

## Welcome to ER Direct

### Editorial

Two events over the last month have highlighted how slow we are to change attitudes and understanding. For instance, the RMU conference at Galong. The issue of 'where are the young people in our churches' and 'what are we doing to address the problem', was raised. A brainstorming session of 'why we wanted young people in church' produced about 16 reasons. Can you suggest any? Stop reading now and write down 5 or 6 ideas. Unfortunately, a lot of the reasons the RMU group came up with arose out of selfish, false or a wrong understanding of the purpose of the Uniting church.

The second event was a survey taken amongst the congregations within the Macquarie Darling Presbytery about congregational responses to the ideas of forming clusters of congregations and Resource Ministry. The responses reflected similar misunderstanding. In my visits to congregations over the last 8 years I have heard the same misunderstandings repeated time and again. However, I am encouraged that I have begun to hear more positive ideas. There is an openness to change, more people are wanting to get on with being Christians in their community rather than trying to maintain the past way of being church.

### How prepared are you to talk about the issues raised by Jesus all about life?

The **Jesus Conversations** material the Board of Mission has been circulating over the last 4 years should have prepared people to have ordinary conversations about personal life issues. Christians today have to relate to people personally and be willing to share their own personal stories about their God experiences in everyday life. If you haven't used this material consider doing so. *We have recently listed the conversations on the DVD.* We have to provide an opportunity for our people to talk about their everyday faith. Two generations of people in mainstream churches were not encouraged to do this and it will require considerable love, gentleness and patience to encourage our members to think like this and do it.

'Jesus all about Life' adverts are going to present paradoxes to encourage thinking about the following issues:

- How come the more you spend the more you want (consumerism vs contentment)
- More friends but less friendship (Facebook vs social networking)
- Bigger houses but broken homes (family values, life purpose)
- A healthy body isn't good enough (body image vs whole person)
- More security, less freedom (security, isolation vs true freedom)

Why do the best things have to end? (loss and grief)

Can you give a life experience story about how your Christian principles or an experience of Jesus has given you direction in dealing with these issues? Can you point to Jesus' teaching about some of these issues?

Your story plus Jesus' teaching is the authentication needed by people to change. Yes, you could just point to the bible teaching and God may use that to change peoples lives and values. But this is also an opportunity for all believers to demonstrate integrity by honestly and critically examining and sharing the true struggle and victory the Christian life brings in daily Christian living. It is actually an opportunity to share your gospel and the gospel. Being in mission, this is actually what the church is meant to be about, not dominated by discussion about services, pastoral care of members or church organisation and property.

**Ross Neville**



## Christian Farmers Camp 7-9<sup>th</sup> August 2009

### Moving Forward Moving Strong

This was the biggest farmers camp since they began 11 years ago. Up to 60+ attendees came from all the places between Tamworth and Wagga. The teaching and sharing was excellent and there was much sharing about local issues amongst the men.

John Anderson was the key speaker and as the ex-deputy prime minister, a practising farmer and a lifelong evangelical Christian, he had a lot to share. Everyone was keen to listen, even if they didn't always agree with his opinion on matters such as the potential for GM crops in the future of agriculture.

John started on Friday evening by sharing his experience of God's guidance and provision over 20 years in parliament. His conversion came in two stages as a youth then as a university student. Four truths have guided his life:

1. The sinfulness of mankind means that mankind denies the truth, and often despises hearing the truth.
2. God prepares. John shared how God prepared him for his parliamentary career and some of the challenges that came with that role - by providing a regular prayer partner for him and the parliamentary prayer breakfasts.
3. We are all answerable and accountable to only one person - God.
4. We will have victory and a reward eventually.

Continued from page 1

John mentioned how important it is for church people to invite their member of parliament to their church, befriend them and pray for them regularly. He taught us from the parable of the prodigal son, emphasising that the Pharisees knew that Jesus was identifying their attitudes with those of the second son. Both sons display wrong attitudes and sinful nature within peoples' hearts.

