



THE new vine

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Blackall Range Uniting Churches

(Kenilworth, Maleny, Montville and Palmwoods)

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

This is the Spring 2020 edition of our journal and as I look at it, it says very little about the turn of the seasons. However, while it says little about promising warmth, new flowers, changing colours, a jauntiness in our steps etc., there is a poem that tells of the touch of Spring and I hope this talks enough about newness of life with the promise of possible new buds leading to fullness of life and much more.

This is because we will look at a number of different topics that focus on where our church might go as we move out of the COVID crisis. We are challenged to look at a new future – how exciting is that? We are all invited to consciously consider how we might contribute to, take part in, and help build, the Kingdom of God. Wow!

So, I guess what our journal is trying to do is to encourage each of us to dip into our imaginations in a very real way and think of our church in terms of the world's seasons. Imagine coming out of the darkness and dread of the winter into the brightness, lightness and rightness of a new season in our corporate life.

We have a chance to imagine what the buds of promise grow into – what sorts of flower/tree we might become. A once in a lifetime opportunity really.

And having written this, I went to the four page report of the Visioning Group – a must read for us all, really – and saw the emphasis on gardens, and it all seemed to fall into place. We can/will be God's garden on the Blackall Range.

Now, I'm not a gardener, no matter how that is defined. But I do understand some of the processes it involves. I know there are sometimes plants that have run their course and need to be replaced either by new plants or seedlings. I know that plants thrive best when they suit the conditions of the place where they are. I know that plants we know and love from our childhood may not be the best plants for our garden today. I know some plants have to be pruned annually to give the best results. Others have greater knowledge of gardening and could expand this list.

And, I wonder, as we imagine our future, how much of this knowledge might best be applied to our Blackall Range Uniting Church garden. Please think about this as you read the various articles.

And may we all ponder – What sort of flower would I like to be in the new garden.

Peace and blessings

Graham



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LIENA'S LINES

The Complexity of Violence

*"No longer will violence be heard in your land,
nor ruin or destruction within your borders,
but you will call your walls Salvation
and your gates Praise." (Isaiah 60:18)*

If I were asked: "What was your most scary moment in life?", I would probably answer "It was a fear of being raped". It was the 18th of February 1994 and I was being assaulted by a group of men in a transport truck-yard. The huge metal gates were closed and any help far away, although the local police station was only a kilometre down the road. I was beaten and kicked and I feared I was going to be raped. I, then the strong, tough and powerful corporate lawyer, was totally powerless and had no control of the situation. All I could do was beg, beg, beg for mercy from my attackers and pray. Thank God I was not raped; and I was in time shoved out of the truck yard.

Trauma and humiliation, came after the assault. Bloody and beaten I stumbled onto a road and had to stop a passing car for help who then dropped me at the police station up the road. There, still bleeding, I had to spell my name over and over again to police officers and painstakingly repeat what had happened while they wrote it down, word for word, slowly.

I did not break down then. No, greater trauma and humiliation lay ahead. I broke down in court. I, who after 5 years of tertiary legal training, and 9 years' experience as a professional legal practitioner, broke down under cross examination in the very same courts I had been pursuing justice for almost a decade. It was several months after the assault, and the defence lawyer was questioning me about the evidence of my assault, and wanted to see the pink shirt I had told them I was wearing that was full of blood. It was a baby-pink shirt, one my mother had made, custom-made with holes for cuff-links, which her daughter liked to wear. Anyone who has been assaulted, will know that the first thing you want to do is wash yourself, cleanse yourself, try and wash away the fear, the violation, the defilement. So I had burnt the baby-pink shirt, for no detergent could have washed out the blood stains. And now, in court, in the place of justice, doubt of my assault was raised because I no longer had the evidence of the bloody pink shirt! That is when I broke down.

And the headline in the paper the next day was "Lawyer breaks down in court".

The assault on me was not a matter of domestic violence, but I am sharing the story because it is a story of violence, and a story of complexity. And the issue of violence is part of our community story. As a community of faith, we need to reflect upon and try to understand the issue of violence and how it influences our lives and the lives of those with whom we share a community. We also need to try and understand the experience and meaning of an assault from different perspectives.

Of course my experience of the attack was very different to those of the perpetrators. With regard to sexual violence, a friend and researcher in philosophy at Stellenbosch University, Louise du Toit writes: "(a) sexual attack usually has very different, even opposing, meanings for perpetrators who typically find it either trivial or exhilarating, and empowering, and survivors, who often experience the 'same' event as world-shattering, as destroying their most basic trusts in the world, in others, and in themselves".

Complex too, is the response to acts of violence. A typical response is to respond with violence. The first thing the company I worked for did was get me a gun and fast track a gun-licence! It

was a beautiful .38 special revolver, aluminium with a lovely wooden grip. But a .38 special did not resolve the commercial dispute the company was entangled in.

Neither did the power of the courts contribute to any form of solution. If anything, the court justice system, increased the trauma (and financial expense) of all parties.

I could carry on, but I think you recognise the scenario. My experience is not a solitary experience, and countless others, mainly women, have experienced similar stories of violence, trauma and humiliation, with no resolution or solution or even comfort from various systems.

Violence, including DFV, is a complex issue, and many have been trying to combat DFV, seemingly not with much success as it is on the increase in the Sunshine Coast. There is a new collective effort by the Combined Service Clubs of Maleny and the Blackall Range Domestic and Family Violence Focus Group to address DFV, including support for perpetrators and victims.

May we, as a community of faith, find ways to join others in the community to combat this sad, sad canker?

