tank Per Capita, Everald set out to raise the money to finish the job. Which he did.

Everald started out running fundraising campaigns for the Presbyterian Church in the 1950s. His first gig, at age 24, was St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital. He subsequently ran over 1000 campaigns in 25 countries, and raised over two billion dollars (inflation adjusted).

Movers and shakers

Everald has mates right across the political spectrum, including former deputy prime minister and fellow train buff Tim Fischer, venture capitalist and philanthropist Mark Carnegie, former Gillard economic advisor Stephen Koukoulas, and Peter FitzSimons, former Wallaby now cheerleader for the republic.

Many of his mates will be on hand this month when he launches his latest venture, a novella about Flynn of the inland called *The man on the twenty dollar note*. The book is being launched first in Cloncurry at John Flynn Place and then in Brisbane, where philanthropist and QUT chancellor Tim Fairfax will do the honours, and the master of ceremonies will be former 4BC radio broadcaster Greg Carey. ABC television's *Landline* has interviewed Everald for a feature on John Flynn.

It was Everald's maternal grandfather Ernest Guhr who fostered his life-long fascination with trains. Everald has been the engine driver of the Melbourne to Darwin inland railway project, a standard gauge track running west of the Great Divide, serving the rich agricultural hinterlands of the eastern states.



EVERALD COMPTON @EVERALDATALARGE · 11h

Never before in my life have voters held #PoliticalEstablishment in such low regard. All night saga on #Senate Elections adds to disgust



EVERALD COMPTON @EVERALDATALARGE · Mar 5

On my way to #Church as I do every Sunday. Hoping #Pell has not driven people away. World needs Christianity far more than it needs Churches



EVERALD COMPTON @EVERALDATALARGE · Mar 16

Spoke at Mobile #Technology breakfast at Parliament today. Outlined hurdles facing #Seniors in high tech world. Huge social & economic issue



EVERALD COMPTON @EVERALDATALARGE

I hold firm belief that #Banks are greater threat to nation than #TradeUnions. Its time for another Royal Commission but with unbiased boss

As we know from the ABC television series *Utopia*, there is no overarching infrastructure plan for this nation.

As Everal tells it: “In preparing the (inland rail) business case, I contacted bureaucrats in the federal government and all state governments to ask for a copy of their infrastructure plans for the next 25 years. Not one of them had such a plan. Indeed, they were stunned that I asked for one. They merely followed the whims of politicians who invested in marginal seats from election to election.”

Will the inland rail line ever be built? Yes, inevitably, says Everal. The end of the mining boom means Australia is even more reliant on agriculture, as the food bowl of Asia. Agricultural communities are poorly served by transport infrastructure.

Everal is candid in his assessment of our political leaders. “Neither Howard nor Costello were interested in infrastructure,” he says.

Casually encountering Everal in the corridors of parliament last month, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull told him, “I’ve got the feeling you’ll live forever”. To which Everal replied, “If that’s your policy, then I’ll vote for you.”

Starting out

Joining the Commonwealth Bank after leaving school, Everal spent several years in Nyngan, western New South Wales, between Dubbo and Bourke. It confirmed his affinity with the bush, and every year he goes bush, “and these sojourns simply cause in my soul a longing desire to go back more often”.

The Presbyterian youth movement, the Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia (PFA), was central in Everal’s Christian formation. It was where he met his wife Helen (nee Wyllie). In the 1950s, Everal and Helen and their PFA mates canvassed the newly developing suburb of

Aspley and rounded up enough Presbyterians to start the congregation that became St Phillip’s Presbyterian Church.

It was in the PFA in the late forties that he met Florence Gilmour, then a secretary in the Queensland Main Roads Department. Florence subsequently married a Lutheran member of parliament from Kingaroy. They kept in touch, and in the eighties Everal was asked to raise funds for the resurgent National Party’s Bjelke-Petersen Foundation, having previously successfully raised funds for the ALP’s Canberra headquarters, John Curtin House. Did Everal lose a bit of bark as a result of the association? “Yes, and no,” he says. “People on the other side of politics rang me up and said, ‘if you can raise money for those so and sos, then you can do it for us’.”

Not so well known is his involvement in the ending of apartheid in South Africa. In the mid-1980s Everal contracted to raise 10 million rand for the Progressive Federal Party (PFP), the multi-racial opposition party committed to ending apartheid. He brought PFP leaders Dr Frederik van Zyl Slabbert and Colin Eglin to Australia to meet church, political and community leaders 30 years ago.

These days, amid his myriad of public engagements and causes, Everal still finds himself at Aspley Uniting Church on Sundays. Mixed in with posts promoting four-year terms, dinner pix with Palmer Senator Dio Wang, and praise for fellow republican Peter FitzSimons, he tweeted on the fourth Sunday in Lent about the gospel reading from the lectionary: “Prodigal Son was lesson at #Church today. Our world exacts revenge & punishment while ignoring forgiveness. Time to reverse that human error.”

everaldcompton.com

“

They merely followed the whims of politicians who invested in marginal seats from election to election



Moreton Bay College student Caitlin Ramsay.
Photo: Supplied



Clayfield College student Helen Watson.
Photo: Supplied

“Making more mission possible

We all know that Indigenous disadvantage is a huge issue, but this is a way that we can provide concrete opportunities for individual children and their families that will have an ongoing impact

Raushen Perera

A Uniting Church Foundation program supporting Year 10 Indigenous students to fulfil their educational potential is going from strength to strength. *Journey* reports.

