



MEDIA RELEASE

Synod of New South Wales and the ACT

Uniting Church in Australia

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Uniting Church leader addresses climate change and sacrifice

In his 2011 Easter message, the Moderator of the Uniting Church, the Rev. Niall Reid, says Easter Sunday speaks of a God not beaten but who offers hope that pain, suffering and injustice are not the end.

Mr Reid said:

Where is God?

Earthquakes, Tsunamis, floods, cyclones; and yet again the blood of ordinary people is spilt as dictators cling to power at any cost.

No longer can we attribute these things, if ever we could, to the wrath of God — they are indiscriminate, taking the good with the evil, reducing a cathedral tower to rubble along with everyone in it, gunfire taking out innocent children, wind and water destroying people's lives without favouring any faith, "punishing" God-fearer and atheist alike.

If this is of God, God is neither just nor merciful.

The Bible speaks of such a God but does not leave us there. It takes us on a journey to the cross of Good Friday, which speaks of a God who is the victim of the world's fury, who shares in the pain and suffers the injustices that are inflicted upon us.

Easter Sunday speaks of a God who is not beaten but offers hope that the pain, the suffering, the injustices are not the end.

The work of God is not done!

The way of Jesus revealed in his life and in his response to the powers of evil is the beginning of Gods' mission to bring about the reconciliation and renewal of all creation.

God is not to be found in the wind, earthquake or fire, but in the lives of those who offer compassion and care and bring healing to those who have suffered at the hands of the world; God is found in the lives of those who seek remedies and work towards God's vision of a reconciled and renewed creation.

While there are many ways to be part of that vision — from personal transformation to working for social justice — surely in our time the vision is most threatened by climate change, which the science seems to be telling us is caused by human activity.

Climate change heralds rising sea levels and a world battered by more ferocious storms, fierce fires and horrendous floods, with the potential to threaten food security, exacerbate poverty and provide an environment ripe for war.

Is this not the inevitable outcome of unsustainable, unfettered and unthinking addiction to economic growth? This in a world where the powers that be are no more willing to contemplate a different way than they were when, for expediency's sake, they sent Jesus to the cross and did everything in their power to cajole, scare off and divide his supporters.

The way of the cross was about a sacrifice made out of love for the world.

In our world, sacrifices have to be made if we love the world and want to be part of creating God's vision for it.

The Rev. Niall Reid is Moderator of the Uniting Church Synod of New South Wales and the ACT.

Images of Mr Reid can be found here:

<http://nsw.uca.org.au/church/moderator.htm>

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