Shalom, Liena



THE SEASON OF CREATION

At the time of preparing this edition, we learnt that we were to be considering Harvest Festival and celebrating God's goodness in all things – including Creation – during September.



The picture below spoke to me of this celebration.

Graham

ODE TO SPRING – By Joyce Butterfield

*Spring has sprung and there's much to be done.
The water dragon lizard is out in the sun,
the mud larks are busy building their nest
in which the eggs will be laid to hatch.*

*Sitting on my verandah watching nature at play
I notice a butcher bird has come to stay,
just for a while, and away he has flown
in search of an insect or a twig for his home.*

*The plovers are quiet down by the creek.
Should anyone venture to take a peek
all hell will break loose to scare them away
as they swoop and attack - so be on your way.*

*The pin oak and other trees are still quite bare,
looking cold and naked through winter they dare,
will now clothe themselves with leaves in the spring
and encourage the birds to whistle and sing.*

*As I sit and meditate overlooking the dam,
I hear the call of the Ibis Clan
honking their songs and flapping their wings
just to prove they belong and welcome the Spring.*

*All are God's creatures both great and small
I am but a tiny part of it all
as I sit in my chair in the sun, I declare,
our Ben Bryce Park is a place of prayer.*



BLACKALL RANGE UNITING CHURCH

Post Covid-19

Thank you to all those who offered their wisdom to the Visioning Group established by Rev. Liena Hoffman. It was stimulating to read of your experiences and insights. What stood out for me was the repeated comments from each of our worshipping communities that we need to connect with our local communities with a greater sense of purpose.

So, the vision that we offer is that which we adopted in our Basis of Union, that our congregation be “the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ. Its members meet regularly to hear God’s Word, to celebrate the sacraments, to build one another up in love, to share in the wider responsibilities of the Church, and to serve the world.”

It is rather daunting to discover that in God’s eyes we, the people who gather in Palmwoods, Montville and Maleny, are the visible expression of the presence of Christ in all that we do individually and collectively.

Many people told us of their desire to grow deeper and more confident in their faith so that their witness to Christ in action and word might be more authentic. Some spoke of our past engagement through the Community Garden at Palmwoods, the Reflection Gallery and Garden at Montville, the Christmas Tree Festival, the Garage Sale, School Chaplaincies, and the Neighbourhood Centre. The Visioning Group was also aware of the many members of our Congregation who are already deeply committed to community service through a variety of non-church groups.

Steps Forward:

1. Gardening

Liena suggested a Gardening Theme might unify our shared vision. Already we have the Community Garden in Palmwoods, a Reflection Garden at Montville and a suggested Landscaping Design at Maleny. With some focused thinking these might all be developed to engage the wider community more and create a bridge into a deeper relationship with Christ. The Church Council will give some oversight and encouragement to those who may be interested in this project.

2. Community Service

This first step we felt was to collate the existing community involvements of our members. We don’t want to overburden folk by launching new, shared projects unless there is a strong desire to do so. It is firstly important to empower those who are already serving in a variety of ways and help them recognize this service as God’s call to discipleship.

It would be great if you would give serious thought to how your community activity expresses Christ’s presence among those with whom you share interests. This doesn’t mean that you have to be always trying to “convert” folk or urge them to “join the Church”. However, when you see your daily life affirming God’s love in people’s lives, you find yourself leaning closer to Jesus. This realization might lead you to seek a deeper understanding of your own faith so that when others raise their own faith questions you will feel confident to respond.

In this edition of The New Vine, I have tried to trigger some initial responses from all of us. There are many other insights contained in the full report and I would urge everyone to read it and reflect upon their own discipleship. The Church Council will continue to work

with this report and develop a “People Plan” for our communities. At some point we will also need to tackle issues of financial sustainability and make decisions about the amount of property we have to use and maintain for Christ’s mission.

Be assured that we will keep everyone informed about our shared journey and make sure that we continue to draw on your wisdom as we go forward together.

Bruce Johnson
Chairperson-elect Church Council



TRADITION/INNOVATION?

I have mentioned previously how I was once taken to task by a wise woman in the congregation who challenged/corrected me when I mentioned a time when I found so many coincidences happening in my life that I could no longer ignore them. She told me there is no such thing as coincidence – rather it was God’s continuing providence I was experiencing.

That message came back to me a few weeks ago as I was pondering how this edition might carry forward the thoughts about the sort of congregation we thought we might become post virus.

I was doing my morning devotions, part of which is using the daily readings in *With love to the world*. Suddenly the words spoke to me in answer to my ponderings. I simply had to share what lay before me. The words spoke to my problem, so here they are – I find myself more and more “in God’s continuing providence”.

Matthew 15: 1 – 9

How many congregations does it take to change a light bulb? Five: one to change the bulb, and four to talk about how good the old bulb was. N.T. Wright suggests that this joke highlights the Seven Last Words of the Church: “We never did it this way before.” This wrestling between tradition and innovation is not just about supporting one against the other. Novelty for the sake of novelty is as problematic as custom for the sake of custom. In today’s reading, the Pharisees accuse Jesus and his followers of throwing out important traditions. In response, however, Jesus accuses the Pharisees of throwing out scripture. Are you really honouring your parents, he asks, if you create a tradition of donating to the temple what you would have spent on your parents’ aged care, thus releasing you from further obligation to actually honour them? This tradition benefits the temple and looks pious – but it undermines the whole point of the Torah. As scripture is the source and basis of our faith and life together as the church, there is nothing wrong with traditions, if they are grounded in scripture. The same goes for innovations. It is scripture that helps us distinguish between healthy and hypocritical traditions, or between life-giving and deadly innovations.