Two more Indigenous students have been helped to pursue their vocational goals, thanks to a second round of grants from the Uniting Church Foundation's \$10 for 10 Appeal.

The Indigenous Learning Pathways project was launched in 2014 in association with the Queensland Synod Schools and Residential Colleges Commission to support Year 10 students in Uniting Church schools to access further education and training.

“It is encouraging that the wider Uniting Church community has taken the mission area of Indigenous education to heart,” says Synod fundraising manager Raushen Perera. “The continued support has enabled more young people to undertake training that will have a significant impact on their ability to fulfil their dreams.”

Moreton Bay College student Caitlin Ramsay wants to become a software engineer, and the grant will be utilised for study resources and to support her attendance at a national computer science summer school.

“It will give me an insight into what it is like to work in an IT-based career,” says Caitlin. “I will also be able to build a network of friends who have similar interests and goals.”

Helen Watson, a boarder at Clayfield College in Brisbane, will use the grant to help fund her involvement in the Edmund Rice Independent Living Skills (Nutrition and Wellbeing) program. The program includes exposure to the childcare industry within an Indigenous setting.

“This will allow me to complete training that will give me the ability to obtain childcare qualifications when I leave school,” says Helen.

“I hope to learn how to look after babies and young children so that I can go back to Palm Island and work with the young children of my community.”

Raushen Perera is excited by the potential of the \$10 for 10 Appeal.

“We should never underestimate the power of modest amounts donated by people coming together because they care. We all know that Indigenous disadvantage is a huge issue, but this is a way that we can provide concrete opportunities for individual children and their families that will have an ongoing impact on the Australian community.”

To learn more or donate to the \$10 for 10 Appeal, visit missionpossible.ucaql.com.au

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Lady Rachel Dudley's Australian Voluntary Hospital Unit (Martha Burns standing at the front) heading for France in 1914.
Photo: Courtesy of the Australian War Memorial

Voices from the Great War

The *Lives, Links and Legacy* project underway at St Andrew's Uniting Church in Brisbane city is uncovering the stories of congregation members who served in World War One. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

When Martha Burns stepped off the yacht *Greta* onto French soil with Lady Rachel Dudley's Australian Voluntary Hospital Unit in 1914, her independent ways had already flouted social conventions. She had battled to attend university—becoming the first woman in Queensland to graduate as a dentist—and achieved notoriety by driving her Oldsmobile at an alarming 16 mph through the streets of Brisbane.

Martha's adventurous life is just one of the stories uncovered as part of the *Lives, Links and Legacy* project underway at St Andrew's Uniting Church in Brisbane. The project is sponsored by the Queensland Government through the State Library of Queensland's *Q ANZAC 100: Memories for a New Generation* program.

The historic city church holds seven honour roll boards in the Merrington Anzac Memorial Peace Chapel as well as significant archival material. In all, there are 267 servicemen and women listed on the rolls from the Presbyterian and Congregational churches which are part of the heritage of St Andrew's. The project team aims to research every name.

Project coordinator and heritage committee member Miriam King says that the project is uncovering some

remarkable stories of how the lives of Queenslanders were shaped by the Great War.

"This is not just about the war, it's about their lives before the war—about their families, their service—and if they returned from the war, the legacy they left for us," she says. "A lot of their experiences were not shared at that time because people didn't recognise their suffering."

The church will launch the *Lives, Links and Legacy* website heritage.saintandrews.org.au on 22 April.

"There will be a page for every person listed with their stories and the many photos we have uncovered," says Miriam. "It's going to be a resource featuring those from St Andrews who were involved in the war and what they did, and it will be constantly updated with new material."

The heritage committee has tracked down information on nearly half of the names in the two and a half years since the project began.

"There are quite a number where we only have a name, and we can't find any links through the church archives or even from the War Memorial," says Miriam. "We would love to hear from families or descendants to help fill the gaps."

To find out more contact staheritage@gmail.com or leave a message at 3221 2400

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This is not just about the war, it's about their lives before the war—about their families, their service—and if they returned from the war, the legacy they left for us

Miriam King

Nominations now open for 2016 Moderator's Community Service Medal

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

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

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

Nominations close **Tuesday 12 April** and should be submitted via the UnitingCare Queensland website www.unitingcareqld.com.au/moderators-medal
Call 3253 4054 for more information.

Nominees must:

- be a volunteer (not be or have been in paid employment connected to their work)
- be involved in community service work other than congregational work
- have exhibited outstanding service over a number of years.





Counting the cost of disaster

Longreach minister **Rev Jenny Coombes** provides insight into how we can care for people in times of disaster.



Distributing vouchers or gift cards stimulates a community, and it has been shown that the money impacts between four and seven sets of lives as it circulates. Talk about value-adding!

