



ISSUE 1 {2017}

# networking

BRINGING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST INTO COMMUNITIES

## How can we embrace spirituality in today's world?

### **A non-negotiable faith**

How faith guides Gerry  
through his life and career

### **A guiding hand**

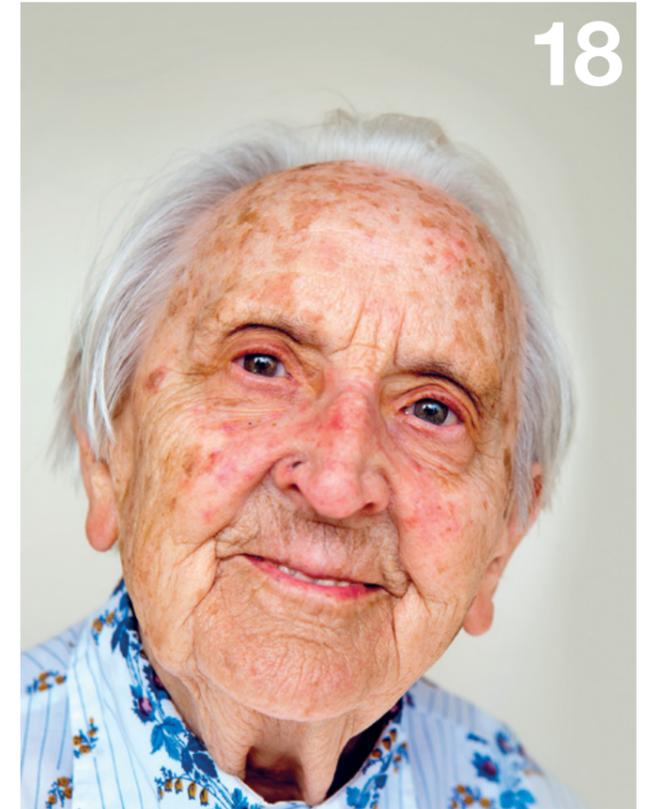
The importance of pastoral  
and spiritual care for seniors

“ Churches of Christ in Queensland accepts that all people, everywhere have a spirit and that this spiritual side of life needs to be acknowledged and understood. We have a strong emphasis on helping all of our friends to work through this and we believe that the God of the Bible and Jesus himself are our primary guide in these matters. The term ‘spirituality’ sometimes feels vague and hard to define and yet it is nonetheless a reality for people, especially over a lifetime. In this issue we hope to inspire you to ‘dive in and work through the questions again’ as you seek connection, meaning and purpose for your inner spirit. ”

Steve Drinkall  
Read the full article on page 6

# { Contents }

Find us on 



- Update from the Editor 4
- Chief Executive Officer update 5
- The spirit can't be tamed 6
- Time to lend a hand 7
- 40 Days of Prayer 8
- A non-negotiable faith 10
- A gift in everyone 12
- Medical Santo update 14
- Outstanding generosity 16
- Focus on developments 17
- A guiding hand 18
- Brad's access to support 20
- Blank canvas excites new chaplain 21
- Letting go 22
- Life giving light 23
- Women's Ministry in Queensland 24
- Fostering communication in children with hearing loss 26
- Women ready to Shine 27
- 'God Breaks Down Walls to Build Bridges' 28
- The main event 29
- Solitude through spirituality 30
- The 'fast' way 31
- Further Faster conference 2017 31
- People & Events 32
- Understanding grief and trauma 34
- Events 35

## networking

Churches of Christ in Queensland  
41 Brookfield Road Kenmore Qld 4069  
PO Box 508 Kenmore Qld 4069  
07 3327 1600  
communications@cofcqld.com.au

Networking contains a variety of news and stories from across Churches of Christ in Queensland. Articles and photos can be submitted to communications@cofcqld.com.au. The submission deadline for the next edition of Networking is Tuesday 2 May 2017.

## Welcome | A note from the editor

I am proud to relaunch Networking magazine and am excited about the new look and themed content. We will continue to tell your stories from our churches, mission development and our care services, while looking deeper into some of the issues that affect us.

The theme of this edition is spirituality, which has been described as giving meaning to life. It transcends beyond the physical world and material possessions and represents our connection to self, others, the world and God.

But what does spirituality mean to you and how do you take care of your spiritual wellbeing?

In this edition, we've included individual stories from people working at the frontlines of caring for people in need and asked them how they acknowledge, welcome and understand the role of spirituality in this context.



I am engaging in the 40 Days of Prayer from 1 March to 9 April. You can take part too, simply go to [cofc.com.au/40daysofprayer](http://cofc.com.au/40daysofprayer) where you will find daily prayer lists and guides.

As we travel through a period of growth in our organisation there have been a number of exciting recent happenings. We turned the sod at the Kallangur and Warwick developments, residents are moving into a new seniors housing at Acacia Ridge, and the residential aged care service expansion at Stanthorpe is well underway. We look forward to turning the first sod for a large development on the Sunshine Coast soon and plans for Boonah are also taking shape. It's an exciting time, and you can read more about this on page 16.

In November last year, we released our policy on addressing domestic and family violence. We are committed to achieving a future where all people are safe, respected and free from violence and abuse. We recognise that domestic and family violence is not just a private or personal issue. The effects of violence have a significant impact on individuals, families and on the broader community. You can view this online at [cofc.com.au](http://cofc.com.au).

With the new look Networking comes a new People and Events section, with photos you have sent through from happenings in your community. Send through your photos and caption to [communications@cofcqld.com.au](mailto:communications@cofcqld.com.au) for the next edition.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Networking and reading about things that are important to us. Sign-up to receive the electronic version at [cofc.com.au](http://cofc.com.au) and don't forget, you can read previous editions at [cofc.com.au/publications](http://cofc.com.au/publications).

**Desley Millwood**  
Director, Communications



As you are no doubt aware, Dean Phelan, our Chief Executive Officer, has been unwell and is receiving treatment at the time of writing. Dean's treatment is progressing well, and he remains interested in, and well connected to, the goings on of the organisation. You can read a note that Dean has asked we share with you on this page. To say that thousands of people are praying for Dean, Janette and family would not be an exaggeration, and I know he is buoyed by the prayers and support.

In Dean's absence we continue to actively pursue the direction for the organisation set out in our strategic plan, and will be particularly focused on: our new build projects (and related commissioning activity) at Kenmore, Stanthorpe, Warwick and Meridan; on continuing to develop the work of our Strategic Action Leadership Teams; and doing whatever else we need to fulfil our mission of bringing the light of Christ into communities.

We use our Strategic Plan as a guide, goal planner and health check to ensure we are on the right track. Adjoining this article I share only a few of our major highlights from a recent report compiled for our Board and Council. In each edition of Networking there will be an update on our progress in meeting the strategic priorities set out in the plan as we head towards the end of its timeframe

*To all my friends and colleagues I want to thank everyone for their continued prayers and for the support expressed in so many ways to Janette and I while I have been in hospital. I am receiving excellent care and the medical staff are pleased with my progress so far. I look forward to seeing you all when I am back on my feet.*  
Regards, Dean Phelan

in 2018. We will post a summary of these on the website for those interested.

