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November 2016



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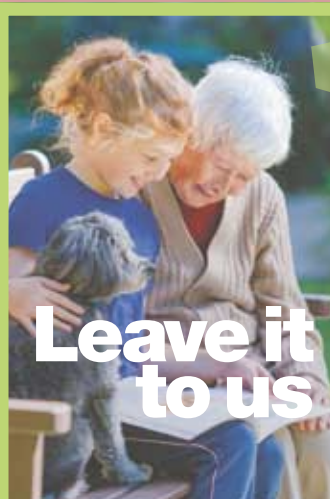
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The Associate Directors of Mission are part of the UCQ Mission Team that is led by the UCQ Director of Mission. They perform key leadership roles in supporting UCQ to be a mission and values led organisation reflecting the Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia. They are responsible for embedding the mission and values of UCQ, supporting the formation of leaders across the organisation and encouraging strong healthy relationships between UnitingCare Queensland services and the Church.

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Applications close 11 November 2016.



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The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

The Board for Christian Formation (BCF) is an integral part of the Synod's commitment to grow, transition and innovate as part of the Together on the Way journey. Members of the BCF are people who are passionate in pursuing the development of people in their discipleship and leadership in the church, with a particular commitment to academic and faith formation.

Members also have a strong sense of the governance responsibilities of this role in the life of the Synod. The Chair will have competencies in Board management and will be ex-officio a member of the Synod Standing Committee. The Board for Christian Formation oversees Trinity College Queensland, and is responsible for the formation of candidates for ministry, lay education, and continuing education for ministry in the Synod.

Email expressions of interest to governance@ucaqld.com.au by **14 November 2016** or the general secretary gensec@ucaqld.com.au for more information on the board's regulatory framework, bylaws, and Trinity College Queensland.

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Editor's note

One of British pop band Pulp's biggest hits, "Help the Aged", contains the lines, "Help the aged, 'cos one day you'll be older too, you might need someone who can pull you through". Those words eerily played out in my head as I researched how the federal government's proposed cuts to aged care health services (page 6) will have devastating consequences for some of society's most frail and vulnerable people.

This issue is a stark reminder that most of us won't escape the advances of old age and one day we might need younger people to pull us through difficult times if the current trajectory of ruthless cost-cutting by governments continues to weaken the provision of key health services. If we would expect a level of compassion and empathy in our old age, have we done enough for our older generation as they face financial, physical and mental hardship?

Romans 15:1 reminds us that, "We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves," and it is a shameful and frankly un-Christianly act to jeopardise the vital health care needs of older people who have provided so much for this society.

With the generous perks and entitlements the political elite bestow upon themselves year-on-year, reducing aged care services for wound care and physiotherapy speaks volumes about the rhetoric-versus-reality of "responsible economic management" espoused by the people's representatives.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Ashley Thompson hears the personal stories (page 9) of women facing complex and difficult decisions about pregnancy. The Queensland Synod's submission to the state abortion law reform inquiry was a trigger for *Journey* to talk about a topic rarely spoken about with balance. Abortion is a topic fraught with emotional, spiritual, political and ethical considerations, but the difficult, sometimes harrowing dimensions of each woman's account should give pause for reflection and prayer, no matter where you stand on the issue.

Last but not least, John Harrison visits Rev Craig Mischewski (page 12) in North Queensland to learn about Craig's faith journey from a remote cattle camp in the Northern Territory to ministry in communities such as Weipa and Aurukun, and the challenges with serving Mapoon, a community keen to rebuild the church after it was pulled down by the state government in 1964.

Ben Rogers
Cross-platform editor

Contents



6 Aged care health cuts:
Budget blades sharpen



9 Reflections on the unborn



12 Cape York nets
a fisher of men

- 4 Moderator's message
- 5 Formula for fun at Redlands day camp
- 8 Rethinking the church in Central Queensland
- 14 Getting to the heart of sorry
- 15 Revisiting seven heavenly virtues
- 16 Review: *Hillsong: Let Hope Rise*
- 17 Fast news
- 18 *The Scoop*
- 19 Letters to the editor

Journey



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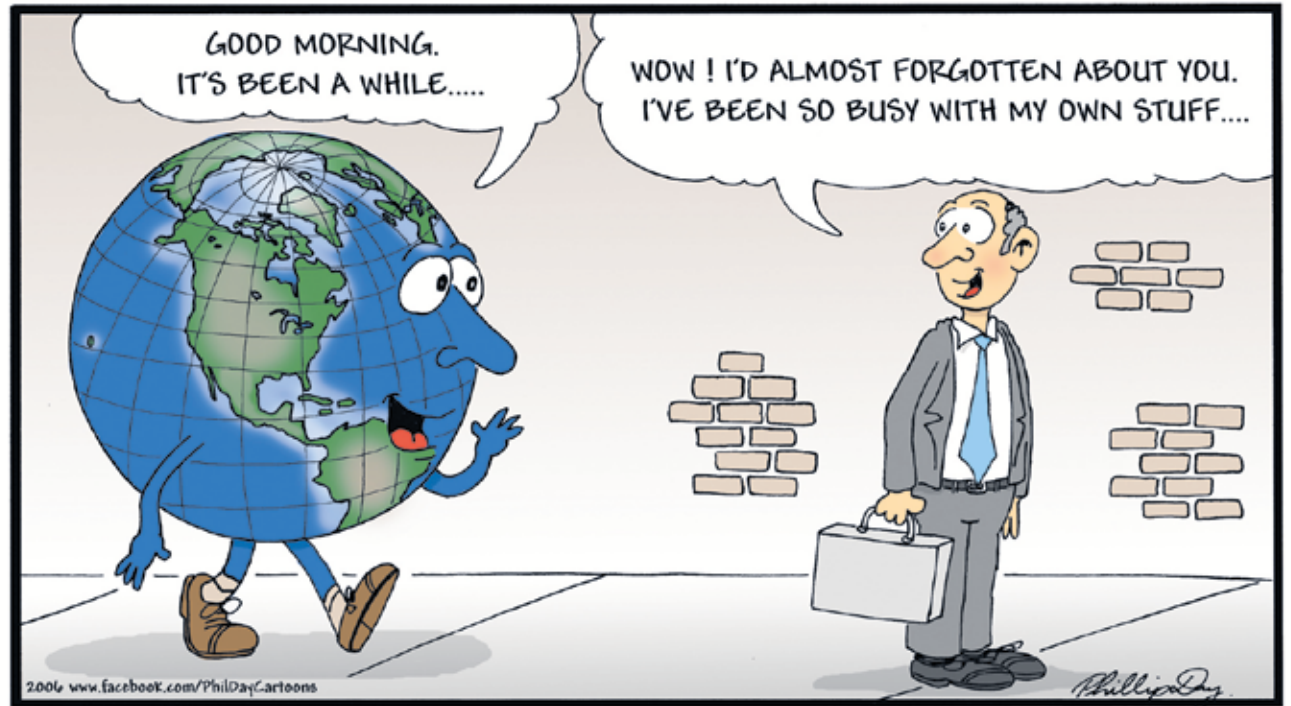
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Closing date for editorial and advertising for December *Journey* is Monday 14 November. The next issue of *Journey* will be available on Sunday 4 December.