One of the greatest stressors in my life at present is having to smile and say “thank you very much” to people who bring goods into the area—toys, pamper packs, food hampers, hay and so on—then deal with businesses who stock these items and are down as much as 60 per cent on income.

Regardless of whether you are talking Cyclone Winston, bushfires, floods, droughts ... stop and think about what you donate—and make sure the people on the ground want it, need it, and can handle it.

Despite the documented evidence across many disaster settings of the damage to the local economy initiated by bringing products into the situation, the practice continues.

Generally, the best option is to send money in some form. Distributing vouchers or gift cards stimulates a community, and it has been shown that the money impacts between four and seven sets of lives as it circulates. Talk about value-adding!

Other options I have found helpful and recommend include resources for those ministering into disaster events such as Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy training (currently available in New South Wales and the ACT) and books such as *Ministry in Disaster Settings: Lessons from the Edge* by Stephen Robinson (Atlantis Books, NSW).

The work Stephen has done in identifying the various responses and phases people are likely to experience after a disaster seems common to all forms of disaster. This knowledge helps you to identify where people are and to find different ways of supporting them, or perhaps just walking alongside as they process the event and its consequences.

The Queensland Synod has implemented a peer support program where ministers and pastors are trained in supporting others who are ministering in disaster situations.

They walk alongside and provide a calm voice in the midst of chaos, and offer some TLC (tender loving care) to those who are in the thick of it. They may also be able to offer some time-out from duties to give the minister some space to recover. Often the ministers and their families in the disaster area have been impacted, so sometimes they need physical support in their own life and home as well as in undertaking their duties as minister. This program is well worth supporting.

For more information contact your presbytery minister, who will in turn contact Rev Linda Hamill, the peer support program coordinator.

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You asked for it: new Safe Ministry resources

A new suite of resources to assist the church to be a safe place for children and young people was launched in March this year. **Mardi Lumsden** reports.

The new Safe Ministry with Children resources are the result of feedback from congregations, collaboration between the Synod office, presbyteries and several committees, and a commitment that the church's ministry with children is focussed on keeping them safe so, as moderator Rev David Baker says, "they can experience the love of God".

In the last year 150 people have been trained in Safe Ministry with Children in the Central Queensland Presbytery. Presbytery and Fitzroy Parish child safe officer Ros McKendry has trained most of them, travelling around 2500 km in the last year.

"It is good to think that so many people have wanted to be informed," she says. "It is important for the kids and the adults in our congregation."

Queensland Synod safe ministry (children) administrator Lynette Drew says the resources represent a greater purpose.

"Our driving force is to provide safe activities for children; the resources and tools just make it happen.

"We aim to work towards a standard greater than best practice. If we want to motivate people to send their children to our activities, they need to be assured that activities are well-planned, venues are safe and people are open and welcoming."

A lot of these things are already happening, adds Lynette. "Safe Ministry just puts some structure around it and enables congregations to show that they are doing the right thing."

Ros says that a number of people she has met feel overwhelmed by the legislation, and the new Safe Ministry with Children resources help them to understand the rules, learn how to report potential abuse and prepare safe programs for children.

"People really appreciate it," she says.

Pastor Tanya Errey of Chinchilla Uniting Church says as a smaller, rural congregation it was helpful for their child safety officer to be trained in the new resources at The Downs Presbytery meeting recently.

"Our child safety officer found it advantageous to undertake the training with a cross section of church members," says Tanya. That person then briefed the church council on the new policies and procedures.

"The training has been very useful and we are making good progress in adopting new procedures in making our church a safer environment for all."

To access Safe Ministry with Children resources visit ucaqld.com.au/safe-ministry-with-children

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If we want to motivate people to send their children to our activities, they need to be assured that activities are well-planned, venues are safe and people are open and welcoming

Lynette Drew



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Shadows from an ugly past



The rise of racism in post-apartheid South Africa

White South Africans continue to leave their home country in droves, many unwilling to share their stories as the pain of leaving lingers on. **Ashley Thompson** talks with three South Africans about how they have been affected by escalating tensions in the post-apartheid nation.

As first-hand observations of race-based university protests fill my Facebook newsfeed with statements like “cloudy with a chance of political instability”—I feel a growing unrest about the political future of my country of birth. South Africa: the rainbow nation, the land of braais and koeksisters, scenic coastal towns and majestic wildlife; the home of extended family and fading childhood friendships. Where have you been and where are you going?

“
Mandela never
ran the country
for five minutes

Dr Eric Louw

Set alight and pushed from moving trains: news agencies Al Jazeera, the BBC, CNN and *The Guardian* detail the rising violence against foreign nationals in South Africa.

Nigerians, Somalis and Ethiopians are just some of the North African nationalities who have travelled to South Africa in search of a better life. Instead, the 2.2 million migrants (Africa Check, 2015) are accused by black South African nationalists of spreading diseases, sponging off government services and stealing their jobs. Citizen anger around the undelivered promises of the African National Congress (ANC) is being directed towards these migrants, and racism has once more become a political weapon.