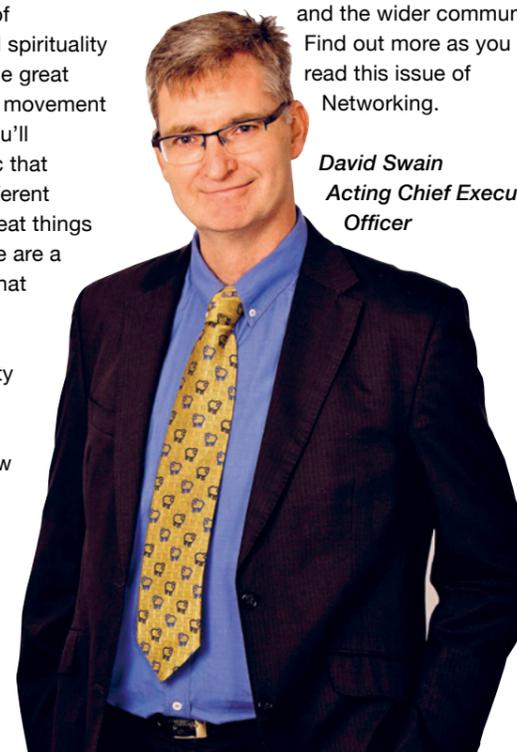
The theme of this edition of Networking is Christ-centred spirituality and you'll find enclosed some great content from throughout our movement on this topic. As you read you'll discover this is a broad topic that means different things to different people. That is one of the great things about Churches of Christ, we are a broad church (so to speak) that has the space to respect a diversity of views.

When I reflect on spirituality it takes me to a very deep place. I believe every person is a spiritual being and I know God's spirit is within. My spirituality can't be summed up easily in a book, let alone a column: it's not issued off a shelf, or acquired from someone else. For me the notion of 'spirituality' and 'the Spirit' are inseparable.

I feel closest to the Spirit when there is inner stillness, often enhanced when there is outer quietness. Interestingly, that's not necessarily when I feel closest to God (complex I know). I actually feel closest to God when in the great outdoors; especially when the elements are at their most extreme.

I encourage you all to exercise your spirituality in our 40 Days of Prayer which started on 1 March. This yearly initiative brings together everyone from our churches, care services and the general community in prayer, holding up all aspects of Churches of Christ and the wider community. Find out more as you read this issue of Networking.

**David Swain**  
Acting Chief Executive Officer



## Major highlights from the Strategic Plan 2015 – 18 so far

- Three new congregations have affiliated with Churches of Christ in Queensland in 2016: Eikon Community, Beth-El Church and Mountain Top Community Church.
- 17 significant planning retreats and sessions with a number of our local churches.
- Developed training package entitled 'Understanding our Churches' to assist our staff to support churches.
- Specialists in areas including youth, children, over 50's ministries, caring for our ministering persons, Deeper Rhythms team.
- 60% of our affiliated churches on a local Strategic Action Leadership Team.
- 135 (76% ministering person cohort) attended 2016 Ministers Forum.
- 2016 Centrifuge hosted a record 302 attendees.
- 80 young leaders attended the Leadership Teams Weekend in July 2016.
- 150 young people attended FUSE Camp in January 2016 and well over 200 in January 2017.
- 200 young adults attended inaugural L10 conference in September 2015 and over 230 in September 2016.
- Community specific Kingdom Access Places (activities outside of 'core' service streams), currently number 48, with over 3,300 people regularly engaged and connected.
- A 40 unit community housing development has been completed at Acacia Ridge and has been funded 80% by the Queensland Government.
- Successful tenders in Children, Youth and Families early intervention and prevention, including a Family and Child Connect service and four Intensive Family Support services since July 2015.
- Head Office building was completed and occupied in April 2016.
- Land donated to value of \$2.5m in Kallangur for construction of a 50 unit affordable housing development.

You can view our Strategic Plan at [cofc.com.au/strategic-plan-2015-18](http://cofc.com.au/strategic-plan-2015-18)



The spirit can't be tamed

**Words:** Steve Drinkall, Group Manager, Mission Action

I recently read about an old advertisement for PAL dog food which used the tagline 'Buy PAL dog food, because your dog wants as much out of life as you do.' Really???

Does my dog have the same expectations and hopes for life as I do? And more importantly, do I have any more needs, hopes and desires for my life than my dog does for his?

It seems to me that if I give my dog the basics of adequate food, water, shelter and a mate, my dog is pretty happy. But if I add to that a bit of exercise and the occasional conflict with another dog or a passing postman then my dog seems to thrive.

Curiously though, my observation is that you can give all of those things to a human being and it is no guarantee that they will thrive and live at peace with themselves and the world. In fact,

my neighbourhood is full of people who have no lack of any of the basics of life and yet still feel unsettled, disconnected and wondering if their life has meaning, purpose or value. It is also curious and troubling to me that in the countries that have the most material wealth and social peace, we often find the highest levels of hopelessness and suicide. It makes me wonder if my dog really does just want the same things out of life as I do.

My conclusion is that humanity is physical, emotional, mental, social and SPIRITUAL. There seems to be a longing within us to not only understand our place among the world and with other people, but also to find our place in the greater cosmos, or bigger story or even with ...God?? This spiritual journey seems to have been part of every culture and people group as far back as we can understand and remains vibrant

and alive today. Indeed, on the whole, the world of 2017 is fast becoming more religious and committed to the spiritual journey, not less.

People search to get in touch with this longing for meaning, purpose and connection in a myriad of ways from religious devotion, meditation, yoga, exercise, connecting with nature and even drug use however very few people seem able to ignore the impulse completely over the long term. In short, we are spiritual beings, just as much as we are physical, emotional and social beings. And whilst we may vary greatly in how we wrestle with and understand this aspect of ourselves, we don't really have the option to ignore it any more than we could ignore our emotions.

Any such attempt is a recipe for an unhealthy person.

Churches of Christ in Queensland accepts that all people, everywhere have a spirit and that this spiritual side of life needs to be acknowledged and understood. We have a strong emphasis on helping all of our friends to work through this and we believe that the God of the Bible and Jesus himself are our primary guide in these matters.

Parker Palmer once said that, 'on the inward and downward spiritual journey the only way out is in and through'. Or put another way 'if you can't get out of it, get into it'.

The term 'spirituality' sometimes feels vague and hard to define and yet it is nonetheless a reality for people, especially over a lifetime. In this issue we hope to inspire you to 'dive in and work through the questions again' as you seek connection, meaning and purpose for your inner spirit. ■



time to lend a hand

Each year, tens of thousands of travellers criss-cross the country with their caravans in tow, with nothing but time on their hands and the horizon in front of them.

A new volunteer program aims to engage these time-wealthy travellers in providing a helping hand to farmers in regional areas.

Farmers in Queensland's South Burnett region have had tough times, and many continue to need help to get by. Community Chaplain Mark Wall has been working with farming families in the area to provide grass-roots support and identify those in need of financial, emotional and spiritual support.

The Farm Hand program aims to gather a group of volunteers who can give a week, two, or more, of practical farming assistance to help those families in need.