Question: What in your church’s life is traditional, and what is innovative? And do you have any innovations that are now your local traditions?

Prayer: Loving God, help me not to worship tradition, nor innovation, but you alone.

The commentary was written by Rev Radhika Sukumar-White, a UCA Minister of the Word, serving at Leichhardt, NSW.

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I felt these thoughts were worth adding to the mix as we think about our future.

Graham

KARL'S KORNER

Apologetics

How do you give reasons for your faith? Apologetics is the art of defending/explaining one's faith to those who are seeking, and we are told to be able to give a reason for our faith (1 Peter 3:15). It has seemed to me that the church has framed its reasons in an environment that no longer exists. A culture belonging to the nineteenth century or before what has been called 'the enlightenment' where scientific framing became the norm. That framing has demanded something called 'evidence' because the whole point of science is to be predictive. In such a frame, an interventionist deity is anathema. However, let me make a few points.

Look at the following two sentences and see where they come from:-

- 11.1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence for things not seen.
- faith /felθ/ (n); the substance of things hoped for; the evidence for things not seen.

We tend to frame statements into a context. So, we think the above ought to be a theological statement whereas it could come from a dictionary. Similarly, when a clergyperson is listened to, we automatically create a frame for their utterances. But is such framing always correct? And does the listener miss the point because the speaker is seen in a certain frame? This is why a layperson's utterances about the faith are so important - the statements aren't automatically framed (contextualised) in a certain way.

Recently, I gave a presentation about thinking logically and I presented a method of decision making based on looking at the consequences which gave me the opportunity to give a reason for my faith. See what you think. I posed three questions as follows:-

1. Do deities exist? (A deity being an entity deemed the ultimate source of everything - material, meaning, and purpose).
2. If so, is this deity interested in me, the individual?
3. What is the essential character of this deity?

The first two questions can only be answered by 'Yes' or 'No'. A 'No' to Q1. implies atheism which, while a legitimate answer, is inherently analogous to zero in mathematics (It doesn't change anything) and absolute zero in temperature (An unattainable reference point since we all live by faith in something) leaving one as one's own deity by default. (Former PM Gough Whitlam responded to the question "What if you met God in the afterlife?" by saying he would treat Him as an equal.)

A 'Yes' to Q1 followed by a 'No' to Q2 has an almost similar result but leads to fatalism since one is then the plaything of the deity whose experiment will likely be thrown away.

However, if we've answered 'Yes' to both, the third question is more open-ended. Traditionally we have been presented with two images of God - an egotistical dictator demanding obedience and obeisance (Think of recent U.S. presidents enamoured by power through 'shock and awe', or who indicate to followers what is expected by applauding themselves at every opportunity); and a loving creator who wants us to be His friends. There may be other images, but, if you're following my thinking, which one of these two makes sense to you?

While the above is an interesting intellectual exercise, it deals only with reasons, not feelings or spiritual aspects. Still, the answers to these questions lead to what is called a 'working hypothesis' for life. What's your 'working hypothesis'?

REMEMBRANCE

Whatever the pandemic might bring upon us, the normal stuff of life goes on, often with greater intensity. The human needs for food and shelter, for warmth and rest, continue; babies are born, serious illness come and go, and people die; human contact and relationships are still needed; we seek security and safety and order among the chaos. Our equilibrium is upset. We are disconcerted and so on.

A number of our people have suffered loss over recent times and two have asked me to include a response to this loss. They follow. One is a tribute to a friend and the other was sent to one of us in response to a letter of sympathy she sent to a friend – a statement of faith. – Graham



SILENT WITNESS

*Each day I wear a cross,
hung from my neck on a chain.
It reminds me of Christ's cross
that brought about our gain.*

*It also shows my neighbour
I own Jesus as my Lord;
and he's called me to labour
to spread the Gospel word.*

*Then should my neighbour ask,
"What does it mean for me?"
I'll tell of that finished task
by which we've been set free.*

*I'll speak too, of Christ's life
and of the things he taught;
of how he shared our joy and strife
and our salvation wrought.*

*I'll show her my cross is empty,
a sign that Christ was raised
and lives, despite that Tree!
The Father's name be praised!*

*So eternal life by faith we inherit;
share each day with our risen Lord
and guided by the promised Spirit
live in the truth of the eternal Word.*

I would like to tell you about my friendship with Olive Harding. I came to Maleny from Bribie Island in 2017 after losing my husband to cancer. My daughter and her family live in this wonderful friendly town, Maleny.

I decided to attend the Uniting Church and met many lovely folk. Through the Women's Friendship Group, I met Olive and we quickly clicked and became good mates. She had a marvellous sense of humour, wonderful tales to tell, wisdom aplenty and a great faith in our God. One day when she was feeling rather reckless, she offered to teach me what she knew about computing so I could move into the 21st century. We enjoyed loads of laughs but learned very little. Days of fun like these are great to look back on and have been added to my HAPPY memory box!!

Olive had a great and abiding love for her two sons and wider family. I heard many stories about her loving parents, siblings and earlier life. She no doubt was treasured by all and will be very sadly missed. If in leaving this world we have brought lots of love, light and compassion to other lives we have lived well. Olive certainly managed to bring these positives into our world with her lovely, generous heart.

The great love of her life and soul mate was Colin. He was totally focused on her welfare, comfort and care during the last stages of her life. Olive told me she was sincerely grateful for all that love and attention he showered upon her. You are a very special soul Col and your devotion, remarkable!!!

I'll miss you Olive, until I also pass through the shadows and we meet again.

