



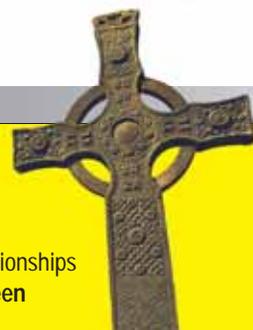
MORE DEPTH, MORE STORIES AT journeyonline.com.au

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A plane crash survivor's story

One woman's survival of the Garuda flight GA-200 which crashed in Indonesia in 2007, killing 22 people.

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Living on Iona

"Living in a community taught me to value all the relationships in my life, and for that I am grateful." **Rowena Aberdeen**



SYNOD LAUNCHES CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN - P4

TUVALU WARNING: AUSTRALIA IS NEXT TO GO UNDER - P5

PREGNANCY LOSS - P10

GROWING WELLBEING

Staying healthy in mind, body and spirit

By Mardi Lumsden

WHEN WE talk about health we often only think of illness or disease.

But there are many aspects to wellness as discussed on the Queensland Synod's new *Thriving in your Life and Ministry* website (an accompaniment to the *Healthy Church* website).

Compiled by Ann Warren, Queensland Synod Human Relations Adviser, and Rev Dr Robert Bos, Director of Pilgrim Learning Community, the *Thriving* website states that the, "Health of a congregation or agency is directly related to the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health of its members".

Ms Warren said there is a large amount of research that shows having faith in a higher being contributes to a person's wellbeing.

"They don't know why, but research shows that simply attending church on a regular basis will increase your life expectancy," she said.

One study, an analysis of results from numerous studies, stated attending church weekly could add as much as seven years to your life expectancy or 14 years for African Americans.

Ms Warren said a person's wellbeing was dependant on a number of factors including: a sense of meaning or purpose which creates a sense of control of their own life, having a moral code to live by, social support, and dietary and health practices.

Blue Care Director of Mission Rev Colleen Geyer said the concept of wellness is multidimensional.

"It's about becoming aware of what it means to be well and then making choices in different parts of one's life in order to be well," she said.

"Promoting wellness and wholeness for all people encapsulates an understanding of the uniqueness of God's creation.

"The church, the community of faith, is an example of the body moving towards wholeness and reconciliation," she said.

"We have a responsibility to care for each others' wellness."

Lifeline Community Care Chaplain Rev Bob Harriman said wellbeing was more than just creating a good work-life balance.

"There is a shift occurring towards resilience, so that when the chaos of life is raging, people have the capacity and the networks to work through the chaos," he said.

The *Thriving* website enables the Queensland Synod to be proactive when it comes to the wellbeing of its staff and members in their life and work.

This resource is one of the first of its kind in Australia with the Church leading the way in the area of wellbeing.

Visit the *Thriving in your Life and Ministry* website at thriving.ucaqld.com.au or go to the Synod website at www.ucaqld.com.au and click on *Thriving in your Life and Ministry*



Wellbeing in abundance: Lessons from John

IF YOU ARE ever attending an event at which Ms Penelope Wensley AO, Governor of Queensland, will be speaking take a note book.

I am sure you will find about six fascinating pieces of information you can use in your next trivia night.

Recently I attended the Dr David Williams Lecture at King's College (a Uniting Church affiliated college at the University of Queensland in St Lucia, Brisbane) delivered by Ms Wensley.

I learnt about the naming of St Lucia, the sugar industry in that area and the demise of the sugar mill on the Brisbane River.

While our Governor's speeches are a great source of questions for trivia nights, they are far from trivial in their substance.

Her lecture at King's College was entitled *The Pursuit of Happiness*.

Her Excellency spoke about her time as High Commissioner to India and Ambassador to the predominantly Buddhist Kingdom of Bhutan. She told us

that the King of Bhutan decided to measure the success of his country not by the gross national product (GNP) but by gross national happiness.

While that may be hard to define and measure, it does point to the conviction that the wellbeing of a nation should not

The more I ponder Jesus' offer of abundant life, life in all its fullness, the more I see that it has personal significance as well as community and global significance.

be understood only in economic terms.

When Jesus said that he came to give life more abundantly, I am sure he was not measuring that abundance with GNP. Does abundant living shape the way we view our national wellbeing?

When I try to understand what an abundant life might look like I find myself being drawn to John's Gospel.

I think of John Chapter 3 in which we are told that the Spirit gives life to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

We are told that in order to experience this eternal life we must be born again.

Every time I think that I have discovered this new life, I am made aware of the other aspects of my life that need to die to allow new life to be born again.

Has the notion of being born again become such a cliché that its power to transform and bring hope is lost?

Of course John 3:16 tells us that God loved the "cosmos" so much that he gave his son.

Do we who share his life care for the health of the "cosmos" or only ourselves?

Does this offer us the bridge to engage with those who have deep concern for the wellbeing of the planet and have not considered that its creator might be interested in their personal life and wellbeing?

John Chapter 10 says Jesus is the good shepherd who tries to gather all of God's people into the one fold where security and abundant life are found.

In this metaphor, abundant living is not a matter of living in

Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



a particular way or even believing the right things.

Abundant life in Christ is found in belonging to the community found in God: father, son and spirit.

In John Chapter 14 Jesus makes it clear that such an intimate relationship with the father is only possible through him: "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me."

John has already made it clear that Jesus longed for all of creation to share the intimacy of the relationship he had with his father.

So this statement cannot be used by us to create exclusion from the heart of God.

It points to the reality that while there may be many ways that people search for God and many paths that lead to a certain spiritual enlightenment, the intimacy of the parent child relationship will not become a reality apart from a relationship with Jesus.

The more I ponder Jesus'

offer of abundant life, life in all its fullness, the more I see that it has personal significance as well as community and global significance.

I wish that, like our Governor, all of us could find a way to move our conversations from the trivial to the deeper issues that shape the way our nation understands health and wellbeing.

In our society the Church is applauded for the way it provides for the physical health and wellbeing of thousands of people daily.

Our hospitals, Blue Care Domiciliary Service, aged care facilities and the wide variety of community services provided through Lifeline Community Care are greatly appreciated, yet the broader community seems less responsive to the Church's offer of living bread.

How can we be more effective in our proclamation of Jesus as the source of abundant living?

How can we influence our nation's view of health and wellbeing?

Sign of the times



THE IPSWICH City Uniting Church is located on the corner of busy Ellenborough and Limestone Streets in Ipswich. Their sign is a talking point in the congregation and the local community.

This slogan not only makes people think but reminds them that love is an action. Photo courtesy of David Freeland. Send your Sign of the Times to journey@ucaql.com.au.

The key to wellness

A FRIEND recently told me that he judged how his life was going by the number of keys on his key ring.

He maintains that the happiest moment in his life was when he got down to just one key (for his bike).

He had everything he needed – a tent, a bike and off he went.

I struggle with that idea. How and what would you eat? Is that lifestyle sustainable? Does it need to be a long term commitment or is escaping for a few days enough to top up the energy levels?

To him that one key represented life as uncomplicated and he felt exceptionally well.

In 1948 Nat King Cole recorded the song *Nature Boy*, which was written by the somewhat eccentric beat poet eden abhez (spelt in lower case – he claimed that only God was worthy of capitalisation).

Mr abhez had tracked Mr Cole and his management down to give them a manuscript of the song but when they came to recording it they couldn't find him to get his approval and copyright.

They eventually found him living behind the Hollywood sign. He and his family had lived there for years.

Some may say he was crazy, or perhaps clinically unwell.



Others may say he had his life in check. He knew what he wanted and what he needed.

The last line of *Nature Boy* says: "The greatest thing you will ever learn is to love and be loved in return".

In this edition we look at wellness and health.

These terms are emotionally linked yet often emotional and spiritual health are put after physical health.

Let's explore how the three, when combined, can make you well.

Mardi Lumsden
Editor

Fiji Methodists double-crossed by interim government

By Rob Lutton

TEARS WERE shed in Fiji and Australia after Commodore Frank Bainimarama revoked the promised permit for the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma to hold its annual choir competition on a district level.

The permit was the Military Government's part of a compromise agreement where the Methodist leadership agreed to cancel their annual conference and national choir competition if the government would allow the choirs to gather on a regional basis.

Shaken by this latest sudden change Methodist Deputy General Secretary Rev Tevita Banivanua was mystified by the announcement, which was broadcast by Commodore Bainimarama on radio rather than formally conveyed to the Church.

In Australia, members of Uniting Church Fijian congregations had committed to raise over \$100 000 to send to Fiji with their choirs.

Around 100 choir members from Sydney, Melbourne and

Brisbane were committed to go, many already in Fiji when the announcement was made.

The new restrictions even prevented the Church from welcoming their overseas guests.

UnitingWorld National Director Rev Dr Kerry Enright said the latest action was deeply troubling for the Church.

"The military government seems determined to cripple the Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma," Dr Enright said.

"The Methodist Church has bent over backwards to meet the government's requirements imposed under the Public Emergency Regulations and to live within what I think are unfair and unreasonable bail conditions placed on them by the courts."

Uniting Church in Australia ex-President Rev Gregor Henderson was in Fiji as part of a World Council of Churches delegation and was to preach at the installation of Rev Ame Tugae as President of the Methodist Church and Rev Tuikilakila Waqairatu as General Secretary for another year.

The Military Government said

the service could not go ahead because of a pending court case.

In a press conference at the Pacific Leaders Forum in Cairns in August, Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd condemned the treatment of Fijian Methodists.

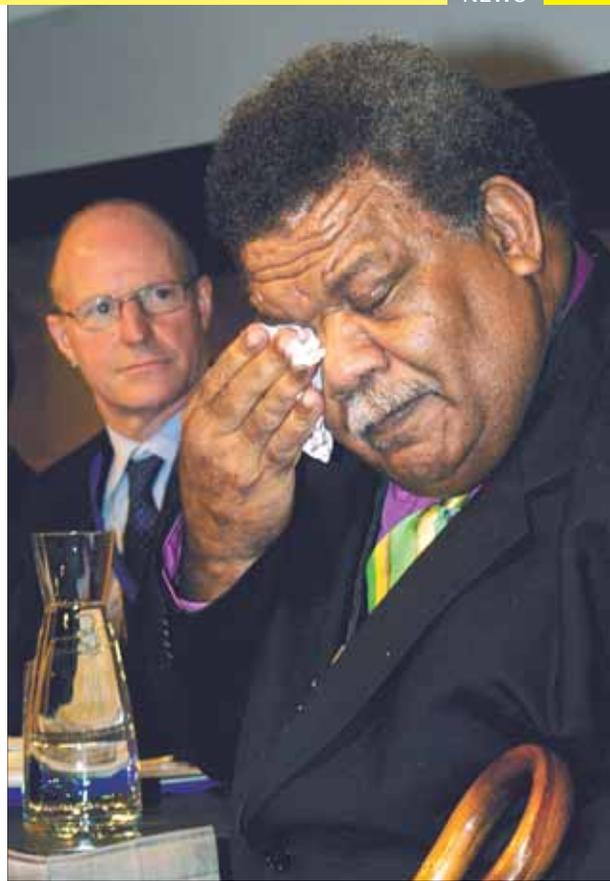
"The fact that a leader of the Methodist Church can have their door banged on in the middle of the night and be taken off by the authorities, whacked into jail, then charged with some trumped up offence under the emergency regulations ... is profoundly disturbing," Mr Rudd said.