"From fixing fences and machinery, to clearing paddocks and irrigation, to business administration or book keeping to general housework or picking fruit, there are a number of tasks volunteers of all capabilities can help with. Even just providing a good listening ear could have a huge impact on the health and wellbeing of a farming family," Mark said.

"More importantly, it allows volunteers to share community spirit and gives

them the opportunity to walk alongside the farmers to not only help, but provide understanding and support, in a time of great need." ■

**Do you have time to lend a helping hand to a farming family doing it tough in the South Burnett region? Register now for the Farm Hand program.**

**Imagine making a difference in a farming family's life.**

*Become a Farm Hand volunteer and you'll work side by side with families in rural locations who need a helping hand and you will enjoy many benefits:*

- Experience an adventure with a purpose
- Enjoy a sense of community spirit
- Share new experiences with like minded people and make new friends for life
- Learn new skills and an understanding of farming life
- Take an opportunity to give back
- Enjoy a working holiday with a difference.

*Go to [imaginevolunteering.com.au](http://imaginevolunteering.com.au) call 1300 760 622, or email [volunteers@cofcqld.com.au](mailto:volunteers@cofcqld.com.au) today to find out more and register your interest in giving a helping hand.*

## Thank you volunteers!

Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good without financial gain.

Each year, we celebrate the dedication, commitment and contribution of our amazing team of volunteers.

Currently, we have over 1,600 registered volunteers who give their time and skills to selflessly support our services and the communities we serve.

Group Manager Volunteer Services Jodie Mears said that last year, volunteers made a significant impact to the lives of thousands of people, simply by giving of themselves.

"Thanks to the open-handedness of people in our communities responding to our call for action, our volunteer program has grown by over 40 per cent, with individuals giving their time right across Queensland, Victoria and Vanuatu," Jodie said.

Not only has the number of people volunteering increased, the breadth of volunteer programs has also grown, with more opportunities than ever before for people to help those who need it most.

"We offer a diverse range of volunteer opportunities for volunteers to make a meaningful difference to the people they are helping. For many of our volunteers, they take up the opportunity in the hope for finding employment or deciding on a study or career path. Last year, 144 of our volunteers found employment, either with Churches of Christ in Queensland or other organisations," she said.

"We want to be seen as an organisation of choice for volunteers, where they know they will be taken care of and their contribution and effort will truly be valued."

A range of local service based events will be taking place to celebrate National Volunteer Week (8-14 May) as we thank those who willingly give their time to help us bring the light of Christ into communities through volunteering. ■

..... Churches of Christ in Queensland .....

# 40 DAYS *of* PRAYER

## Devote yourselves to prayer

Colossians 4:2 (NIV)

**F**rom 1 March to 9 April, we will once again unite in prayer. We encourage everyone to join in this time of focus, reflection and dedication.

Our Conference Council is calling on church members, staff, volunteers and the public to join together in this special time of prayer leading up to Easter.

During this time, we again focus on all aspects of Churches of Christ, our mission, our people and our communities, as we look towards another exciting year and the future ahead.

Prayer was a priority for Jesus. His life and ministry were built on it. If Jesus needed to pray, then how much more do we? During this time let us give ourselves to prayer for everything we do ourselves and as a movement of God throughout Australia and beyond. Pray for the leadership in our conference and churches, our state, our nation and the world. Pray

for the staff, carers and those we serve in our various mission services, for our community chaplains working in communities all over the country, for our mission action teams and all our volunteers. Importantly pray for all those staff who support these front line services with their varied skills and expertise. Pray for every church and each member, and that God will be glorified and many will come to faith through the saving grace of His Son and our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We are inviting as many as have a heart for the Kingdom, to join us at Churches of Christ as we dedicate 40 days to prayer. We are seeking Gods direction for our work and listening to what amazing things he will lead us into in 2017 and beyond. ■

*Find out more*  
[cofc.com.au/40daysofprayer](http://cofc.com.au/40daysofprayer)  
[cofcqld](#)   
[#40daysofprayer2017](#) 

Sign-up to receive weekly email updates  
and prayer lists at  
[cofc.com.au/40daysofprayer](http://cofc.com.au/40daysofprayer)



“The journey I had to go on was how does a knowledge of God or being within a Christian environment translate into a personal relationship with a God who is real”

# A non-negotiable faith

**F**or a man helping steer a major Australian not-for-profit Christian organisation, Gerry Weatherall is far removed from his roots as a young English Anglican.

In his current role of Acting Chief Operating Officer, Gerry is responsible for the day-to-day operations of an organisation that includes nearly 70 member churches, hundreds of care services and thousands of staff and volunteers. Ultimately, as an important part of the leadership team, the care of tens of thousands of Australians and ni-Vanuatu are in his hands. Gerry talks about business, leadership, spirituality and what are his non-negotiables.

## Defining moments

Born into what he calls a ‘dyed in the wool village Anglican Christian family from England’, Gerry’s parents, grandparents and great-grandparents were either caretakers or active in the local village church. You can go there today and find little plaques recognising the hallmarks of many generations of his forebears.

The Weatherall family were active participants in church life, but young Gerry always felt there was something more to life and more to his faith.

“As a teenager I never went through a period in my life where I thought there is no such thing as God and I’m just here on my own. But the journey I had to go on was to appreciate how a knowledge of God or being within a Christian environment translated into a personal relationship with a God who is real,” Gerry said.

He questioned how what the Bible said about Jesus, his person and his purpose could be appropriated in his personal life.

“That was my teenage journey and I got to a point at about 16 or 17 years of age where something changed. I went from being somebody contemplating what it meant to be Christian and if I really wanted to be one, to having a confidence within myself that making a definite decision to follow Jesus, and all that it meant, was right. In doing that I had, if you like, fallen over the line and reached a point where I now felt assured

that I had a real relationship with God.

“Other people may call that a conversion experience, and I’m not fussed on language, but there was a definite time in my life where I made the decision that I actually needed my life to be transformed by His grace and to put my faith in Jesus as both my Lord and my Saviour because of what He had done for me through giving His life for my sake. Now this may sound like religious language but I can’t tell it any other way. That’s what I did and it changed my life forever.”

Gerry discovered, like most people, that he fell short of any aspiration he had to be the holy young Christian. He discovered despite the fact a confident decision could be made, and he had every intention of being the person God wanted him to be, that actually living a Christian life that reflected the person and teachings of Jesus was nowhere near as easy.

“By the grace of God I met my wife Joy, who is also a Christian person, and for 42 years we’ve had the very close relationship that has enabled us to seek God’s direction and purpose together and develop our commitment to the spirituality that is ours – this personal relationship with Jesus, as a saved member of the kingdom of God,” Gerry said.

## Journey to leadership

“That conviction led me to work with people in need, to want to work in aid projects, in essence to try and put into practice as much as I possibly could of what I believe God, through his grace, had given me the skillset to achieve.”

In the 1990s Gerry and Joy and their young family packed up and moved to Vanuatu for a number of years to work on a mission station and do whatever they could to help the ni-Vanuatu.

His leadership experience in business and missional work led to Gerry being part of the Conference Council and later what was the Care board and then to be part of the original Board of Churches of Christ in Queensland. Gerry was then invited to take an operational role and be part of the Executive team.