Chris Turtle, a former Baptist minister army chaplain and now financial consultant, taught the men some of the truths found in scripture about money. There is more scripture teaching about money and property than almost any other issue.

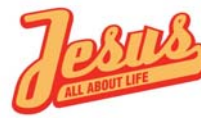
Chris highlighted the two different positions taught by Jesus. Use money to win friends Luke 16:8-9. Your attitude to money can make you a servant/slave to that money and you can't serve two masters Matt 6:24. Money is actually Mammon, a god of ancient times and one of the powers Jesus helps overcome. The men at the camp looked for scriptures that taught about the dark side of money and the good side of money. There are many supporting both positions.

Chris outlined God's strategies to help us have the right attitude to money: understand that God owns everything Ps21; God is in control of everything Col 1:15; God provides for all our needs Luke 12:22-34. The part we play in handling money is to be good, smart, wise, faithful stewards and managers of money and possessions.

Bruce Armstrong, an independent agronomist and farmer from Wagga had everyone asking 'Why didn't I think of that' when he showed pictures and figures demonstrating the positive results of sending diesel exhaust fumes back into the ground with the seed at sowing. The method has been used this in Canada and the USA and Bruce has been doing it at Wagga. It has the potential to reduce fertiliser amounts by up to 75%. Bruce then spent time going over soil test results and showed how important this tool is if you are growing crops.

John Davey is a veterinarian and farmer from Ariah Park. He explained the role and changes from the old PP Boards and the new Pest and Weed Authorities. His observations about the changes in sheep numbers and the viability of maintaining a merino flock in today's environment caused some considerable discussion. Holmes and Sackett maintain that the top 20% of producers are still as profitable as any other farm enterprise. The challenge for Christian growers is to be wise and smart in our management and stewardship of any enterprise.

The concert and forum on Saturday night started off with people in stitches of laughter listening to some of the poems and anecdotes told by the men. The discussion got quite animated as a panel consisting of John Anderson, Bruce Armstrong and John Davey fielded questions and comments from the men until late in the evening. John Anderson's often repeated warning was that Christians within Australia have to be more vigilant and proactive in public affairs. Anti-Christian groups are very aggressively pursuing changes via the legal and parliamentary processes that are very subtly changing the Christian based intent of many of our laws that respects the rights and values of every person.



'Jesus. All about life' is a prime-time media campaign that presents the words of Jesus to the community. It will run from September 15th for six weeks across NSW.

### Sermon Series

If someone were to respond to the TV commercials and arrive in church they may well be hoping to learn something about the person of Jesus.

- One week into the TV advertising campaign commence a 4-6 week sermon series on the Life & Teachings of Jesus.
- Concentrate on the things that Jesus did and said and how this might impact be relevant to us in this time.

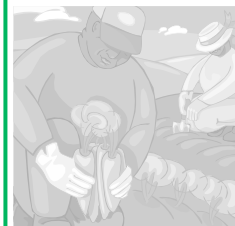
### Resource Ideas

#### Plan Be -

This book forms the main reading for a 10 week study on the beatitudes but would also provide some great reflection on one of the most significant teachings of Jesus.

#### The Life & Teachings of Jesus -

This book is the result of a nine year effort to concentrate the Bible verses associated with Jesus into one volume. Each occurrence of his life is treated individually, and then arranged in a chronological sequence. Thus, it presents Jesus' life and teachings as they actually took place. A downloadable copy is available at <http://www.ltjesus.org/>



## TWINNING UPDATE

Broken Hill Aboriginal Ministry team have established a Community Garden. They are looking for some congregations or groups who would like to sponsor, spend some manpower hours, or to help facilitate the development of the garden idea more extensively. They are looking at a community garden programme and cooking classes. If your congregation could help contact Rev. Neville Naden, 241 Pattern St, Broken Hill. The ministry is a joint venture of Anglican Bush Church Aid, the Church Army and the UCA.