Promise Monareng is a young adult leader at her church, the Barn Christian Fellowship in Johannesburg. She struggles to come to terms with the social and political deterioration of the country she loves.

“At the end of the day it’s dramatic, it’s traumatic, it’s chaotic,” says Promise.

“It’s a very sad admission but if nothing happens, if God doesn’t intervene for us in South Africa, we will be going down.”

A matter of principle

In 1985 Archbishop Desmond Tutu told the Synod in Session via an unprecedented live phone interview, that the best way for Australian Christians to support the end of apartheid was to pray, guard themselves against “disinformation from the South African government” and put pressure on decision-makers.

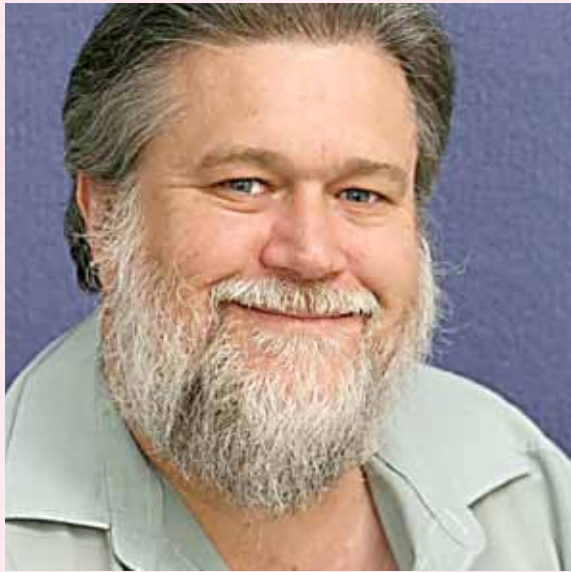
For over a decade, leaders and members of the Uniting Church in Australia participated in campaigns to boycott South African goods, raise funds for a multi-racial opposition party, and support economic and sporting sanctions aimed at undermining the apartheid system; a system recognised as not dissimilar to how Australia had treated its own Indigenous people.

ANC unmasked

When the first democratic elections were held in South Africa 21 years ago, Australians were among the millions who celebrated the creation of the rainbow nation. But it seems that even in those euphoric days, things were not going according to plan.

Dr Eric Louw is a former ANC member and United Democratic Front (UDF) activist—the organisation instrumental in dismantling apartheid.

“I can tell you the moment I went home and I said to my wife ‘We’re leaving, we’re not staying here anymore,’” says



Dr Eric Louw.
Photo: Supplied



Promise Monareng.
Photo: Supplied



Rev Marius Kruger.
Photo: Supplied

Eric, who is now associate professor at the University of Queensland School of Communication and Arts.

“It was when the Bisho Massacre happened in 1992—I realised black nationalists were going to take over and screw whites over. When I was inside the ANC that’s what I was hearing, it was unambiguous.”

According to Eric, while there was one distinct voice inside the ANC, there was an entirely different one being heard on the outside: Nelson Mandela.

“Mandela never ran the country for five minutes,” says Eric. “No matter what anyone says, everyone in the ANC knows that. From day one Mbeki was ‘president’.”

Thabo Mbeki was South Africa’s second post-apartheid president and oversaw the implementation of Black Economic Empowerment (BEE).

BEE ensured the transfer of wealth and jobs via quotas. Yet while it saw a rapid increase in the black middle class, it failed to address unemployment amongst the unskilled majority of the population, resulting in opportunities for trained professional migrants and consequent xenophobic violence.

Promise says that there is a variety of factors contributing to the desperate and violent outbursts of her countrymen.

“We are putting a blanket on everyone and calling it a race thing and sometimes it’s not even about race—it’s about class, it’s where people find themselves at a time where justice is not practised,” she says.

Packing for Perth

The saying “packing for Perth” is a wry dig at the over 50 000 South African immigrants who have arrived in Australia since the election of Nelson Mandela in 1994 for “fear of a lower standard for living”, as the Sydney Morning Herald suggested in 2008.

Due to strong Methodist ties, Uniting Church congregations across Queensland have continued to be a logical church home for such immigrants.

Rev Marius Kruger, minister at Highfields Community Church near Toowoomba, moved to Queensland ten years ago with the intent to stay for just two years before opportunities changed his young family’s path.

His concern for his home country has sharply increased within the last year as the BEE has started to affect the livelihood of his family back home.

“My family are all in business and they’re finding it harder and harder to do business, especially where involving Black Economic Empowerment.”

Marius believes that many of the issues his South African family face, such as crime and horrific murders, are so commonplace “it’s almost impossible for them to have an outside objective view on it”.

As an expatriate, he knows that his options are limited.

“What the church [here] can do is pray and raise awareness internationally because South Africa’s just a sheltered little country and no one really cares,” says Marius.

“It might not be seen on the front pages of newspapers but God is doing some great, life-changing stuff. There are glimpses of hope where people look beyond the racial divide.”

Living in hope

Back on my Facebook feed, the stream of images and comments continues to witness to the impact of black nationalism on the everyday lives of people. For my Christian friends, the gospel imperative to live as beacons of hope still lights the way through the gathering clouds of intolerance.