Think local, connect to the global

Monday Midday Prayer

*Lord,
lift up our hearts, that
we might have a vision
of your kingdom that
helps us discern clearly
how we should live.*

Amen

There was an old bumper sticker that said, “Think global, act local”.

Our faith speaks about the great universal themes of creation, of reconciliation, of salvation. The Uniting Church, particularly, is energised by the large and broad issues that humanity and the nation are facing—anthropogenic climate change, the global refugee crisis, the world economic order.

Yet for many of us, local is where it’s at. It’s in local communities that we find a sense of belonging, crucial to a healthy and meaningful life. It’s in local communities that we serve and contribute generously for the health and strength of that community.

My observation of Brisbane in the 1980s was a series of villages with the veneer of a city overlaying those villages. Many families lived inter-generationally in the same suburb or locality.

As a “Parson’s kid”, we travelled around the state; the church wherever we lived was my local community. It used to be that churches in regional Queensland were an amalgam of the locals and the itinerants (the locals usually ran the place and “itinerants”—teachers, public servants, etc.—contributed by running Sunday Schools and youth ministry).

In adulthood, being a public servant in a number of locations, and then a minister, I became an itinerant. “You’ll be here for a couple of years, and then you’ll be gone,” was the wisdom of one elder in my first placement; his strategy was to enjoy whatever he liked that I brought to ministry and endure what he didn’t like. Ministers came and went; the local community lived on.

Some say the local community for many is now a virtual community residing in the World Wide Web; I’m not so sure. If anything, our economic order has demanded that for many their community is their workplace, not where they reside. That’s building on the sand.

It is the local that political parties, state-based and national organisations forget at their peril. “Think global, act local” has to have as its corollary a knowledge that what happens locally will ultimately play out on a broader sphere.

Ministers in congregational leadership are called to be a significant connecting point between local and those broader themes. Those broader themes are, in the end, about people, and about our joint home, this fragile earth. And what’s happening locally, must be articulated to the wider church, if the wider church is going to be adequately grounded and address issues in a meaningful way.

Rev David Baker
Moderator, Queensland Synod

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Hunter with camp director Jenny Cameron-Smith (Cleveland Uniting Church)
Photo: Holly Jewell

Formula for fun at Redlands day camp

After 40 years of running day camps, it's clear that the folk at Redlands Uniting churches just love going bush. *Journey* ventured down the dirt roads of a campsite south of Brisbane to find out why everyone keeps coming back.

It's easy to see the attraction of the Karingal Scout Campsite at Mt Cotton, the site of the Redlands day camp during the September school holidays. The 120 children between grades one and eight were spread throughout the bush clearings, accompanied by team leaders and supported by church volunteers manning the activities and providing backup services.

Judging by the squeals of excitement ringing out from those on the flying fox, getting lost in a cardboard box maze or taking part in archery activities, there was plenty of popular entertainment to enjoy. When you add in chapel time, craft, cooking, sports and other activities, it is a jam-packed five-day event.

One of three camp directors and Cleveland Uniting Church youth group member Jenny Cameron-Smith has been a day-camper since grade one.

"I've gone from camper to leader to director," says Jenny. "There's a real community around it—a lot of kids come back every year and there are families that go all the way through. We've got one family this year with four generations involved in camp."

Training up young leaders is a key part of the Redlands day camp model. Each group of six to seven children

has a senior leader (grade 11 or older) and junior leader (grades nine or ten), with leaders-in-training from grades seven and eight.

Cleveland Uniting Church youth group member BJ tried out being a leader two years ago and liked it.

"The biggest challenge is keeping track," he says, casting an eye over the small boys either side of him kicking their heels energetically.

"I just enjoy the whole general experience. At the end of the week you have kids who get to know you say hello every morning—it's a nice feeling."

Maddie, youth group member from Victoria Point Uniting Church, is in her eighth year at camp.

"I always wanted to be a leader, and that's why I keep coming back," she says.

"I'm not usually an outdoorsy person but day camp is fun. You really get a sense of community amongst the leaders and you've got a good support team behind you."

Redlands churches share their day camp expertise with rural churches through the Go West initiative, partnering with communities in Roma, Longreach, Barcaldine, St George, Charleville and Mundubbera.

“There’s a real community around it—a lot of kids come back every year and there are families that go all the way through

Jenny Cameron-Smith



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Aged care

What's lurking behind the Budget cuts?

“
The Government
is arbitrarily
reducing the
level of funding
assigned to frail
older people in
care, thereby
reducing the
level of resources
available to
deliver that care
Geoff Batkin

As the federal government moves forward with plans to cut \$1.2 billion in funding for aged care health over four years, what does this really mean for elderly people on the receiving end? Ben Rogers investigates.

During the 2016–17 Budget announcement in May, the federal government signalled \$1.2 billion worth of cuts to the Aged Care Funding Instrument (ACFI)—a resource allocation mechanism to distribute funds to aged care providers based on core care needs.

This comes on the back of a December 2015 Mid-Year Economic Forecast and Fiscal Outlook (MYEFO) decision by the government to cut \$750 million from aged care services.

Understanding ACFI

The ACFI, according to the federal Department of Health, focuses on “the main areas that discriminate care needs among residents” and is “primarily intended to deliver funding to the financial entity [residential aged care home] providing the care environment.”

It examines three main components of residential care subsidy—daily living activities such as nutrition, mobility and personal hygiene; behavioural issues such as cognitive skills, verbal and physical behaviour and depression; and complex health care needs.

After a “care needs assessment” is undertaken by care staff (focusing on a resident’s usual care needs) based on a series of questions laid out in the ACFI, the responses are then used to measure the average cost of care and determine the overall relative care needs, and subsequent funding required to then meet those needs.

Budgetary blues

It is the unexpected increase in ACFI that has been in the federal government’s crosshairs as they target areas for cost savings, and their announcement of \$1.2 billion (in addition to the MYEFO decision) worth of cuts was framed against what they claim were predicted payment cost blowouts in the sector.

Health and Aged Care Minister Sussan Ley stated in May as the Budget was being released, “The current aged care funding model will also be improved by redesigning certain aspects of the ACFI to stabilise higher than expected growth. Expenditure on the ACFI is expected to blow out by \$3.8 billion over the next four years without action.

“This reform aims to maintain sustainable funding growth for the residential aged care sector and will save taxpayers \$1.2 billion over four years.”

The government’s euphemistic phrase “redesigning certain aspects” is primarily focused on the Complex Health Care (CHC) domain of the ACFI which includes medication assistance and pain treatments. The proposed changes entail altering the CHC scoring matrix through which funding flows, halving indexation for the CHC domain and changing scoring and eligibility criteria.

But while many would perceive the government’s changes as “cuts”, Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care Ken Wyatt tells *Journey*, “It is important to note that the changes introduced in [the] Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook and the 2016–17 Budget are not a funding cut but seek to moderate growth in expenditure.”

Abstract numbers to real consequences

Regardless of whether you accept the changes as “cuts” or the government’s official terminology of seeking to “moderate growth in expenditure”, what do the numbers and policy tinkering really mean for those elderly residents who will be impacted the most?

