

# ACCatalyst

ASSEMBLY OF CONFESSING CONGREGATIONS WITHIN THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA



## THE FIHAKI DISMISSAL

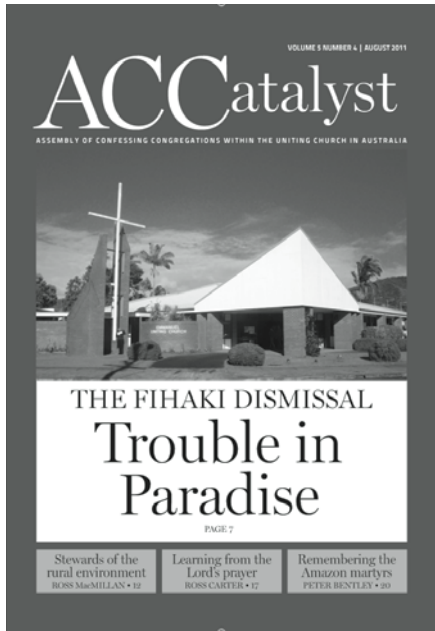
# Trouble in Paradise

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Cover: Emmanuel Uniting Church, Cairns

## EDITORIAL

# Just the facts

In this edition of *ACCatalyst* we present the rather sad saga of the termination of ACC vice Chair Hedley Fihaki from his placement as a UCA minister in Cairns.

We run what I have attempted to make a straight news report; Fihaki's sermon after his dismissal, a statement by a supporter, Bill Hollingsworth, and we give space to the Queensland Moderator, Bruce Johnson.

The object of journalism as far as I can make it out, is to give the reader the information they need to get a

fair understanding of what is going on. I hope we have done this.

If we have missed anything significant, please let us know. It is a continuing story. So please pray for the church members of Emmanuel Cairns, the church council, the UCA Queensland office bearers and for Hedley Fihaki and his family.

Whether in the UCA like the readers of *ACCatalyst*, or an outsider like myself, we will have to bear with disputes within Christian organisations until the eschaton. So let us pray.

*John Sandeman*

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# The Morning Glory Vine

A few years ago I was at work in the vineyard and we were busy with winter pruning. As I worked down my row, I came to a vine that looked nearly the same as the others, except that where the others had lost all their leaves, this vine still had some leaves on it.

I called out to the boss, "This is a funny grapevine; it's still got leaves on it."

His reply surprised me: "Check and see if it has produced any fruit."

I peered closely at the vine and sure enough there was no brackish on the vine. Brackish is what's left behind after the mechanical picker comes through and pulls the grapes off. Much to my surprise, my boss took his loppers and cut the vine off at ground level.

"That's not a grapevine, it's a morning glory vine" he said.

It seems that these vines were grafted and morning glory vines were used as the rootstock. This vine had grown from below the graft and voila! A morning glory vine was hap-



pily growing in the vineyard. These vines were about six or seven years old, so for all that time this vine had

deceived everyone who had pruned it. It looked like a grapevine, but there was no fruit. No amount of tender loving care, or water or nutrients was ever going to make this vine bear grapes, because it was not a grape vine.

In Matthew 7:15-20 Jesus says: Watch out for false prophets. They will come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By your fruit you will recognise them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, by their fruit you will recognise them.

There's a warning here to all Christians to be careful what we believe and whose words we trust. The Truth is important, and there is too much at stake for us to get it wrong!

*Robyn*

# Gospelling in SA

The SA ACC Movement held a combined Resourcing and Encouragement Event with Hope Network at Port Augusta in late June. Entitled *Christ's Living Gospel, Today: Living in, and fulfilling, God's local mission*, it sought to assist folk with the mission of God in their local community.

Firstly, mission is God's own mission to the world, which he is in fact already doing - as Lord, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. This means in our own communities too!

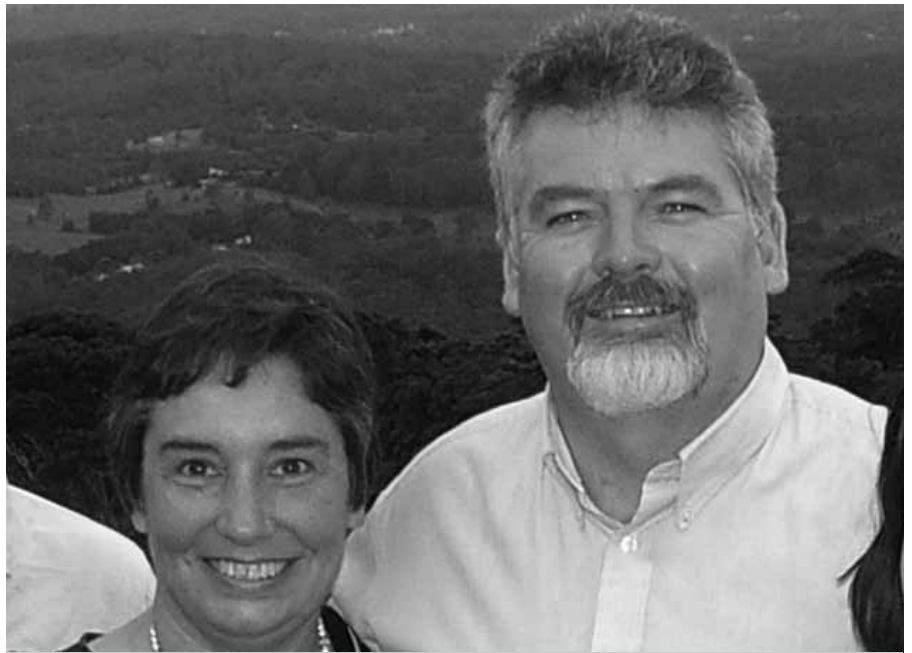
Secondly, God's mission is to us before we can ever think of doing mission ourselves. We can only ever love because God first loves us.

Thirdly, through God's ministry (mission) to us, he calls us to share in his ministry (mission) to the world. We do not create mission, make it succeed, or achieve it; God shares it with us, puts it within us, and gives it to us as a gift. That is the Gospel - Good News - of God's mission. Speakers included ACC members Rob Tann and Jonathan Button and ACC National Council Members Rod James and Robyn Painter. The event was attended by about 40 people from Port Augusta, Whyalla, Port Pirie and other places in the North.

Recently discussions have been held with Hope Mission Network with a view to cooperating in the planning of future events as we did with the Port Augusta event. Hope Network is affiliated with ACC and many of our objectives overlap. With limitations on our leadership and other resources, it makes a lot of sense to work together. At this stage we are planning to make the *Stir the Fire* event in March/April 2012 a joint event.

We have one active Regional Cluster in SA—the Inner Northern Suburbs Cluster. The group meets once a month for study, prayer and sharing. This opportunity is much appreciated by the participants who belong to congregations not sympathetic to the ACC or to evangelical theology.

At the South Australian ACC AGM in July the Acting Convenor, Rod James, paid tribute to the work of Don Purdey in the following way:



Anne and Ian Weeks, NSW ACC Convenor

## New ACC Congregation welcomed

The Booragul UC Congregation (in the beautiful Lake Macquarie area, near Newcastle), which has recently joined ACC, invited the Hunter ACC Cluster to hold its 24 July meeting at Booragul as a combined venture. The Hunter cluster was delighted to accept, and together 21 people were present, about half being from each group.

Rev Ian Weeks presented a study, "Persevering in our Confession". Commencing with the recent example of the Presbyterian Church USA capitulating to over 30 plus years of homosexual lobby pressures, this study provided a comprehensive overview of renewal movements within and beyond the Uniting Church in Aus-

tralia, and of our need for patience and sustained effort to proclaim the truth in the face of weariness.

Considerable discussion followed. The meeting acknowledged that the ACC is primarily concerned about our failure to accept and proclaim the authority of Scripture and is not just a reaction to "Gay Rights". Given that the 2011 NSW Synod is being held in Newcastle in September, the meeting also discussed raising the ACC profile at the Synod meeting. The NSW ACC Committee, led by Ian Weeks, have taken up this suggestion, and look forward to supporting ACC and other evangelical members during the Synod.

*Alton Bowen, ACC Hunter Cluster Convenor*

"As most of you will know our past Convenor, Rev Don Purdey, has contracted motor neurone disease. This sad occurrence has been tempered by Don's amazing sense of well-being in God's gracious care. Don and Annette have recently returned from about 10 weeks overseas touring Europe and the UK and visiting family there. Don's main difficulties at the moment have to do with the functioning of his tongue for talking and swallowing.