Dr Enright said, "We believe it is also a breach of human rights of freedom of religion and belief."

UnitingWorld Associate Director (Pacific) Bruce Mullan said under the Special Procedures of the UN Commission on Human Rights UnitingWorld has prepared an urgent submission from the Uniting Church in Australia to ask the UN to investigate.

Mr Mullan said the choir competition cancellation could be financially catastrophic for the Methodist Church.

It was even alleged that the Commodore asked, on radio, for



Uniting Church Fijian National Conference in Australia Chairperson Rev Jovili Meo bringing an emotional message regarding the situation for the church in Fiji to the 12th Assembly in July. Photo by Kim Cain

people not to give money to the Methodist Church.

Mr Mullan said the Methodist Church had done everything in its power to avoid public unrest.

"The Fijian Government needs

to be more thoughtful about the consequences of its actions and how they can provoke deep feelings of anger, powerlessness and betrayal," he said.

Territory intervention highlighted for UN Rapporteur

By Penny Monger

THE UNITING Church Assembly has acknowledged its vehement

opposition to the Northern Territory Emergency Response to the United Nations.

The Uniting Church wrote



UAICC Chair Rev Ken Sumner. Photo by Kim Cain

to the United Nations Special Rapporteur Prof James Anaya, who is currently visiting Australia, on the Situation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Indigenous People, to draw his attention to the concerns expressed by Indigenous Uniting Church members.

The letter, co-signed by Uniting Church President Rev Alistair Macrae and Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) Chair Rev Ken Sumner, outlined what the Church believes is Australia's most pressing human rights concern.

It highlighted the discriminatory implementation of policies under a suspended Racial Discrimination Act;

inadequate consultation with Indigenous peoples affected by the Emergency Response; and policies that contravene human rights principles.

Mr Macrae said the UN Special Rapporteur's August visit was timely given resolutions passed at the 12th Assembly in July.

"At the 12th Assembly the Church ... called on the Federal Government to rectify the lack of negotiation with Indigenous communities about the Northern Territory Emergency Response.

"We have since written to the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and requested that the Government urgently facilitate a 'negotiation forum' in the Northern Territory to address a

number of serious issues relating to the implementation of the Intervention," said Mr Macrae.

"We do not believe the Emergency Response meets the criteria in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights for an emergency situation, the basis for the suspension of the Racial Discrimination Act.

"We do not believe that the policies are being implemented in a way that demonstrates genuine long-term partnership and engagement with the communities affected.

"It is, therefore, vitally important that the United Nations is able to look at the situation independently."

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Cadbury goes fairtrade

By Mardi Lumsden

CADBURY AUSTRALIA announced in late August that they have committed to making over 60% of their milk chocolate range guaranteed fairtrade by Easter next year and available throughout Australia and New Zealand.

This announcement means that one of the world's largest chocolate companies is helping lead the cocoa industry away from child labour; particularly in West Africa where 70% of the world's cocoa is harvested.

It also ensures West African cocoa producers receive a fair price for their crops.

Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson

said this is the result the Church has been lobbying for all year.

"It was only last Easter that I tried to buy fairtrade chocolate at the supermarket and couldn't.

"So we urged the Church to ask why and to lobby the chocolate manufacturers," he said.

"This is a major step towards eradicating child labour in the cocoa industry. It shows that engaging in dialogue with these multi-national companies about justice is worth doing."

The announcement follows similar moves in Ireland and the UK, where fairtrade Cadbury products are now available in supermarkets.



Cadbury prepares for a fairtrade Easter

When Cadbury's fairtrade Dairy Milk products hit shops in Australia and New Zealand, the combined global Fairtrade cocoa sales from Ghana will quadruple from 5000 tonnes in 2008 to 20 000 tonnes in 2010.

SEE
CHRISTMAS
IN A DIFFERENT
LIGHT

Shedding light on Christmas

THE SYNOD communications team will once again put together a Christmas postcard campaign for congregations to invite their local communities to explore Christmas with them.

This year we asked people to tell us their ideas for the theme with the most popular being: *See Christmas in a different light.*

Last year the *Wait ... there's more ...* campaign saw around 215 000 cards distributed throughout Queensland and New South Wales. This year they will also be distributed in Western Australian.

The theme *See Christmas in a different light* was chosen to remind people that Christmas is more than the consumer based holiday it seems to have become.

Uniting Church Communications Manager Mardi Lumsden

said one of the symbols of Christmas frustration is untangling the Christmas tree lights.

"In using the tangled lights image we hope to remind people to step back and think about the real meaning of Christmas," she said.

"We encourage people to embrace a back-to-basics celebration of Christmas."

Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson has a challenge for Uniting Churches this Christmas.

"Will your neighbours see more than Christmas lights this year? You can help the light of Christ glow this Christmas."

To order a pack, visit www.ucaqld.com.au after 1 September and complete the online registration.

Registrations close Friday 18 September so don't delay!

Ecumenical media workshop a hit

"FANTASTIC PRESENTERS – a day full of entertainment and learning" was one of the many enthusiastic evaluations from participants at the Communications Training Day held on 1 August at the University of Queensland (UQ) St Lucia Campus.

The event was hosted by the Queensland chapter of the Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) and brought together more than 50 people from Anglican, Uniting, Baptist, Lutheran and Catholic Churches from Brisbane, Toowoomba, Bribie Island, the Gold Coast and Hervey Bay.

Four presenters (Phil Smith, Duncan Macleod, Mardi Lumsden and Beatriz Skippen) and three participants were

Hosted by the UQ School of Journalism and Communication, thanks to Uniting Church member Dr John Harrison, participants had access to state-of-the-art technology at the St Lucia Campus.

The training day offered workshops in photography, e-communications, photo editing, pew bulletins, working with local media, interviewing and writing.

This year the organisers invited four speakers from diverse and challenging ministries to make brief presentations.

Beatriz Skippen spoke of her passion for prison chaplaincy, Aunty Jean Phillips spoke on Indigenous issues, Bronwen Healy spoke on her ministry to women leaving the sex industry and Ian Watson told of his passion for the mens' shed movement.

Alongside *Journey* editor Mardi Lumsden, the planning team also included editors and staff of the Anglican, Baptist and Lutheran magazines and the Christian Referdex.



Lutheran Pastor Greg Vangness brushes up on his photography skills at the ARPA training day. Photo by Mardi Lumsden

Ministers reflect from one generation to the next

By Caitlin Harrison

THIS YEAR'S Golden Jubilee of Ordinations was marked by those celebrating reflecting on their ministry experience during a seminar held at the Chermisde Kedron Uniting Church in June.

Ministers ordained 50 years ago this year shared some lessons learned.

Rev Ron Potter said there was a strong emphasis on unity, the need for people to hear the Gospel in their own culture and make use of technology in worship.

Several people stressed the

importance of "wow" moments in their Christian faith.

There was a desire to see the passion of young people encouraged and two members spoke about the way God had worked in their lives through periods spent out of active ministry.

Mr Potter said, "Those in ministry need to listen to the call of God as it comes through the church, to see a need and to be able to meet that need."

Meanwhile, seven Ministers of the Word and three Deacons, each in their third or fourth year

of ministry, attended the graduate in-service review at Mooloolaba Uniting Church in August.

Participants with varying ministries came from as far away as Weipa and Longreach.

Led by Rev Dr Neil Sims, much of the time was spent listening to one another's stories of their first years in ministry.

"It seemed to be the right time for everyone to come together. There was a lot of shared wisdom in the group along with genuine care for one another," said Dr Sims.



Participants at the graduate in-service review in August. Photo courtesy of Bruce Raymond



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Graham Clarke

Tuvalu minister urges action on rising seas

By Mardi Lumsden

“IF WE DON’T act now, by the time you realise that you should do something, it will be too late to save yourself and your country.”

That is the message from Rev Tafue Lusama, Secretary for Peace and Justice at the Ekalesia Kelisiano Tuvalu (Christian Church of Tuvalu) and Chairperson of the Climate Action Network Tuvalu.

Mr Lusama, who wrote his Masters thesis on climate change from a theological perspective, was in Australia in July and August on a speaking tour for Greenpeace and Oxfam to raise awareness of the real threat of climate change.

Tuvalu is the world’s fourth smallest country and home to only 12 000 people, but rising sea levels are threatening their very existence.

Its people are on the brink of becoming climate refugees but Mr Lusama said Pacific people will not accept losing their homelands.

“Becoming climate refugees is absolutely intolerable to us,” he said.

“We will lose everything our identity is tied to. When it comes to relocation we have no option but to move.

“If we are climate refugees and, for example, move to Australia we will be living under the mercy of the government of Australia ... we will not be free people.

“Our culture and tradition are things that were born out of the environment that we live in.

“If we move to another place, the culture and tradition of Tuvalu will definitely lose out.”

The aim of Mr Lusama’s trip was to wake the Australian public and churches up to the effects of climate change.

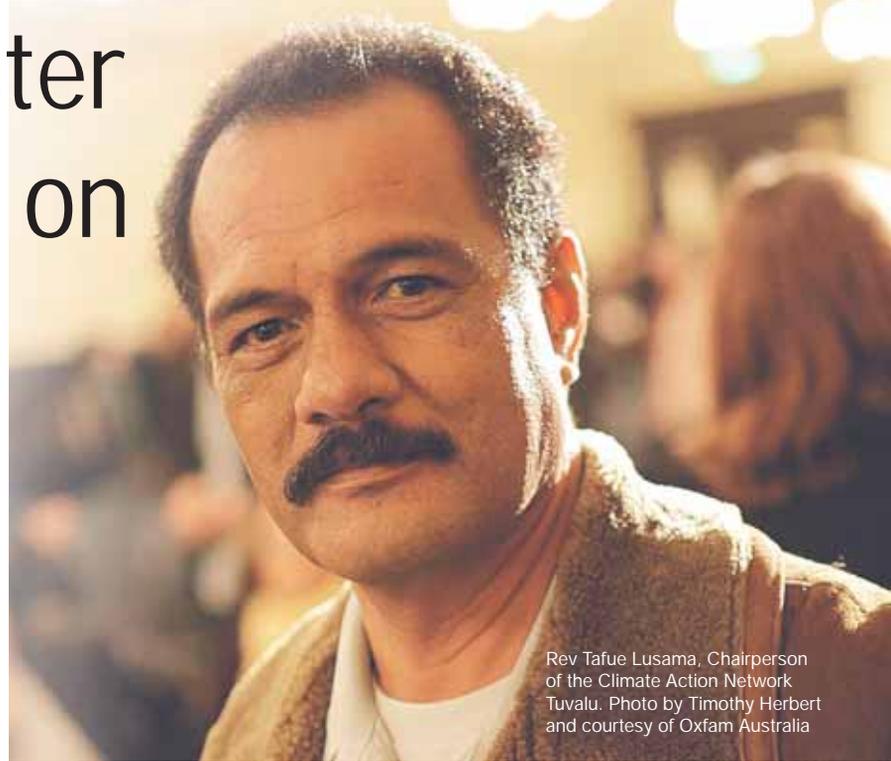
“We would like to inform the public of Australia that climate change is happening now and it is affecting the lives of people around the Pacific Island countries.