Geoff Batkin—CEO of Wesley Mission Queensland which operates aged care services throughout South East Queensland and Chair of the UnitingCare Australia Aged Care Network—explains, “The 2016–17 Budget was particularly harsh as it targeted people with complex health care needs and those receiving treatment for severe pain and chronic diseases like heart disease, diabetes and dementia.

“The Government is arbitrarily reducing the level of funding assigned to frail older people in care, thereby reducing the level of resources available to deliver that care.”

According to independent modelling carried out by Ansell Strategic which examined the full impact of the Budget proposals to ACFI (based on reference to more than 20 per cent of aged care places in Australia), on average the changes will reduce funding to meet complex health care needs by around \$6500 per resident per year and up to \$18 000 for those with very complex health care needs.

Critical health needs such as wound and skin care, mobility needs, arthritis treatment and end-of-life treatments could all be under threat. During Ansell’s independent modelling, the company conducted a survey of aged care providers on their

reaction to the ACFI changes: the anonymised feedback illuminates the serious danger ahead for residents.

“In 25 years I have seen the residents moving into residential care, now arriving at an older age bracket, most with multiple diseases and co-morbidities,” wrote one respondent. “These residents require skilled clinical and medical care which will not be available due to reduced funding.”

Another respondent stated, “Our physiotherapy program is the core of our Living Longer/Living Better initiatives for our residents; to cancel this program would be catastrophic for our residents, impacting pain management, mobility, independence, continence to name just a few unacceptable outcomes.”

Others spoke of reduction in pain management services, protective bandaging for oedema, palliative care and the loss of expertise of a fulltime physiotherapist.

A catastrophic chain reaction

While the implications are clearly alarming for non-profit providers struggling to meet the increasing complexity of care needs for older Australians and legal obligations under the Aged Care Act while ensuring an economically sustainable operation, there are wider concerns the government’s actions could trigger a wave of knock-on effects to hospitals and those living in regional and rural Australia.

Geoff Batkin sees longer hospital waiting lists as a natural consequence of the cuts due to the closely-tied relationship between hospitals and aged care residencies.

“Many aged care providers will make a decision at the point-of-entry as to whether they can afford to provide care for those who have those complex and high care needs,” Geoff says. “And that will mean that some people will be waiting a lot longer to get the care they need because aged care providers will choose not to accept that class of resident.

“Many people who have the complex high care needs will be staying in hospital for longer, waiting for a provider that’s willing to admit them into residential aged care.”

Geoff also notes that for some regional and rural aged care providers, the cuts will only send them further into financial crisis.

“In some regional and remote areas, a high proportion of aged care providers are already

operating close to or negative in terms of income versus expenditure. It will place them more and more in an intolerable situation in terms of trying to care for people.”

Taking action

While the federal government is yet to fully implement the changes to the ACFI, UnitingCare Australia is intensifying its “#stopthecuts” campaign to alert the wider community and encourage people to express their opposition to the government’s proposals.

Martin J. Cowling, acting national director of UnitingCare Australia, says, “We recognise the government’s need to manage the growth of expenditure on aged care, but any sustainable funding model must consider the care needs of growing numbers of older people requiring residential aged care.”

When asked what could be a practical solution given the heavy opposition to the changes, Ken Wyatt tells *Journey*, “The Department has held discussions with key stakeholders (through the Aged Care Sector Committee and ACFI Expenditure Working Group) on the ACFI changes. This includes discussion on the broad types of alternative options for changes to ACFI that could be contemplated (while still delivering the government’s desired budgetary savings). The Department will now provide advice to the government on the alternative options discussed with stakeholders.

“Going forward, both the government and the sector are keen for a system which provides stable funding arrangements. Work is underway to investigate other approaches to determining residential care funding.”

In the meantime, UnitingCare Australia wants the information about the cuts to circulate far and wide given the impact will be felt in all communities across Australia.

For Geoff Batkin the bottom line is that politicians need a firm reminder of who they are there to serve: the people.

“It is critical at this time that we provide feedback to our political leaders so that they can understand the impact on the most vulnerable people in our society. Rather than merely cost items on a budget spreadsheet, they must be seen as what they really are: our family members and loved ones.”

For more information on UnitingCare Australia’s campaign against the cuts visit stopcutstoagedcare.good.do/take-action/email-your-mp



Central Queensland Presbytery
remote/rural ministry project officer
Rev Arthur Tutin.
Photo: Supplied

Rethinking the church in central Queensland

“

I don't see these churches as weak congregations—I see that external forces have laid a lot of demands on them and they've responded in quite marvellous ways

Rev Arthur Tutin

Congregations in central Queensland are having their say about the ministry models they need to sustain them amid the ongoing challenges of life on the land. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

Rev Arthur Tutin, the new Central Queensland Presbytery remote/rural ministry project officer, is the man literally behind the wheel of a two-year project to explore how the presbytery might develop and resource new models of ministry across the far-flung Central Queensland region.

“In most places within the presbytery, congregations have been impacted by external forces—whether it's drought or the mining downturn or the depopulation of rural centres—and so they realise that the old model is not necessarily going to work in the present age,” says Arthur.

The role entails meeting with congregations in an area which stretches from Nebo—100 kilometres south west of Mackay—out to Longreach and Winton and then south to Bileola.

While some rural placements have been filled, many of these smaller congregations are essentially lay-led or have limited access to ordained leadership, and there seems to be little chance that this situation will improve.

“We have places that have got lay leaders and all of a sudden these people have to take services, do funerals and that sort of thing and they are thrown into it,” says Arthur. “The model we are looking at is—how do we

encourage, support and train people to engage with and be the people of God within their own community.”

Some of the options on the table include linking smaller congregations with larger churches on the coast, forming a central regional hub, increasing ecumenical cooperation and fostering community ministry.

Coordinating training and skill sharing will be key to resourcing the new ministry models.

“What I am doing is looking at the systems or models that may be implemented and I am also trying to model what a resource minister might be ... for example, one of our congregations has asked for training on worship leadership, so I can do that or find others within the presbytery.”

Arthur has been on the job since March, clocking up the kilometres as he listens to the challenges and opportunities of continuing to provide a Christian witness in Central Queensland.

“I think there's a sense of hope, faithfulness,” he says. “I don't see these churches as weak congregations—I see that external forces have laid a lot of demands on them and they've responded in quite marvellous ways.”

Staying calm,
when everything
seems impossible



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Reflections on the unborn

Abortion can be a notoriously difficult topic to discuss in the faith community, but proposals to reform abortion laws introduced to the Queensland Parliament this year have once again put it under the spotlight. **Ashley Thompson** meets four women who share their personal encounters with pregnancy, abortion and faith, and examines where the Uniting Church in Queensland stands on the issue.

Clare* was 16 years old when her youth group boyfriend Hamish* raped her. But no one knows, not her parents and definitely not her now 13-year-old daughter.

Growing up in a Christian family in rural New South Wales, Clare had assumed that because her then boyfriend had said he was Christian that meant “Christian like me, not different”.