On behalf of the ACC both within South Australia and nationally we would like to thank Don for his faithful ministry over several years, which he has carried out with vision, and with good humour. In particular we would like to thank the Lord for

the vision that He gave to Don for the Emerging Leaders Award camp. It has turned out to be a resounding success and a great blessing for all who have taken part, not least the awardees, and has provided a model of encouragement for the next generation of young leaders and also to the ACC movement as a whole. Don's contribution to the confessing movement within the Uniting Church stretches over about 20 years, and encompasses the eras of EMU, RA and ACC. As the ACC-SA Movement we wish to acknowledge all that you have done, to thank you most sincerely, and to assure you that you are not forgotten in these present times."

*Rod James,  
Acting SA ACC Convenor*





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## PUBLIC SQUARE

BY PSEUDO-MAXIMUS

### ABC Bigotry

The media bears a heavy responsibility to report public issues in a fair, sensitive and professional manner. The recent scandal involving *News of the World* has been rightly condemned by other media outlets, including the ABC's *Media Watch*.

But how do things fare with The Australian Broadcasting Commission, the taxpayer-funded broadcaster? Its self-appointed reputation as a fair, unbiased reporter was tarnished recently in "Marriage Right vs Rite" on *Compass* (10 July). Only one of the seven participants in a discussion about same-sex marriage, the Rt Rev Robert Forsyth, was opposed—hardly an accurate representation of Christian community opinion.

The next day the pro-same-sex marriage views of Baptist minister, the Rev Nathan Nettleton, were repudiated by Australian Baptist Ministries. The views of Fr Frank Brennan, Catholic priest and human rights advocate, on civil unions were at odds with the teaching of his church.

Clearly, the representatives of minority opinion in two large denominations were chosen by the ABC to give the false impression to viewers that the majority of Christians were in favour of radical changes to the meaning of marriage. Hardly a fair portrayal of the true situation!

For a compelling account of the way in which the 'blatant propaganda' shown on the program is typical of the 'radical agenda' on the ABC see [www.billmuehlenberg.com](http://www.billmuehlenberg.com).

### Polygamist push

The pressure is mounting for Western countries to recognise polygamous marriages.

A report in *The Age* (16/7) cites

the case of Kody Brown and his four 'wives.' They are challenging Utah's bigamy statute on the grounds that they have a "constitutional right as consenting adults to choose a plural family existence" in accordance with their religious beliefs.

It's hard to argue with the logic. If the only prerequisite for marriage is adult consent then the number (and gender) of partners in a marriage is irrelevant. Mormons, Moslems, African migrants and others will surely demand similar marriage rights.

Built on flimsy foundations of individual rights, equality, mutual consent and tolerance of diversity, such marriages will be a rejection of centuries old definitions of marriage, which reflect Christian convictions. The splendour of marriage between a man and a woman, which mirrors the relationship between Christ and his church, will be treated as an embarrassing curiosity.

All the more urgency, then, that the UCA, in concert with our ecumenical partners, should reaffirm the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman. It is a cause of great regret that due to decisions on sexuality at the 2003 and 2006 Assemblies, the Orthodox Church has suspended dialogue with the UCA, the Lutheran Church has set aside discussion of a joint statement on marriage, and discussions with the Catholic Church on mission have avoided the issue.

### Silence

Death by silence is the subject of a fine article by former Fairfax and News Ltd editor Shelley Gare in *Quadrant* (July-August 2010). She traces the ways in which the progressive media in Australia block conservative voices on important political, cultural and literary issues.

Death by silence is "an astonishingly effective tactic for killing off not just creative work but also ideas or news reports or contrary opinions that don't fit the prevailing and fashionable mores." Deprive opponents of oxygen and their views will "expire soundlessly like a butterfly in a bell-jar."

The tactic is now embedded in the promotion of progressive causes. Disengagement is the preferred strategy. If this fails then conservatives are patronised, mocked and abused (often behind their backs) for being right-wing, fundamentalist extremists.

The gate-keepers of public opinion will not admit thoughtful conservative views on the environment, indigenous affairs, sexuality, abortion, euthanasia etc.

On occasions UCA leaders have chosen silence when inconvenient news has emerged which could prove divisive.

How else to explain the total silence in UCA media outlets around the country about the Sacred Union Ceremony held at Brunswick UC (Vic) in mid 2010? How else to explain what has happened to the liturgy prepared by Uniting Network for that occasion and presented to President Alistair Macrae in the hope that it would be accepted as a new UC order of service?

And how else to explain the silence of Presidents, the Assembly Standing Committee and the Christian Unity Working Group at the dismay expressed by the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran Churches at the direction of the UCA on sexuality and leadership?

### Her ladyship

Lady Gaga "is not just a pop megastar, she's a cult leader"

Simon Hattenstone in an interview in *The Weekend Australian Magazine* (9-10 July).

Gaga is described as “an evangelist” and her show as “like a revivalist meeting.” “She is a sincere believer in the cult of Gaga—she really does think she’s a modern-day Messiah, here to lead her fans to a brighter, better future”.

Here are a few pearls of her wisdom: “On *Born This Way*, I’m writing more about pop culture as religion, my identity as religion: ‘I will fight and bleed to death for my identity.’ I am my own sanctuary and I can be reborn as many times as I choose throughout my life.”

When it is suggested that she is “the Billy Graham of pop” Lady Gaga laughs and says “It’s more self-worship, I think, not of me. I’m teaching people to worship themselves.”

There you have it. Don’t worry about truth or reality. Shape your own identity. Worship yourself. Who said that we live in a rational and secular world, free of religion?

How urgent then that the liberating word of hope be heard. Our identity is given by him who is “the way the life and the truth.” In naming self-worship as idolatry, this Messiah identified himself with idolatrous humanity and called disciples to a life of sacrificial love for others.

## Not a trap

“The Monogamy Trap” by Mark Oppenheimer (*The Weekend Australian Magazine*, 16-17 July) examines the demands of monogamous marriage. The article consists mostly of the views of Dan Savage, a married gay activist with a global syndicated newspaper column read weekly by millions.

Savage pays lip service to the advantages of monogamy. But “he inveighs against the obsession with strict fidelity.” What is necessary to avoid boredom and despair is “a more flexible attitude within marriage” and a greater “honesty” about our sexual needs. He argues that, because “we can’t help our urges,” sex with other people is OK “with proper disclosure and consent.”

This is healthier than partners having unrealistic expectations of one another. It’s better to “succeed at non-monogamy” than to “fail at monogamy”.

This sad tale of marital infidelity is told, virtually without criticism, as if it were the blueprint for future happy, liberated marriages.

In *Feedback* (30-31 July) one writer said “long term monogamy comes easily to those who lack vitality and passion”. Another said that “after 68 years of happy marriage, I have never found monogamy to be a trap, or even a slight problem”

Alasdair Livingston (Mitcham SA) put it best: “By the same logic, what the poor need is a bit of theft, and the rich need a bit of fraud to make themselves even richer. It’s all about rights.

“But not once in the article are the rights of children mentioned, of which the main one is the right to have a mother and a father in a stable, married, loving relationship.”

## Hitchens is right

Resisting the fetish of consensus is the title of a review of *The Quotable Hitchens: From Alcohol to Zionism* in *The Weekend Australian Review* (22-23 June) by Richard King. Noted atheist Christopher Hitchens is not easily categorised. As King points out, given the gulf widely assumed to exist between conservative religion and enlightened atheism, his

views on consensus and abortion are surprising.

He is contemptuous of the quest for political consensus that thrives on “backroom decision-making, mutual soft-peddling and covering-up ... most accurately captured by the word ‘complicity’”. It is better for a healthy society to foster robust debate than avoid conflict!

On abortion, too, he defies the party line. “I have always been convinced that the term ‘unborn child’ is a genuine description of the material reality. Obviously, the foetus is alive, so that disputation about whether or not it counts as ‘a life’ is casuistry. As for ‘dependent’, this has never struck me as a very radical criticism of any agglomeration of human cells in whatever state. Children are ‘dependent’ too.”

In an age when many church leaders trumpet the virtue of consensus and the right to abortion, Hitchens’ observations illustrate Jesus’ saying that ‘the children of this age are more astute in dealing with their own generation than are the children of light’ (Luke 16:8)

## IAN CLARKSON

### The mystery of Evil

Is it possible to understand the deeds of Anders Breivik? Coldly beckoning them to himself, looking into his young victims eyes executing his premeditated murderous mayhem.

Can we ever understand that? Commenting on this, long serving British prison psychologist Theodore Dalrymple perceived “I don’t think we will ever understand, we don’t even know what it is to understand”. The journalists tried; he had had links with people or used terms that linked him with groups as specific as the ancient Knights Templar through to freemasons, neo-Nazis, so-called fundamentalists, and Darwinists.