“If Tuvalu goes down today you will follow tomorrow.

“Climate change is not isolated to Tuvalu or Kiribati alone, it is a global problem.

“From a Christian perspective we are fighting against injustice.

“I appeal to Christians to fight



Rev Tafue Lusama, Chairperson of the Climate Action Network Tuvalu. Photo by Timothy Herbert and courtesy of Oxfam Australia

with us, as members of the one body of Christ in the world.

“Fight with us, stand together and let’s defeat this unjust system which is oppressing and forcing people into poverty and hunger and will force us underwater.”

The Australian Government has refused Tuvalu’s relocation assistance plea three times, but Mr Lusama said relocation is plan ‘b’. The aim is to save the low lying island nations in the Pacific.

“The priority for our government and our people is to save our country and to remain on Tuvalu but if we have to move we should have a plan in place.”

Mr Lusama said there is

currently no legal status in any international convention to protect the rights of so-called climate refugees.

Tuvalu is one of the seven countries in the Association of Small Islands States that will ask developed nations to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen this December.

“I do believe people are listening and trying to do what needs to be done. The problem now is the political will,” said Mr Lusama.

“My aim is to convince people to lobby their government to

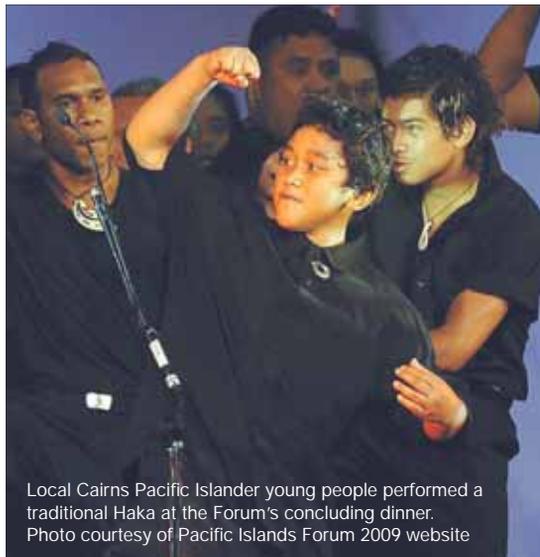
support a coherent and realistic deal to come out of Copenhagen.

“We are hoping that the industrialised countries, in particular Australia, will agree on a fair economic deal that will ensure our survival.

“If we ignore the injustice in this issue we are ignoring the mission of Christ.

“This world was given to us by God, it doesn’t belong to us.

“Tuvalu is the country given to me by God to serve, protect, look after and to pass it on to my children. If we mistreat what has been given to us for a short while I believe we are insulting the owner of that property.”



Local Cairns Pacific Islander young people performed a traditional Haka at the Forum’s concluding dinner. Photo courtesy of Pacific Islands Forum 2009 website

Uniting Church welcomes Pacific leaders

By Bruce Mullan

UNITING CHURCH leaders made for a significant Christian presence in the events surrounding the 40th Pacific Islands Forum held in Cairns in August.

Cairns Emmanuel Uniting Church minister Rev Dr Hedley Fihaki coordinated an Ecumenical Prayer Service for the Forum at which former Uniting Church President Rev Professor James Haire preached.

Almost 400 people attended the service including Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi.

Bible readings were presented

by Dr Fihaki together with Rev Tafue Lusama (Tuvalu Congregational Church), and Vice-Chairperson of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Ms Roberta Stanley.

North Queensland Presbytery Chair Rev Bruce Cornish led the service.

Mrs Marie Bray (PNG), Rev David Teaurere (Cook Island Christian Church) and Mr Galuo Seiuli Aisa (Fofoga Samoa) all brought greetings on behalf of their local communities as well as singing traditional songs.

Professor Haire emphasised the need for the church to speak of, and live out, God’s peace.

“The contemporary reality of many parts of the world is one of deep oppression,” he said.

“Behind this lies the development of a new ideology which legitimises a culture of violence by invoking God arbitrarily to suit a particular agenda of aggression.

UnitingWorld National Director Rev Dr Kerry Enright welcomed forum delegates and others to the service.

As President of the Pacific Communities Council of Far North Queensland, Dr Fihaki also gave a greeting on behalf of local Pacific communities at the Forum dinner which closed the event.



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Flight 22 ... a plane crash survivor's story

By Priscilla Raepom

SHE IS PERCHED on the tattered lounge chair; back straight, legs crossed at the ankles; a proper lady's posture - a stark contrast between sophistication and shabbiness. "Ready when you are," she smiles, smoothing her beautifully embroidered silk outfit for the hundredth time.

The PA system overhead crackles to life; a husky female drawl announces a well-rehearsed script that a flight has been delayed for yet another half hour. An annoyed murmur of voices erupts, then gradually dies down to a lull.

"You know, this is going to be my 22nd flight after the crash," she reveals.

Sri Irianti, a mother of three and a PhD student at Griffith University, Queensland, is a survivor of a tragic plane crash in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Mrs Irianti, 50, lived through the March 2007 airline tragedy when Garuda flight GA-200 crashed on landing at Adisucipto International Airport before bouncing into rice fields nearby and exploding into flames killing 22 (including five Australians) of the 133 people on board.

Both the pilot and the co-pilot survived and were admitted to an Indonesian military hospital.

The pilot has since received a two-year jail sentence for negligence.

Mrs Irianti's story starts on 7 March 2007, a date she swears she will never forget.

"It was 4am and it was still dark when my daughter and her fiancé dropped me off at Jakarta International Airport on that fateful day," she reminisces, with a faraway look in her eyes.

Mrs Irianti was on her way to give a lecture on environmental health at a university in Yogyakarta.

She had been up most of the night before preparing her notes and she didn't have time to pray before going to the airport.

"I prefer to sit in front, because it is easier to get in and out. But on this particular day, I had to pray first, so by the time I checked in, all the seats upfront were taken.

I was given the seat 22D, an

I remember the plane
diving down ... I remember
people screaming for God
to help them.

aisle seat at the back," she said.

Mrs Irianti says she had an unusual feeling of nerves when the plane took off.

"I was afraid for some reason, but I was tired as well so I must have dozed off for 20 minutes or so, because I was awoken by the flight attendant, asking me if I wanted anything to drink.

"Just then, the captain announced that we would be landing in 17 minutes ... that the

weather was not good and some turbulence was to be expected."

She said the horrific events that followed still haunt her today.

"I remember the plane diving down ... I remember people screaming for God to help them. I remember mad panic and people stepping all over me as I lay on my back in the aisle, covered in my blood," she says.

Mrs Irianti was pushed onto the floor of the plane in the mad rush to the emergency exit doors.

"I was screaming for help, but maybe because I was covered in blood, they probably thought I was already dead," she says.

She remembers praying, asking God to help her if she had a chance to live.

"I believe that he did because after saying this prayer, I reached up and realised my left hand had grabbed the handle of one of the exit doors. I got up and a flight attendant appeared, asking me if I could jump. I jumped and landed on the ground but I got up

again.

I heard someone shouting, "run, it's going to explode", so I ran. When I looked back some metres away, I heard, and then saw, the explosion," she recalls.

A cameraman for the Seven Network also escaped the burning wreckage and filmed the aftermath. The exclusive footage was on the news that night all over the world.

Mrs Irianti said she had seen



Sri Irianti thanks God she survived the Garuda flight GA-200 which crashed in 2007, killing 22 people.
Photo by Priscilla Raepom

the Australian journalists at the departure lounge when she was on the phone with her husband, who was away on business in Aceh. They were covering the visit of then Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer and Attorney-General Philip Ruddock to Java.

Mrs Irianti has had plastic surgery on her right eyelid which was torn when her face slammed into the seat in front of her on impact. She has also received physiotherapy for her right leg which she injured jumping off the plane.

"The plastic surgery was to make me beautiful again," she says laughing, making light of a slight scar on her face. "My leg gives me problems sometimes, but I am very lucky to be alive."

Just then, the PA system interrupts the interview once again.

"That's my flight," she says, smiling, any hint of nervousness either discarded or cleverly masked.

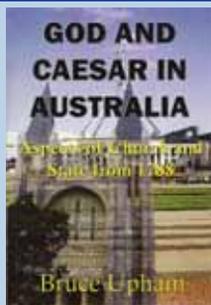
As she collects her bags to leave, she says that two weeks before the crash, she had seen a story on TV about a journalist who had died in a boating accident because he had gone back to get his camera.

"My husband told me to leave everything and go to safety first if anything like that ever happened ... can you believe I thought of rescuing my laptop?" she asks in disbelief.

Then she's gone.

With her 22nd flight after the crash waiting to take off, one would bet Mrs Irianti would be clapping and thanking God for the 22nd time when the plane lands, for saving her life and for not making the list of the 22 who died two years ago.

God and Caesar in Australia



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See page 13 for review by Bill Adams



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Blessed burnout: when all your gifts feel used up

By Mardi Lumsden

CREATING A work-life balance is difficult, perhaps even more so when your employer is God.

According to the study: *Burnout in Church Leaders* (Kaldor and Bullpitt 2001), based on *National Church Life Survey* research, nearly 23% of

church leaders experienced some burnout symptoms and 55% were borderline to burnout.

The report said that burnout affected leaders in paid and voluntary positions.

Church leaders with poor or fair health had much higher burnout scores than their colleagues with good health.

Leaders who grow in their faith, have an active devotional life and feel close to God and have a happy home and social life are less likely to experience burnout.

Author of *Pastorpain* and former pastor Steve Bagi said that although burnout happened in all areas of work, there are significant emotional and spiritual impacts on someone in ministry.

“Going through burnout can be very difficult for someone in ministry as the person can feel guilty about letting down God and the people they have dedicated their lives to serve,” he said.

“As they might find it difficult to re-engage in ministry, this could also lead to feelings of resentment and regret.”

Mr Bagi said creating a healthy work-life balance is more than just taking time off.

“As people go down the road leading to burnout the fun part of life seems to disappear and that needs to be recaptured.

“The leadership of the church can ask someone ... to ensure that the pastor and his/her family are having adequate time to unwind, have breaks away and have enough finances to help make this happen.”

American research states that 80% of seminary and Bible college graduates who enter the ministry will leave within the first five years of active ministry.

Mr Bagi said while that research may not reflect the Australian situation the results are still concerning.

“Whatever the percentage is, it’s too high,” he said.

“A significant reduction in the incidence of burnout in ministry will require the adequate



Pastorpain author Steve Bagi knows the pain of ministerial burnout. Photo courtesy of Steve Bagi

supervision and care of those in ministry, changes in the expectations and treatment of pastors by their congregations and a reviewing, and renewing of the whole way we ‘do church.’”

He said congregations and the wider church needed to acknowledge, encourage, train and reward people more generously for effective service.