“Because I thought all Christians were the same, which is wrong,” she says with conviction.

It was the first time she had had sex but Clare had not yet processed the shock of Hamish’s betrayal before two little pink lines changed her world forever.

“It [the pregnancy test] came up with the biggest, strongest lines in all the world. I didn’t even have to wait—there was no doubt. I was super pregnant.”

But abortion never occurred to Clare, for despite the calm way in which she tells her story now, “as soon as I was pregnant, it was a baby for me—another person.” It wasn’t until her first antenatal appointment at eight weeks, that the option was presented to her.

“I walked in the door of the appointment and the nurse, she looked at me and the first thing she said was, ‘Ah, would you like me to arrange an abortion?’ and I was like, ‘What? No!’ I was really shocked because until she’d said it, I honestly hadn’t even thought about it.”

Yet for Steph* from South Australia and Tiffany* from Victoria, no other option seemed possible.

Continued >>

Public notice



The Uniting Church in Queensland’s interim redress procedure is now available for survivors of past child sexual abuse that occurred in Uniting Church affiliated institutions or entities.

The Uniting Church encourages survivors to seek assistance in determining the outcomes that best suit their needs and to access the interim redress materials at ucaql.com.au/interim-redress.

The Church also has compensation processes for physical, emotional and psychological abuse and other forms of neglect.

To make a claim or for more information phone 1800 874 995 or email UCredress@changeutures.org.au.

ucaql.com.au/interim-redress



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

>> continued

Reflections on the unborn

17 again

Steph was 17 years old when, against all odds, those two little pink lines on a pregnancy testing stick that indicate a positive result faded into the foreground of her final school year in a toilet cubicle in the middle of the Adelaide markets.

She and her partner had used a condom and, when that broke, the morning-after pill; she was floored with disbelief.

“You never think you’re going to be a part of the point zero something per cent that it doesn’t work for,” she says today, nine years later.

“For my whole life up until that point I’d been quite against the idea of ever having an abortion, but now I firmly believe until you are in that situation you cannot have an informed opinion on it.”

A number of factors influenced Steph’s decision to have an abortion at 11 weeks, including her strained home life, ambiguous relationship status, age, economic position and the knowledge she would never be able to give the baby over to somebody else.

Although Steph knows she made the right decision for herself, it still weighs heavily on her mind.

“The long-term mental side effects were the guilt of having done it—even though I did know I had done the right thing—and the fact I had been and continue to, carry this massive secret, which is a huge burden.”

While Steph doesn’t have a Christian faith, she did have a Christian friend close to her but was reluctant to tell them for fear of being judged or influenced. Steph’s experience of abortion in relation to Christianity was limited to the pro-life messages of the Roman Catholic church.

“I never really stopped to think about which denomination specifically, I just had a general awareness that people with extreme pro-life beliefs had those beliefs because of their religion.”

21 candles

Tiffany had just come out of a four-year abusive relationship and spiralled into a haze of alcohol and sex when she found herself pregnant at 21. Single and mentally unstable, she felt “it was totally inappropriate for me to be having a baby”.

“[The father] could have been three different people who I had slept with in maybe a month’s period, which is not typical behaviour for me.

“I chose to make the decision on my own and with strangers in the health industry. I didn’t tell my family as no one really knew how bad a state I was in with my sleeping around.”

Humiliation engulfed Tiffany and she chose to terminate her pregnancy at five weeks.

“
I do think
about my [first]
baby. I don’t
know if it was a
boy or a girl,
I don’t know
who the father
was and I’m
a little bit
haunted
by that
Tiffany



Photo: Supplied

“I am pro-choice but it’s a really sad choice,” she says. “I do regret it but I more regret putting myself in that position.”

Now the mother of a one-year-old son, 13 years later, Tiffany believes she may have made a different decision had she had more support.

“Before I had my son I knew heaps of people who were trying to get pregnant and couldn’t. I felt really guilty that I had thrown away a chance to be a mother because I’ve wanted to be a mother forever.

“I do think about my [first] baby. I don’t know if it was a boy or a girl, I don’t know who the father was and I’m a little bit haunted by that. It’s not like ‘I had another baby and now I don’t care’.

“I used to have a much more scientific, objective view before I got pregnant but now I’m so confused because with the second pregnancy ... the tiniest little spark, you are like, that’s it, we’re us, we’re alive!”

Competing rights

Due to lack of collection standards and documentation, no finite statistics on abortion in Australia exist. However, a study conducted in 2012 by the Medical Journal of Australia found that almost half of all pregnancies in Australia are unplanned. Of that half, research commissioned by Marie Stopes in 2006 indicates that at 56 per cent “parenting is the most common outcome of an unplanned pregnancy”, with 29 per cent ending in abortion.

In May this year, independent Member of Parliament for Cairns Rob Pyne introduced the *Abortion Law Reform (Women’s Right to Choose) Bill* into Queensland Parliament. The bill proposes the removal of existing safeguards for women and the unborn child.

The Uniting Church in Queensland made a submission to the state government’s inquiry into the bill in July.

Queensland Synod moderator Rev David Baker was asked to speak to the submission in front of the inquiry panel, confirming that the Uniting Church in Australia does not hold one position on abortion but rejects two extreme positions: “that abortion should never be available; and that abortion should be regarded as simply another medical procedure”.

“The church is simply saying that both the foetus and the mother have rights and that legislation should recognise those competing rights,” says David.

He defends the right of the church to speak on this issue: “The fundamental truths of the Christian worldview are one, life is sacred, and two, that the most vulnerable need protection. So I think the churches are seeking to articulate a priority to the most vulnerable.”

While pro-life advocates are most often linked to Christian lobbies, the relationship between abortion and Christianity is complex and varied within the Uniting Church.

Perhaps what matters most is how we respond to the human face of those presented with this difficult choice.

Wesley Hospital pastoral care manager Julie Mackay-Rankin says Christians should always respond to the disclosure of pregnancy loss with “the compassion of Christ and the respect we would desire for ourselves”.

“Our own convictions are irrelevant at this time of loss as our role is to respond to the pastoral imperative—which is the spiritual welfare of two human beings, children of God, who need to experience the love of God, the grace and compassion of Christ, and the healing and comfort of the Holy Spirit.”

Of ethics and grace

As the ethically ambiguous nature of abortion inspires both heated and insensitive advocacy from all sides, respectful public discourse around abortion is even more important in circumstances of rape, profound disability, critical health risks for mother or baby, and incest.

For Queensland Uniting Church member Sandy*, the alarm bells began early into her pregnancy.

When her second daughter Catherine* was indicated to have Down Syndrome at the 12-week mark, Sandy was offered termination which she and her husband rejected. Then at the 20-week mark, when their daughter’s lungs weren’t developing, they were again offered termination which they rejected.

“We sat down with our minister at the time and decided that whatever her life is, it’s God’s decision and if that’s another 20 weeks in utero and that’s her life, then that’s her life. Who were we to decide to end that sooner?”

Catherine died at 17 days old. Yet Sandy says, “I would never judge another women’s decision. We’ll grieve together and go on life’s journey together but until you’re in that spot you don’t know.”