Breivik’s act grabs Western media attention because it is so unexpected, so out of place. Persons who commit these evil deeds are mostly linked to Islamic Mujahadeen type groups such as the murderous rampaging of jihadists slaughtering scores of Christians on the Jos Plateau last January, with scarcely a blink from the mainstream media. Think more deeply and more obscure but no less terrifying, the clinically cold working of the surgi-

cal instruments towards the tiny infant outlined on the ultrasound image cringing fearfully for its life—and that repeated thousands of times over in Australia.

The apostle Paul writes about the mystery of lawlessness at work in the world. It’s a mystery because evil is irrational and cannot be understood apart from Divine insight, and it is lawlessness because it can only be defined theologically, that is, against the law of God. And this leads to another media overlooked yet profound issue in the Breivik case. He wrote “If you have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ ... you are a religious Christian. Myself and many more like me do not necessarily have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and God. We do however believe in Christianity as a cultural, social, identity and moral platform. This makes us Christian.” Wrong.

The root of evil may be restrained by divinely ordained governments enforcing good laws but evil is only eradicated through personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Nothing so safeguards a society than the lives of the godly and the diligent work of the ministers of the Word who preach Christ crucified, the Saviour of the world!

# “Serious discussions”, Christian Unity and *ACCatalyst*

*ACCatalyst* has received communication from the Secretary of the Christian Unity Working Group the Rev. Dr Sandy Yule about part of the report “Resignation from the UCA”, concerning Gordon Watson’s resignation as a Minister of the Word (*ACCatalyst*, June 2011, p. 4).

The communication addressed the comment “Nor should it be surprising that, despite attempts by UCA leaders to convey a spirit of ecumenical co-operation, the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches still refuse to participate in serious theological dialogue with the UCA.”

The Christian Unity Working Group took issue with the inclusion of reference to the Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches.

ACC offered to publish a letter or full page statement in response to the comment so that their position could be concretely outlined and a dialogue opened on this important area between the ACC and the UCA.

The ACC received the following response from the Secretary. “The Christian Unity Working Group is of the view that there is a factual error to correct and that this is not a matter of opinion.

“They further advise me that I should provide you with the appropriate documents which demonstrate this rather than enter into correspondence.

“I therefore attach two documents which are on the Christian Unity pages of the Assembly web site and which are the recent results of our active dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and the Lutheran Church of Australia.” (*ACCatalyst* readers are referred to <http://assembly.uca.org.au/unity/dialogues/50-dialogues.html>)

The response is extremely disappointing. Clearly, the Christian Unity Working Group doesn’t intend to

give ACC any oxygen in the UCA or the ecumenical community.

Nevertheless, *ACCatalyst* doesn’t resile from saying that the three churches ‘still refuse to participate in serious theological dialogue with the UCA.’”

It is important to note that Assembly authorities have never publicised the fact that the UCA’s request to the

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**It is important to note that Assembly authorities have never publicised the fact that the UCA’s request to the Greek Orthodox to resume dialogue was rejected**

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Greek Orthodox to resume dialogue was rejected until the UCA officially adopted a statement on sexuality and leadership comparable to the official position of the ACC.

*ACCatalyst* doesn’t dispute the fact that discussions have been held with the Lutherans and Catholics. The question is whether they regard it as “serious theological dialogue with the UCA.”

The Lutherans have set aside further joint discussion of marriage and sexuality. They are also aghast at the shallow contribution of the UCA to biblical interpretation.

The Catholics and the UCA have launched a joint statement on mission which, however, avoids addressing the critical missionary issues concerning marriage.

Ecumenical discussions that skirt the crucial issues of the day cannot be

## City dwellers are destructive

Re The earwig trap, April 11 *ACCatalyst*.

Why are farmers selected for examples of destructive creatures?

I am amazed when I visit a city to see the amount of paving where there used to be native trees, shrubs, and native grasses.

I see bore water being used, sometimes in the heat of a summer day, to water huge areas of unnecessary lawn.

I see houses of 5 and 6 bedrooms and living areas, theatre rooms etc and bathrooms all for two or three people to live in.

All the above are far more destructive to our environment than the general practice of farmers who know where water comes from, who know if they over use their water supply it runs dry and no government will supply them more. Farmers know that if the land is not looked after their income disappears.

Locally grown food is also likely to disappear in favour of imported items, coming from places where standards do not match Australia’s.

Come into the country, Robyn, and look around as you leave the destruction behind in the city.

*Wendy Anderson  
Kojonup*

called”serious theological dialogue.”

While on the question of factual errors, the Christian Unity Working Group needs to explain why, in the joint submission to the UCA-Lutheran dialogue on biblical interpretation, ACC’s position on homosexuality was misrepresented.

The ACC’s statement on sexuality commits her ‘to speak Christ’s word of mercy and friendship to any person who is tempted by homosexual practice and to offer them counselling and pastoral care when they experience temptation, hostility, illness or bereavement.’

It is untrue to say, without qualification, that ACC “will not accept practising homosexuals” (5.3.2).

*Max Champion*

## BATTLE IN CAIRNS



Emmanuel Uniting Church, Cairns

# The Fihaki Dismissal

**E**mmanuel Uniting Church in Cairns has been packed full each Sunday, since Sunday 26th June 2011, the first Sunday after Rev Hedley Fihaki's ministry was terminated by the UCA Queensland Synod.

Fihaki's removal follows a dispute over a homeless people's shelter, the Good Samaritan Centre in Cairns. The residents were ordered by Uniting Care to vacate the centre due to fire safety concerns.

Fihaki and many in his congregation believed that the last ten residents should be given a few weeks longer to relocate.

Taking a stance on a justice issue, the need for the people at Good Samaritan to have housing, means that

Fihaki has undermined the stereotyping of evangelicals that says they do not care for social activism. Fihaki is the Assembly of Confessing Congregation's Deputy Chair and Prayer Network Convenor.

In this *ACCatalyst* we carry Hedley's sermon on the morning he preached as a minister whose placement had been terminated by Synod.

"Rev Dr Fihaki has exercised an effective ministry within the Emmanuel congregation and the Cairns community," said Rev Bruce Johnson, the Moderator of the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia.

"It is disappointing that the issues that arose following the closing of the uninsured temporary accommodation at Gatton Street could not be resolved in a way that gave the Church confidence that Rev Dr Fihaki was committed to the polity

of the Uniting Church in Australia and should return to serve the Emmanuel congregation." The moderator's full statement appears in this *ACCatalyst*.

A resolution passed at a special combined meeting of the Cairns Emmanuel Uniting Church, Church Council and Elders on Sat June 25 and by the congregation on Sunday June 26 reads "In the light of our calling to confess Christ as Lord of the Church, the Cairns Emmanuel Church Council and Elders rejects the Synod Standing Committee decision to terminate the Rev Dr Hedley Fihaki as Minister of the Emmanuel Uniting Church, without lawful consultation and due process, and without providing a full understanding of the reasons for taking such a serious and unprecedented action."

*John Sandeman*



# The harvest

Hedley Fihaki preached on Sunday June 26 after being told that his ministry at Emmanuel Church had been terminated on Thursday that week

**I**would like to begin by saying (on behalf of my wife, Amelia and my son, Kotoni Atunaisa) thank-you to you, my brothers and sisters in Christ; my family; Emmanuel, God-with-us; thank you for welcoming us back home. We have truly missed each one of you. Thank you for continually upholding us in your prayers, as well as our congregation and the wider church as a whole, including our Synod and our Presbytery leaders:

You have truly helped to sustain our faith in God our Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. You are truly a welcoming Church; a welcoming family, and I pray that we will continue to welcome all people into God's family.

I would like also to thank my other Family, Pastor Bill and Ruth Hollingsworth and all at Eternal Life Fellowship at Gordonvale [to my surprise they all came to this service]; thank you for welcoming us and for caring for us in the last three months. We found such peace and comfort and joy at Eternal Life Fellowship during our short time there

May I also take this opportunity to thank the Rev. Graham Whybird and his wife Annette for giving up their family time to come and look after this congregation while I was away. Thank you.

Jesus said: *"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes God's messenger because he is God's messenger, will share in his reward. And whoever welcomes a good man because he is good, will share in his reward. You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my followers because he is my follower, will certainly receive a reward"* (Matthew 10:40).

As you know I haven't preached for three months, so this sermon will make up for lost time, so I invite you to make yourself very comfortable and no snoring during the sermon please.