“Often people in ministry roles are weighed down with criticism and aren’t empowered to actually lead in those positions as other people try to influence and control them.

“People in ministry roles also need to be given time to rest and have a break.

“Some church rosters have people involved every week and this is not helpful in the long run.”

Mr Bagi also said it was up to the person in ministry to create healthy boundaries around their time and address any personal

issues like “people pleasing” that might add to the pressure.

“Then, congregations need to acknowledge and respect these boundaries and spread out the load of pastoral care so that it doesn’t rest on one person or a small team of people.

“Many people who burn out have probably been aware of a growing sense of anxiety, depression and total physical, spiritual and emotional weariness for some time.

“There may also be other signs like confusion of thought, irritability and a sense of hopelessness and helplessness.

“If you are experiencing these things then it would be a good idea to talk to a health professional.”

Steve Bagi is an organisational psychologist. After 21 years in pastoral and missionary service he went through burnout and during his recovery wrote the book *Pastorpain*

30 years of care coaching

FOR 30 YEARS graduates of the Hospital Ministry and Pastoral Care Course have been active in the life of the Church.

After the year-long practical and theoretical course students from all denominations have grasped the challenges inherent in chaplaincy and pastoral care.

Course coordinator Rev Rowena Harris said graduates

leave the course to minister in paid and voluntary positions in hospitals, aged-care facilities, prisons, schools and universities, congregations and the community.

For information on the 2010 course contact Rowena Harris on 3232 7269



Rowena Harris (left) with two of the participants of the 2009 course. Photo by Osker Lau

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Action needed on Indigenous health gap

By Andrew Johnson

THE HEADLINES scream of a 17-year life expectancy gap - a devastating figure by any measure. Report after report records statistical evidence of chronic issues in Indigenous health.

According to a 2008 joint report from the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, *The Health and Welfare of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples*, Indigenous adults are twice as likely as non-Indigenous adults to report their health as fair or poor.

Indigenous adults are also twice as likely as non-Indigenous adults to report high or very high levels of psychological distress.

Indigenous people are hospitalised for dialysis at 14 times the rate of non-Indigenous people.

The mortality rate for Indigenous infants and children is

around three times that for non-Indigenous infants and children.

At the 12th Assembly in July, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian National Administrator Rev Shayne Blackman reminded the Assembly that these statistics have not improved since his report to the 2006 Assembly.

All these statistics can feel overwhelming and inevitable. We sometimes believe that this is just the way the world is; the problem is just too intractable.

Yet all the statistics can also shield us from the reality of people's lives.

In our clamour for objective data we must never forget the human face and personal story of people.

We must never forget the story of a life constantly weighed down with chronic health concerns.

Many Indigenous people seek to offer leadership in battling the health issues of their community. For many Indigenous ministries

funerals form an all too regular part of their life together.

Our Uniting Church national and state bodies continue to grapple with how we respond in formal, organised ways. The impetus formed through renewing the covenant process, the new preamble, the constitutional amendments and the national apology which acknowledged the need for a practical response have all been encouraging.

However, just because our institution is at work does not mean that we as individuals and faith communities are exempt. We don't have to wait for their answers to commence our contribution to closing the gap.

The *Building Partnerships* resource from the Assembly is a great place to start in exploring how to deepen the covenantal relationship with our Indigenous brothers and sisters.

Who are the Indigenous people in your community you could work with in concrete, tangible ways?

Who is your local member of parliament you could write to about your passion for closing the gap?

What gifts and skills could you offer to the wider community?

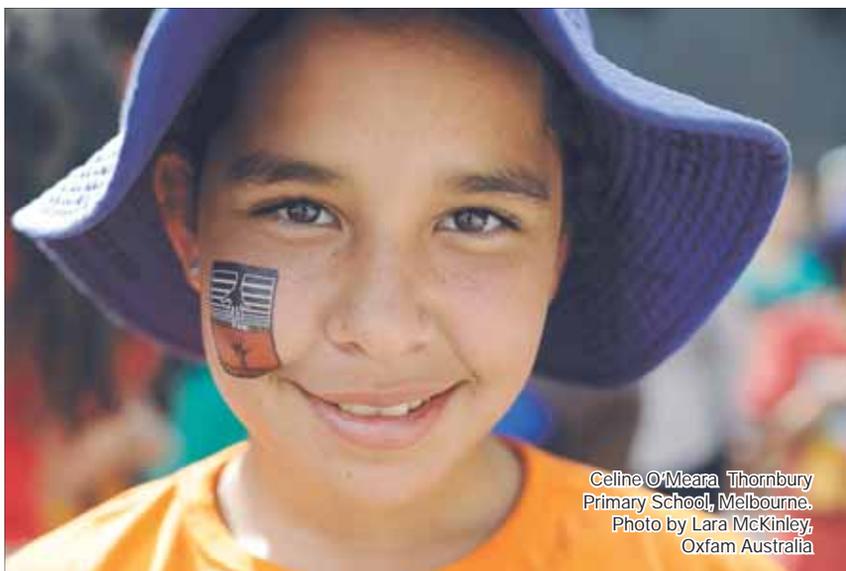
What health care services are in your local area with which you could make a connection?

The concept of wellbeing is an interesting one.

It seems to me that it is closely related to the holistic approach to ministry I hear Congress talk about.

It also seems to me that a holistic approach to ministry and the wellbeing of the whole person was at the heart of Jesus' ministry.

Andrew Johnson is a Community Justice Minister at West End Uniting Church



Celine O'Meara, Thornbury Primary School, Melbourne.
Photo by Lara McKinley, Oxfam Australia

Fast facts on UnitingCare Australia

UnitingCare Australia has 25 000 volunteers and employs 35 000 staff. That's a total of 60 000 people. The entire Australian coal industry employs 20 000.

There are twice as many UnitingCare sites in Australia as there are McDonald's restaurants. There are over 1400 UnitingCare sites (including Blue Care, Lifeline and hundreds of other community services agencies) and only 760 McDonald's restaurants in Australia.

UnitingCare is the largest social services provider in the country - offering services to 2 million people in urban, regional and remote Australia.

Of the \$2 billion plus annual turnover of UnitingCare Australia, half comes from Queensland.

Facts courtesy of UnitingCare Australia

For *Thriving in your life and Ministry* resources visit <http://thriving.ucaql.com.au>

Art helps to heal the mind

ASHMORE UNITING Church on the Gold Coast hosted an art and craft exhibition in June to raise money for *beyondblue*, a national not-for-profit organisation working to address issues associated with depression and anxiety disorders in Australia.

Minister Rev Bradley Foote said, "We want to share the walk with people in our congregation and community who are dealing with issues related to mental health."

Mr Foote asked Craig Watson, a Uniting Church member from Brisbane, to curate the art show.

"I have suffered from schizophrenia for most of my adult life and after much time spent reflecting I've discovered two of the most important helps for me are self acceptance and relaxation. I seek to reflect this in my art," said Mr Watson.

World Health Organization days:

10 September:
World Suicide Prevention Day

10 October:
World Mental Health Day



Below:
Self portrait - *Trusting* by Craig Watson.
"In it God is smiling at me and I am smiling back."



A rolling mist at sunrise!



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Wellness and salvation

By Robert Bos

WHEN I lived in Townsville an Aboriginal man told me about the days of cutting sugar-cane by hand. The work was hard, hot and dirty.

When he first started he was keen to get as much done as quickly as possible. He laid into the cane with energy and enthusiasm and was exhausted after a couple of hours. An old hand took him aside and advised, "Son, take time out to sharpen your cane knife".

Sharp cane knives are far more efficient implements and take much less energy.

Often, when I ask fellow Christians how they are, they respond "busy!". What causes us to be so driven?

Would we be better relaxing more and allowing the Spirit to direct us to the things which really matter?

Christians are called to be witnesses to the reign of God, which entails living and proclaiming personal, social and ecological wholeness.

Jesus came to bring life in all its fullness.

The word salvation is linked to the notion of healing and wholeness.

Even though we claim

salvation by God's free grace, at times we think it all depends on us and we have this terrible burden of responsibility. As forgiven people, we are good at guilt.

Jesus also called his followers to take up their cross.

Some understandings of the atonement suggest that suffering is somehow necessary to bring about a renewal of the world but is that what Jesus meant? I don't think so.

Jesus also said, "My yoke is easy and my burden is light".

Jesus commanded, "Love your neighbour as you love yourself".

Sometimes we have to make tough decisions for our own wellbeing, even survival. This can be difficult for Christians, especially if others are hurt or deprived through our decision.

Sabbath-keeping is a biblical command often neglected.

We may not murder or commit adultery, but sometimes we think we can ignore the fourth commandment.

For those of us in church ministry there is no clocking on and off. The danger is that we are always available.

We never relax. Our spouse and kids miss out. We burn out.

Jesus took time out so what makes us think we don't need to?

Do we model a balanced life style? Do our actions match our words?

Yes, God does graciously invite us to participate in the renewal of individuals, society and creation but it does not all depend on us.

We proclaim Jesus as saviour, but often act as if we are.

I am still learning to keep my cane knife sharp, but I'm getting wiser.

Many of us need to slow down, go for quality more than busyness.

We don't need to feel guilty when we take time for refreshment. We need to find what energises and renews us. We can model the reign of God.

We can be witnesses for salvation.

Rev Dr Robert Bos is Director of Pilgrim Learning Community

Healing the sick

By Robyn Kidd

EXCELLENCE IN health care and promoting the health of our patients and the good of the community is part of the work of God in the world. I believe that is what we do at UnitingCare Health (UCH).

Having worked in the healthcare system for almost ten years, I am grateful for our standards and access to medical care.

Through insight, wisdom, and the excellent stewardship of previous and current leaders, UnitingCare Health is able to provide acute healthcare services to our community and beyond.

The Uniting Church currently owns and operates five hospitals in South East Queensland through UnitingCare Health – St Stephen's Hospitals in Maryborough and Hervey Bay, Sunshine Coast Private Hospital at Buderim, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital in Brisbane, and The Wesley Hospital in Brisbane.

UCH has around 1200 beds (17% of hospital beds in Queensland), employs over

3500 staff, and has around 1000 volunteers.

UCH believes that everyone should have access to healthcare and have a choice about where they access that care. It is a false perception that our care is only offered to the wealthy, those who can fund their treatment or afford health insurance.

We need to take the risk of being different, that is having our Gospel as our travel guide, not as an end point. Our theology must inform the care we offer and all of our services must meet missional imperatives.

We work closely with our colleagues in other faith-based, not-for-profit healthcare groups, and are a voice and advocate for healthcare at state and federal levels.

We actively seek ways in which UnitingCare agencies can work together for the benefit of our community, such as the financial counselling Lifeline Community Care provide to our patients and their families within The Wesley Hospital.

We also work with Queensland Health to lift the burden from the overloaded public system, and the



UnitingCare Health Director of Mission Rev Robyn Kidd (right) with St. Andrew's War Memorial Hospital Intensive Care Unit nurse Julie Goodfruit. Photo courtesy of UCH

University of Queensland to assist with medical student placements.