“The whole experience of my personal spirituality is what sustains me in life. It gives me a humble view of what we as people in God’s kingdom need to be doing and striving for,” Gerry said.

“For me, my spirituality leads to a position of assurance that comes through knowing you have a relationship with Jesus Christ, which is an eternal relationship within His kingdom, with Him as the king. If He’s the king then my duty is to serve Him in the way that He chooses. As I read His teachings, loving God with all your heart and loving others as yourself is a pretty good summary.

“One of the phrases that is often referred to in the office here is ‘who are we and what are we on about’ – there are many contributors to our mission that we bless and respect as colleagues committed to the outcomes that we are seeking to achieve, and that’s the hallmark of it... that we truly respect and we abundantly bless all of these people, even though their spirituality may be something that is totally different, a totally different expression or a indeed a different interpretation to ours.”

## Sustaining the faith

Gerry maintains his spirituality, even in the darkest of hours, by placing himself in a prayerful position and has one simple request.

“Whatever I need to be, whatever I need to do, I pray for your sustaining influence in my life, to help me overcome the doubts and fears, to be able to do Lord what it is you require of me this day, just this day. I’m going to get some things wrong God, I’m going to get some things right. What I need of you today is to somehow mediate on a moment by moment basis so that overall by your grace, I have been able to tap into your sustaining power for me and apply it in what I am doing so that people are blessed.” ■

*You can read more of Gerry’s thoughts on spirituality and leadership at [cofc.com.au](http://cofc.com.au)*

# A gift in everyone



I was brought here to agitate and create some space for us to deliver more houses, more homes for people, to enhance more people's lives



Throughout Australia, there are over 100,000 people who are homeless. That's equivalent to 49 people out of every 10,000. Many sleep rough, some stay with other households or live in temporary or supported accommodation.

Spirituality for those experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness is either something that they are able to hold on to, something they question or something that they abandon or think has abandoned them.

Churches of Christ Housing Services is making a real difference to the lives of thousands of people by providing safe, secure and affordable housing – creating uplift in the human spirit. General Manager Frances Paterson-Fleider discusses the real differences being made to the lives of residents and the role of spirituality in this.

## A question of calling

Anyone who has spoken with Frances or seen her advocating for housing at any number of forums would have noticed more than a touch of a Scottish accent.

"People say to me 'why did you come to Australia?' and I often think 'why did I come to Australia?' and 'why am I in this job?'... I have bounced that around many times over seven years now, but I actually believe I was brought here for a purpose," Frances said.

"It wasn't by chance, it was actually something intentional and I've really come to believe I was brought here for a purpose which is to enhance the lives of people who don't have a voice.

"I use my voice to give them a voice and that's why I never give up. I'm always the noise in the room and always fighting in their corner, in housing's corner, because I wouldn't be doing my job and wouldn't be honouring what I believe I was brought here – I wasn't brought here just keep things running smoothly, I was brought here to agitate and create some space for us to deliver more houses, more homes for people, to enhance more people's lives."

That drive to enhance more lives has seen the number of properties managed by Churches of Christ Housing Services rise to over 1,200 and that figure will grow by almost 10 per cent this year

alone. Innovative new ways of providing housing in 2017 include an Acacia Ridge community housing complex co-funded by the Queensland Government, 50 affordable living townhouses developed on donated land and a variety of partnerships.

## Spirituality in action

According to Frances, spirituality is evident within the people that Churches of Christ Housing Services supports and accommodates. Whether that be through gaining a voice, giving back or looking after one another, spirituality is at play in communities and individuals.

"People that come to us are very grateful for the opportunity, and some people are absolutely overwhelmed by the opportunity that's been given to them to live in one of our properties," Frances said.

"People who have been homeless or disadvantaged and have no voice have all of a sudden been given a secure property and encouraged to have some say in how their property is managed and how their community is run. We see that people are very grateful and in turn want to give something back.

Whether that's through supporting their neighbours or volunteering, you see people want to contribute something back to the community.

"We deal with people who have been marginalised, low income and what little income they have they want to donate it to help other people... there is this sense that there are people in more need than me for certain things... it's quite uplifting to see that."

## Connecting communities

At a Brisbane property managed by Churches of Christ, little or no community grew a cohesive, connected group of residents. It's a similar story at many of the housing complexes, where not only has bricks and mortar been provided, but also the building blocks of community-mindedness.

"You have a community of people together for the first time, such as one of our complexes in Brisbane. A brand new community of people together in an area where historically there was no public housing, so when people put their name on the housing register they didn't choose this particular area.

Residents weren't forced to move there, but were encouraged to move there even though that perhaps wasn't their community of choice.

"You bring 20 plus people, some with complex needs, with no real connections with the area, no real connections with each other together into one community – it could go one of two ways, it could be a complete disaster or it could be something where you see something great going on.

"One of the strengths we have as an organisation is our chaplaincy service. We initiated this service with Community Chaplain Murray Thompson at the new complex and he hosted a barbeque very early on and I think that two people came out, other people were looking but didn't come.

"Trust is a big issue for people and some were thinking is this a 'God thing?'... people were a bit suspicious of what was going on. But gradually over the weeks more and more attended the barbeque and a community formed, albeit fragile. We can say it was a community because at one stage if someone wasn't seen for a number of days no one would have paid any

attention or noticed, whereas (after the barbeques) we then had people raising concerns if someone was not around. That gave us hope that people were finding a connection and what was their role as part of a community – caring and showing an interest in the wellbeing of others.

"We've seen that community-building play out across a number of our developments, where people feel a part of something and there's a sense of connecting and belonging. That's one of the most important things we have created... giving someone a house is the easy part, it's that sense of connection and bringing people together. There are people with mental health issues, people who have struggled with drug and alcohol, but showing them that they are valued, loved and they have a contribution to make and that we are interested in who they are and they are of no less value than anyone else makes the difference ... unconditional love in action". ■

You can read more of our conversation with Frances at [cfc.com.au/our-blog/networking-blog](http://cfc.com.au/our-blog/networking-blog)

## Medical Santo update

# God has good plans



■ Kate gave her time to make much needed curtains for the clinic.

“My heart has been given to the people of Vanuatu,” Kate Grieve from Sanctuary Park Church of Christ said.

“I first visited Vanuatu as a 21-year-old tourist, enjoying the culture and countryside of the island of Efate. Something precious has remained in my heart since that time,” she said.

Kate had long wanted to go back to the island nation and has thought a lot about short-term mission opportunities, “but it was difficult due to family commitments,” she said.

Last year, Kate and her husband Ian were presented the opportunity to volunteer with Churches of Christ Medical Santo after plans for their family holiday changed. Within a fortnight the trip had been planned and they were on the flight to Espiritu Santo.

At Medical Santo the pair provided valuable support helping with maintenance around the building.

“Ian was doing hard yakka in the hot sun, and as he continued his labour of love with concrete and timber I had the joy of making curtains while being cooled by the overhead fan,” Kate said.

The couple spoke to Vicki Marney from Global Mission Partners prior to travelling to Vanuatu as Vicki had just returned from a trip there. On her way to the airport, the Secretary General for Churches of Christ Conference Vanuatu, Esline Toamavute, took Vicki to visit Bombua School, just outside of Luganville.