Sandy and Clare represent the human faces of these complex discussions.

“Being pregnant is physically and emotionally life-changing and so whatever you do with that decision it will affect the rest of your life,” says Clare.

“I am someone, honestly, who has made a decision to keep a baby after non-consensual sex and most people do not do that. But it’s just different for every woman, so just saying ‘No, it’s never right’ is not the right answer either because you can’t know.

“All you can do is show love because there’s no one showing love to those girls. They’re there because they’re desperate. And you can’t make those decisions for people, you can just love them no matter the consequences.”

His grace is enough

Clare’s only regret was that she decided to marry Hamish.

Hamish turned out to be physically and emotionally abusive and Clare recognised her previous desire to “fix” the situation and “make it okay” was tied not to guilt, but shame.

“I can tell you that getting pregnant at 16 and having to rock up to church with your big belly is not a way to build your self-esteem. People don’t treat you with love,” says Clare.

“I had the unique pleasure of having my pregnancy become the most discussed topic at a youth camp. It was as good as it sounds. At night, I could literally lie in my tent and overhear other girls in their tents talking about me being pregnant.

“For me it was a massive lesson in being gracious because at that time I actually knew one of the girls had recently had an abortion and it was genuinely hard to keep that quiet—but I think God grew me in that time, in my little tent.

“Yes, it would be easy to clear my name in a sense by telling the full story but that’s not beneficial to me, that’s not beneficial to my child and actually it doesn’t matter because God’s grace would be enough for me.”

Read the Queensland Synod’s Abortion Law Reform submission on the Queensland Parliament website bit.ly/2eqQ6TU

**Names have been changed.*



Cape York nets

Rev Craig Mischewski began his ministry in a remote cattle camp in the Northern Territory, and he is still more than happy to leave the city lights behind. **John Harrison** talks to the new Uniting Church minister serving the isolated communities of western Cape York.

New Zealand-born Rev Craig Mischewski is a big man with a big heart and an even bigger parish. He's a lifelong fisherman who, like Saint Peter before him, has turned into a fisher of men.

“
I love remote
Australia:
the more remote
I go, the
happier I am

In Weipa, Craig is the Uniting Church minister in a dual placement with Calvary Presbytery and North Queensland Presbytery, serving the Anglican-Uniting cooperative congregation at St Luke's. He also serves the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress congregations at Aurukun and Mapoon and, until the new minister arrives, Napranum.

“I love remote Australia: the more remote I go, the happier I am. I'm not good in towns and stuff like that,” says Craig, who first arrived in the Northern Territory in his twenties, working and living in bush camps with Aboriginal stockmen.

It was there, on a hill above a remote cattle camp on the edge of the Tanami desert, that he encountered God's call to ministry.

Street work in Townsville followed, then ministry in Hughenden as a non-stipendiary agent. His ministerial training, including time at Trinity College Queensland in Brisbane, led to ordination and a placement at Tingalpa.

Craig then spent a decade at Townsville Central, followed by five years as a patrol padre based in Hughenden.

When the patrol was wound up, it was as if his whole life had been in preparation for Western Cape York: his understanding of multiculturalism as a pakeha (white) Kiwi who spent time as an infantryman in the New Zealand Army, the roughing it in the stock camps of the Territory, his lifelong passion for fishing.

“I actually tried to get up here years before as a younger man with a young family and do the patrol. Dennis Robinson in his wisdom said, ‘No, you've got a young family, you'll be out on patrol the whole time, you'll never be home'. That was some 30 odd years ago,” says Craig.

“When the opportunity came to have Weipa and Mapoon together, I just jumped at it ... it's a stunning place—I love it.”

Sitting in the pews of St Luke's one recent Sunday, the number of men in the congregation was notable. And young men too. Not a typical Uniting Church congregation.

The following day Craig was out in Albatross Bay fishing in his 60 horsepower boat.



Rev Craig Mischewski, a lifelong fisherman serving North Queensland.
Photo: John Harrison

a fisher of men

The next day he was off to Mapoon, an hour to the north, by four-wheel-drive on a road mostly unsealed. It's a community which has been much in the spotlight over the years, and the immediate challenge for the new Uniting Church minister is that there's nowhere to set up shop.

"There's no accommodation for me and there's nowhere to hold Bible studies," says Craig. "I run a service in the covered area of the school but I've got to travel one hour there and one hour back each time I go up there."

Mapoon was originally a Presbyterian mission. When bauxite was discovered in the 1950s, the area became of interest to mining companies. With the cooperation of the church, the Queensland Government cut services to Mapoon, closing the community.

In November 1963 the government forcibly removed the remaining residents from their homes and burned the mission village. The old church building—the JG Ward Memorial Church built in memory of James Ward, the Moravian missionary who died of fever at Mapoon in 1895—was pulled down by the government in 1964.

Former residents eventually resettled in the area restoring their link with the land. In 1990, then Uniting Church president Sir Ronald Wilson apologised to the Mapoon community for the closure.

At last year's National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, the church committed itself to funding a new church at Mapoon.

"The people want their own 'sacred space' and they name it like that," says Craig. "They want a spiritual place and so the Uniting Church has a responsibility, particularly given the history of what happened there, to provide that space. They recognise that as a community, they don't feel like they have their soul until they've got their church. That's very important to them, they have a very elevated perspective of that. That's a big role that we play there."

"They particularly value work with their children, introducing their children to the Lord Jesus Christ, discipling them and giving them a moral framework."

He adds, "I'm not going in there with an agenda. I'm there to loiter with intent."

What makes Craig most proud of the Uniting Church?

"The *Basis of Union*, our constitution and our regulations," he replies promptly. "That may sound really crazy but the *Basis of Union* is a profound theological document and the way in which we've structured ourselves is awesome because it's a structure that empowers the local congregation but protects it ... it empowers ministry but it protects it from abuses."

"The Uniting Church is just an amazing organisation and what I love is the breadth of understanding that can be accommodated in the Uniting Church. Our strength is our diversity plus we've got a great heritage of service, particularly community service. That's something we can be really proud of."

For more information on the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress' Mapoon appeal visit uaicc.org.au/mapoon



Getting to the heart of sorry

It's a word we hear almost daily in some form or another but **Dr Gilbert Bond** explores the history behind "sorry" and how we can forgive others when confronted by horrific acts of inhumanity.

On any ordinary day one hears the word "sorry" uttered on numerous occasions. Without "sorry" the friction of ordinary interactions between people would eventually generate intolerable heat and result in emotional combustion. "Sorry" is the apologetic lubricant that keeps our social machinery functioning.

"Sorry", therefore, is a conventional form of apology utilised in civil society by Christians and others. Christians, however, often equate an apology with forgiveness.

"Apology" is from the Greek word apologia: 'apo' meaning away; 'logos' meaning speech. An apologia was a speech made in defence of one's actions. The Greek word is often translated as "defence" as when Paul defends his vocation as an apostle, "My defence (apologia) to those who examine me is this," and proceeds to list his reasons.

Apologetics eventually became a form of theology dedicated to defending and explaining the Christian faith to non-believers such as St Augustine's *Of True Religion* or C. S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*.