Another exciting project is our participation in organ transplant reform as part of the Australian Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation Authority.

UCH actively supports the Helena Goldie Hospital in the Solomon Islands through a relief and development program which provides teaching and training. This program provides a vehicle for the further enhancement of the United Church in the Solomon Island's mission to provide a healing ministry to its people.

Some of our mission is not

easily visible and does not result in direct service delivery, but through advocacy and the support of those who do provide direct services.

Chaplaincy is the more visible expression of our mission day-to-day.

Our chaplains provide an incredible ministry to those who need our services and their families as well as staff.

Many staff, patients and families have no experience of church and it is a privilege to express the love and compassion of God to them. We should never underestimate the power of active chaplaincy.

Creating stronger links amongst

presbyteries, congregations and the hospitals is important to UCH and this year I will endeavour to engage in a more intentional way.

We need to be in conversation with one another because we are all in this ministry together and UnitingCare Health is one part of the Church continuing the healing ministry of Jesus.

All that we provide supports our intention to make our healing God present to the people we care for.

Rev Robyn Kidd is available to visit or lead worship. If interested email robyn.kidd@uchhealth.com.au



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Special candles were handed out to parents at the pregnancy loss service. Photo courtesy of Jennifer Roberts

Pregnancy loss set free

THE NORTHERN Coalfields Uniting Church in Moranbah, Central Queensland, held its first memorial worship service for pre-term baby and pregnancy loss in June.

Minister Rev Jennifer Roberts set up a service on the Gold Coast after the loss of her first of two mid-term babies.

"Both losses were devastating for us and our family," she said.

"This service was a valuable part of our healing process, as we acknowledged our loss and reflected on the life we carried for such a brief time."

After a second loss, in remote Central Queensland, Ms Roberts and her husband

saw the need for such a service in their new community also.

"Sadly we were sent home with no hope of any follow-up or support to honour our baby's short life," she said.

"Having reflected on the needs of parents who have lost pre-term babies, our own experiences, and how a remote mining town might embrace such a service, we decided to offer a memorial service for pre-term baby and pregnancy loss."

The local community support service (called the M.D.S.S and who also run the local newspaper) fully supported the idea and ran free front page advertising for the event.

"The service was an awesome experience of the love and healing power of God," said Ms Roberts.

"Each of the ladies who attended were touched in a special way as they acknowledged the lives of their unborn babies, reflected upon the hopes and dreams that were lost with the death of their babies, and as they focused on the hope that each mother has that her little one is in God's arms."

Parents were given a candle to honour and remember their lost child.

Ms Roberts urged other church communities to consider such a service.

Complexities of the unborn

By Joanne Styles

UNPLANNED PREGNANCY, teen pregnancy and termination of pregnancy have never been popular issues to talk about, particularly within the church.

These are highly sensitive topics, drawing hot debate from all spectrums, often only causing further heartache and pain to those who have walked this difficult path.

Current statistics show that one in three women in Australia will choose to terminate a pregnancy in their lifetime and more than half of all pregnancies are unplanned and half again will not be continued.

Chances are either someone you know, someone in your family or even a close friend will experience this and will need your support, love and compassion.

Unfortunately this may not always occur, particularly when the issue arises within the church, with the woman or couple possibly becoming targets for judgement or criticism or simply suffering in silence.

Director of Mission for UnitingCare Queensland and Rev Robyn Kidd said the Church has an important part to play in supporting and caring for women who find themselves faced with an unplanned pregnancy.

"Our first response must always be to show the compassion of Christ to those who are in such circumstances," Ms Kidd said.

"The second important aspect in supporting women is to ensure that correct and appropriate medical and psychological

information is given."

Christians share an underlying belief that life is precious, sacred and indeed a God-given gift as illustrated in Psalm 139:13, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb".

Ms Kidd said that in an ideal world there would not be unwanted pregnancies but that we are not living in an ideal world.

"The creation of any new life is something to be in awe of and that life must be honoured and understood as sacred," she said.

"In honouring this new life any decisions around the continuation of that life are very complex and there is no one way to support and care for women.

"It would be unjust to treat every situation of unwanted pregnancy in the same manner or to apply a strict set of rules to every person."

The Uniting Church's official stance on termination of pregnancy is different in each Synod however they share similar themes.

Part of the reason there are differences stems from the fact that there are different laws in each state on this issue.

Ms Kidd said a summary of the Church's official stance included the belief that life is a gift from God and the sacredness of life is to be respected and that indiscriminate abortion damages the sacredness of life.

The Church rejects the position that abortion should never be available to women in need and it also rejects the position that abortion is simply a medical



A plastic model of a baby at 12 weeks gestation. Photo by Bill Davenport, Canada, and courtesy of Stock.XCHNG stock images

procedure. The Church accepts that people's circumstances will always be unique.

The fact that each person's life is unique and most likely more complex than what it first appears shows the importance of trying to be non-judgemental, particularly if faced with someone who is experiencing the effects of a termination of pregnancy.

Ms Kidd said women who have had a termination of pregnancy often experience a range of effects on different levels including emotional, physical, financial and social.

"These effects are often felt many years, and even decades after the termination," she said.

Ms Kidd said the primary affects included grief and loss and at times shame or even feelings of relief.

The independent and pro-choice organisation Children by Choice recognises termination of pregnancy is a difficult decision for a woman to make and is often emotional and sometimes seen as a practical choice.

A spokesperson for Children by Choice said the organisation provides unbiased information and counselling that gives women all the options, including referrals for termination, adoption and parenting information.

"Religion plays a major role in a woman's decision-making process

as it impacts on their belief and values systems," she said.

There are also many church-based pregnancy counselling services available.

Ms Kidd said she believes the church has a responsibility to offer support and, when required, forgiveness to women and couples who experience an unplanned pregnancy.

She said it was also important to offer support to all new parents including those who had unwillingly lost a child.

"The loss of a pregnancy, through choice or otherwise, demands one response only - demonstrable human compassion," she said.

For you
created my
inmost being;
you knit me
together in
my mother's
womb.

Christ in our neighbour: Iona reflection

By Rowena Aberdeen

“TO FIND my own life is a task I cannot undertake without the neighbour.”

This comment by Rowan Williams from his book *Silence and Honey Cakes* sums up the reasons I chose to live and work with the Iona Community for three years.

The Iona Community is an ecumenical Christian community based on the Isle of Iona, just off Scotland, committed to seeking new ways of living the gospel.

Of course, before I arrived I could not have articulated it so clearly.

In the years I spent as MacLeod Centre Warden I learned the deeper meaning of this phrase, with all its joys and challenges.

In our world today, most of us can choose our ‘neighbours’ – those we socialise with are usually people who reflect the world as we see it. We struggle with church or office politics, and breathe a sigh of relief that we leave at the end of the day or only see people once a week.

So what happens if you put yourself in a position where you

can’t walk away? Where your colleagues must also become your friends, family and support.

Where, as we say on Iona, we choose to be open to un-chosen relationships.

That is when life gets interesting!

The un-chosen neighbour provides us with a different perspective and holds us accountable to recognising who we really are, rather than who we like to think we are.

It is in this way that our neighbour gives us a new context:

a different and perhaps more honest place in which we must put all our values and intentions into daily practice.

We are all wonderful and loving people until we have to engage with the messy reality of human relationships, where nothing is perfect and we must wrestle each moment with our ideals.

Am I really kind and generous? Or only when I’m not tired or stressed? Am I really good at communicating? Or only when the other person reacts appropriately?

We all know how we think we would act in these situations, but



Community members wave farewell from the jetty to those leaving the Isle of Iona. Photo by Rowena Aberdeen

when we live among un-chosen neighbours these ideals are tested.

In community living we must recognise that we are our actions, including when we are tired, stressed or hurt. Here we come face-to-face with our own brokenness.

Luckily for me daily life on Iona also provided many opportunities for a stumbling and halting progress towards a truer love for those around me – a daily practice of love.

Anywhere else and I would have run away, I even tried, but on Iona you can’t run away.

You need your fellow staff; they laugh and cry with you, support you and socialise with you, and help you survive a busy and challenging season.

Eventually you try again and in that you find moments of grace, where the Spirit moved when you’d thought it impossible, and a love you didn’t think you had.

But not all relationships are reconciled and not all people become close friends.

But you can move a step closer to being able to love others for who they are in your life, whether that be a close companion who provides nourishment and

support, or someone who mirrors your judgmental attitudes. Both are important to our journey; both help us to grow and to be open to moving from brokenness to wholeness, as individuals and as a community.

One of my fellow staff said, “When I’m not living in a community, I’m a lot more careless with my relationships”.

Being on Iona and living in a community taught me to value all the relationships in my life, and for that I am grateful.

Rowena Aberdeen is Head of Chaplaincy at Somers College, Gold Coast

Working out how to share faith

By Duncan Macleod

REV GRAHAM Keech visits the gym every Friday to work out physically and to work out how to share his faith.

Training alongside Mr Keech is Luke Ryan. The two got together when Mr Ryan offered to help Mr Keech with his bench presses.

As the friendship grew Mr Keech asked Mr Ryan if he’d thought about spiritual things.

The resulting conversation is covered in the *Faith Stories* DVD and training resource being used by Uniting Church congregations around Queensland.

Mr Keech talks about the need to explore faith step by step.

As a faith coach he is continually asking, “What does it mean for Luke to take the next step of faith in response to God?”

A person’s journey to faith may vary depending on the way God is working in their life.

Mr Ryan talks about his exploration of spiritual reality.

Spending time with Mr Keech

and the Logan Uniting Church community helped him consider a universe in which a personal God empowers people to make a difference in the world.

This story helps tie coaching and faith sharing skills together and challenges Christians to think more about what God is doing in the lives of their friends and the appropriate response.

To learn more about the *Faith Stories* DVD and training resource visit www.faithstories.org.au

Duncan Macleod (Vision for Mission) and Rob Bos (Pilgrim Learning Community) are available to lead two hour and one day workshops to introduce people to the *Faith Stories* resource



Luke Ryan and Rev Graham Keech share their faith at the gym. Photo courtesy of Red Earth Films



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September 6 Fathers' Day



Celebrate and honour your father and the fathers around you this Fathers' Day.

Did your church do something special for the fathers' in your community?

Send *Journey* your photos to journey@ucaqld.com.au

Photo by Vivek Chugh, India, and courtesy of Stock.XCHNG

Sep 2-Oct 1. Visionaries Art Exhibition. See work by 25 artists from SE Queensland churches on the theme: *Crux/Cross* at the Australian Catholic University, Banyo. Contact Geraldine Wheeler on 3437 8743 or gwheeler25@bigpond.com.

Sep 4, 7pm. PRUC Community Trivia Night, Pine Rivers Uniting Church, Kallangur. \$5/person or \$15/family. Contact Jane Moad on 3285 6126 or pruc.trivia@gmail.com.

Sep 4, 9am-5pm. Annual Tully and District Uniting Church Flower Show, Tully Uniting Church Hall. \$2. Contact Beth Strako on 4068 1709 or kmurphyk@optusnet.com.au.