“The school had many needs. In preparing to go to Vanuatu, Vicki asked if we could visit the school,” Kate said.

“What particularly touched my heart was spending time with the teachers and students at the school. Esline, Ian and I spent the morning with them, discussing their needs. I was then able to spend more time at the school.”

Kate enjoyed watching as the students began their day with worship to the Lord and as a student said a prayer at the end of each class.

“I am so glad that God interrupted my plans and gave us a glimpse of his plans for helping others in need. We are looking forward to the journey of seeing his plans unfold for Medical Santo and Bombua School and the part he has for us in those plans.

“Gud day blong yu (Have a good day)”. ■



## Supporting Vanuatu National Games



Over 15-16 December 2016, Churches of Christ Medical Santo volunteer Ruth provided medical assistance at Vanuatu's National Games held in Luganville.

The games, held every four years, bring together competitors from across Vanuatu's provinces in eight teams to compete in a range of sports, including soccer, basketball, volleyball, pétanque, netball, boxing, karate, athletics and futsal.

Working with the National Provincial

Hospital, Ruth helped participants in the games who presented to the clinic with minor sports injuries, such as sprains and lacerations, and also a couple of boxing opponents with concussion and dehydration.

“It was a great opportunity to see the team spirit amongst Vanuatu's athletes and also work alongside hospital staff in the community,” Ruth said.

This is another example of how Churches of Christ Medical Santo provides care and outreach to the local Vanuatu community. ■



*Medical Santo urgently needs adequately experienced and qualified doctors, nurses and other medical volunteers for short, medium and long-term appointments.*

*If you are interested in volunteering, or you know someone who could provide help in these vital positions, please contact Libby Scheinplug on 0457 204 669 or email [volunteers@cofcqld.com.au](mailto:volunteers@cofcqld.com.au). [Medicalsanto.com](http://Medicalsanto.com) [imaginevolunteering.com.au](http://imaginevolunteering.com.au)*

“I am so glad that God interrupted my plans and gave us a glimpse of his plans for helping others in need”

Donate today: 1800 600 900  
Your donation makes such a huge difference to people in Vanuatu.  
[give@medicalsanto.com](mailto:give@medicalsanto.com)



■ Sod turning ceremony for our new affordable living development at Kallangur. Left to right: Frances Paterson-Fleider, Denise Sims (Moreton Bay Regional Councillor), Gary Edwards (Chair of the Board, Churches of Christ in Queensland), Pastor David Taylor (Rivers Church of Christ), Ian Handy and David Swain (Acting Chief Executive Officer).



■ Artist impression of the Brookfield Road, Kenmore view of the new community centre.

# Outstanding generosity

## Couple donate land for affordable living development

**A**s the first residents move into our new Wattle Apartments development at Acacia Ridge, another development has broken ground to house people in the Moreton Bay area. Ian and Neva Handy, from Rivers Church of Christ, gifted 9,000 square metres of land in Kallangur for the townhouse development. Churches of Christ Housing Services General Manager Frances Paterson-Fleider said the generous donation by the Handy family is helping grow the supply of affordable housing for those on low to moderate incomes.

"The financial challenge of developing affordable housing is often about the cost of the land, rather than actual construction costs," Frances said.

"This project presented an opportunity to leverage private capital and philanthropic resources to achieve

both financial and social returns, it is an example of philanthropists and the community sector partnering to address affordable living options in Queensland."

The Duffield Road development, located on previously underutilised land, will be transformed into 50 quality, affordable, energy efficient and architecturally designed townhouses with a mix of one, two and three bedrooms.

Scheduled for completion in early October this year, the development will deliver affordable living options primarily targeted at key workers (employed across retail, financial and community services), seniors, and people living with a disability and those on low to moderate incomes. Residents will receive a discount on the prevailing market rents.

The townhouses are located 27 kilometres north of the Brisbane CBD, and conveniently close to Northlakes. Residents will also have ready access to rail services following the recent

completion of the Moreton Bay rail project.

"With 35 years' experience in providing housing solutions, we recognise the importance of a diversity of housing options in close proximity to employment, shops, transport and parks to support a thriving community," Frances said.

"Our aim is to provide quality housing solutions in empowered communities, with the support of the Handy family we are achieving that here in Kallangur."

A sod turning ceremony was held for the development on 13 February.

### Focus on developments

Churches of Christ in Queensland is committed to ensuring innovative campuses incorporating the latest in care accommodation design and community spaces are available to remote, rural and regional communities.

Our Stanthorpe, Warwick, Boonah

and Meridan developments will each be unique in the way they connect with their local communities.

Our new campuses will create a variety of activity spaces and services and will include multi-purpose community centres, cafés, seniors care accommodation and a mix of home care and support services.

### Stanthorpe

The extension of our Carramar Aged Care Service in Stanthorpe is well underway. Once completed over 100 residents will call Carramar home. Facing inward onto a beautifully landscaped central courtyard and community area, we are creating an environment which will offer people a relaxed, safe and peaceful space for residents and visitors to enjoy.

A sod turning event was held on 12 September 2016 with current residents and the local community. Construction commenced a week later and we plan to welcome residents to their new home by the end of the year.

### Warwick

Our Warwick Campus will provide interactive recreational spaces and care facilities for the people of Warwick and the Southern Downs Region. The Campus will have a large multi-use Community Centre, ideal for school formals, large events, community events and meetings, a café and alfresco area to catch up with friends or to relax and enjoy when visiting

residents. Included on the campus will also be a new seniors care community and our existing Regency Park Retirement Village.

A sod turning event was held under the gumtrees in Mel Gibson Park on Wednesday 15 February. Over 100 excited community members and neighbours joined special guests to celebrate this milestone for the Southern Downs region.

Director - Seniors and Supported Living Bryan Mason emceed the official proceedings with Acting Chief Executive Officer David Swain and Southern Downs Regional Council Mayor Tracey Dobie as guest speakers. Local Mission Action Partner Craig Sadler offered a blessing over the works and for the people who will call this new and state of the art facility home.

With early earthworks now commenced, and with weather permitting, construction should be completed in early 2018.

### Meridan, Sunshine Coast

This new integrated campus will include an intergenerational community hub with multipurpose rooms, and social and recreational spaces for all of the community to enjoy. A range of care services including a seniors care community and home and community care services will also be located on the campus.

A sod turning ceremony will be held on 6 March.

### Boonah

Masterplans are being finalised for our Boonah Campus. The development will incorporate our existing Fassifern Retirement Village and aged care service with a community centre and landscaped spaces for all to enjoy. The provision of a campus café and new seniors' supported living units will ensure Boonah becomes the place to be for a unique and comfortable seniors' lifestyle.

### Kenmore

The first stage of the Churches of Christ Campus Kenmore development was completed in 2016, following staff moving into the new Head Office building in April, and the new multi-level undercover carpark opening in December.

In January construction started on stage two of the development - a new community centre at the front of the site. Due for completion in the second half of 2017, the centre includes a 350-seat auditorium suitable for conferences, concerts and performances, as well as a meeting room and café. The centre will be available for the local community's use, with surrounding landscaped gardens to be enjoyed by all. ■

**Go to [cofc.com.au/developments](http://cofc.com.au/developments) to read more about our developments.**

The importance of spiritual and pastoral care for seniors



# A guiding hand



**C**hurches of Christ Care is committed to providing the highest quality care to seniors across its services.

An important part of providing truly holistic care is ensuring that an individual's spiritual health and wellbeing is considered.