## Project Reconnect

Project Reconnect supplies a DVD with all the elements of a lectionary based worship every week. They send this mainly to very small rural congregations, approx 50 a month across Australia and the number is growing all the time. The Project Reconnect Committee would like invite congregations to become partners with them in this project. To find out more details of how you could help contact Kingsley Murphy 02 68855778 [kingsley.murphy@bigpond.com](mailto:kingsley.murphy@bigpond.com) or find details of Project Reconnect at [www.projectreconnect.com.au](http://www.projectreconnect.com.au)

## Cross-Cultural Gathering 27-27 October 2009

The Cross Cultural Gathering is an annual event coordinated by the Multicultural Ministry Reference Group in the Synod for sharing, networking and empowering. This gathering is aimed at people engaged in cross-cultural ministry in presbyteries and congregations. The theme for this year is 'Christ the Living Water'. Main Speaker: Rev Kerry Enwright. All welcome. Registration: Belinda Fry, BOM. [belindaf@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:belindaf@nsw.uca.org.au)

# Resources Direct



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Email to: [bomrural@bigpond.net.au](mailto:bomrural@bigpond.net.au)



## 1 Australia - whose land? Dr Peter Adam The Second Annual John Saunders Lecture August 2009

*The John Saunders Lecture is an initiative of the Baptist Union of NSW Social Issues Committee. Rev John Saunders is best known for his temperance work and his advocacy for justice for the Aborigines.*

In this talk Dr Peter Adam, Principal of Ridley College, Melbourne, encourages Christians to take a lead in this important moral debate over land ownership in Australia. In some cases it may be almost impossible to know the nation to whom some land was first given, but this is not so with Australia. Dr Adam strongly challenges Christians and the established church to accept that we have wronged the Aborigine people and we should display repentance by offering real recompense to the indigenous people of Australia.

## 3 Talking About .....penny-pinching Tony Watkins Idea - Evangelical Alliance March/April 2009 [info@eauk.org](mailto:info@eauk.org)

Tony Watkins helps us to answer the questions raised by contemporary modern culture. In the current economic climate we are being encouraged to spend, spend, spend. Despite the problems that have been caused by over-borrowing we are being pushed further into debt. This disturbing trend of imposed consumerism and a society in which worth is based on material possessions clashes with our Christian values. The monetary success of our nations are built on shifting sands. As Christians we are called to serve God not materialism - where do you stand in this moral dilemma?



## 2 How to Handle the Next pandemic Mark Gali Christianity Today May 2009 [www.christianitytoday.com](http://www.christianitytoday.com)

*This article can be found at:  
[http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/article\\_print.html?id=83130](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/article_print.html?id=83130)*

Media hype over crises such as Swine Flu has the result of instilling an ominous anxiety. Why? Perhaps it is because it threatens healthy adults like ourselves. In the past when epidemics wiped out whole sections of the population Christians risked their lives to care for the sick. How will we respond? Will we be more concerned with institutional survival or with the welfare of the suffering?

## 4 Stranded in Neverland Skye Jethani Leadership Spring 2009 [www.LeadershipJournal.net](http://www.LeadershipJournal.net)



**Consumerism addicts us to immediate gratification and perpetual youth, but the cross lifts us up to a more satisfying joy.**

A society that keeps adults thinking and buying like children, emotional spending and instant gratification. All these are evident in modern culture, encouraging a 'Peter Pan' existence, overindulgence and a lack of self control. A mature approach to living within our means is discouraged. In some of our churches this causes tension. There is a temptation is to settle for desires far below what we were created for. We should be forgoing our immediate desires and straining towards our mission in life, following in the steps of Christ. Accept the trials of ordinary existence and experience God with us. Discipline yourself by fasting - not just a temporary abstinence from food but what about a media fast to create opportunity in our lives to search for hidden treasures. How long will we remain in Neverland?



### Board of Mission Christmas Cards

A brochure and order form can be [downloaded](#) from the BOM web site or you can contact Veronica Rebolledo on 02 8267 4390

[veronicar@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:veronicar@nsw.uca.org.au) There are 6 designs suitable for all age groups. Order now to avoid disappointment.