Our gospel reading for this week is only very short, but I will begin from Matthew 9: 35-38 which says:

*"Jesus went around visiting all the towns and villages. He taught in the synagogues, preached the Good News about the Kingdom, and healed people with every kind of disease and sickness. As he saw the crowds, his heart was filled with pity for them, because they were worried and*



*helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. So he said to his disciples, "The harvest is large, but there are few workers to gather it in. Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest."*

Jesus reveals here the mission of the Church, to preach the Good News about the Kingdom of God that has come in and through Jesus Christ.

Jesus not only preached and taught with words, but he put his words into action because he is the Living Word of God; He healed people with every kind of sickness, says Matthew's gospel.

**W**hy? What is the motive for his words and his actions? Mat. 9: 36 says, he did this because he was filled with 'pity'. He was filled with 'compassion' and love for the people. And so his heart not only went out to them, but through his reaching out to them, he draws them unto himself.

Jesus explains to the disciples the situation that is before them regarding their mission.

He says, plainly, the harvest is large. Those who are helpless like sheep without a shepherd are plentiful. But, the problem at hand, says Jesus, is that the workers are few.

But, before he allows the problem to consume the disciples, he immediately calls them to 'pray'. "Pray", says Jesus... pray to the 'owner' of the harvest; since it is his harvest, pray to him; pray that he will send out workers to gather IN his harvest.



# is huge

Noting of course, that prayer is not a tool for getting our way; prayer is not a tool for twisting God's arm to do what we want. Nor should prayer be used as a last resort or when something bad happens to us.

Prayer is a way of life; prayer is being in constant dialogue and in constant communion (relationship) with God in Christ through the power of His Spirit, regardless of the circumstance or the situation.



In a Christian video I saw last Sunday afternoon, I came across a wonderful little quote; it said something to effect:

“Religion is when the Holy Spirit has left the building.”

In the same way, when we are not living a life that is not in constant communion with God in prayer, in Christ, through faith, by the Spirit, then, we fall into the real danger of simply living a “religious life” God does not need more “religion”, he needs more sons and daughters in the image and in the lineage of his dear Son, Jesus Christ.

In Rom 8:29 St. Paul says: *“Those whom God had already chosen he also set apart to become like his Son, so that the Son would be the first among many believers.”*

God wants more sons and daughters who have a heart of compassion; a heart of love and a willingness to reach out to others; so that by reaching to others with God's love and compassion, Christ may draw others to himself.

And so Jesus exhorts his disciples to pray; to pray in particular for more labourers.

But the answer to the prayer comes not in the form of bringing extra labourers from the ‘outside’ as such (which is sometimes the way we pray as a church), but the an-



swer comes in the ‘calling’ of the 12 disciples themselves.

Matthew's gospel chapter 10 begins with the calling of the 12 disciples.

Jesus calls them and then he gives them “authority” to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease.

Noting that authority here is a “given” authority; it is something given to the disciples by Jesus Christ himself; it is not something that they established or built up by themselves to be used for their own purposes. No, authority here is given to them by Christ himself to be received in faith and to be used for the mission of the church, that is, to drive out demons, and evil spirits and to heal the sick, and to preach and proclaim the good news, through words and deeds ... that the Kingdom of God has come to the world in Jesus Christ.

Note carefully that in Matthew 10 verse 1 Jesus calls 12 “disciples”, but in verse 2 Jesus names the 12 as “apostles”.

That is, they are called and trained as “disciples”, but they are “sent” out with authority as “apostles” or as missionaries.

And, they needed to be trained as disciples, that is, they needed to be trained in the school of prayer because of the hostile world that Jesus clearly highlights will be awaiting them.

Jesus doesn't try to hide the dangers before them in fear that the disciples might run away; no, Jesus tells them exactly what the missionary field will look like.

Jesus warns his disciples that they will be persecuted for their faith. He paints a dark picture of their suffering and trials in years to come (10:17-42).

Jesus tells them plainly that they will be persecuted at every level of government, from synagogues and local

## BATTLE IN CAIRNS

councils to Roman courts and royal palaces. They will be flogged and imprisoned.

Jesus tells them plainly that people will disagree about the gospel. It will split even the closest relationships. The apostles will be hated because of the message they bring.

In Matthew 10: 16 Jesus says, *"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves"*. I can just see people running to the church office after the service asking for an application form to sign up for our next discipleship course.

Jesus continues: Mat 10:38 *"Those who do not take up their cross and follow in my steps are not fit to be my disciples. Those who try to gain their own life will lose it; but those who lose their life for my sake will gain it."*

**O**ur natural instinct as humans is to try to protect and look after ourselves first before we help others. But, here Jesus turns the rules for ministry and mission in his Kingdom on their heads.

If you want to be an apostle or a missionary in my kingdom says Jesus, you must first lose your life, before you are fit and ready to serve me. Because if the order is reversed in God's kingdom, then, we will fall into the real danger of serving ourselves, rather than serving Christ and serving one another first.

Matthew 6: 33; *"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you....."*

The mission of the Church is not always easy, as we have all felt and experienced: there is no doubt about that. And I'm sure there will be many more trials that will come before us in the future.

But today, I believe, is a new day for us as a congregation.

The Good News is, as we so often forget, that God will never abandon us, regardless of how bad a situation might seem. His Spirit will always be with us and he will always provide for us and protect us.

The name of our congregation should always be a reminder to us of that fact, that "Emmanuel" means God-is-with-us. We have been given a particular calling, to be a confessing congregation, to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord; Lord of our individual lives, Lord of our families, Lord of the Church and Lord of the world and the universe as a whole.

**O**ur confession must be more than words, it must involve action, that is, we must continue to reach out to others, as apostles, or as missionaries, with the love and the compassion of Christ, so that by reaching out to others, God will use us to draw others closer to Himself.... in Christ.

In Matthew 10: 42 Jesus says: *"You can be sure that whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my followers because he is my follower, will certainly receive a reward"*.

May God be with us today. May He give us a sense of peace, the peace that passes all human understanding so that we might be able to fulfil the mission of his church. Amen.

## A word of hope



Pastor Bill Hollingsworth of Eternal Life Fellowship offered this Benediction, at Emmanuel church 26th June 2011

**T**hank God for the opportunity today, to be present and to share this moment with you all. With Hedley, with Amelia and family. Just a short while ago, in prayer, in the last few weeks, regarding this situation here, I felt the Lord speak to me and say, "Give Hedley this message. The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords loves you and it doesn't really matter what anybody else says or thinks."

And I was looking at Jesus sleeping in the boat while the storm was raging around and the disciples are all in a dither but he is asleep. And they woke him up and he said, "Oh ye of little faith." What are you getting worried about? He speaks to the storm and the winds and the sea, and the winds settle down. He conveys, he imparts, his rest, even to the elements.

And then on his way to the cross, he turns to his disciples and says, "My peace I leave with you." What kind of peace is that when you are going to the cross and you can share something that this world can't give, and the world can't take away. But we have that peace in Jesus Christ.

Let's bow our heads and pray.

Thank you Father, great is your faithfulness. Lord we thank you that if you be for us, then who can be against us? Father thank you for your loving kindness and your tender mercies. Thank you that you passed this way before us. And you called us to follow you even to the top of that hill called Golgotha, there to be crucified with you.

# BATTLE IN CAIRNS

You said, unless we ourselves do not take up our cross daily and follow you, we cannot be your disciples. So father we thank you for the courage and the strength to face whatever adversities, whatever obstacles, the heart-aches and the grief, Lord that confront us as servants of the Lord, disciples of Jesus Christ, and sons of God...

May we prepare our hearts through the grace of God given unto us, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, go forward in Jesus' name regardless of the cost and the consequences and knowing full well that the knowledge of the God of the ages is to be in his everlasting arms. It will be worth it Lord, when we see Jesus. Thank you for the fellowship today. Thank you for the songs of praise, Lord, and everything that has taken place to your honour and glory. Unite our hearts in your name, and that in everything you Jesus Christ will have the pre-eminence, the honour, the praise and the glory alone. We thank you in the name of your Son and our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

## The UCA is committed to serve Cairns....

Queensland Moderator Rev Bruce Johnson written a special statement for *ACCatalyst*

**I**t was with deep regret that I, the Moderator of the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia, advised people that the ministry of Rev Dr Hedley Fihaki at Emmanuel Uniting Church in Cairns has been concluded.

This was determined after a lengthy process, including a three-month suspension on full pay, by the Church's Discipline Committee.

Out of respect for Rev Dr Fihaki I have chosen not to make any formal comment about the decision of the Committee for Discipline.

Rev Dr Fihaki has been given a full report of the Committee's decisions and, while he has the right to share those with whomever he chooses, he has chosen not to do so.