Jan Trendle

CREATIVITY IN THE CONGREGATION?

The Maleny congregation was asked recently to bring short poems they had written about the time of the virus, to be read as part of the service. The result is reproduced below and shows we can, between us, do many things. The variety of poems reflects, I think, the diversity within our congregations and is interesting in itself. To be read and pondered.

2020 – By Ray Ellemor

*The world has changed since Covid came
the pace has slowed world-wide
the natural world sighs with relief
while most find it a bind.*

*For me the downside's not so bad
gives time to think, take stock,
consider what's important now,
a chance to just relax.*

*For trials like these have come before
and likely will again
but faith gives hope and reason
to look for brighter days.*

*The sun will shine, the world rotate
and all will be OK
just help each other through it all
to find a brighter day.*

THE INVITATION – By Helen Uhlmann

*A time to stop;
To enter,
To sit awhile
In divine companionship.*

*To listen,
To hear,
To be embraced,
To be shown...
Acknowledged,
Met.
Abiding;
Remaining awhile.*

*Then to move on...
Transformed,
Filled,
Complete,
Ready.
In ongoing companionship...
Held,
Guided,
Shown.*

*How to be
How to love
How to embrace.*

Make Yourself a Veil – By Karl Tietze

*In 2020 a virus came on the local scene
And medicos immediately cried out for a
vaccine*

*Then we were told to keep our distance
And wash our hands with great persistence;*

*If we should feel chest irritation,
Proceed straight to a testing station.*

*And then go into lengthy isolation
Until someone assessed the situation.*

Now we are told to wear a mask.

*But "What good will that do?", you ask.
If you are well, the virus you'll suck through,
But if you're crook, you'll concentrate it too.
So if you'd like more safely to inhale,
I do suggest you make yourself a veil.*



**A LAMENT AT THE START OF LOCKDOWN
IN MARCH**

**(with apologies to the Bob Dylan song,
"Maggie's Farm" – By Peter Uhlmann**

*I ain't gonna be able to drink coffee at
Maple 3 no more
No, I ain't gonna be able to drink coffee at
Maple 3 no more*

*Well, I now wake up in the morning
Fold my hands and pray for a vacciiiiiiiine
I've got an iphone full of online meeting
apps
That are drivin' me insaaaaaane*

*It's a shaaaaaaame
The way this virus means
We can't meet at church that's for sure*

TOUCH – By Rev Graham Dempster

*I'm not!
I'm not touchy feely.
Social distancing, tho' necessary, - sucks.
Elbow contact does nothing for me.
Isolation and quarantine just bring
aloneness.
I need more. I covet touch.
But how? Where? When?
Suddenly I see -
There is healing, there is promise, there is
hope
Ah! The touch of God.*



**HAIKU – Reflections on a Pandemic
– By Fran Guard**

*Our church family,
Torn apart. Now together.
Thankful for mercies.*

*Dilkusha Refuge
full of the beauty of life,
God help me to share.*

*The Queensland bubble.
Surrounded by grief and loss,
Give us compassion.*

*Corona virus -
Life changes for good or ill.
We can make the choice*

*Covid pandemic -
A chance to reshape our world? -
Let's do it for good.*

A DANCE – By Rev Graham Dempster

**"I danced in the morning when the world was begun
I danced in the stars and the moon and the sun....."**

*Dear God, will you partner me in this current
dance?*

*For I long for the lightness that comes with each
step
And I cannot do it alone.*

*The pandemic is so, so heavy
I just want to put it down.
I want to glide. I want to float. I want to be free.
And I cannot do it alone.*

*I need a hand to hold, an arm on which to swing.
Someone to share the music and rhythms
To be so close, as to be one.*

*Dear God, please partner me in this current
dance.*

**NOW MAY BE AN APPROPRIATE TIME FOR EACH OF US TO TRY OUR HAND AT DOING
THIS.**

PLEASE SEND ANY POEMS TO ME AND WE CAN KEEP THESE CREATIVE PAGES GOING.

PEOPLE MATTER MORE THAN THINGS – By Brian Richards

“People matter more than things” was the foundation upon which 10 different denominations worked together to be alongside people in the workplace. The umbrella organisation was known as “I.T.I.M.” - Inter-Church Trade and Industry Mission or Industrial Chaplaincy.

This was one of the Ministries I was involved with for 10 years in Brisbane. We “tramped the rounds” i.e. we went to where people worked and built up trusted relationships with them and were available 24/7 for counselling and crisis support. Many companies paid ITIM to make our service available to their staff. Their statistics showed increased job satisfaction, higher productivity and less absenteeism.

When widespread restructuring took place about 1990, for economic reasons, many employees were retrenched or made redundant. A very different emphasis was the result, with us supporting staff and families, many knowing they were going to be out of work with all the implications that brought. It was a stressful time for them and for us who were supporting them and their families.

The approach of caring for people where they are goes back to the time of Jesus. In the early church Jesus called the fishermen to share their lives and stories with people in their local communities and beyond. John Wesley (a Church of England clergyman until the day he died) was the leader of a group who were nicknamed the “Methodists”. This subsequently led to the founding of the Methodist Church (one of the members of the Uniting Church). Wesley rode thousands of miles all over England to be where the people were (e.g. at the coal mines, on the common).

Looking back on these early models there are some principles that could well be applicable to any situation or time frame:

- Be involved with people where they are.
- Listen to their story and needs.
- Support them where appropriate and on their terms.
- Advocate for injustices.
- Connect people to other supportive community agencies.

Brian Richards



WOULD HE? OR JUST WOODY?