It was not until Shakespeare that the meaning of apology shifted from defence to sorry: "My Lord, there needs no such apologie." (Richard III)

An apology became an acknowledgement of wrong doing and an expression of regret.

As important as an apology is for both mundane and tragic transgressions, forgiveness stands in stark contrast. Although many different words are used in

the New Testament for "forgive", at the root of most is 'charis', the Greek word for Grace. Jesus asked the Father to forgive those who crucified him "for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

How would the dynamic change between transgressor and offended if the transgressor asked for forgiveness rather than made an apology? The question is crucial in the face of transgressions that violate the sanctity of the human soul, such as torture, sexual abuse, domestic violence, the Stolen Generation, or the Forgotten Australians. These injuries are so deeply traumatising, that forgiveness may not be immediately forthcoming.

Instead of apologising, asking, "Can you, might you, forgive me?" places the offender at the mercy of the offended and ultimately God. The offending person now becomes vulnerable and dependent upon the unpredictable time it takes for healing to occur within the injured person. At such time, known only to God, the wounded person will say, "I forgive you". Now the offender is in a position to receive.

Christians believe that forgiveness originates in God, is received as an unearned gift through Jesus Christ and is meant to be shared with others. Whenever forgiveness is asked for or given sincerely, the Holy Spirit is at work both within the injured and the agent of injury, since God deeply desires to heal us, one and all.

Dr Gilbert Bond

Dr Gilbert Bond is an Active Faith chaplain serving at Grace College and the Multi-Faith Chaplaincy Centre at the University of Queensland, and will be commissioned pastor with Indooroopilly Uniting Church this year.

“
As important
as an apology
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Revisiting heavenly virtues

What's so bad about being good? *Journey* examines the traditional list of seven heavenly virtues, and how they might continue to guard our hearts from the perils of the contemporary age.

1

Chastity

With almost 80 per cent of couples living together before marriage, this is one virtue that contemporary western Christians can find awkward. Let's reclaim the virtue of the chaste heart which does not squander love: "The real killing of joy comes with the grabbing of pleasure. As with credit card usage, the price tag is hidden at the start, but the physical and emotional debt incurred will take a long time to pay off" (N.T. Wright).

2

Temperance

This virtue is usually associated with the Temperance movement, which championed abstinence from alcohol. The original concept of moderation or restraint has fresh relevance for worship leaders addicted to PowerPoint and those who own selfie sticks. You know who you are.

3

Charity

This is not just about the benevolent act of giving alms. *Caritas* means both "charity" and "love", and the explosion of public shaming on social media suggests that a more tolerant approach to human frailty is overdue. The universe is not interested in your snippy comments.

4

Diligence

Woody Allen reckons that 80 per cent of success in life is about showing up, but God holds us to a higher standard. Hebrews 6:11 (*The Message*) "And now

I want each of you to extend that same intensity toward a full-bodied hope, and keep at it till the finish. Don't drag your feet."

5

Patience

"Please wait ..." The irony in this age of instant gratification is our acquiescence in the face of updates on our phones and computers. In contrast, the slow food and handcrafted movements signal a real desire to slow down the pace of life. Romans 8:25 (RSV) reminds us that "... if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience".

6

Kindness

Could this be the most important virtue of all? Kindness is the practical expression of empathetic love. It smooths the way, uplifts the weary, and links us together as children of God. Jewel, in the lyrics of her hit song "Hands" sings, "In the end only kindness matters ... We are God's eyes, God's hands, God's heart".

7

Humility

This virtue has had a bad rap since Charles Dickens created the obsequious Uriah Heep in *David Copperfield*. Yet the Christian concept of stripping away false pride and obsession with self in order to find grace still resonates. The servant king will always challenge the values of the world.

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Members of Hillsong United gather to pray before a concert.
Photo: Pure Flix



Behind the soundtrack to your faith

Hillsong: Let Hope Rise

Director:
Michael John Warren
2016, rated PG
In select cinemas

If you're dismissive about *Hillsong: Let Hope Rise* (2016) "preaching to the converted", you're missing the point—because that's actually their purpose. They are fundamentally a C2C (church-to-church) resource that is serving the global church—and this documentary, and their music, is for us.

"We're the biggest band you've never heard of." Hillsong United Jad Gillies' statement couldn't be truer of the band that has sold about as many albums as Beyoncé.

Since 1998, this worship juggernaut, along with a host of Hillsong Music Australia's band subsidiaries, have resourced the global church in worship, slipping quietly under the radar of mainstream culture—until now.

The chart-topping band is breaking sales records and filling stadiums bigger than they, let alone outsiders, can fathom. But with this attention comes a higher level of scrutiny than any other Australian-based church.

When "non-religious" Hollywood filmmaker Michael Warren chose to chronicle the band's preparations for a 2014 concert, he didn't have an agenda (other than to tap into the Christian market). And while his personal faith hasn't changed, there couldn't be a documentarian who speaks more highly of his subjects.

Despite my general reservations about mainstream Christian media, I was pleasantly surprised at the level of frankness Michael garnered from the band

members, particularly in relation to their home lives and personal struggles.

Audiences may expect the stylish musicians to live an Instagram-glossy life on the road but what shines through is pure sacrifice: a group of young adult leaders who have given their lives to Jesus and his church by living away from their small children and spouses for months at a time, writing and practising songs at three in the morning, all the while taking low salaries in return.

Journalist Katie Rife of the *A.V. Club* jadedly writes of the band members' naivety in accepting low wages and traditional family arrangements without question. *The New York Times*' Andy Webster claims "these tunes won't keep you awake" and are rife with a "torrent of clichés".

And yet, this will not deter Christians because, as Nick O'Malley of *The Sydney Morning Herald* correctly asserts, these songs and this film, are meant to inspire and encourage churches everywhere.

So here's the thing: Hillsong doesn't need your approval, because if their music doesn't reach you, it's not for you—and no amount of criticism will stop their reach.

Ashley Thompson

Visit theaters.hillsongmovie.com to find a screening near you.



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National Recycling Week

National Recycling Week (7–13 November) puts the spotlight on the environmental benefits of recycling by promoting industry and community recycling initiatives and educating people on responsible waste management.

According to the 2014 National Waste Data Report, recycling is an \$11 billion a year industry in Australia and is a prime source of new jobs creation: for every 2.8 jobs in landfill the recycling sector creates 9.2.

Beyond the regular range of recycling initiatives conducted by workplaces, schools and homes, your community could host your own themed swap party for quality goods people no longer want, which helps save the country's resources and reduces the volume of material going to landfill.

For more information or to register your event visit recyclingweek.planetark.org

Multifaith march for peace at home

On 25 November, a multi-faith coalition of communities is coming together for a rally against domestic violence to coincide with the United Nations' International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Now in its second year, the walk through Brisbane city—which will include prayers and reflections from various faith perspectives—is an initiative between Believing Women for a Culture of Peace, the Centre for Interfaith and Cultural Dialogue and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, as well as representatives of a range of faith communities, to raise awareness on issues of domestic violence.