### The ABC Appeal

The ABC ("Above our Budget Commitments" and "Above and Beyond with Christ") and Easter Thank Offering Appeals give congregations, groups and individuals an opportunity to support new mission and ministry projects. If you are participating in God's mission for the world in a creative way and are seeking funding, contact the Board of Mission for an application form. Presbyteries have a DVD for loan which details the 2008 Appeal.



**The ER Direct Team**  
Editor: Ross Neville  
Co-ordinator: Gillian Blowes

### Activities of the e-team of The Board of Mission

Jesus Conversations Network  
Evangelism Resources  
ER Direct  
In a State of Prayer

*This work is funded by Living is Giving  
Mission Focus Area No.7 and direct donations.*

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## 5 Small Church Evangelism - is it possible? Rev Don Purdey ACC Catalyst Vol 3 June 2009

Many small churches are aging and shrinking - and on a tightrope. There is no plan of action that 'suits all sizes' but this article offers some suggestions, nine in fact, for you to ponder. Ideas you could try include migrant English tuition, school holiday programs and sports days for kids. A few 'don'ts' for you too like 'Don't assume you know what your community needs - ask them' and the most important one 'Don't give up!' Make the Christian lifestyle that is on show from your church as positive and life-giving as you can, because you are reflecting the life Jesus offers.

*This article was written for and first appeared in ACC Catalyst, June 2009. It is part of a series of lessons in small church evangelism being published in this magazine.*

## 6 It's About the Main Thing ....Really! Gilbert Foster Australian Leadership Vol 2 Issue 2 July/August 2009 [www.mediacom.org.au](http://www.mediacom.org.au)

No sermon, no ushers, no worship singing .... for twelve Sundays? In order to hold on to the main purpose of being church one congregation decided to make a bold move. They replaced their normal worship services with the Alpha Course, sat people around tables and served burritos. The result? Ninety new guests exploring faith and forty people making a commitment to Christ.

You can subscribe to Australian Leadership by contacting MediaCom Education Inc by phoning toll free on 1800 811 311 or ordering online at [www.mediacom.org.au](http://www.mediacom.org.au) for an annual fee of \$68.00 (print copy) or \$47.50 (electronic copy).



## 7 Ministry for Dummies Graham Humphris Australian Leadership Vol 2 Issue 2 July/August 2009

Graham Humphris offers some very practical advice for people in ministry - not just those entering this field but those feeling frustrated by years of 'hard' service. He reflects on his own experience and shares his ideas for effective ministry. Consider your people and teams, develop a mission oriented strategic plan, preach through the values of the church and model evangelism in your personal life.

We could all take something away from this article. It is certainly not just for dummies!

## 8 What is Church? Bessie Pereira Faith & Life Issue 2 July 2009 Australian Evangelical Alliance Inc. [www.ea.org.au](http://www.ea.org.au)

Many fresh initiatives are allowing people to 'be' church rather than 'go' to church. Most meet around a meal in a gathering away from pews on any day of the week. Why is this happening? Bessie Pereira examines this question and gives her response. With a lack of trained ministers many congregations are having to develop community based groups that take responsibility for their own spiritual growth. Where might this form of church be leading? Seekers are not rushing into church buildings. The culture and language of church is foreign. It is time to re-read the Gospels and learn how to walk the walk with others.

### CHECK OUT THESE RECENTLY UPDATED WEBSITES

**BOMRURAL** <http://nsw.uca.org.au/bom/>

**ELM** <http://www.elm.org.au/>

### Articles for ER Direct



#### Read any good articles lately?

ER Direct welcomes articles, poems, web sites, books you have read, reviews of articles and pictures of any form relating to evangelism from its' readers. Anyone who has an article or review should send a copy to Rural Evangelism and Mission Office, we'd love to hear from

### Rural Chaplains Roundup

Julie Greig and Kel Hodge now have their own blog! Go to [www.ruralchaplains.blogspot.com](http://www.ruralchaplains.blogspot.com)

Their Newsletter can be viewed on the website at: <http://www.ruralchaplains.blogspot.com/>  
(follow this link)



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## GREVILLEA

The email magazine *Grevillea*, which now goes out quite widely across the Uniting Church, emerged out of my previous role as mission resource officer for the Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery.