Sep 4, 10am-5pm. Boonah Uniting Church Floral Fair. Floral art based on the theme: *Colours of the Scenic Rim*. Contact Jean Kassulke on 5463 1858 or b.bartleet@bigpond.com.

Sep 5-Oct 4. Building Christian Communities Seminar, Christian Heritage College, Mansfield. Lecturer Emeritus Professor Charles Ringma. \$545.50. Contact Jennifer Wallis on 3347 7930 or jwallis@chc.edu.au.

Sep 7, 10am-1.30pm. Uniting Church Adult Fellowship Annual Service, Gatton Uniting Church. Guest Preacher Rev David Baker. Theme: *Sowing Seeds for the Kingdom*. All welcome. Contact Angela Lester on 07 4667 3726 or lesterwm@activ8.net.au.

Sep 10-12, 9am-3.30pm. Laidley Uniting Church Quilt and Craft Expo, Patrick Street, Laidley. Contact Robyn Muller on 5466 5436 (A/H) or rob.mul@bigpond.com.

Sep 12, 8am-1pm. Elanora Uniting Church Spring Fair and Flower Show, Gold Coast. Official opening at 10am. Contact Mary Flynn on 5598 8733 or flynn10@bigpond.com.

Sep 12, 8am-1pm. Brookfield Uniting Church country markets, Brisbane. Contact Joan Andrews on 3378 0840 or joan@renditionrecords.com.au.

Sep 12, 2pm-9am. Logan/Beenleigh Relay For Life, Canterbury College. Contact Matt Gees on 0427 768 228 or gees.matt@gmail.com.

Sep 12, 7pm-10pm. Fireproof movie night, Mount Louisa House of Praise, Townsville. Contact Joel and Fiona Mackereth on 4773 1369 or Greg and Tonia Johannesen on 4775 6942 or johies@bigpond.net.au.

Sep 12, 7.30pm-9.30pm. Brisbane Combined Festival of Male Voice Praise, The Gateway Centre, 1052 Mt Gravatt Capalaba Road, Mackenzie. Contact Malcolm Arnold on 3805 4732 or mal_dot@bigpond.com.au.

Sep 12-13. Flower Festival, Coolool Beach Uniting Church. Contact Margaret Hall on 5446 1493 or mlchall@bigpond.com.

Sep 25, 7.30pm-9.30pm. Lay Forum Seminar on contemporary worship, Sherwood Uniting Church. Keynote presenter Rev Rex Hunt. \$10/\$5. Contact Reg Collard on 3378 4258 or rcollard@bigpond.net.au.

Sep 26, 8.30am-4pm. Lay Forum Conference, Wesley House, Brisbane. Registration \$20/\$15. All welcome. Contact Reg Collard on 3378 4258 or rcollard@bigpond.net.au.

Sep 27, 9am-10am. Worship with contemporary elements, Albert St Uniting Church, Brisbane city. Guest preacher Rev Rex Hunt. Contact Reg Collard on 3378 4258 or rcollard@bigpond.net.au.

Oct 3. Clayfield Hamilton Garage Sale, Clayfield Uniting Church. Contact Helen Wilson on 3266 5132.

Oct 8, 7.15pm-9.30pm. Brian McLaren Seminar: Where Faith Meets the World at Chermiside Kedron Uniting Church. \$25. Register online at www.worldvision.com.au/act/attendedevents.

Oct 15, 10am-2.30pm. Musical morning: An October Affair with Brother James. Hosted by The Gap Uniting Church Day Fellowship and Frontier Services Queensland Support Group. The Gap Uniting Church. \$10. Contact Alma Davie on 3300 3087.

Upload your 'What's On' entries at www.journeyonline.com.au. Items may be shortened due to space limitations.

Lay Forum pays tribute to founder

PROFESSOR ROD Jensen, former chair of the Ministerial Education Board and lifelong active layman in the Methodist and Uniting Churches, passed away on Sunday 23 August.

Prof Jensen was also the author of *Two Small Books on Laypeople and the Church*.

Dr Paul Inglis, Community Minister at Dayboro/Mt Mee, said Prof Jensen was an inspiration to those who want the church to engage more intentionally with contemporary society, to make appropriate adaptations and changes that would address the obvious fall in worship attendances and the ageing of congregations.



Vale Pauline Campbell

PAULINE CAMPBELL was born in Adelaide in 1923 and studied at Canberra University College.

In 1949 Ms Campbell went to Suva, Fiji, to teach at Dudley House School where she remained for eleven years, including nine years as Headmistress.

From 1960 to 1967 she worked as a District Sister in Dudley Circuit among Indian women. Her fluency in Hindi was an asset.

While living in Suva, Ms Campbell promoted the foundation of the Deaconess Order among Fijian and Indian women, hoping to advance women's evangelical and social welfare.

The Deaconess Order is a monument to her wise oversight and her spirit of complete devotion to the Church's mission in Fiji.

Pauline retired in November



1971 to travel and enjoy family life but was recalled to the Deaconess Order in Fiji in 1975, where she developed a Religious Education curriculum for schools, returning to Australia in 1986.

Pauline was a strong advocate for racial reconciliation, and a quiet but firm believer in the ordination of women and advancing the role of women in the church.

She is survived by her sisters Erica Wiltshire and Joyce Higgins.

Vale Mabel Walker

MABEL WALKER was the first deaconess in Queensland. Born Mabel Trigger in 1923, Mrs Walker grew up in Maryborough and worked as a clerk before returning to the family farm.

It was Circuit Minister Rev Carter, seeing Mabel's leadership, music and teaching gifts, who encouraged her to train as a deaconess.

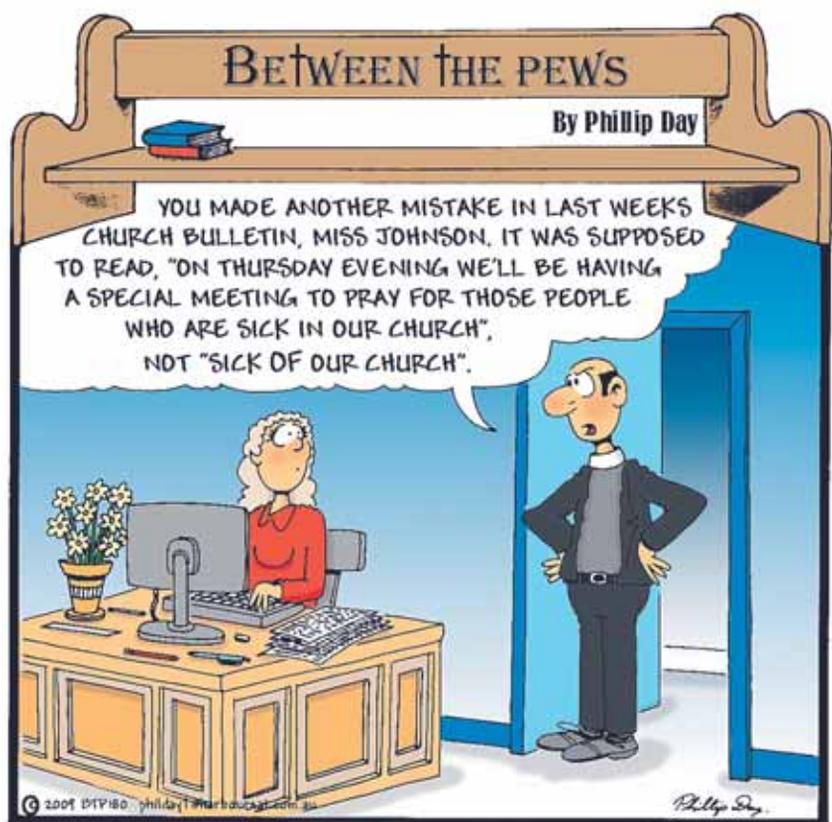
After training in Sydney, she returned to Queensland in 1948. She said she sensed that the Church, "didn't know what to do with me".

Her work in Brisbane, Ipswich, Mackay and Townsville centred around pastoral care, Christian education, and also being on the preaching roster.

She married the Rev Robert J Walker, in 1958. Her earlier training fitted her well for the work of a minister's wife. She and Bob had four children.

They served at Gayndah, Noosa, Kelvin Grove, North Ipswich Methodist Circuits, Mossman, Blackwater, and Lowood-Rosewood Uniting Church parishes.

Mrs Walker's last residence in Brassall Village after Bob's retirement was the longest period she had spent at one address in her earthly sojourn. A person of dry wit and a direct, no-fuss, no-nonsense attitude, she is remembered fondly and with thanksgiving for her life in service of her Lord.



Car Park Parables: Old Mr T. and Friends

Created by Paul Clark, Animated DVD, RRP \$9.95

Reviewed by John Ruhle, minister at The Gap Uniting Church.

CAR PARK Parables is a collection of Jesus' parables based around cars in a car park – the Westbrook Church car park to be exact.

This new resource, released in July, uses humour, creative flair and cars to engage children and adults alike in some of Jesus' most famous parables including Trevor Truckstarring in *The Prodigal Pick-up*, Freida Ford reminding Harry Holden that not all Fords are bad in *The Good Ford* and Harley doing what Harleys do best in *The Missing Motorcycle*.

The DVD finishes with the author's take on how baptism

can be understood through the eyes of a child and the use of cars, in *Issi's Baptism* - a great story of only five minutes that I have used during a baptism service with really positive feedback.

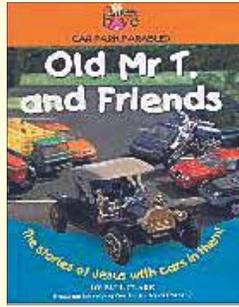
Car Park Parables really is a unique and creative response to telling the stories of Jesus.

It will not only delight boys and girls, but also men and women of all ages.

Available from www.mosaicresources.com.au

To win a copy *Old Mr T. and Friends* answer this question:

In 2007 Paul Clark with Ms Downs and Gwen Marshall



completed a tour of their show called ... ?

The answer is available at www.journeyonline.com.au

Email the answer along with your name and address to journey@ucaqld.com.au

God and Caesar in Australia: Aspects of Church and State from 1788

By Bruce Upham, Zeus Publications, 2009, RRP \$34.95

Reviewed by Bill Adams.

THE VERY title of *God and Caesar in Australia* quickens the pulse and sends the blood pumping. We think of all the confrontations, the power struggles in times past and present, between church and state.

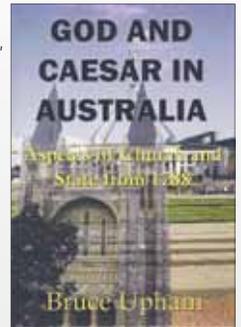
Rather than deal only with the ideas and concepts the title evokes, author Bruce Upham has worked on the topic as a strict historian, coming down from the clouds of abstraction to the reality of life in Australia.

He has dealt with particular areas: education, Aboriginal affairs and other social issues like sexual morality and the role of trade unions.

Mr Upham concludes by comparing the situation in Australia with that of other places such as Europe and the US.

Mr Upham is well-known in theological education, especially in Queensland where he lectured for 23 years at Trinity Theological College.

He was very involved in the preparation of the *Basis of Union* for the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia, having come from the Congregational Union.