Promise Monareng sees her country as a place of incredible ministry opportunities, and she is upbeat about the role of the church in demonstrating Kingdom values.

“Here at the Barn we have people from Zimbabwe, people from Mozambique and Zambia and we show them that we’re not promoting this [xenophobia].

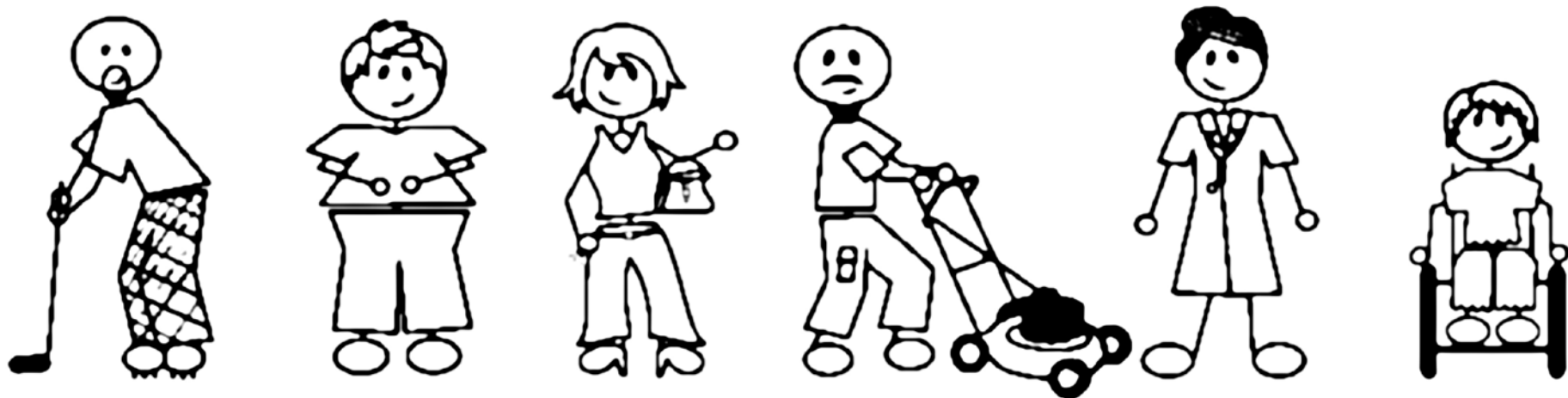
“If you could see the amount of foreign Africans coming to our church services in Johannesburg, you could see that they know where protection is, where hope is—it’s definitely in church! There’s hope in community.

“Personally I say Christ is the hope of glory and we need justice according to him because according to him there’s no class, there’s no gender, no colour.”

thebarn.co.za

“
There are
glimpses of hope
where people
look beyond the
racial divide

Rev Marius Kruger



Not drowning, Singles and the church

Singles make up more than half of the people in churches, yet they are often sidelined when it comes to ministry and outreach. **Dianne Jensen** asks singles how we can change things.

“
I do not see
singleness as
a calling or as
a gift to the
church. It is a
state of being. I
want the church
to affirm my life
and how I live it
with and through
God’s grace

Journey respondent

Many people go to church alone. While some have a spouse tucked up in bed with the Sunday paper or doing the soccer run, others attend by themselves because they are single.

The proportion of single people in Australia (never married, separated or divorced, widowed) now outweighs those who are married. Data from the 2011 census gathered by the Bureau of Statistics shows that 48.7 per cent of the population aged 15 years and over are married, down from 49.6 per cent in 2006. While these numbers do not take account of the 11 per cent of Australians aged 18 years and over living in a de facto relationship, it seems reasonable to assume that singles probably outnumber marrieds in the average church congregation.

What does this mean for church communities? Clearly, if churches are framing their worship in terms of couples and families, the majority of those sitting in the pews may be wondering if they are invisible or simply keeping the seat warm. In terms of outreach, churches may be ignoring an entire segment of the population in their desire to attract families.

We all know that singles don’t come in neat categories. Never-married, divorced/separated and widowed are diverse groups distinguished by age and personal circumstances. The unmarried professional has different concerns from the young widower or the recently divorced retiree or the elderly person grieving their life partner.

Singles are not universally lonely or unfulfilled, and most are not pursuing a call to the celibate life. What they do have in common is the desire to have their life experience and their spiritual value affirmed by their church community.

Are you here alone?

Katherine Grocott, in her dissertation *A singular focus: theology of singleness* (2005) points out that the church has had a pendulum swing in regards to singleness.

“The reformers of the sixteenth century had to work very hard to justify marriage because the church, from its early days through to their own time, had held celibacy in such high regard,” she writes.

Although Jesus and Paul describe both marriage and singleness as gifts from God, the elevation of marriage

as the norm and a sign of God’s blessing effectively cast a shadow over singles.

“Many parts of the church view singleness as second best, a disappointment and not God’s will for a person’s life,” says Katherine.

A straw poll of Uniting Church singles—each serving their local church in a variety of ways—suggests that this is indeed the case.