For more information closer to the date visit facebook.com/BelievingWomenForACultureOfPeace



(L—R) Rev Graham Johnson, Rev Ray Reddicliffe, Rev Trevor Foote and Rev Ossie Kadel celebrate 50 years of ministry in the Methodist and Uniting Churches at Albert Street Uniting Church, Brisbane.
Photo: Supplied

UnitingCare Australia appoints national director

UnitingCare Australia has appointed Claerwen Little as its new national director who will commence the role in February 2017.

Claerwen is currently a member of the UnitingCare Australia National Committee and chair of the UnitingCare Australia Children, Young People and Families Network and has previously held senior executive roles in service delivery, advocacy and innovations for over two decades.

50 year ordination milestone

On 16 October celebrations were held at the Albert Street Uniting Church for those who were ordained 50 years ago as ministers in the Methodist (and later) Uniting Churches. Those who were ordained in 1966 were Ray Reddicliffe, Graham Johnson, Ossie Kadel, Ken Neill, Horst Gesswein, Bill Johnston, Mervyn Stace and Trevor Foote.

Trinity College Queensland appointments and graduations

Trinity College Queensland has appointed two new faculty members, Dr Paul Jones and Rev Dr Peter Hobson, to support the key features of the college's Future Ministry Model. Paul will serve as lecturer in Old Testament and Homiletics as well as develop a new lay education program; Peter will serve as dean of Formation and Dispersed Learning.

Dr Janice McRandal has been promoted to vice principal.

On 10 October the college celebrated the graduation of Aaron Moad, Beatriz Skippen and Michelle Cullen. Aaron and Michelle graduated as Ministers of the Word and Beatriz graduated as a Deacon.

trinity.qld.edu.au

Remembrance Day

This year's Remembrance Day (11 November) marks the 98th anniversary of the Armistice which ended the First World War. On the 11th day of the 11th month of the year, all Commonwealth nations are asked to observe a minute's silence at 11 am to honour the memory of those who died or suffered in all wars and armed conflicts.

The National Assembly's resources for Remembrance Day, prayer and peacemaking include hymns, prayers, laments and poems. Visit assembly.uca.org.au/images/Remembrance_Day_resources.pdf



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Please refer to the Easter Madness Appeal insert in this edition for more!

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The Scoop

Journeyonline.com.au/scoop

Friday's religion wrap

The **Journey** team selects faith-related stories that got us talking this week. Check in every Friday to see the latest wrap up of news and opinion pieces that made us think and reflect. Don't forget to leave comments on each post about the stories inspired and engaged you throughout the week.

What if every church ...

Scott Guyatt looks at faith on the home front and how families can practise and express their faith outside a church setting. Numerous studies indicate that children and young people learn faith best at home, so what is your congregation doing to promote and cultivate faith at home?

Responding to the call to embrace the arts

Last month Scott Guyatt wrote about the potential benefits to churches if they embrace the full spectrum of the arts; now **Rev Graham Dempster** responds with how an encounter with the work of Queensland artist Judith Parrott shaped his perspective on community and faith.

Bridging the Gap with Sri Lanka

Joanne Allen-Keeling shares her memories from a recent trek through Sri Lanka by members of The Gap Uniting Church to raise funds for children with disability. Not only did the group see a side of Sri Lanka many tourists miss, they witnessed the inspiring work UnitingWorld is doing to bring hope and meaningful change to communities abroad.

To the editor

That's us in the corner?

The title of the secular band R.E.M.'s 1991 hit single "Losing my religion" was supposedly taken from a southern United States expression meaning "At my wit's end", as if things were going so bad you could lose your faith in God.

So what has this to do with Rev David Baker's statement that Australia has fallen into the 24/7 commercial carousel by default ("Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy", October 2016 edition)?

Whilst he is correct, let me go so far as to suggest that the Christian church has not responded well in attempting to arrest that fall. The evolution of the 24/7 cycle was initially slow and not universal, yet in more recent years changes have occurred virtually overnight.

Gone are the days we thought would never end. The generation that knew Sundays as a day of rest have long gone.

The widening gap between worshipping congregational demographics combined with the limited financial, and therefore ministerial resources, means that the church's presence in the community is limited to one or perhaps two services each Sunday. The building stands as a silent citadel while its people busy themselves with wide and varied pursuits, rubbing shoulders with the passing parade of an increasingly dominant secular society.

So should we have done more to arrest the changes, has it been too easy to conform to the world and leave our religion at the door? The transitions from the "baby boomers" through generations X, Y and Z have not seen an embracing of that "old time religion".

Rather the "religion" we once held true to has become one of many, sport, celebrities and the phenomenal uptake of relationships via social media. My view is that whilst we have

seen "keeping the Sabbath holy" diminish in significance, Christians, including many within the Uniting Church, have seized the opportunities that the 24/7 cycle has created to better relate to the world in which we live.

Now, 25 years since R.E.M.'s hit song, the Christian church is in the corner, in the spotlight and at real risk of losing its religion.

Allan Gibson OAM
Cherrybrook

No permission needed to doubt

In the August 2016 edition, Val Webb says, if I read her correctly, some people wait for something to give them permission to doubt. Not so in my case!

My faith is about 80 per cent belief and 20 per cent unbelief. From studying the stars, planets, marvels of the universe and the human mind which is the most complex in all creation, I have no doubt there is a mind behind creation.

It is very difficult to believe that creation happened by accident. Love, which is the ground of our being, the fundamental building blocks of human relationships, shows to me that this mind is also a mind of love.

Put these together, I have no problem in believing that Jesus, who to me is the greatest man who ever lived for what he said and did, is the embodiment of love, truth and justice and that God intervened in nature to perform the miracles of virgin birth and the bodily resurrection.

To me, these make sense and explains the universe and man in it. No other explanation has satisfied me in my quest for truth.

I still have questions about pain and suffering, tsunamis and earthquakes, salvation outside Christ but the overwhelming evidence for an almighty, loving God is most compelling.

Derrick Fernando
Sunnybank Hills

All letters must directly address articles and letters from the previous month's edition of Journey and be accompanied by the writer's name and the name of their congregation or suburb of residence. Opinions expressed are only indicative of the individual writer, not their entire congregation. Letters are published at the discretion of the editor, but do not necessarily represent the views of the editor or that of official Uniting Church policy. Letters may be edited for clarity or space, at the discretion of the editor. Letters should be no longer than 150 words. Full submission guidelines for letters to the editor can be found at journeyonline.com.au/submit

Safe Ministry matters

I appreciated Rev David Baker's commitment that the church prevent the sort of child sexual abuse documented by the recent Royal Commission from happening again ("Standing in solidarity for safe ministry" October 2016 edition).

In reading through the testimony compiled by the Commission, it becomes painfully apparent that the violations committed against children in the care of the church could not have continued without the knowledge, complicity and silence of church ministers and supervisors who were aware of such transgressions but neither intervened nor reported this behaviour to the authorities.

As we take steps to heal the wounds of the past and prevent injuries in the future, I would like to know what measures church leadership will take to interrupt the conspiracy of silence and demand accountability from inert supervisors.

As Edmund Burke reminds us, "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men (and women) to do (and say) nothing."