Since moving to the Range in 2000, I have been involved in a number of community and church groups – but the one which beckons me most, and takes up the bulk of my time, is the Maleny Woodworkers group. This brings involvement with the Maleny Arts and Crafts Group [MACG] shop on Maple Street where I do my rostered days from time to time. I have been the Coordinator of the Woodies Group for 10 years and the Maintenance Officer for the greater MACG group, workshop and Gallery, for a little longer than that.

The Woodies group also involves a variety of other service matters:

- helping spouses clear sheds of deceased members
- building special 'invalid' furniture for people as they age
- constructing bench seats for Maleny Hospital and the Garden Club
- making lecterns for various church groups and businesses.
- fashioning Honour Boards for the Maleny Hospital and the Senior Citizen's club
- clearing up fallen trees, slabbing the trunks for timber that can then be utilised.
- crafting palm crosses for use at Erowal and other places
- running a stall at the Australia Day Festival – demonstrating and giving away hand tops
- producing 'boomerang seats' for the indigenous group at the Neighbour Centre

A particularly rewarding and different activity has been the one-off help for a project in New Guinea. We were approached by someone we met at the Wood Expo, to help in equipping a shed with tools so the inmates in one of the PNG prisons could be taught a craft they could use to support themselves after release. This involved collecting a large quantity of wood-working hand tools, crating them up, and transporting them to New Guinea.



SALT OUTSIDE THE SALTSHAKER – By Bob Grice

After my Letter to the Editor in the last edition of the New Vine, I had resolved not to contribute to this Issue. However, our persuasive Editor has persuaded me to share just a little of my community involvement since Annette and I moved to Maleny at the end of 2003.

At age 61 I thought I had done my time of many years of community service - and besides, with a Macadamia Farm, a Christian Campsite and some Directorships in Brisbane, I considered I had more than enough on my plate. However, God must have smiled given the plans He had for me as He knew I strongly believed that His people needed to be salt, light and yeast in the world and that, in the words of our Editor, "salt is not much use in a saltshaker".

So, in 2007 with my passion for youth, no Youth Group in Maleny and no one in all the churches willing to lead a Combined Churches Group, I took on the challenge. Meeting in the High School Auditorium, the foundation 12 kids from the Churches soon encompassed a further 50 young people from unchurched families in the community. It was a significant commitment of time, energy and emotion but interfacing with so many families was a joy. Liaising with the Churches was a challenge especially when many of the young people began to be baptised, but what a witness to the community to see all of the Churches working together. I got to know so many folk during my 5 years with the Youth Group and it is always good to run into them, and some of the now grown up kids, in the street and talk about life issues and our time together.

About this time Gloria Collard asked me if I would take her place on the High School Chaplaincy Committee. Given the synergy between the High School and the Youth Group, I agreed. By this time, Church representation on the Committee had shrunk and the Churches were funding the Chaplain for less than one day a week. Most of the funding for which the Committee was primarily responsible, came from Service Clubs, local businesses and community minded individuals. It was therefore not surprising that I worked alongside many of these organisations and people. When some government money began to flow into Chaplaincy in recognition of the great work being done, it became increasingly difficult for the Chaplain or a member of the Committee to be overtly forthcoming with respect to our Christian faith. Nonetheless, there was always opportunity to bring a Christian perspective into relationships on the Committee and with teachers, students and parents in the various activities – as those currently serving on both High School and Primary School are aware.

In 2009, I was asked to become involved in what had become something of a range war between opposing groups who had very different ideas about use and development of what is generally referred to as the Maleny Precinct. This is a valuable large tract of land adjacent to Maleny town centre which had been acquired by Sunshine Coast Council for community use. With disagreements becoming more heated and spilling over into the public domain, there was real danger that Council would decide that it was all too hard and withdraw their offer of the land for community use. To her great credit, Jenny McKay worked hard to find a way forward and I and a former colleague who had been CEO of a large Queensland enterprise, took up two independent positions on the Precinct Advisory Committee. It was a tough gig and a pretty bumpy ride but so satisfying to be able to retire with all of the interested parties signing off on a Plan which is, and increasingly will, underpin the enjoyment for so many of this wonderful community asset. Involvement in community affairs, especially in Maleny, can be stressful and even risky and there were times during this project that I feared for my Christian witness. There was little opportunity to overtly advance the Gospel, but with prayer, patience, Christian ethics and commitment, there was opportunity to honour God through example and to make associations with people from all walks of life – and who knows where these may lead.

Finally, (I hope), I was asked in 2013 to accept Presidency of the Maleny Community Centre which had just undergone a million dollar refurbishment made possible by a government grant and overseen by the previous hard working President who needed a rest. With the progression of Annette's terminal illness I agreed to take a defined two year term to guide the installation of modern Governance, introduce Strategic and Operational Plans, develop Budgets and enhanced Financial Reporting, engage paid part time administrative assistance and establish a business focus that, whilst retaining the community ethos, would facilitate a sustainable future for this valuable community owned asset. There were plenty of challenges and inevitable obstacles where, once again, overt proclamation of the Gospel was neither possible nor appropriate. However, God was faithful in helping me to honour Him and to leave the organisation in good shape, having grown close to some of my committee colleagues and getting to know lots more people in the community.

Through my community involvement in Maleny over the past 15 years, I have met and worked alongside so many people – most not outwardly followers of Jesus – but the great majority desiring to make a difference for the good. Through all these interfaces I have sought to honour God and to live a Christian witness and to share my faith when there was opportunity and God has grown me.