“One of the challenges about being single in Australian society in general, and the church in particular, are the assumptions that people make about your singleness,” says a professional woman in her early sixties who has never married. “They include such assumptions as you have not met the right person yet, you are gay, you’re obsessed with your career, you do not ‘want’ children and the like.”

These negative attitudes impact all single people, she adds, including those who are separated or divorced or widowed.

“In all these circumstances a single person is often treated with suspicion (e.g. if a single woman, you are not to be trusted—by both women and men—to be in the company of married men) and awkwardness (e.g. not raising topics of conversation that the speaker deems not to be ‘appropriate’ for a single person).”

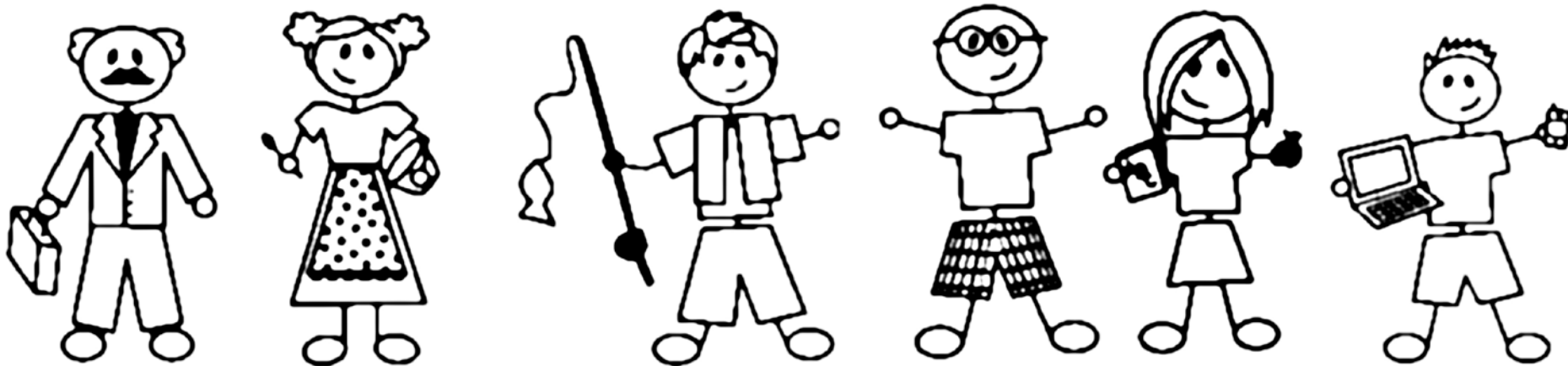
Table for one please

Couples often feel awkward around those who have lost partners, once their initial sympathy passes. A retiree who became a widower many years ago remembers feeling isolated by his church community.

“People tended to avoid me. It was only much later I found out why, that they were coming to terms with my wife’s passing and also just did not know what to say to me. Once I understood this I did not feel quite so disappointed.”

Another congregation member, now in her 80s, continues to feel that the loss of her husband has rendered her invisible at church.

“If I go to a church function, I find all the couples gravitate to their own table, leaving the single people to get together as though we are only of interest to other widows and widowers.”



waving

For the divorced person, their single status evokes a complex mix of responses.

“Each person brings uniqueness to a congregation and should be recognised as who they are, not who they are married to, or how many children they have,” says one woman, who has learned to keep her answers brief when people start to probe.

“I don’t think many people are single by choice. Who wants to go home alone all the time?”

What not to do

Ministering to the needs of this disparate group presents a number of challenges.

United States pastor and author Adam Stadtmiller, writing in *Christianity Today’s Leadership Journal* (2012) says that a study of singles ministry yields common themes about why programs targeting singles often fail.

“The problem was not the intention, but the core concept that singles’ needs are best ministered to in a segregated setting. This led to ministry models that actually disenfranchised singles from the body of Christ and isolated them in groups unable to maintain long-term structural and emotional sustainability,” he writes.

“While I agree that singles have unique needs, I have a hard time finding any that the church cannot address in a mixed setting, provided that the church is on mission to integrate singles into the entirety of church and body life.”

With the exception of support groups and social networks, the singles *Journey* surveyed did not want to be “ministered to”.

“I prefer an inclusive church where the church works harder on creating and sustaining models of ministry related to bringing people together, identifying the commonalities and ‘making difference ordinary,’” says one respondent. “I think one of the problems of the 21st-century church is that the church operates by creating groups and silos, where territory is marked out, topics are reduced to binaries, and the complexity of issues and the multiple perspectives that can be held are simplified, and/or discounted and/or obscured.”

She adds: “I do not see singleness as a calling or as a gift to the church. It is a state of being. I want the church to affirm my life and how I live it with and through God’s grace. I want the church to affirm this for all people without categorising or labelling us.”

We’re all in this together

Everyone agrees that one thing that the church can provide is community.

Simon Gomersall is the pastor at Toowong Uniting Church in Brisbane, an established congregation whose broad congregational demographic reflects its close proximity to university campuses and the city.