As a piece of historical research *God and Caesar* is very well documented, with careful referencing, accurate footnotes, comprehensive bibliography and many appropriate quotations to strengthen the point being argued.

As a source of information for a student these topics are absolutely invaluable.

Many hours must have been spent researching the archives of the various Churches and government institutions here and in London, newspaper reports and other historical works to gather so much information in such compact form.

God and Caesar is most interesting because of its relevance to the issues we face today - so many of them have roots in the past. This history is an invaluable tool.

I Am Bonhoeffer: A Credible Life

By Paul Barz, Fortress Press, 2008, RRP \$49.95

Reviewed by Don Whebell, a retired Uniting Church minister.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER'S life and witness have been a source of inspiration for Christians for many years.

Books about Bonhoeffer abound and here's another one! This, however, is very different to any other.

Author Paul Barz is a journalist and historian. He is also a very astute theologian.

From deep immersion in Bonhoeffer's writings, awareness of the political and ecclesiastical scenes in the world of the 1930s and '40s, and a gift for incisive writing, Mr Barz brings to life the people whose lives interacted with Bonhoeffer: his family, fiancée, friends, fellow theologians (such as Barth and Bethge) the theological students,

confirmation class, those involved in the emerging World Council of Churches, fellow prisoners, collaborators, and interrogators.

Mr Barz senses the dilemma: Bonhoeffer the pacifist is also a participant in a plot against the life of Germany's ruler.

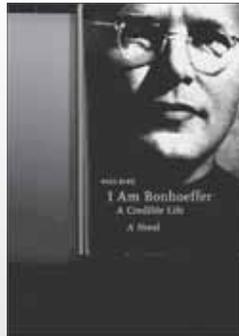
He enters into the life of the illegal seminary Bonhoeffer ran, which was important to the life of the new Confessing Church.

Anyone who has read Bonhoeffer will enjoy meeting him again in these settings.

Those who do not now know who he was will appreciate this introduction.

Each chapter of *I am Bonhoeffer* closes with 'Tegel' reflections.

Tegel was the prison where Bonhoeffer was held and wrote



what became *Letters and Papers From Prison* before he was taken to Flossenberg and executed on 9 April 1945.

These reflections are compelling reading as we in the Church today are also confronted by the need for engagement with the world with a discipleship that is clear and costly.

Blessed Relief: What Christians Can Learn from Buddhists about Suffering

By Gordon Peerman, Skylight Paths, 2008, RRP \$34.95

Reviewed by Marian Zaunbrecher, Associate General Secretary of the Queensland Synod.

THE AUTHOR of *Blessed Relief* has been an Episcopal priest for 30 years and found himself drawn to Buddhist spirituality.

Buddhism is not a religion so much as a philosophy. As such the believer can draw on its deep understanding of life, suffering, pain and conflict.

I have found that this continues to draw us back to Jesus and the rich history of Christianity.

Blessed Relief is inspiring, instructive and useful to those interested in prayer.

It is easy to read, full of narrative stories and each chapter finishes with simple practices to experience "blessed relief".

The concept of mindfulness reminded me of Jesus' teaching as recorded in Matthew 6.

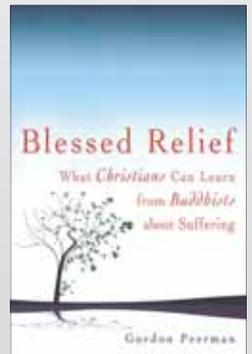
The chapters cover awareness, ambition, conflict, being an instrument of peace, beginning anew, dying and compassion.

I especially loved the chapter on non-violent communication, a practice

that would enrich our personal relationships as well as our communications within the communities of faith of which we are a part.

Mr Peerman's writings will not appeal to everybody, but as one who believes we can learn a lot from our believing sisters and brothers of other faiths, I found it instructional.

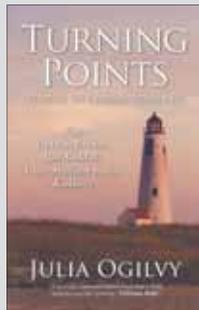
In reading *Blessed Relief* I was led repeatedly back to the Christ and the unconditional love that is intrinsic to both Christian and Buddhist teachings.



More reviews online at www.journeyonline.com.au including:

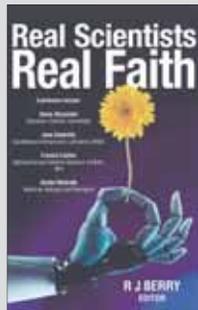
Turning Points

By Julia Ogilvie, Lion Books, Oxford, 2009, RRP \$22.95



Real Scientists Real Faith

Edited by R.J. Berry, Monarch Books, 2009, RRP \$22.95



Spirituality in the Lives of Children and Adolescents: Some Perspectives

Edited by Marian de Souza and Winifred Wing Han Lamb
2008 Interface: a Forum for Theology in the World Volume 10 No. 2, ATF Press Adelaide, RRP \$19.95

Reviews available from ...

Many of the titles reviewed in *Journey* are available from C.M.S Bookstore, St Paul's Bookstore, or Christian Supplies in Brisbane city. Books can usually be ordered from Vision Books at Broadwater Road Uniting Church, Mansfield, or may be available from www.mosaicresources.com.au



Jars of Clay. Photo courtesy of Crossroad Distributors

Jars of Clay break mould

WITH THE release of their latest album *The Long Fall Back to Earth*, internationally acclaimed rock band Jars of Clay has forged new territory not only musically but also in the area of humanitarianism.

For band members their musical success has provided the perfect platform to put their faith in action.

Keyboard player Charlie Lowell said God had given them opportunities to travel to places like China and Africa where they have been challenged in their understanding of God, the church, and faith.

Through these travels the band built a defining relationship with humanitarian work in Africa and established the not-for-profit organisation *Blood: Mission* in 2005.

Their first effort was the 1000 Wells Project with a goal of raising funds to build, rebuild and repair wells in urban and rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa, 700 wells have been built to date.

"When we travel to Africa and see first-hand the difference this project is making ... it just renews us and gives us that extended passion that we need."

Mr Lowell said this new album

was inspired by some of their favourite 1980s bands including Tears for Fears, The Cure and INXS. "This style of music was an area that we hadn't dipped our feet into yet and we love to evolve and challenge ourselves musically."

Thanks to Crossroads Distributors *Journey* has three copies of *The Long Fall Back to Earth* to give away. Simply tell us which AGMF Jars of Clay closed.

The answer is at www.journeyonline.com.au. Email your answer along with your name and postal address to journey@ucaqld.com.au

Sunday 13 September: Barnabas Community

INSPIRED BY the L'Arche Community, the Barnabas Community was formed at Oxley Uniting Church in 1995.

Our mission is to establish a permanent Christian Community that is a home for people, able and disabled, to live together in mutual support and enrichment.

Through outstanding generosity we purchased a large house in Durack in 1996, now named Barnabas House, which has become our headquarters.

Two ways in which we embody our vision is in regular attendance at worship at Oxley Uniting Church, and in our monthly fellowship meal.

Added to this is the day-to-day communal life of our residents.

We value every person in our community, including our many donors, supporters and volunteers.

We value your prayer on the many important topics listed below.

- We give thanks for the recent news that we have received a grant from Disability Services Queensland of \$50 000 to undertake much needed renovations and repairs at Barnabas House.

- We ask for your prayers as we seek to address a serious funding shortfall which has been of great concern to our community for nearly 12 months. Every endeavour is being made to find a way out of this current funding crisis.

- We value your prayers for our precious household residents and co-residents, that our house will be a sacramental place, a place of giving and receiving, where the love and grace of Jesus Christ is found and celebrated.

- Finally, we remind the Church to pray for ageing parents of children with disabilities, who carry in their hearts a burden of love for their children, and anxiety for their ongoing care and nurture.

Sunday 27 September: St. Andrew's Uniting Church Mt Isa

ST ANDREW'S Uniting Church in Mt Isa is celebrating the arrival of their new minister Rev Paul MacGregor and his wife Margaret.

Paul and Margaret have completed four years serving as volunteers with the Rahab Ministries in Thailand which reach out to women working as prostitutes in the red-light tourist districts. Before moving to Thailand, Paul was a Presbyterian pastor in New Zealand.

When the St Andrew's parish was between ordained ministers, members of the congregation stepped into the gap in numerous ways ensuring that the parish remained in great shape.

Their services and gifts will continue to be strengthened and used as Paul encourages them to take an active role.

We are excited to explore fresh ways we can impact the community with the love of God.

Plans are being prepared for a hall

upgrade so that it can be used for community programs. Already a group within the church run a Homework Club for high school students.

Plans for a music group, cooking-on-a-budget classes, and many other opportunities are also being explored.

The raising of the necessary funding is an urgent need.

St. Andrew's Mt Isa, being in the world's fifth largest city (by area), also has a strong multi-cultural congregation.

Fijian, Samoan, Maori, other Pacific Islanders, Indian, and South African members are a valued part of our community.

Please pray for our community outreach initiatives and the necessary funding to bring our hall up to standard.

Also pray for the congregation and Paul and Margaret as God welds us together to achieve all that he has planned for the parish.

Advisory Group on Housing and Homelessness

Queensland Synod is seeking expressions of interest for the Synod Advisory Group on Housing and Homelessness

If you are committed to alleviating homelessness and would like to contribute your gifts and experience as part of a voluntary team, please consider applying. The Advisory Group will provide advice and guidance to church and agency members wanting to respond to housing and homelessness in formal, organised ways. The group will have a range of experience including a knowledge of the mission of the Church, community development, creative approaches to community services, finance, property, planning, building and partnerships with external organisations.

Expressions of interest should address the criteria (no more than 2 pages) along with a brief CV outlining relevant experience. For further information or to submit an expression of interest see:

W: www.ucaqld.com.au/job.aspx
T: (07) 3025 2013
E: uc.socialjustice@ucareqld.com.au
GPO Box 45, Brisbane QLD 4001

Closing date for expressions of interest: 30 September 2009



Social Justice Sunday resources

SOCIAL JUSTICE Sunday will be held on 27 September 2009.

This year's theme is *Hope for the Common Good: Beyond the Global Financial Crisis*.

The National Council of Churches resources explore different social justice themes, and include prayer and worship materials reflecting the theme and are available from UnitingJustice free of charge.

Simply call 02 8267 4236, email unitingjustice@nat.uca.org.au or visit www.unitingjustice.org.au.



Right now in North Korea

...people are starving. While the world scratches its head and debates the best approach to relations with North Korea, our approach as Christians is clear. Christ calls for us to care for those who need it.

Uniting World is responding to these needs with a range of projects that address some of the most urgent needs in the region of Rason, in the country's mountainous north.

To read more about this project, go to www.unitingworld.org.au or call +61 2 8267 4267



An Agency of the National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia

We're still uniting

DURING THIS semester I have participated in a series of lectures about the *Basis of Union* and the Uniting Church.

One of the startling things I found was how little I knew about this important document within our Church.

I was born after union and so all I know is the Uniting Church.

In my early adult years I visited several different denominations.