However, my personal passion in whatever time God gives me, is to be about matters of eternal significance, and to this end to be used by Him to bring people to salvation and to help them to walk their journey, and to navigate life's challenges, with Him. From my community involvement I know how much need there is.

Bob Grice

UNIFORMS FOR KIDS

I'm involved with a charity founded in 2017 called Uniforms for Kids. Uniforms are collected from various emergency services and police services. The uniforms vary from brand new to well worn. We unpick them and sew them into amazing children's clothes. The clothes are returned to the various services from which they originated. The services then distribute the clothes to children in need.

The services who donate uniforms include: Australian Federal Police, Australian Border Force, Australia Zoo, Western Australian Police, Queensland Fire and emergency services and the Queensland Police Service.

As Uniforms for Kids Facebook page says: Our Aim is to:

- Provide children who are in need with unique clothing, no matter who or where they are;
- Improve self esteem;
- Through the participation of Australia Zoo, provide opportunities for children to understand the importance of respecting our natural environment and fauna;
- Bridge the communication gap and understanding between local communities and police officers;
- Build legitimacy and trust between law enforcement agencies, emergency services personnel and the community in an effort to prevent and reduce offences;
- To connect and support retirees and other community members by engaging them in a life changing charitable program. By donating their time to participate in sewing, cutting, ironing and networking, they become involved in a meaningful and important part of our children's future.
- Protecting and enhancing our environment by reducing landfill by fashioning sustainable clothes that would otherwise be shredded and join the landfill.



A THINKING MAN'S APPROACH – By Karl Tietze

Graham has asked for our stories of involvement in the community and I take it that we should tell how we express our faith in this involvement.

Since I was a lad I have been interested in science and knowing how things work. This led me ultimately to work in a technological area and "dabbling" in a number of things to continue exploring how things work – not just technically, but also socially. That dabbling has seen me involved in idealistic politics and Christian radio at times. Since retiring here, I've volunteered at the Lifeline store for a year or two, and taught R.E. but chiefly I've found myself involved with the University of the Third Age whose activities in Maleny included square dancing for a few years but primarily involve attending lectures given by various people on a wide range of subjects. I also took advantage of their activities on the Sunshine Coast where I attended a Free-thinker's group as well as philosophy classes.

Since having lectures each week requires a lot of people to come and present on subjects, it wasn't long before someone tapped me on the shoulder and asked if I could give a presentation on some subject. So, initially I gave presentations on technical subjects like Aviation Electronics, The March of Technology, and Computer Security but then found myself talking about Democracy and German History with a little Philosophy and Thinking thrown in.

Not really topics where one's Christian convictions can be presented given the need to refrain from theologising or preaching, you would think. However, there were times in the Free-thinker's group where your faith was challenged, and I could put my views politely. In the Philosophy class the lecturer showed a few video clips from the Blackadder show which ridiculed faith and I asked why it was necessary to ridicule since this was not legitimate argument (in debating terms). Even interactions with some members have presented opportunities to correct people's understandings of the faith. My involvement in these activities has highlighted to me how poorly the church has engaged with secular thinking and why we need to support our folk in responding respectfully to such challenges. When people on game shows no longer know about the tower of Babel or other fairly common Bible stories, it demonstrates how secular our society has become and why people no longer have an understanding of, nor feel a need for, faith with the attendant consequences for our society. It also tells us that young people today may only have been exposed to voices ridiculing faith or highlighting the failings of its representatives. So, my efforts have sought to present a Christian perspective without "sugar coating" to emphasise the truth of Jesus' claims on our lives.

As an example of my approach, I remember writing "Sez hoo?" on the board during an R.E. class hoping someone would correct my spelling whereupon I would simply point at the board.

Karl Tietze

Our faith becomes
stronger as we express it;
a growing faith is a
sharing faith

Billy Graham

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FOR BAKERS

Malcolm trained as a cabinet maker and Nancy as a Home Economics teacher, so we were no strangers to working with, and for, the community.

During the first 23 years of our married life we lived in the farming community of Wandoan. It was in our DNA to be fully involved in all aspects of whatever we perceived to be important for our friends and family. That involvement led to an almost disproportionate amount of time engaged in Committees and groups ranging from School, Guides, Arts Council, Show Society, JP duties, and the establishment of an Aged Care facility, etc etc as well as a host of Church related commitments.

Malcolm's two terms in Local Government preceded our move to Maleny in 1991.

Having a chance to start afresh, and thinking it prudent to hold back till we found our feet, we decided to begin tentatively. Our Church welcomed us but soon found jobs for both of us, so, at first, we limited our community involvement to P and C at the State School and the Girl Guide Support Group.

Malcolm soon found that the Rotary Club suited his desire to contribute in a service club. He prefers to just get on and do things without accolades, but his fellow Rotarians have rewarded him with not just one but two Paul Harris awards for Community Service.

More recently he has helped found the Maleny Men's Shed which gives opportunities for interactions with a diverse group. As they stand shoulder to shoulder the men open up about their lives. Friendships and trust have developed.

Our working life of operating a School bus and a Tour and Charter Coach business gave numerous opportunities to get to know many of the local personalities in a variety of clubs plus church, school and sporting groups. As we shared outings not only were we providing transport but the chance to create lasting friendships.

One ongoing connection has been with the Garden Club. For the past 9 years Nancy has acted as Trip Convener. With 4 or more yearly trips ranging from day or overnight outings to extended local, interstate and overseas tours there have been endless chances to show our "hands on" Christian values.

After selling our coaches we have had the chance to give more time to the town and community we love so much. Working in the local Visitor Information Centre was a great place to promote the area we call home.