“Here we think in terms of family, rather than families. That is at the heart of our identity as a church,” says Simon. “We are all in this together as disciples of Christ, and there are families within that and there are also single people and perhaps other formations of relationships.”

The pastorates (mid-sized groups) at the church are created according to convenience rather than age, marital status or interests.

“What we found is the ones that flourished were the ones that had numerous generations within them and there’s something healthy about that—the singles meet the marrieds and the younger people meet the older people and vice versa,” says Simon.

“We are so captured by the ideas of the culture around us, you could almost say that marriage can become an idol in western society because it’s what people look to, believing that it’s going to provide them with their ultimate sense of meaning and purpose ... whereas our faith acknowledges that marriage is a good thing and a valuable thing, but we are pointed beyond it to another relationship that will actually provide the ultimate meaning and purpose.”

“
Each person
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many children
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Journey respondent



Blessed and Called to be a Blessing: Muslim-Christian Couples Sharing a Life Together
Helen Richmond
Regnum books 2015

Making peace starts at home

“
They connected
with each other
by recognising
Christianity
and Islam’s
common focus
on kindness,
goodness and
integrity

When Michelle and Yusef chose to embark on life together as a married couple, some things were sure to become a little complicated.

For Michelle, an Australian-born Christian, and Yusef, a Muslim, one of their first experiences of balancing two different religious traditions was deciding how they would get married. And more specifically, who would conduct the service.

Uniting Church minister Rev Helen Richmond tells their story in her new book.

The book is inspired by her own multifaith family. Helen was studying theology in Indonesia in the late 1970s and early 1980s when she met her husband Bendut, who came from Indonesian Muslim heritage. He later took the decision to convert to Christianity, but their family embodies the diversity of religious and cultural traditions of which she writes.

The couples Helen interviewed for *Blessed and Called to be a Blessing* represent a wide range of experiences. A small number of marriages did not last, others faced disapproval or rejection from their families or communities, and many found the experience of living together renewed and deepened their faith.

The wisdom found within their stories lies in how participants were able to reflect on their own faith and reimagine some of their religious understandings.

Coming to recognise that God might work in their life partner in different ways led participants to consider the question of whether religious diversity reflects God’s purposes.

A major component of the research for the book was identifying different approaches to religious diversity, particularly with respect to an individual’s religious understanding of Christian mission or in Islam the concept of *da’wah*.

Interestingly, most couples took an approach that focused on shared actions for the betterment of humanity. They connected with each other by recognising Christianity and Islam’s common focus on kindness, goodness and integrity.

It is Helen’s hope that readers will come away encouraged to take journeys of friendship with people of other faiths.

Blessed and Called to be a Blessing is a powerful and positive insight into how human relationships are challenged by and can transcend our notions of the religious other.

Blessed and Called to be a Blessing can be purchased from Regnum books ocms.ac.uk/regnum

Rebecca Beisler
Communications and resource officer,
Uniting Faith and Discipleship, NSW/ACT Synod



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Rachel McAdams, Michael Keaton and Mark Ruffalo play a team of *Boston Globe* reporters.
Photo: Kerry Hayes/Open Road Films

Breaking the silence

Sometimes it takes an outsider to notice something everyone else doesn't want to see.

It's one of the curiosities of human behaviour; different people, given the same information, in the same context, will interpret that information completely differently. Setting aside one's preconceptions and reporting a story with fairness and accuracy is the core challenge of journalism. Done right, it's a powerful truth-finding tool and contributes to a just society.

Spotlight, the latest winner of the Academy Award for Best Picture, demonstrates the power of long-term, investigative journalism to change the world. Based on a true story, it tells how the Spotlight team at the *Boston Globe* uncovered systematic, institutional abuse of children in the Catholic archdiocese of Boston.

It's a film about the power of an outside perspective—the Spotlight team only began to investigate the archdiocese at the direction of their new editor Martin Baron (Liev Schreiber), “an unmarried man of the Jewish faith who hates baseball”. He's an unusual addition to the *Globe* in the deeply Catholic, family-oriented and sports-mad town of Boston, and is incredulous at the paper's failure to follow up on the accusation that

a local priest has abused up to 20 children. As the team follows lead after lead they are shocked to discover the scale of the abuse, and that many people, including members of Spotlight itself, knew—or had an indication—but said nothing.

They were incurious about all the ways their familiar world troubled them, leaving the story unreported for years.

In this way, while *Spotlight* demonstrates the power and importance of investigative journalism, it is just as much a criticism of journalists as it is of Catholic hierarchy. Breaking this story would have been impossible without the discerning eye of people who did not fit into Irish-Catholic Boston society—the new editor, the survivors of abuse and Mitchell Garabedian (Stanley Tucci) the Armenian lawyer fighting for them. Diversity is vital, not just for healthy news media, but for the wellbeing of every organisation and the society in which they operate.

This film has a poignant message to people everywhere, but given the ongoing Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the ongoing homogenisation of our national media, it is of particular significance in Australia.