Spirituality has been defined as giving meaning and value to the lives people live. It is the quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul and a connection to the divine or transcendent.

Research suggests that as part of holistic care of people living in aged care, their spiritual health and wellbeing needs to be acknowledged and supported.

We are a founding member of Meaningful Ageing Australia (formerly Pastoral and Spiritual Care of Older People), the national peak body for spiritual care in ageing - they define spirituality as:

"Spirituality is integral to, but not confined by, religion and faith. It is about what gives us a purpose to our lives. It is about our sources of meaning and hope, which in turn is intimately related to our connectedness to ourselves, to others and to the world... Spirituality is all about meaning, purpose and connectedness." [meaningfulageing.org.au](http://meaningfulageing.org.au)

Taking care of an older person's spirituality requires more than religious instruction. It is about their connection – to themselves, others, the world and to the something bigger. Meaningful Ageing Australia's mission is to ensure that all older Australian's have access to high quality pastoral and spiritual care. They support organisations and groups to respond to the pastoral and spiritual needs of older people, significant others and carers, while advocating for this care to be included in all care settings.

We have implemented a number of programs and initiatives that promote the spiritual health and wellbeing of individuals in our aged care services. These include spiritual care at end of life, special dementia specific church services and training for staff and volunteers to promote spiritual wellbeing in residents.

## Spiritual care at the end of life

In 2015, Churches of Christ Care implemented 'A Palliative Approach', using evidence-based tools to inform and facilitate the best way to deliver individualised, holistic and quality care to those at end of life.

Julie Baker, Clinical Practice Lead – Palliative Care, said that palliative care aims to improve client quality of life as they near the end, and this includes their spiritual wellbeing.

"Taking a palliative approach means not shying away from people as they contemplate the big questions at the end of life: What has my life meant? Have I made a difference? And what happens next?" Julie said.

"We view spiritual care as being as important as physical care, and even more so at the end of life. Working as a team, our nurses and chaplains along with family members, are able to be attentive and listen to people as they near the end of life, offering them comfort and compassion," she said. "By doing this, we foster a sense of openness and spiritual wellbeing for those in our care, which is part of offering people dignity at the end of life."

## Dementia specific church service

"Empirical evidence suggests that older people who attend church receive more spiritual and emotional support compared with those who do not attend. The more they feel supported, the more closely they are connected to God and older people who are more connected to God are generally more optimistic and enjoy better health," Wayne Crouch, Seniors Chaplain, said.

Pastoral care is a cornerstone of our seniors and supported living services, and as such we were delighted to receive the 2015 Pastoral and Spiritual Care of Older People Annual Quality in Pastoral and Spiritual Practice Award.

This was awarded to our innovative pilot dementia church service initiative, developed at our Moonah Park Aged Care Service.

Since 2014, 42 per cent of residents living with dementia within our south east Queensland aged care services have attended weekly church services.

Dementia has an impact on a person's ability to connect with God in the way they have in the past. Through music, singing, scripture and prayers, individuals are able to reignite their connection with God.

## Pastoral and spiritual care training

A new pastoral and spiritual care training program aims to equip staff and volunteers in aged care services to be able to assess an individual's spiritual health and provide avenues to support their spiritual care and wellbeing.

Developed by Meaningful Ageing Australia, and contributed to by Churches of Christ in Queensland's Senior's Chaplaincy Team Leader Peter McRoberts, the ConnecTo program will be delivered to staff and volunteers in our residential aged care services.

The training includes spiritual orientation, followed by the ConnecTo program, which is a tool used for assessing people's spiritual needs right from admission.

It explores what spirituality is and signs of someone who is in spiritual distress.

According to the program, spiritual distress is defined as the 'impaired ability to experience and integrate meaning and purpose in life through connectedness with self, others, art, music, literature, nature, as well as a power greater than oneself, spiritual distress can impact on someone's belief system, which provides strength, hope and meaning to life.

The pilot program has recently finished, and it will be rolled out across services shortly following the review of feedback. ■



■ Brad first met Kerry when he entered his artwork in a show at The Access Place Atherton. He is now a regular at the cafe where he enjoys chatting to Kerry and helping out and 'paying-it-forward'.

## Brad's access to support

**W**hen Community Chaplain Kerry Parry first met Brad, his paintings were gracing the walls of The Access Place in Atherton. The talented painter was showing his work as part of an exhibition for Mental Health Week.

In his 50s, Brad moved to Far North Queensland from the Northern Territory. Worklink's Personal Helpers and Mentors Service encouraged him to take the leap and display his vibrant artworks for the first time.

"He was pleasantly surprised when he sold a number of his paintings. He went on to have his own exhibitions and sold even more," Kerry said.

With the exhibitions, Brad became a regular face at The Access Place, and enjoyed having regular chats with Kerry. In his own words, Brad said: "We've had a few yarns about God things, but she doesn't force me to believe in anything".

Brad, like many people, is struggling

to get by each week on a very low income, leaving him with little in the hand after paying rent.

"At The Access Place there is a 'pay-it-forward' board where individuals anonymously purchase someone in the community a coffee, and Brad has found this very helpful at times," Kerry said.

Through Brad and Kerry's regular conversations, it was decided that a free pantry would be helpful for the people in need in the local community.

Brad generously offered to build some shelves out of pallets to fit in with the design of the café and people are now able to drop off excess fruit, vegetables and tinned foods, to be accessed by people in need.

For Brad, The Access Place provides a welcoming sanctuary where he can contribute and where he can sit and chat with Kerry.

"In my experience, Australian's don't do help for help's sake anymore, there is a sense of obligation. This is the point of

difference at The Access Place, because they care with no strings attached. The world is full of people who are ruthless, callous and disconnected. I grew up with feelings of respecting others only out of fear. I'm bewildered about how nasty the world is—but not so the people at The Access Place," Brad said.

Brad has almost become a resident handyman at the café—fixing chairs and tables, refurbishing furniture and his latest project has been building a bookcase so they can have free books available.

Slowly, Kerry has been encouraging Brad to take part in more social events. For over a year, Kerry has been coordinating social dinners and after multiple invitations, Brad, finally agreed to attend. He helped by waiting on the tables and clearing up after the meal.

In his own way, Brad is connecting into community through The Access Place with the help of Community Chaplain Kerry Parry. ■



## Blank canvas excites new chaplain

■ Judy Dallinger gets the tick of approval from grandson Connor on her new home at Churches of Christ Campus Acacia Ridge.

**F**or some it could be a daunting role. Setting up a new network, in a new suburb, with people from all walks of life also starting afresh, but for Merisa Holland she is excited.

Merisa has recently been appointed the Community Chaplain at our Acacia Ridge Campus, which encompasses Wattle Apartments and Brig-O-Doon Aged Care Service and Retirement Village.

While not her first mission role, it is her first chaplaincy role.

Previously a Senior Pastor, and eight years in a homeless service management role in Brisbane, Merisa brings experience and compassion to the role.