Following the decision by the Committee for Discipline to terminate the placement of Rev Dr Fihaki, the Synod Standing Committee determined to continue to pay Rev Dr Fihaki the basic stipend and to continue to live in the manse for a further three months.

As I have read the reports of the Committee for Discipline, while Rev Dr Fihaki has shown that he understands the polity and responsibilities of an Ordained Minister of the Uniting Church, he could not assure an independent panel that he would live and work within

that understanding into the future. When he has done that he will be able to take up another placement.

Rev Dr Fihaki has exercised an effective ministry within the Emmanuel congregation and the Cairns

## This has been, and continues to be, a very difficult and painful journey for many people

community. It is disappointing that the issues that arose following the closing of the uninsured temporary accommodation at Gatton Street could not be resolved in a

way that gave the Church confidence that Rev Dr Fihaki was committed to the polity of the Uniting Church in Australia and should return to serve the Emmanuel congregation.

The Queensland Synod and the Presbytery of North Queensland remain committed to supporting Rev Dr Fihaki and the Cairns Emmanuel congregation towards a positive future. I am aware that the Presbytery has appointed two ministers to provide pastoral support to Rev Dr Fihaki and his family.

This has been, and continues to be, a very difficult and painful journey for many people in the Congregation, the Presbytery and the Synod. We seek the grace and love of God and we covet the prayers of the people of God as we move from forward from here.

*Rev Bruce Johnson*

*Moderator*

*The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod*

*Summary of Important Steps (From the Moderator's letters to the Congregation).*

1. Complaints against Rev Dr Hedley Fihaki which related to his actions contrary to the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice and the Polity of the Uniting Church were "made out".

2. Hedley received sanctions including three months paid leave from March 23 to do work to convince an independent panel that he will work within the Code of Ethics and polity of the UCA.

3. Hedley then had the responsibility in those three months to work with his mentor to be able to convince the panel that he had learned from this and that he was willing to work within the Code of Ethics and Polity of the Uniting Church and so be reinstated to his ministry position at Cairns Emmanuel.

4. The panel presented their report to the Committee for Discipline on the June 14.

5. The Committee for Discipline presented its decision to the Synod Standing Committee which included the decision to conclude the placement of Rev Dr Hedley Fihaki at Cairns Emmanuel Uniting Church.

6. The Synod Standing Committee at a meeting on 23rd June noted that decision and carried resolutions putting into effect that decision and appropriate pastoral support and communication processes.

It is noted that Rev Dr Fihaki does have the right to appeal this decision of the Committee for Discipline and he has been informed of that right.





Kandos Country

## ENVIRONMENT

# Stewardship of the rural environment: Care, use, enjoy and rest!

By Ross MacMillan  
Senior Fellow in Agricultural  
Engineering, University of  
Melbourne. Member ACC,  
ISCAST\* Fellow.

**O**ur failure to care for creation has become a common and significant theme for publications over recent years and the need for greater care has been accepted, in principle at least, by most people in society. In Christian terms our lack of care has usually been expressed as the result of both personal and societal sin. However experience and the examples presented suggest that much of the damage to creation is not only the result of specific human sin but also of our misapplication of technology, our failure to understand what might be the result of our actions and our inability to mitigate the damage that they may cause.

It is argued that continued use of the rural environment is therefore only likely to be care-full if it is based on a productive system that can justify the cost of a continuing program of research to identify appropriate inputs, eliminate any damaging effects and accept a willingness to pay for the real costs of the production.

The stewardship of the rural environment is important because it appears, from its introduction in the biblical creation narratives and from our science and husbandry, that it is fundamental to life on earth.

It is also important at this time because the rural environment and our agricultural industries are suffering from our lack of care and because this failure will continue to affect all of society.

## 2. Perspectives from the Creation Narrative

It is appropriate in any consideration of the rural environment to begin with the first two chapters of Genesis. Here the elements, which are features of the rural environment (and much else), are revealed in non-scientific terms, pronounced good and given to humans for their



Matt Cornwall

care, use and enjoyment. An opportunity to rest completes the narrative.

In the following paper the themes of care, use and enjoyment of the rural environment are considered firstly in relation to Genesis 1:26–2:24 and then explored in the light of the Australian experience.

#### *Care*

In Genesis 1:26–28, which follows the revelation of the creation of the earth, the “care” aspect of these “creatures” is introduced in terms of having “dominion” over (ruling or managing) the earth and its various creatures and identifying the human responsibility to “keep” the garden in the context of “till and keep”.

These are active roles and are given in the context of humanity as the “steward” of the ruler; nowhere do they provide biblical mandate for care-less use of the earth or its resources. As Wright (1977) asserts, it is as human beings, created in “God’s image”, which justifies our being entrusted with this role of serving God as co-ruler and co-creator of the earth.

#### *Use*

The creation narrative also involves the gift of and authorisation for use of the earth and its resources—here green seed-bearing plants. The command to “fill the earth and subdue it” (v. 28) legitimately and necessarily involves humans working to produce food from the earth for increasing numbers of people and creatures and enjoying the privilege of eating of its fruit.

#### *Enjoy*

Genesis 2 also mentions that trees, which were “pleasant to the sight and good for food”, are given to humans for their enjoyment and use. This is the only specific reference to “enjoyment” although other verses imply that the result of care and use will result in the pleasure that creation (Genesis 1:31), fruitfulness (Genesis 1:28) and sharing bring. Such human enjoyment is perhaps a reflection of God “resting in” creation and presumably “enjoying” it.

The enjoyment that man was to have is heightened by the presence of animals that had been created (Genesis 2:19) and by their being known by the name that he gave to them in what is the beginnings of animal husbandry and science.

However because of his aloneness, man’s capability as

a worker and his enjoyment as a human (in contrast to the animals) is still not complete. So a “human” who, at least in a physical sense, is closely related to him is created and becomes his “wo-man” and ultimately becomes one with him in a new creation.

#### *Rest*

We can identify the final ‘act’ in the great creation narrative as one of ‘rest’. This was the signal that the work was finished, that all was ‘good’ and that the creation was (at an initial level) complete. So God rested on the Sabbath and in doing so established a series of regular rest periods, including one day of rest in seven, for all creation and for all time.

## **The steward ... is a rather superior servant, a sort of supervisor or foreman who must make decisions**

As Blocher (1984) states: ‘... the climax of Genesis 1 is not the creation of man the worker but the institution of the Sabbath for man the worshipper; it is not our toil (subduing the earth) but our laying aside of our toil on the Sabbath day ... ‘The rest that is mentioned following the completion of

creation (Genesis 2:2–3) is presumably more of a model for human benefit (and later for the sabbatical laws) than because God had grown tired as human bodies do (Isaiah 40:28).

In summary then we see that the creation narrative includes the themes of care and use, enjoyment and rest—themes which define the roles that humans have been given and confirm our belief that such roles are theologically and morally legitimate (Wright 1997).

## **3. Stewardship as a biblical image**

The idea that best describes our relationship to the earth and our human role is that of “stewardship”. While

# ENVIRONMENT

the word is not used directly in Genesis 1 and 2, the idea is widely used in the Bible generally and is inherent in many stories and commands in both Old and New Testaments.

The role of the steward is spelt out by Hall (1990):

“The steward ... is a rather superior servant, a sort of supervisor or foreman who must make decisions, give orders and take charge ... one who has been given the responsibility for the management and service of something belonging to another; his office presupposes a particular kind of trust on the part of the owner or master.

... however important the steward may be ... he is neither ultimately authoritative nor irreplaceable. He may indeed be a superior servant ... but he is still a servant and if he forgets this and begins to behave as though he were himself unambiguously in charge (i.e., not accountable) he shall be dealt with most severely.”

These principles of stewardship are promoted, quite explicitly, in the story of the Hebrew people as the principles by which they, as the people of God, were to live in the land that they had been given. Their faithfulness in the application of these principles to the care of their land, to its use for the support of human and animal life and the enjoyment of and rest for all was reflected in the condition of the land and its environment. This ultimately was one measure of their faithfulness to God and to his commands about how they were to live.

We, in later times, in other places and different technological worlds have to ‘read off’ their application to our situation. Recent discussion in the Christian literature on the general subject of environmental concerns is often limited to establishing the case of human failure to ‘care’ for creation on a ‘sin-redemption’ grid.

However it leaves much unsaid in relation to what it means to be good stewards and to care for the earth in the light of the range of climatic, socio-economic and technological conditions in the modern world. There is therefore now less need to argue the general case for care and a more urgent need to consider how we should deal more specifically with the existing damage in individual situations and how we might live and change our ways to avoid such damage in the future.