Dr Gilbert Bond
Indooroopilly

As I read Rev David Baker's reference to the Royal Commission, and commitment to Safe Ministry with Children (SMC) ("Standing in solidarity for safe ministry" October 2016 edition), I am prompted to remind congregation members to be vigilant. The SMC approach has been developed on a foundation of evidence from scholars, Royal Commission papers and guiding documents such as the Uniting Church's National Child Safe Guidelines.

Our aim is to develop a culture of shared guardianship in which the vision and mission of local congregations is supported by the Safe Ministry with Children approach.

Safe Ministry with Children is not just a policy for church councils to adopt—it's a culture change.

Behind the comprehensive suite of resources is relationship-focussed support and two-way communication to develop the capacity of individuals, congregations, presbyteries and the Queensland Synod to work together to achieve our shared goal.

For congregations, this involves screening, training, supporting and supervising people who work with children; planning and delivering appropriate programs; respecting behavioural standards and interrupting, discussing and reporting boundary violations. This is about holding to account and taking personal responsibility to protect the boundaries of safe ministry.

The SMC policy, processes and tools support congregations to safely enact their vision and mission to minister to families within their communities. The relationship-based approach aims to set things on a right pathway, a fellowship of shared responsibility and right relationships. Will you join the change?

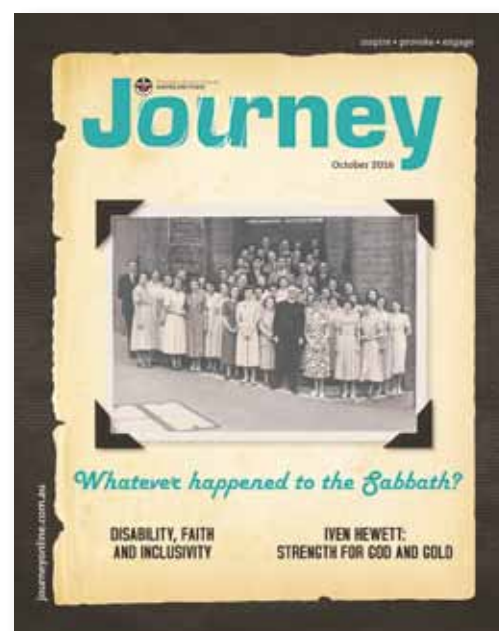
Lynette Drew
Safe Ministry (Children) Administrator

Hervey Bay's Crossroads

I read the article "Disability, faith and inclusivity" in the October edition. For over 25 years Hervey Bay church has successfully run the Crossroads program for people of any denomination with any type of disability. This is a Uniting Church initiative from many moons ago.

Perhaps in a future edition you may wish to remind readers of this truly worthwhile program which my wife, Meg, and I enjoy monthly. In fact this program helped me on my way to becoming a hospital chaplain.

Rodney Boyce
Kawungan



Grandmotherly advice on the Sabbath

Your feature on "Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy" in the October edition was a timely reminder of what we have lost with Sunday no longer being a day of rest. However, it brought me a poignant memory of my grandmother.

I have been sewing ever since I learned to thread the needle about 65 years ago, but as a very small child, Grandma warned me that "every stitch that is sewn on a Sunday you have to unpick with your nose when you die".

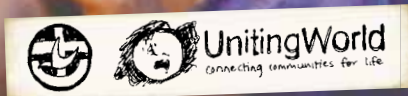
I must admit I slipped up a bit when I was working and didn't have a lot of free time, but these days I tend to heed Grandma's warning, just in case she was right!

Barbara Kavenagh
Buddina

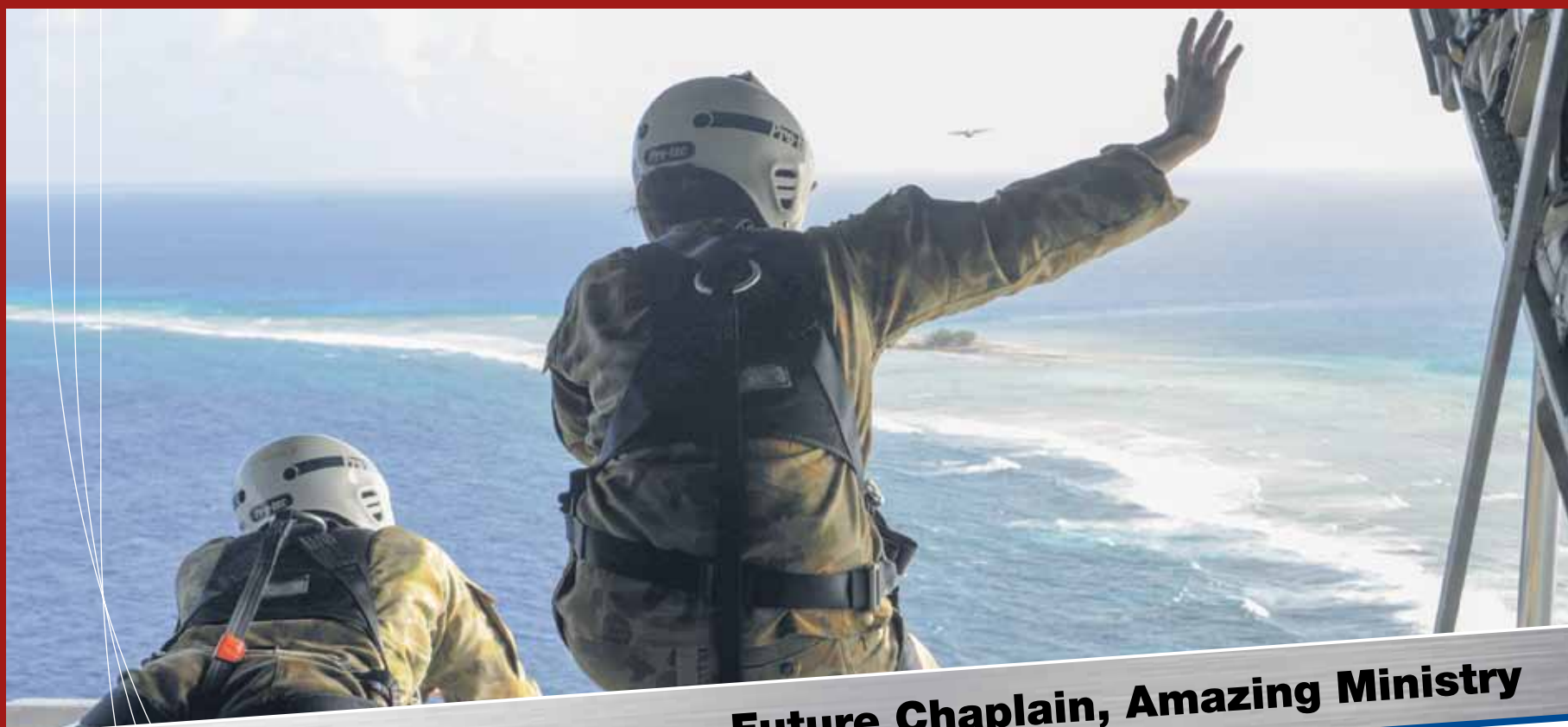
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