Rohan Salmond

Spotlight

Directed by Tom McCarthy

Starring Mark Ruffalo, Rachel McAdams and Michael Keaton
2015, M

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5

ways to care for your minister

Ministry is a hard gig, and it's becoming more and more complex. Human resource consultants **Meryem and Greg Brown** suggest five ways that congregations can ease the daily burden.

1

Behave

Many ministers spend a lot more time than they should sorting out personality issues and resolving petty conflicts. We call our ministers to train and teach and equip us. Let them do what we called them to do.

mentors, spiritual direction, professional supervision, spiritual retreats etc. Give them the space to do these activities and where possible, budget for this.

2

Share the load

Sometimes it looks like we pay the minister to be good and the people are good for nothing. Our *Basis of Union* affirms that we are all gifted for ministry and calls on us to use those gifts. When we moved towns and visited our local church for the first time, we introduced ourselves to the minister (the late Rev Col Warren), informing him of our intention of joining the congregation. His response was "Let us know what your gifts are. We don't like people sitting on their backsides here". We need to build a culture of lay ownership of ministry.

4

Develop a feedback loop

Our ministers need to hear what is going well and what needs improvement. Some churches have a small representative group which meets periodically with the minister for a constructive conversation about how the church is going.

5

Be family friendly

Don't have unhealthy expectations of your minister being available 24/7. Ministers with a family need to be able to make family life a priority. The church's program should enable them to do that. Minimise committee meetings; streamline decision-making. Unmarried clergy—often seen as being more available—actually need more time than married clergy to build lifestyle balance.

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QUEENSLAND SYNOD



Moderator Rev David Baker, newly commissioned director of education for ministry at Trinity College Queensland Dr Leigh Trevaskis, and Synod general secretary Robert Packer.
Photo: Ashley Thompson

To the editor

Well done, Margaret

Referring to your article in February *Journey* regarding 2016 Australia Day Awards recipients, I would like to advise that Mrs Margaret Buchanan was awarded the Ipswich City Council Senior Citizen Award for 2016. Margaret has been a church member since 1951. She has been involved with music programs for residents at Lauriston Nursing Centre from 1972, firstly with the Silkstone Methodist Church and also at Nowanvil Nursing Home with Glebe Road Uniting Church until 2012.

Margaret also played for their church services, some funerals and “hymnalongs”. She is currently back playing at Brassall Village once a month for residents’ birthday morning teas, organised by three other ladies of her church.

Margaret has been church organist and pianist for 62 years. She has also held Sunday School and Christian Endeavour positions, choir conductress, elders’ secretary, Comrades district director and Silkstone Eisteddfod committee member since 1956. Margaret recently retired from being vocal convenor for 25 years, but is currently in her 20th year as secretary. The Silkstone Eisteddfod will be celebrating its 90th eisteddfod this year. She was involved in organising the eighth annual reunion of Methodist Girls’ Comrades and Order of Knights held in Ipswich in 2010.

Ian Buchanan (son)

Trinity welcomes new director

Dr Leigh Trevaskis was commissioned into the role of director of education for ministry, incorporating the role of principal at Trinity College Queensland, at the Uniting Church Centre on 14 March.

Leigh was previously the director of the Emmanuel Centre for the Study of Science, Religion and Society at Emmanuel College, the University of Queensland.

“My role is to lead Trinity College in a direction that will see it produce mission-ready graduates, people equipped for turning the tide in struggling local churches: children’s and youth workers, chaplains and ministers,” says Leigh.

“I’d like to see the college integrate a rigorous academic experience with a program that provides on-the-job experience with leaders of engaging and vibrant churches. We’re also looking to provide regular events that help Christians develop a clear and reasonable approach to sharing the gospel with others.”

National conference promotes youth leadership

The 2016 National Young Adult Leaders Conference (NYALC) will gather up to 100 young adults from the diverse cultural groups of the Uniting Church on the Gold Coast from 8–13 July.

NYALC aims to equip young people with leadership and service skills, and to encourage the formation of a discipleship network.

For more information visit nyalc.org.au

Uniting for social justice

Uniting Church staff working in social justice met in Sydney at the end of February, with representatives from Assembly and every synod.

“Thirteen passionate people in one room!” says Queensland Synod research officer Sue Hutchinson. “It was an encouraging, inspiring and challenging two days with a great deal of robust discussion.

“Steve Bevis from the Northern Territory talked about the important work they are doing advocating around the issue of uranium mining and the disposal of spent uranium.

“We were also challenged to consider how we might support covenanting, build relationships and work together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander church leaders. Some social justice units are leading the way in this.”

Wanted: your church camp memories

The Mary Burnett Presbytery in partnership with the Synod is seeking to identify the strategic future direction for the Alexandra Park Conference Centre on the Sunshine Coast. As part of the discernment process, they would like to hear from those who have benefited from church camps over the years.

Rev Ian Stehbens says that Easter camps and conferences have been a significant part of the life of our church for generations.

“To stress the value of our camps, we would love to collect written testimonies or receive phone calls or emails telling of the vital impact our camps and conference centres have had on your spiritual life and commitment to follow in the way of Christ.”

Contact Ian on (07) 5484 5731 or email mirs@bigpond.com

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