Helping residents settle into the newly completed Wattle Apartments is one her first tasks.

"To have a blank canvas here, to be able to plan what this space will be with residents is so empowering for us all.

I've a really good feeling about Wattle Apartments," said Merisa.

"There's green space that could be a playground or a dog park depending on needs. We have that time to all start afresh and plan as a group."

Merisa is proud of her new role, particularly in the holistic care the new residents will receive when moving onto campus. She explains it as a real point of difference.

"Integrated housing really is what you want it to be," Merisa said.

"There is no reason to feel isolated here. If you want privacy you have it. If you want constant contact with people and a connection that is here also."

Completed in January, Wattle Apartments residents are still moving in, the majority are from a 10 kilometre radius meaning they are familiar with Acacia Ridge and local amenities.

"I am conscious many residents may have had little or no contact with a chaplain where they have come from

so that is in the back of my mind when introducing myself."

One resident who was thankful for the welcome is Judy Dallinger.

"Thoughtful and heart-warming," said Judy with a tear in her eye of the chaplain's goodie bag and welcome on her first day.

"Having a face I now know, I have such a good feeling about being here."

Judy works part-time as a teacher aide and relishes her role as 'Nanny' to grandchildren in nearby suburbs.

"I've a balcony with a beautiful view of the city where at night it just twinkles. The bedroom is so large I feel there's enough room for my grandchildren to play and feel comfortable." ■

*Merisa is one of our dedicated Community Chaplains working to help people in need. This vital chaplaincy program relies purely on donor support.*

Support the work of our Community Chaplains by purchasing an Entertainment Book membership



OR



**\$13 from each printed book or digital membership sold goes to support our chaplains.**

Purchase your membership today at [entbook.com.au/9m18469](http://entbook.com.au/9m18469)



## letting go

“ Sometimes we make everything into hard work and we assume that’s the way it should be!” Bruce Warwick explained. “Not the least when it comes to spirituality and spiritual disciplines like prayer.” Bruce is a Senior Pastor, and a member of Churches of Christ in Queensland’s Deeper Rhythms team.

“I was watching a craftsman at work who clearly cherished timber. You could tell by the way he smelled it and carefully handled it. He made things look easy, because he worked with the grain and texture, it was like he had a relationship with the wood and the wood was the senior partner. So in tune with the material it was almost as if it was quietly telling him how to get the best out of it. The result: great beauty. Yes, the craftsman had put in effort, but there was a real grace about it all, like the beautiful product he was making was already waiting to be released from the raw timber,” Bruce said.

Growing in the Christian life is not so much about striving or grasping for something; much more about letting go.

“We don’t have to make ourselves into anything; rather to enter into what was intended to be ours all along – to fall into our truest and most open self, let God show us who we are,” he said.

“Prayer is not so hard. We don’t even have to start a prayer. God, in His remarkable grace, actually starts hundreds of prayers within us in the shape of a longing, a desire, a concern, a need, a wounding, a thankfulness or some other prompting, and invites us to pick up the thread, climb on board, find some words or just be speechless because His part in the prayer is enough.”

“We don’t have to bring people to God, He’s already in their world. Our role is to lovingly help them in coming to this awareness and realise for themselves what that means.”

For Bruce, it’s not really about pursuing God; more about experiencing how he is pursuing us.

“Everything is a gift.” ■



## Solomon Islands receive life changing light

**F**ollowing earthquakes, cyclones, death and disease, the community of Vatu Loki in the Solomon Islands is trying to rebuild in a new area.

On 3 December, the community received a gift that will change not only the community but the lives of residents.

On behalf of Whitehill Church of Christ, Dan and Kathy Leadbetter delivered new home solar units to 90 families in the resilient community.

Members of the church donated the vital units, which contain a solar panel, four LED lights, the New Testament Bible on USB, FM radio and a battery unit.

“They were so excited and thankful that they went straight back to their homes and set up the units, placing the panels out in the sun to charge. We could hear music playing, and there was a general atmosphere of excitement,” Dan said.



■ Dan and Kathy Leadbetter handing over home solar units in Vatu Loki, an hour north-west of Honiara. The Leadbetters have been coordinating mission teams to the Solomon Islands for the past seven years. The church-supplied solar units are providing a safe and reliable power source to communities relocated after natural disasters. LED lights, a radio and battery are included.

The island community has no electricity connected, and rely on fire or kerosene lamps for lighting to make their meals and for children to do their homework.

“This is an unreliable and poor source of light at a high cost. It has the potential for serious health and safety risks,” Dan said.

The donation will relieve energy poverty in the community, as well as provide the Bible into the home, increasing opportunities for social engagement as well as Bible study groups and education in the evenings.

A further 62 units are awaiting transport to the One Pusu Bible College on the island of Malaita in the Solomon Islands. Whitehill Church of Christ has sent working mission teams there over the past seven years and have an ongoing partnership with the college. The units will be given to students, so they can take them back to their own villages to enable ministry opportunities. ■

Last year, we released the second edition of the Churches of Christ in Queensland history book, *The Church from the Paddock*. The following is an excerpt from the history book.



# Women's ministry in Queensland

*Throughout the history of the Churches of Christ in Queensland, there has been an active ministry to and by women. Often their names – as per cultural norms – were hidden behind the names of their husbands, and they were given less space and words in Conference records. They were, however, indispensable to the growth of the churches, care services and the impact of various other committees across Queensland, and often they served internationally in roles that they were not permitted to in their home state.*

**D**espite the cultural norms of the day, there were many women whose active contributions to bringing the light of Christ into communities should be recorded. Often their work would be anonymous, like the many women who provided meals during the Great Depression at the Annerley Church of Christ. Though unnamed, many women whose work is unknown to us in the early twenty-first century made sterling contributions to the cause, and shaped a great deal of the foundations that the Queensland Churches of Christ currently stand upon.

## The Queensland Christian Women's Fellowship (QCWF)

It has been suggested that the Women's State Conferences were often more 'progressive' than the general

conferences held at state levels in Queensland and, especially in the early part of the twentieth century, often presented motions and reports on a wide array of topics. The Queensland Christian Women's Fellowship enjoyed a long history of impacting lives around them. In 1889, 'The Christian Pioneer' reported that a small group of women met in Toowoomba, in the hopes of creating an annual event. This hope was not realised until 1913 (again at Toowoomba) when women from Toowoomba, the West Moreton district, Chinchilla, Ma Ma Creek, Gympie, Moonee River, Tara and Brisbane gathered to form the 'Queensland State Sisters' Conference'. The next year the women met again, this time at the Ann Street church, and in 1915 the Queensland Conference recognised the Women's State Conference as

an auxiliary conference. Broad and diverse ministries then followed rapidly for this vital collective – an Indian orphan was supported in 1919, hospitals were visited, prayer meetings were held, support to the general Conference work and meetings was also provided. The QCWF grew quickly in scope and stature, supporting – among other things – the Federal Conference held in Brisbane (1930), advocating for temperance issues, supporting the work of foreign mission, and supporting Indigenous ministry (1943). Of course, the work of women in the Queensland churches was not confined to conference auxiliaries, but was paramount in local churches throughout the state, often in unheralded and surprising ways. Yet they always were in keeping with their constitutional purpose: "Christian

Women's Fellowships exist to develop a deeper understanding of Christ's love and salvation for ourselves and others and to provide channels of service to the Church, community and the world."