This year has seen a few changes with more "at home" time. As we have worked on projects in our garden many conversations leading to friendships have happened with folk walking by, with or without their dogs. Perhaps the future holds more opportunities for neighbourhood interactions. Or maybe we will work for better outcomes of local Homeless and/or Domestic Violence issues.

We are open to whatever God plans for us.



Malcolm receiving his Rotary
Paul Harris Award
in January 2012
That's Nancy in the party hat!

WHAT'S IN A NAME – By Bob Philpot

Marrying Fran Guard in August 2001, brought me into the area of forest regeneration at Dilkusha. A group title property, it was first set up in 1983. Later when an Indian Minister, Alexander Devasundaram, was visiting Evan Jones here, he was led to say to Evan, "Oh, you have found your Dilkush!" - a Hindi word from which is derived the name, Dilkusha, meaning the place of the happy and contented heart.

When the property was purchased it was really a degraded dairy farm, covered to a large extent in privet and lantana. Having always had a love of the land it presented an opportunity for me in helping to restore the land to what it had once been i.e. 29 hectares of sub-tropical rainforest. Six house sites of 3000 m² each make up the living areas, with the remainder given over to Nature Refuge and Land for Wildlife.

Covered now in trees, some 15 to 20m tall, it was recently granted remnant rainforest status by the Sunshine Coast Council, which meant the whole area could be designated as Nature Refuge. How that came about in 30 years would provide the material for a book on Forest Regeneration.

INVOLVEMENT IN THE COMMUNITY Lake Baroon Catchment Care Group (LBCCG)

The above group now has a Facebook page. This is jumping the gun a bit in my story for it was set up in 1992 by SEQ water to assist with increasing the quality of the water that flows into Lake Baroon, which is a major contributor to the Sunshine Coast water supply and sometimes even Brisbane City's water needs.

Part of LBCCG's work is controlling weeds in the catchment area and it was through this work that I became a regular attendee at committee meetings, for LBCCG was helping reduce weed problems on the church property.

Over time my status was to become a committee member, and then as the need arose, I was asked to take on the Treasurer's role, and that has involved me in a voluntary capacity for the last two and half years.



LBCCG's work covers many areas, all relevant to improving water quality. Weed management, landslips, animal access and effluent control, and reforestation all come within this ambit, funds being provided by SCC and SEQ water with some input from land-holders and the Main Roads Department, to name a few.

They are an excellent group of people to work with as they are all passionate about the environment and protecting and enhancing Obi-Obi creek and for me, it is a privilege to be with them.

In compiling these articles, I thought about some past work I had done. I will give you some clues about it and you may work out what the job was.

When I commenced, I was a brace boy and then I moved on to become a tipper and ended up being a clipper.

Instruments we used were podgers and sprags.

What was I? Happy guessing.

MALENY PROBUS

A number of people indicated they were members of Probus, and so Stan McCallum has provided this information about what that might mean – in Maleny, at least.

Probus is an acronym for Professional Business; is an offshoot of Rotary; and is for retired and semi-retired people. The Maleny club has been operating for 31 years with a current membership of 90/95 folk with a worrying average age of 81 years.



There are 10 meetings every year with the Club being an avenue for retirees to socialise together. A guest speaker attends every meeting to address members on a wide range of interesting, relevant topics and Maleny CWA provides a suitable morning tea/lunch at these meetings. The meetings are an excellent way for seniors to generally get together and maintain friendships with their fellow Maleny retirees, a number of whom are also CWA members.

Regular, suitable one day bus trips are organised to transport members to various activities e.g. Brisbane airport tour--Bribie Island tour. These trips normally culminate in an enjoyable lunch at a suitable venue. There have also been longer 5/6 day trips to places like the Murray River region and Norfolk Island.

The health and welfare of members is monitored by a specific person with get well cards being sent where required and hospital visitations made as necessary. Members are encouraged to look after each other.

Probus is a low cost, non-profit organisation (approx. \$90 p.a.) with some hundreds of clubs Australia wide providing an outlet for seniors to get together and socialise.



Whatever the future looks like, it may help to smile a while. There are still some jokes that are not directed at the virus!