## 4. Care, use and enjoy as stewardship

### *Lack of care*

There has often been a general lack of concern for the care of creation, particularly in the urban community. This is a carry over from earlier times before the industrial revolution when the population was much smaller, the per capita demand was less, hence the demand for resources was low and pollution was diffuse.

We have continued to base our societies on the assumption that these conditions still apply and have only realised recently that in many areas they do not.

On a world scale the two major political philosophies and the various religions have not developed alternative systems for the care of creation that have been widely accepted. For example, notwithstanding the Judeo-Christian world-view as a basis for Western societies the idea of “stewardship”, which is inherent in it, remains a ‘Christian’ ideal.

The rejection of an active Christian world-view by many has necessitated the development of a more secu-

lar and humanistic basis for care.

Our cities and their marketing systems with demand for all-year product availability have separated the understanding of many about the land and its seasonal production. As a result we have insulated ourselves from many aspects of creation that would sensitise us to the need for its care and allow us to live in ways that are heedless of that care and its Creator.

### *Care, use and enjoyment in agriculture*

Of the features of earth over which humans have significant control, land (top-soil), water and atmosphere are the most important, followed closely by their combined output of plants and animals.

Agriculture, and particularly modern agriculture, is highly complex and variable and it is frequently not clear what “care” means or which “operating system” is the most “care-full”. This is or has been significant in developing countries where agriculture, as practised, is often antithetical to sympathetic stewardship.

So the question might be asked, “How will we measure ‘care?’” or “How will we know that we are caring or not caring?” The answer might only be discovered from longterm research or when it is too late and evidence of our failure is obvious for all to see.

Care, which might be considered one of the “costs” of production, is such that it can be put off; other costs may be seen as more demanding and urgent. So, in effect, we begin to “mine” the land—taking out without putting anything back and allowing damage to occur without taking steps to repair it. Hence, to discuss care in isolation from all the production issues and the necessary inputs needed to sustain that care and to meet other human desires is to leave much of the story untold.

### *Examples of care and use*

In the history of agriculture one could enumerate many specific sites, land types or agricultural systems which have suffered damage to a greater or lesser degree from lack of knowledge, insufficient research, over exploitation, pollution, etc.

The following are two examples of “care and use” in dry-land crop/animal production, in a developed country—Australia, and a developing country—Niger.

In neither example could lack of care be specifically attributed to human “sin” on the part of the practitioners nor could biblical teaching have provided more than general principles, which presumably it did. Rather, these failures arose largely from a mis-reading of the conditions and the mis-application of technical information from one setting into another.

A well-documented example of “care” and lack of it, is the story of the wheat industry in the wheat-sheep areas in SE and SW Australia. In Australia our forebears were slow to recognise the need for different systems to manage our dry, light (sandy) soils that are subject to wind erosion and our clay sub-soils which are subject to water erosion.

In the early stages of development (1870–1910) the lack of “care”, resulted in soil depletion, declining yields and social dislocation because of nutrient exhaustion, dry-land salting and wind erosion. Later “care”, resulted in increasing yields because of moisture retention, improved soil structure, reduced erosion, fertiliser from legumes and the use of new varieties of wheat.





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## **The richness of the creation which has been given to human kind ...is 'given' to humans as to a steward with responsibilities of care and use but also the privileges of enjoyment and rest.**

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So we see that our failure to care was essentially a failure to understand the technical issues in land use. This was hardly a sin although it was a grievous error.

The care when it was practised resulted not from a new reading of the scriptures but from a century of on-going, basic scientific research and good husbandry. This produced a world-class example of sustainable and productive land care and use and enjoyment of the food for millions of people over 150 years.

A second example, which comes from a report by Tony Rinaudo (2005), illustrates how ignorance and perhaps lack of care (as aid) by Western society combine to limit the use and enjoyment of their land by people in sub-Saharan Africa.

For many years conventional Western forestry methods have been applied and exotic tree species promoted in Sahelian countries in order to combat desertification. Indigenous species that were barely acknowledged and generally dismissed as "useless" scrub were cleared to make way for exotics.

Then, in 1983 while on route to a village, I [Tony] stopped the car and looked out over the barren landscape and said a silent prayer asking for wisdom and a breakthrough. Then for the first time I "saw" what had been there all along ... an underground forest just waiting to be discovered.

Twenty-two years on, the results have been amazing with "farmer-managed natural regeneration" (FMNR) being practised in one form or another across Niger and beyond. Trees have become a cash crop with multiple benefits.

Once this was established, the revolution began, moving slowly but surely from farmer to farmer and eventually across the nation. Because FMNR can become a grass roots movement, large areas of land can be

"re-treed" rapidly, resulting in increased bio-diversity and benefits to people, the environment, soils, crops and livestock.

Again we see not a spiritual "failure" (eventually a spiritual success) but a failure because of the mis-reading and mis-application of knowledge. It was originally not clear what "care" meant but when correct use was understood and practised, both care, enjoyment and further use became possible.

## **5. Conclusion**

In a complex industry such as agriculture, use will only be justified if it is "care-full" but this will not always be clear without significant research to avoid damage due to technical ignorance. Such careful use should also involve the production of food and fibre for the enjoyment of the whole community and also for others who need it and receive it as the result of trade or aid.

With such care and use, society can expect to and does find enjoyment in its forests and fields whether they are productive for food and fibre or inspirational for wonder and worship.

Lack of care and over-use often result in lack of rest that was intended to be part of the created, weekly and seasonal cycle for land and labour; in these ways we are care-less of both. So we should bless the Creator for a day of rest in the weekly round, a week or two when the seasons allow, and perhaps even a jubilee year!

The richness of the creation that has been given to human kind is illustrated in both its diversity and fruitfulness but also in its complexity and usefulness. In the biblical story it is 'given' to humans as to a steward with responsibilities of care and use but also the privileges of enjoyment and rest.

These ideas have spiritual and technical aspects, hence both need to be kept in view and discussed theologically and technologically if a faithful but practical understanding of these themes is to be obtained.

*The full version of this paper including the references was first published in Christian Perspectives on Science and Technology and may be viewed on the Christians in Science and Technology web site at <http://www.iscast.org> \*ISCAST is the Institute for the Study of Christianity in an Age of Science and Technology.*

# Could the Church of England be dead in 20 years?

*Michael Youssef, the Atlanta based evangelist whose Leading The Way ministry reaches across the Muslim world makes a big call.*

**T**he headline on the July 14, 2011, edition of the British paper, *The Daily Telegraph*, heralded some very bad news for British Anglicans. It declared, "Aging Church of England 'will be dead in 20 years.'" They buttressed their argument in two ways:

1. The average age of a Church of England attendee is 61 (you do the math).
2. In the last 40 years, church attendance has been cut in half.

You would think that the Archbishop of Canterbury would wake up and smell the coffee. Instead, a few weeks earlier, he finally came clean. Well, he was forced to come clean. For years, he acted as if he was an impartial arbitrator between the believing Anglicans [who make up the majority of Anglicans worldwide] and the apostate ones led by the American and Canadian Anglicans/Episcopalians. He has always called for "unity," a way of saying to the believing Anglicans, "just shut-up and let the apostates have their way."

Now, a document has leaked to the press affirming his quiet desire to ordain homosexual bishops all along, not only in the United States, but in his own backyard, in England. The document entitled *Choosing Bishops – The Equality Act 2010* affirms that, "someone in a sexually active relationship outside of marriage is not eligible for the Episcopate."

But, it contains legal advice that calls for celibate homosexuals to be eligible for ordination to the Episcopate. This is double talk.

First of all, if a person is celibate, why do we have to know their sexual orientation? Unless ... this is his way of getting homosexual bishops under the wire, as it were.

Second, since when does the church obey the government when the government legislates anti-biblical and anti-God laws? Have we forgotten our Christian heritage, our forebears who were sent to face hungry lions in arenas for saying that God must be obeyed above Caesar?

It is now time for ALL believers to wake up and smell the coffee. These older denominations and many so-called "evangelical churches" are falling prey to Satan's lie.

The leadership of the mainline churches in general

and the Anglican/Episcopal church in particular, has led their denominations over the cliff of apostasy.

Their denial of the authority of the Scriptures, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and their belief in a God who will not judge sin, but will send everyone to Heaven, has rendered their denomination anything but "a Christ-ian church."

### *The Urgent Need*

The most urgent need today is for a new reformation and a return to biblical integrity and authentic Christianity.

Historic reformers, whether Martin Luther, Calvin, or even Wesley, were seldom successful in their attempts to reform the church from within. If the experiences of past reformations have taught us anything, it is that reformers will only succeed by creating an alternative structure. Luther's deep desire to remain in the Medieval Church and reform it from within failed miserably—a valuable lesson here.