The main reason I decided to stay within the Uniting Church was its focus on being an ecumenical church.

The Uniting Church has a great tradition. We were once three separate churches which came into union in an attempt to be a movement for Christian unity as opposed to being just another denomination.

The 'oldies' which many young people whine about

(myself included) were once enthusiastic young Christians who helped orchestrate and coordinate this move towards a better expression of what it means to be one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

As the years slip by there will be fewer of these people who remember what it was to be a Presbyterian, Methodist or Congregationalist.

We younger members should seek to learn from our predecessors and those who remember coming into union should share their stories and lessons with the younger generations.

As a church we should not rest on our laurels. Instead we should continue the unifying activities of our forbears.

John Dansie
Coopers Plains,
Aitkenvale, and
Enoggera



Photo of sadness?

MY HEART ached as soon as I saw the photo on the front page of the August *Journey*.

My initial reaction was what are these members of the Uniting Church doing that the photo has such darkness?

The title *Flood of Tears Assembly 2009* and the photo of the blessing of the new President Rev Alistair Macrae is not a joyful photo.

It is so singular, sad and serious in composition.

How disconnected is our Uniting Church at the top?

Life at the top doesn't have to be as lonely as this photo depicts.

We are told "Rejoice in the Lord always" yet none of the five people on the front page seem to be rejoicing; most likely they would have rejoiced later and in this photo they are expressing the solemnity of the occasion.

Maybe the four supporters at the rear of the photo had

finished laying hands on Rev Macrae, but surely it would have been even more supportive if they were photographed looking joyful and physically connected to Rev Macrae.

What comes across starkly is the staidness and separateness of the leading members of our church.

Where is the joy, the passion and creativity?

We may be considered rednecks in North Queensland, but so many visitors from down south comment on the life of our church.

In fact nearly half of our congregation is under 15 years old. When we bless people we lay hands on them.

Rev Macrae has a nice humble smile on the back page. This photo bodes well for the future of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Meryl Thomas
Townsville



Have faith

RECENTLY IN church we had a few sermons on faith.

These brought to mind a very special time in my life.

Let me tell you.

At the age of eleven I read the book *God's Smuggler* by Brother Andrew.

Then and there I knew that this was what I wanted to do: smuggle Bibles to people who couldn't get God's word for themselves. But of course I was a little young.

At the age of 20 I was praying about the possibility, then got scared and stopped praying.

Four years later the church I was attending had a mini seminar after Sunday service.

The speaker spent a lot of time explaining the first part of the Bible - Creation, also telling that God's word meant exactly what it said.

I already knew that but the proof these people encouraged us to examine made my head knowledge become heart knowledge.

Suddenly when I knew that God's Word was totally believable I had the faith to go and smuggle Bibles.

Would we want to have faith in something that wasn't true?

What would be the point of going to church or worshipping God if we couldn't believe him?

God's word is totally true and there is proof for anyone who is willing to accept it.

Let's have faith in someone faithful.

Cathy Hawkins
Mannum



Rise to the challenge

I AM EXCITED that Uniting Church President Rev Alistair Macrae has highlighted care for creation as one of the crucial mission challenges facing the Church at this time. Caring for creation is part of our biblical and church tradition but the current ecological crisis has brought an awareness and immediate urgency to this area of ministry.

The President's challenge for serious theological reflection and ministry engagement is one we need to heed.

Our understanding of creation will be important in shaping how we respond to this challenge.

In his installation sermon the President used the metaphor of steward as the model for our engagement in this vital ministry.

I recognise that Mr Macrae is using the metaphor with the best of intent and in the most positive way.

However, I do not believe "steward" is the best image for the ministry of creation care and argue that we need to seek

alternate metaphors.

The metaphor contains some less than helpful implications including a managerial approach to Earth, an absentee God, a separation of humanity and the rest of creation, and a lack of recognition of how Earth cares for people.

Many thinkers in the area of ecological theology, including Norman Habel, Claire Palmer, Paul Santmire and Ruth Page, argue that it is important to seek an alternative term that avoids the negative possibilities of "steward".

Some alternatives suggested include being members of a partnership, community or shared household.

Care of creation is one of the most pressing challenges facing the Church and our President has well served us by highlighting this mission focus. I encourage us all to embrace our vocation to serve the reconciliation and renewal of all creation.

Paul Chalson
Howrah, Tasmania



What do we believe?

TED BUTLER'S reply (August *Journey*) to my letter raises further questions in my mind.

To begin with there is some ambiguity in the term "believing Christians".

Who are they and what exactly do they believe?

In my discussions with JWS I have often been told that they all speak and think the same.

Personally I am not impressed with this answer because it indicates a lack of freedom or the ability to have a diversity of insights and expression.

Obedience is one thing but servility quite another.

For too long the Bible has been called the word of God by the church.

By all means let us call it Sacred Scripture but God,

as the creator of the entire universe, could give us a far better description than any inspired biblical author.

The horrible reality is that the church is negligent in bringing its people up to date. Spong and McNab are warning us that our fear of new insights, which has existed since the Enlightenment, has become a choking phobia.

We must learn to reconcile religious truths with scientific truths.

This is not an easy task. However, if we believe that all truths emanate from the creator we can be confident of a successful outcome.

Len Notenboom
Elanora



Compassion

THIS BRIEF account is one that memorialises human kindness and compassion.

It is my good fortune to have a cluster of Christian friends and a never-stop-caring Buddhist friend.

One brought me home from hospital after an accident.

Another took me to see my wife in a Blue Care nursing home.

A retired Minister was untiring with his "call me any time" approach, proving his words with countless favours and errands.

Yet another friend arrived on my doorstep expressing his

concern for my welfare.

"I am coming every Thursday at 10am I will take you to see your wife, do your shopping then bring you home. This promise is for every week until the end of the year," he said,

Note that these, with others who express concern for others' needs, are ardent believers in God.

Using charity and imagination I have a care for the lonely unbeliever, the free thinker.

Who ministers to them?

Or the organised humanists, with their endless debating that never produces a Mother Theresa or an Albert Schweitzer.

CLASSIFIEDS

Accommodation

Holiday unit, modern, pool. 100m from Kings Beach Caloundra from \$360/wk. Ph Ray 0427990161.

London B & B. Easy city access; lge double room, ensuite, self-catering. Reas rates. *rachel@brockleybandb.fsnet.co.uk* Ph/Fax: 001144.2086946538.

Position Vacant

St Bartholomew's Anglican Church, Mt Gravatt is seeking a Paid Musical Director. Duties will include supporting and providing appropriate music for 2 services each Sunday and a general overview of music requirements for the Parish (approximately 6 - 8 hrs / week). All enquires to Ken Suddick, Rector: 3849 4411

Email your classified advertisements to journey@ucaqld.com.au

Send your letters to journey@ucaqld.com.au OR Journey GPO Box 674, Brisbane QLD 4001.

Letters may be edited due to space limitations.

Good human beings no doubt. Emphasising the intellectual is different from serving the needs of others with heart and will.

That is compassion.

Phillip Ramsay
Manly West





How does your faith keep you well?

Rob Rixon

IT IS NOT until recently that I have once again consciously identified myself as being 'religious'.

Like many of my friends, I let any considerations of faith fade into the periphery through my later teenage years.

A move interstate brought the importance of family and friends into sharper focus and I started to think seriously about the movements of a higher power in my life.

I've also never really thought of myself as 'sporty'.

I like playing soccer and touch, and I'll watch Origin, but I wouldn't consider myself an athletic type.

On paper I fit the general framework: I ride every chance I get and I'm bleary-eyed

for three weeks every July when the Tour de France is on.

Cycling is, of course, a sport but it's become my entire world over the past few years — not so much a pastime as what I do with nearly every waking moment.

Riding is a chance to think, to meditate. The desire to push yourself to the point of pain and exhaustion may seem somewhat perplexing.

Temporarily suffering puts things into perspective and many riders will tell you about a sense of freedom from having to think about anything at all.

I find myself thinking about what's really important: my family, my friends and my faith.



Rob Rixon after riding to the top of Mont Ventoux, France, during a recent ride along the Tour de France circuit. Photo courtesy of Rob Rixon

Beatriz Skippen

"BE STILL, and know that I am God" Psalm 46:10. In the middle of my chemotherapy treatment a dear friend of mine gave me a beautiful glass ornament engraved with the words of that Psalm.

I placed it on my bedside table. Before I started chemotherapy I had plans to catch up with my reading and administration work.

I wanted to take my laptop computer with me while I had the needle in my arm with chemo going to my body.

Those who know me well understand how difficult it is for me to be still.

I want to run with the Lord, not just walk, and probably because of my health I had a sense of urgency.

During my treatment I cried out to the Lord to show me the purpose of it all.

My focus was the ministry, the blessings of walking with God, the privilege of knowing Jesus as my saviour, friend, teacher, and Lord.

This is what kept me going, with the emotional support and prayers of my brothers and sisters from the "inside" church (those in prison to whom I minister) and the wider Church.

Many people sent me emails, cards, letters, and flowers.

So much love was a constant reminder that Jesus understood my pain.

My journey with cancer wasn't only mine, but the journey of my husband, children, grandchildren, the prison ministry team, our church family, loved ones and friends overseas.

All held me in prayer.

The Lord showed me his mercies and love through many in my church community and especially the inmates.

The Lord in his grace gave me energy, even when I didn't have much, to go to the prison and share my faith with the inmates.

But something special happened. The Lord ministered to me through the inmates. Those brothers and sisters certainly refreshed my heart.

Once again I experienced the power of the cross and his grace which come from his unconditional love for me.

Beatriz Skippen is Prison Ministry Coordinator for Lifeline Community Care Queensland



Marcia Pitman

WHEN I was a child I had very poor health and the effects of that stayed with me well into adulthood.

I had been connected with the church in Broken Hill in those earlier years and eventually found my way back into the church through a Uniting Church congregation in Adelaide where my faith journey really began.

The care and support I received through that Christian community was very important. The relationships were special and I really enjoyed participating in worship and small group activities.

Eventually I sought confirmation and became a member of the Church.

I realised that my faith in God was touching every area of my life, including my health and wellbeing.

I worked for many years in aged care and found the spiritual dimension of my life to be vitally important.

Being able to see my everyday work as consistent with God's purpose was energising and there were many occasions when my faith led to conversations with people that otherwise would not have been possible.

I had been greatly helped over the years by some forms of holistic medicine in which the spiritual dimension of life is given an important place, and eventually moved into that area of work myself.

I have no doubt that a personal faith in God gives us an inner strength and peace that greatly assists the natural healing processes in our bodies.

I believe that my faith not only enhances my own wellbeing and enjoyment of life, it also gives me the opportunity to offer so much more to my clients than would otherwise be possible.



Marcia Pitman is a bioresonance therapist

Commemorating 100 years of our family's funeral care...

In 1909, Alexander Gow made a commitment to Queenslanders. In 2009 that commitment continues, and we're celebrating by doing something special. Whenever our family company conducts a funeral service for your family, and everything is settled - we'll honour our 100 years of tradition by donating \$100 to your favourite charity.

ALEX GOW FUNERALS
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