With the demise of *Ministry* magazine it seemed to me there was a gap between people reading *Insights* magazine which is news focused and *Uniting Church Studies* which is more academic and has a more limited readership. So I came up with the idea of an email magazine which would not cost and could be readily sent to ministry agents and congregational secretaries across the presbytery. I gathered a few people to be a reference committee and they agreed with the idea and helped me to develop it. The group continue to meet twice a year to brainstorm ideas for future editions of the magazine. We thought that by having a theme each time this would give focus to each edition.

As the first page of the magazine says, "Grevillea is an Australian e-magazine which will cover a large range of subjects as time goes on. We trust they will be interesting (not just ornamental), useful and stimulate (not irritate) your thinking. We aim to have articles that will be short, practical and worth your opening them as attachments".

One of the positive aspects of Grevillea is that it gives a range of people the opportunity to write about their ideas and experiences for the benefit of others. I am impressed with what others write and the helpfulness of what they say. Feedback is positive. So now it goes to each presbytery in NSW to distribute as they choose and to a number of people across the country. The latest edition is on the Parramatta-Nepean presbytery website and the Assembly Theology and Discipleship website.

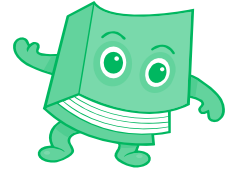
So *Grevillea* seems to have filled a niche. It has covered a wide range of subjects in its thirteen editions so far, from Story to Leadership, from Mission and Evangelism to Economic Responsibility. It comes out twice a year. The next edition will be on Hope and will be available in November.

### Chris Walker

*The May edition focuses on Economic responsibility. Stuart Elliot a Christian banker offers insight into the global financial crisis. Chris Bertinshaw has written an article called 'Investment decisions: What does a Christian need to consider?'* Narelle Penman and Chris Walker offer some biblical and personal comment about Christian discipleship about finances. John Cutts, an executive in an International Company, tells about his career change. *Grevillea* can be viewed at:  
<http://assembly.uca.org.au/theology/images/grevillea/0905grevillea.pdf> or hard copies can be requested from the BOM Rural Office.

## BOOK REVIEW

BY  
ROSS NEVILLE



'Faith Like Potatoes' by Angus Buchan

The story of a South African farmer who risked everything for God. A story about a farmer who trusts God for provision and blessing of rain for crops, financial hardship and family tragedy. Angus has converted part of his farm as a mission refuge. He travels the world preaching an uncompromising gospel message. His life story has been made into a film in 2006 'Faith Like Potatoes'  
An inspiring read.

'A Farmers Year' by Angus Buchan

A daily devotional with a scripture verse and a farm or life story to support the scripture promise for each day.

## Useful Websites



Evangelical Alliance 'Square Mile'

<http://www.eauk.org/squaremile/> How churches in the UK are showing mercy in their communities. An interesting site if you are looking for visionary ideas for outreach.

OIKOS

<http://www.oikos.org.au/>

This site invites you to take a tour of the new testament church and discover the core values behind OIKOS and 'House Church' through these four short articles written by the Director of OIKOS, Bessie Pereira. For those of you 'bloggers' out there don't forget to read the [OIKOS Australia Official Blog!](#)

Asset-based community development (ABCD)

This is a philosophy that was developed by John P 'Jody' Kretzmann and John L McKnight from the Northwestern University in Illinois, USA. The key principles of ABCD were laid out most extensively in the book [Building Communities from the Inside Out](#). If you would like a copy of this book please contact us. More information can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.synergos.org/knowledge/02/abcdoverview.htm>

<http://thinkingsocialpsychology.blogspot.com:80/2007/10/asset-based-community-development.html>

<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/abcd/index.html>

## Forthcoming Events

### ELM COURSES

#### 'Proclaiming Jesus' Christ Courses:

*Riverina* - September 25-27 & October 23-25

*Sydney* - November 20-22 & December 4-6

#### Funeral Training:

*Sydney Region November 13, 16 or 17 Venue- Centre for Ministry, Parramatta*

**For more information go to the ELM website -**

<http://www.elm.org.au/>

#### Period of Discernment:

What is a Period of Discernment?