LIGHT RELIEF

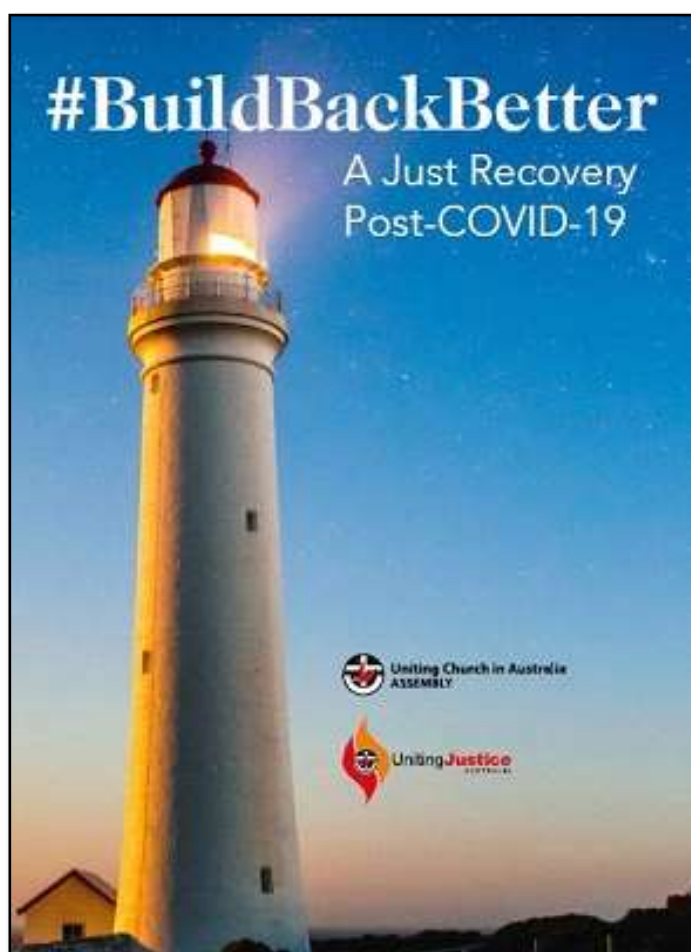


A JUST RECOVERY POST-COVID-19



The Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) have released a Vision Statement which outlines a set of principles and key actions required for a better future in Australia.

"In the space of just a few months, the COVID-19 crisis highlighted the stark inequality and disparity in our Australian society and exacerbated the disadvantage faced by our most vulnerable people." Deidre Palmer, President UCA Assembly, states in the Introduction.



In producing this Vision Statement, The UCA Assembly has collated input from across their Church, including from agencies delivering community services on the ground, the Uniting Aboriginal Islander and Christian Congress (UAICC) and others working in the area of justice.

The Vision Statement affirms that it is grounded in the life and mission of Jesus, and is for a nation which:

- is characterised by love for one another, of peace with justice, of healing and reconciliation, of welcome and inclusion.
- recognises the equality and dignity of each person.
- recognises sovereignty of First Peoples, has enshrined a First Peoples voice and is committed to truth telling about our history.
- takes seriously our responsibility to care for the whole of creation.
- is outward looking, a generous and compassionate contributor to a just world.

Key Actions for rebuilding:

Based on the principles outlined above, we believe the following actions are key in the process of rebuilding our nation.

- Stimulation of the economy with a focus on job creation by investing in projects that are good for all Australians and for our planet.
- Fix gaps in the social security safety net and ensure a permanent increase to JobSeeker Allowance, providing a liveable safety net for those out-of-work.
- Ensure community services are properly resourced to support vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, families and communities, and to respond to areas of growing need, including domestic and family violence and mental health.
- First Peoples and rural and remote communities have adequate access to food and health services.
- Initiatives that improve access to affordable housing for all people.
- Ensuring our tax system is fair and transparent, with individuals and corporations contributing fairly to the costs of post-COVID recovery.
- Doing our share for the global recovery from COVID-19 and building a more equitable, safe and sustainable world for the future.
- Reducing fossil fuel usage, and excessive consumption of resources to build for a sustainable future
- Adequate support for people living with disability and older Australians.
- Prioritising work towards Voice, Truth and Treaty for First Peoples, meaningful action on incarceration rates for Indigenous Australians and calling out racism and building inclusion across all Australian society.
- A focus on creating pathways to permanent migration.
- Collaboration between Governments and civil society with political leadership focused on common good.

The Statement goes on to elaborate what some of these actions might be and are well worth a look. It uses two headings for each of the 12 principles:

- *During COVID-19 we have learnt-*
- *Therefore we ask –*

The material above was passed to me by Fran Guard who found it on the National Council of Churches website [ncca.org.au].

Fran used it to help her prepare her Prayer for Others in church some weeks ago. It is re-printed below.

Graham

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS SUNDAY, 23rd AUGUST 2020

Adapted from the Post-Covid Vision Statement of the UCA, August 2020.

[Download the [UCA Vision Statement #BuildBackBetter A Just Recovery Post-COVID-19](#)]

In a post-Covid world we have learned:

- Australia and the whole world are not immune from major threats, and that society is only as strong and as healthy as the most vulnerable in our communities.

We pray that we may build resilient individuals, families and communities

- Existing inequalities are exacerbated in times of crisis, increasing the vulnerability of individuals and the whole community. When we make sacrifices for the well-being of the whole of society, we all benefit.

We pray that we may build a more equal society

- We are all interconnected..... In times of fear and anxiety, racism, isolation and remoteness can lead to less healthy and productive communities.

We pray that we may build a nation where everyone is respected and has a voice

- We are capable of innovative solutions and new ways of being. A crisis is an opportunity to reimagine policy.

We pray for creative, collaborative and constructive leadership to rebuild Australia

- Reducing fossil fuel usage is possible and positively impacts the environment and all living things.

We pray that we may build a sustainable future

Creator God, we come to you with thankful hearts that we can meet together in worship and prayer. What we have taken for granted we now realise is a privilege and we are grateful.

We pray for those of our church family who are struggling with ill health, grief and loss, uncertainty or depression. Bring comfort and hope, healing and confidence in your unfailing love. Give us compassion that we may act with justice and wisdom in all our relationships and our daily lives.

In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.

CLASSIFIEDS

When I sought copyright permission from *With Love to the World* to use the above extract in our journal, I learnt it is now available as an App.

With Love to the World App



A daily devotional guide that provides a reflection on a Bible passage for each day of the year.

During these difficult days of the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are seeking ways to find meaning, encouragement, and hope for life, and are keen to maintain and deepen their faith and sense of community/connectedness with their church and other Christians.

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NO! IT IS NOT FOR SALE

Someone has a story for the next edition entitled:
"Holden Monaro hijacked, what did God have to do with it?"

Just in case you have been unable to sleep while you were waiting for this story, I am reliably informed that the best way to access it, would be to talk to Richard Hackett-Jones – 0405 405 110.
He knows the answer!