Faithful global Anglicans must create an alternative to Canterbury. No, not just threaten to do it, but to "get on with it." Without that global alternative, they will continue to subject themselves to Canterbury's trickery, manipulation, and stalling tactics. They need to take heed of *The Daily Telegraph* prediction that The Church of England will be "dead in twenty years".

Anglicanism by its very nature [like it or not] is hierarchical. Therefore, global leadership must emerge to unite all faithful Anglicans worldwide. This requires an acceptable global servant leader.

As I have thought deeply about this need, and as I have examined the situation as thoroughly as any man can, it is my considered opinion that the man who has proven his servant leadership qualities, to say nothing of his sterling theological orthodoxy, is none other than the General Secretary of the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON), Dr. Peter Jensen, Archbishop of Sydney.

### *The Way Forward*

The leaders of biblical Anglicanism within and without GAFCON need to close ranks behind Peter Jensen and elect him as an alternative to Canterbury. They must give up on this misguided notion that Anglicanism is a monolithic church that meets once every ten years in Canterbury at the Lambeth Conference so the bishops can get together, hold hands and sing "Kumbaya."

Only then will the failing apostate branch die off as *The Daily Telegraph* paper suggests and the new alternative flourish and preserve the Anglican reformation for which Latimer, Ridley, Cranmer, and countless others have given their lives.

The details of this broad outline can be fleshed out by far more qualified leaders within GAFCON.

# Why Jesus taught his followers to pray

ROSS CARTER begins an *ACCatalyst* series on the Lord's Prayer

**T**he New Testament records that Jesus taught his disciples a particular prayer. Why did he do that because every human being knows innately how to pray? That is what we think so why did teach his disciples us to suck eggs, as we say?

The only possible answer to this question is that we don't have a native ability to converse with God.

We need to be told how to pray: "When you are praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words" (Matt 6:7-8).

In this introductory article on the Lord's Prayer I discuss the difference between prayer that is addressed, as Jesus taught it should be, to God the Father and inadequate forms of prayer such as the reflex utterance of what is thought to be our native ability to pray, and the "lobby-group" prayer.

I call reflexive native prayer the "off chance prayer".

Prayer on the "off-chance" is an instinctive cry to something or someone who might be out there, and something or someone who is more powerful than us and might be able to do what we cannot get done for ourselves.

Prayer on the off chance is activated when we have run out of possible solutions to some problem.

It is also an agnostic prayer for it

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## We know the nature of the divine person who speaks to us because we know Jesus Christ

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operates on the principle that while praying probably won't get us what we want, it is still worth a try on the off chance it just might work this time.

But there is also another view that sees prayer as a way of lobbying God to get something done that we can't do for ourselves. This is believed to operate like a political lobby group.

If you can get as many people as possible praying constantly for the same thing then you will get God's attention just as the strong and large lobby group thinks it will get the at-

tention of the government.

The "lobby group" prayer is similar to the "off-chance" prayer in that it arises when we have exhausted our abilities and resources in trying to solve a problem.

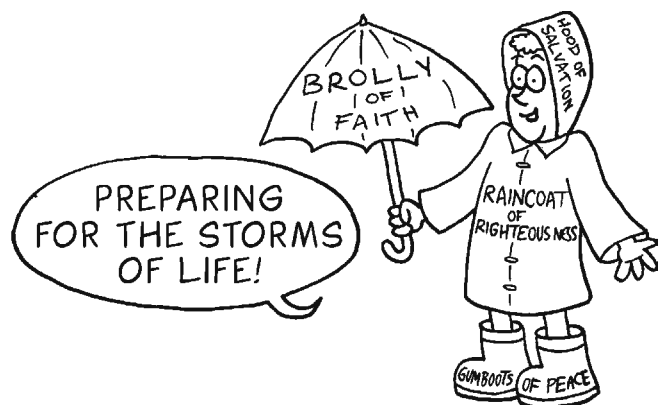
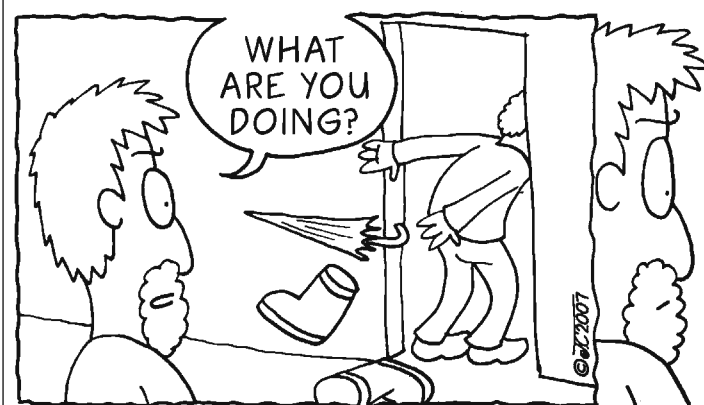
Christian prayer, on the other hand, is a response that arises because we are spoken to. And what we say in this responsive prayer is shaped by the kind of person who has spoken to us and by what has been promised us.

We know the nature of the divine person who speaks to us because we know Jesus Christ, who is one with the Father, and who declares and manifests in his death and resurrection the coming kingdom of God.

This responsive prayer, unlike the other two kinds, arises out of the known identity and fullness of the conversation partner and not as a last resort to our own impotence.

It is not a stab in the dark to someone who might listen to whoever can yell the loudest but a joyful thanksgiving to someone who has and will fulfil our humanity according to his will.

In future columns I shall look at the petitions in the Lord's Prayer and show how they are a response to the reality of God revealed in Jesus Christ and, therefore, how each petition asks God to be true to the nature he has already revealed.





# Focusing on the Gospel

The Future of Evangelism is the theme of the 2011 ACC National Conference, that will be held 8-10 September 2011

The conference features a strong line up of speakers.

Thursday night: Benjamin Myers on "The Basis of Union: An Evangelical Manifesto?"

Friday morning: Mark Durie on 'Evangelism and Islam.'

Friday Night rally: Stu Cameron on "Confident Humility"

Saturday morning: Graham Paulson on "Bringing the Gospel to Indigenous People"

The conference will be held at Brimbank Anglican Church Centre, Corner Ely Court and Keilor Park Drive, Keilor East, in Northern Melbourne.

Invite your friends to the Friday Night Public Rally. This will be an excellent opportunity to hear from one of the Uniting Church's well-known leaders Rev Stu Cameron. Stu was formerly the SA Synod Secretary and is now the Senior Minister at New Life Uniting Church, Robina, Queensland.

Dr Mark Durie is a theologian, human rights activist and pastor of an Anglican church. He has published many articles and books on Chris-

tian-Muslim relations and religious freedom.

Benjamin Myers is Lecturer in Systematic Theology at the United Theological College, and is widely read online as a theologian with an international audience.

The conference also includes the ACC Annual General Meeting.

Time has been allocated again for state movements to meet together. The whole conference and AGM will build on previous conferences where a growing warm fellowship in Christ has been evidenced, and will also help members understand more fully our world today, and be encouraged to faithfully witness to the Gospel.

Nominations are due by 1.30 pm: Thursday September 8, 2011.

All members attending the 2011 AGM will receive a copy via email after registration for their reference.

If you would like a copy now, please email the ACC office. A limited number of printed copies will be available at the 2011 AGM.

We hope you may be able to come to the conference, and value your prayers for the arrangements.

If you have any questions contact Peter Bentley at the ACC office.

*Revd Walter Abetz  
ACC Secretary*

## ACC AGM and Conference Notice

Notice of meeting and Agenda for the Annual General Meeting and Second Annual Conference of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations Inc. (within the Uniting Church in Australia), to be held on Thursday 8 September 2011 at Brimbank Anglican Church, Ely Court and Keilor Park Drive, Keilor East, Vic, commencing at 1.30 pm.

1. Opening and welcome
2. Apologies
3. Approval of the minutes of the 2010 AGM
4. Matters arising
5. Financial accounts for 2010-11 and Budget for 2011-2012
6. Election of Chair and National Council
7. Report of the National Council
8. Reports and Business from the Boards and Commissions
9. Proposals
10. Other business
11. Close

# Praying churches and evangelism

*After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly (Acts 4:31 NIV).*

When the believers in the early Church were in one accord and prayed, an earthquake shook the building, all believers were filled with the Holy Ghost, they witnessed boldly, and the Church had great power. Great grace was upon every member and when they prayed glorious things took place through the unleashing of the power of the Holy Spirit in response to the 'corporate

prayer' of God's people crying out to Him together and lives were impacted for the Kingdom.