At the heart of this process is the understanding that discipleship and ministry is a calling on all people who have been baptised. This ministry may be expressed:

- within the local congregation
- in your workplace or the community
- or within one of the specified ministries of the Uniting Church.

We believe that no ministry is more important or more holy than any other.

The Period of Discernment is a process approved by the National Assembly in 1997 to enable the church and individuals together, to discern God's call on their life for future ministry and where our individual ministry lies.

Whilst all people considering offering as a candidate for one of the specified ministries of the church have to participate in the Period of Discernment, it is not just for such people. There are no pre-determined outcomes – the Period of Discernment provides an opportunity for all members of the church to clarify God's call on their lives to serve in any number of different areas.

At a number of points during the Period of Discernment process, you will meet with representatives of the church, and together you will seek to discover God's directions for your life.

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY**

**27 September 2009**

**Hope for the Common Good: Beyond the Global Financial Crisis**

Resources available from Uniting Justice free of charge Contact 02 8267 4236 or email [unitingjustice@nat.uca.org.au](mailto:unitingjustice@nat.uca.org.au)  
<http://www.unitingjustice.org.au/>

#### Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM)

Intentional Interim Ministry (IIM) training is a specialist program for people who are called to minister in a focused way in situations after betrayal of trust, lack of direction, congregational trauma or conflict.

6

Pre-requisite: FTM

Dates:

Residential mode: 9-13 November 2009

Venue: Centre for Ministry (North Parramatta)

Contact Rob McFarlane at the School of Continuing Education, [robertm@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:robertm@nsw.uca.org.au) or 02 8838 8935

Brochure: <http://nsw.uca.org.au/boe/sce/tm-iim2009.pdf>

### The Sydney Alliance

The Sydney Alliance is a community organising venture in Sydney that has been building for two years and so far has brought together 22 organisations as well as other organisations that are exploring membership.

The Sydney Alliance has a 2 day experience of community organising on September 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. There will be two parallel events running, one in Bankstown the other in Parramatta. Participants will be introduced to the principles of community organising while interacting with a wide range of leaders from community organisations, trade unions and other religious organisations. Community organising offers a manageable approach to developing and using relationships to achieve missional objectives and strengthen our organisations.

The NSW-ACT Synod has made a significant investment in this project, with over 30 leaders involved so far. This includes people from the Boards of Mission and Education, Uniting Care and Sydney, Sydney North, Georges River and Parramatta Nepean Presbyteries. We are keen to expand the representation, especially to include indigenous and non-Anglo cultures.

If you are interested and able to attend, please let [Belinda Fry](#) know. We have twelve places 'reserved' for Uniting Church leaders.

The next opportunity is another 2 day Community Organising event happening in November, but it involves two Sundays, the 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> of November.

The Sydney Alliance is also offering a six day advanced training course in Community Organising for those who have completed the two day introduction. This will be held Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> to Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December and Monday 7<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December.

**If you are interested in either of these additional opportunities, please let Belinda know.**  
[belindaf@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:belindaf@nsw.uca.org.au)

These events are free for endorsed Uniting Church participants, although a donation is asked to cover lunch.

For more information contact Glen Powell 02 8267 4389 or [glenp@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:glenp@nsw.uca.org.au)

#### CONTACT US

If you would like copies of any articles covered in this edition of ER Direct please contact us :

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Check out our web page on the Board of Mission site for more resources and information about events.

<http://nsw.uca.org.au/bom/Rural.html>