The critical issue and problem that we face today, is that we have not followed and do not always follow the pattern set down for us in the Scriptures, in relation to prayer and evangelism.

If, as a church we are not seeing converts won for the Lord, perhaps we need to be asking ourselves the question: "Are we being intentional, persistent, consistent and devoting ourselves to prayer for souls to be won for the Lord and His King-

dom?" A church that is praying and also proclaiming the truth of the Kingdom will win souls for the Lord.

Let us all pray that we have a burden of prayer for salvation, a burning desire to make salvation known to sinners, and open mouths to proclaim boldly that Jesus can save, in order that we make Christ known.

*Mandy Scott  
"PrayerNet" The Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia  
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# THIS IS THE ACC

## Who we are

Within the Uniting Church context of a very broad range of theology and practice, the Assembly of Confessing Congregations is a nationwide body of congregations and individuals whose vision is confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaiming the truth, renewing the church.

*Our goals include*

- Encouraging the confession of Christ according to the faith of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, as that faith is described in the UCA's Basis of Union.
- Providing resources, seminars and conferences to build up believers, develop their gifts, and equip them for life, mission and works of service.
- Encouraging Christian believers in earnest prayer through our Prayer Network.
- Encouraging younger members of the Uniting Church in their faith and participation.
- Communicating about current events and issues through our website, our national magazine *ACCatalyst* and local newsletters.

## What does ACC do to help you?

The ACC conducts meetings, events and seminars to assist believers to

- grow in their faith and be active in prayer, worship and fellowship
- share their faith and respond to current issues in the church and the world
- develop their congregations as vibrant expressions of the Good News.
- experience God's Word in action through healing broken lives and reconciling relationships.

## What we want to do

The objects of the Assembly of Confessing Congregations are:

- a) To confess Christ according to the catholic, reformed and evangelical heritage in the Basis of Union, by:
  - i) upholding the Scriptures' prophetic and apostolic testimony to Christ as the final authority for the Uniting Church's faith and life;
  - ii) calling the Uniting Church to

determine matters of doctrine and ethics according to the teaching of the Scriptures and the faith as understood by the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church;

- iii) calling the councils and congregations of the Uniting Church to uphold the Basis of Union and Constitution:

- iv) providing biblically grounded leadership in partnership with other confessing movements;

- v) developing ecumenical partnerships for the more effective proclamation of the Gospel in our pluralist nation; and

- vi) establishing national, state and territory bodies to implement the Charter as approved by the inaugural meeting of the Association, and seeking the renewal of the Uniting Church.

b) To undertake such religious, educational or other charitable activities which are incidental to the above objectives.

## How to join us

Please consider joining the ACC. Supporting Membership forms are available at: <http://www.confessing-congregations.com/assembly/members/individual-members/>

Interested congregational contacts please contact the office or see the website.

Membership rates for supporting members: Concession (single or couple): \$35.00 pa. (financial year basis) Full (single or couples): \$60.00 p.a

Contact (02) 9550 5358. email: [accoffice@confessingcongregations.com](mailto:accoffice@confessingcongregations.com) mail: PO Box 968 Newtown NSW 2042

# ACC DIARY

## What happens next:

● August 29–31: Oxygen 11, the First National Conference for Pastors and Leaders, in Redfern, Sydney. Speaker: John Piper (ACC NSW has a group of 11 members attending) –

● September 8–10, 2011 : ACC National Conference, at Brimbank (Anglican Church, East Keilor, Melbourne). The conference commences at 1.30 pm on Thursday 8 September 2011 and concludes with lunch on Saturday 10 September.

● October 4: ACC Doctrine and Theology Commission

● October 8: NSW ACC General Meeting at Newtown Mission, 11 – 1 pm with guest speaker Rev John Mallison. This will be followed by a guided tour of the Revelation Ceiling at Newtown Mission.

● October 29: ACC SA Movement 'Living Waters' seminar at Mt Gambier. The theme will be The Gospel Mission to Marriages and Families. November 14: ACC National Council meeting (teleconference)

● November 25-27: Rod James Seminars in Brisbane (Organised by ACC Queensland)

## Consider making a Bequest to the ACC

It has been wonderful to see the support and hope evidenced for the ACC appeal, and in particular the enthusiasm for a National Director. Some members have indicated that they would like to make a larger contribution to the future work of the ACC, but are not presently able to do this, and thought one way was to provide for the ACC in their wills.

This is a very helpful suggestion, as people can contribute to the on-going and long-term work of the confessing movement. All you need to do is specify in your will the name of the organisation, and the amount to be provided:

For example, "I give .... to the Assembly of Confessing Congregations Inc. For the general purposes thereof."

## FILM



The Grandfathers

# A different heart

*The Grandfathers* (2011, PG)

For those who saw the first documentary in this trilogy, this will be a must-see film. *Beyond the Gates of Splendor* (2002 documentary) was followed by the *End of the Spear* (2005 dramatised version). These films are based around the murders of five missionaries, Nate Saint, Jim Elliot, Ed McCully, Pete Fleming, and Roger Youderian in 1956 by men from the Waodani (or Huaorani) people, who live in the Amazonian rainforest area of east Ecuador.

The Waodani and their neighbours were characterised as one of the most violent peoples in recorded history. The first documentary told the story from the viewpoint of those who went to live with the Waodani people after the murders, including Steve Saint, the son of Nate, and his family. I have always found it to be a profoundly moving and challenging story of reconciliation.

*The Grandfathers* continues this theme, but focuses on Steve's son Jesse, as he works through his time with the Waodani people, learning subtly about the events that took place in the 1950s, which formed his father and have now formed him as a man, and have led him to continue a ministry in his own right.

The film itself is a cultural study and testament to Jesse's generation, and also different forms of film-making as it is part conventional documentary, part Terrence Malik style of personal reflection, and even part music video (how can one not like a documentary that has the Eurhythmics singing Missionary Man in the background?).

The style may actually be difficult at times for some people to watch, but there are many fascinating parts, and it links well with the first documentary, often using references and even jokes, albeit with Jesse's comments, rather than his father's.

It is sobering to witness the next generation simply being with the people who had killed your own grandfather and his friends, but for Jesse he cannot contemplate being without his new relations, summing up the Christian gospel: 'Same man, - different heart.'

*Book of Eli* (2010, MA)

Sometimes Hollywood surprises you with a film with religion at its centre. This sometimes erratic and quite violent film (be warned, many characters are dispatched to meet their creator), centres on a 'book' carried by Eli, a contemporary road warrior played by Academy Award winner Denzel Washington.

He is on a mission in a post-apocalyptic world to deposit this book at a remaining civilised centre for safe-keeping. One person asks Eli what was the world like before (the apocalypse). He replies simply "People had more than they needed. We had no idea what was precious and what wasn't. We threw away things people kill each other for now."

The film is summed up by one poster "Some will kill to have it. He will kill to protect it." Eli is an enigmatic survivor in this post-apocalyptic world (much like the film *The Road*). Throughout the film he consistently refuses the temptations and rewards, including sexual advances he is of-

fered. He acknowledges God's provision. "Dear Lord, thank you for giving me the strength and the conviction to complete the task you entrusted to me. Thank you for guiding me straight and true through the many obstacles in my path. And for keeping me resolute when all around seemed lost. Thank you for your protection and your many signs along the way. Thank you for any good that I may have done, I'm so sorry about the bad. Thank you for the friend I made. Please watch over her as you watched over me."

He is depicted as a moral and upright person, perhaps like an Old Testament prophet, who also provides swift judgement on the immorality around him. What is this book? Aptly for this contemporary period, it is a copy of the King James Bible.

He has one person as his nemesis: Carnegie, a ruthless local war lord figure who tries to seduce Eli into joining him, because he wants this book at all costs. He knows the book.

He says "I grew up with that book, I know its power." Further that it is "A weapon aimed right at the hearts and minds of the weak and the desperate. It will give us control of them.... People will come from all over, they'll do exactly what I tell 'em if the words are from the book. It's happened before and it'll happen again. All we need is that book." The film certainly highlights that words and this book have power, and significant parts of Eli's dialogue are quotes and references from the bible.

Eli of course completes his mission. The KJV bible is put in place with other religious works, the curator seemingly implying that it is the lost piece that the world needs, an integral work of culture and a future help in terms of the re-civilisation of the world. The role of the bible is clearly pointed to in the past, as it will be in the future, though we know it as more than a cultural work.

Eli concludes the film, depicted as the faithful servant, "I'm so very tired, but I go now to my rest at peace. Knowing that I have done right with my time on this earth. I fought the good fight, I finished the race, I kept the faith."

Peter Bentley

Executive Consultant for the ACC