The church at Rockhampton, which was founded in 1928 after a Hinrichsen and Stewart tent mission, can trace its existence in part to the active work of the Women's Conference, whose executive decreed that, "the



work of the church be extended to Rockhampton". This decision was backed with funding from the women of the Queensland churches to the tune of £300 which, according to Haigh, led to the "establishment of a fully functional church". These women did more than fundraise – they helped ensure that the kingdom expanded throughout Queensland. It was Ruby Hinrichsen, for example, who set up the Sunday school in September 1928 at the newly formed Rockhampton church. The point that needs to be made here is that women were not incidental to the work of developing and sustaining churches but, especially for the first 75 years of the Churches of Christ in Queensland, women were perhaps reported incidentally in regards to the development and growth of churches. ■

Fostering communication in children with hearing loss

**H**earing loss in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is at epidemic levels, particularly in children.

Staggeringly, there are ten times more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with hearing loss and disease than non-Indigenous persons. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have one of the highest rates of otitis media—or middle ear disease—in the world. This can lead to a lifetime of problems, as hearing loss impacts on the way they interact with the world around them and how they communicate.

Cathy Clun is a Churches of Christ Care foster carer in Townsville. Cathy and her husband care for eight children, two of whom suffer from hearing loss. Their birth families were unable to communicate with sign language, and there is no access to signing classes in remote communities.

“The shocking fact is that in some areas 70-93 per cent of children have hearing loss. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children suffer the highest degree of ear disease and hearing loss in the world. More than that, they don’t have a voice because nobody can communicate with them,” Cathy said.

“The children were learning signing at school, but were unable to ‘speak’ at home,” she said.

“I want deaf kids to be able to be in their community, with family and able to communicate. So I wrote a book called ‘Simple Signs’.

“The book is designed so that our kids can teach their families and communities (how to sign). It depicts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children signing and even has a space to put the words into language.

“I really hope it helps the children.”

“The book is designed so that our kids can teach their families and communities [how to sign]. It depicts Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children signing and even has a space to put the words into language”



*Churches of Christ Care is proud to have over 970 foster and kinship carers who have opened their homes to provide care to over 2,600 children and young people. Foster and Kinship Carer Week (24-30 April) recognises the dedication and commitment of Queensland’s foster and kinship carers who provide children with a safe, loving and stable home. There are currently more than 5,100 carer families in Queensland who find room in their hearts and homes for more than 8,000 children and young people in care. The week offers an opportunity to highlight the selfless work by foster and kinship carers, thank them for their efforts and raise the profile of foster and kinship caring in the community.*

*If you have thought about opening your home and helping a child in need, call 1800 222 273 today or go to [fosterwithus.com.au](http://fosterwithus.com.au) for more information. You too could help change the lives of children, just like Cathy.*

## Women ready to Shine



**E**very woman has the ability to shine, to understand her own personal worth, strength and purpose and to realise the potential within her to fulfil her desires.

This is the aim of the Shine Women program currently being delivered across Churches of Christ in Queensland.

A group of Churches of Christ Housing Services residents recently took part in the nine-week program, held at our Ipswich office.

Mission Action Partner Donna Savill helped facilitate the program with Lynne Feldon, Community Chaplain, Volunteer Joanna Butler, and Modupe Akib, Learning and Development Facilitator. Donna loves taking part in the program and seeing the difference it makes in people’s lives.

“It is so amazing to see people recognise their worth, develop resilience and discover a purpose for their life that they might not have realised before, or never thought it would be possible to achieve,” Donna said.

■ From left: Donna Savill, Joanna Butler, Lydia Buhse, Sherrill Paton, Belinda Schmid, Colleen Sank, Debi Hogarth, Lynne Feldon.

“The first part of Shine encourages participants to understand that your worth is intrinsic and isn’t changed by what happens to you or what other people say about you, or even what you say about yourself. This is life changing!”

Throughout the nine-week program, Donna witnessed some inspiring things.

“One lady had never known what it was to feel happiness. But through Shine, and through the relationship with her Community Chaplain Lynne, she is seeing the world through different eyes, understanding emotion, and dreaming about stepping out and accomplishing goals which she never thought she would,” she said.

If you are interested in attending a Shine program, or would like to see one run at your service or in your community please contact Donna Savill at [donna.savill@cofcqld.com.au](mailto:donna.savill@cofcqld.com.au).

**As a result of the program, the participants feel more confident that they can or will be able to:**

- “Follow my dreams”
- “Deal with things in general in a more confident manner”
- “Grow and move forward knowing I am really worth something”
- “Be more positive and confident”
- 100% of participants:**
- Have had a change in their understanding of their own worth, self-esteem and emotional intelligence
- Have reinforced sense of identity, confidence and purpose
- Are more aware that every life has intrinsic value
- Have learned some great tips for life
- Would recommend the Shine program to others

**And almost everybody:**

- Understands more about their own strengths and are able to make good decisions based on skills they have learnt at Shine
- Has developed holistic personal and problem solving skills which they can apply on a daily basis.

## In the Limelight

Motel-style twin share waterfront accommodation  
\$150 Early Bird by 7 May \$135 Students \$40 Saturday Only

Featuring guest speaker Heather Foord

[bit.ly/GirlsGetaway2017](http://bit.ly/GirlsGetaway2017) for more info or to register,  
or email [donna.savill@cofcqld.com.au](mailto:donna.savill@cofcqld.com.au)

Option to add accommodation for Friday night also available.

**GIRLS  
GETAWAY  
WEEKEND  
4-5 NOVEMBER  
MAROOCHY  
WATERFRONT**

# God Breaks Down Walls to Build Bridges

Over 12-15 January, members from Churches of Christ across the world travelled to India for the 19th Global Gathering. Bruce Greig from the Australian Committee World Convention Churches of Christ attended the gathering.

“Having the Global Gathering in India where less than three per cent of the population are Christian was a bold move,” Bruce said.

The gathering was held in Damoh, the heart of the early American missionary work established over 125 years ago and the location of Central India Christian Mission (CICM).

President of the World Convention of Churches of Christ Dr Ajai Lall and his team worked tirelessly to transform the campus of CICM into a welcoming place for 3,500 visitors from 29 countries, including 26 representatives from Australia.

“Each group was welcomed with great ceremony. The hospitality of the hosts was overwhelming from the welcome, the warmth of friendship, the accommodation and all meals prepared for the 3,500 attendees.”

The theme of the convention was ‘God Breaks-down Walls to Build Bridges’ and speakers from New Zealand, Brazil, Poland, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Swaziland and the United States of America presented on the topic, while workshops, and men’s and women’s groups were also part of the program.

“Dr Lall challenged attendees to break down the walls between the head and heart, between faith and action and between traditionalism and truth—allowing Jesus to lead them into a revolution that takes us beyond



Over 3,500 people from 29 countries attended the Churches of Christ Global Gathering in India in January, including Churches of Christ in Queensland Chief Executive Officer Dean Phelan (pictured far right with a group at the Gathering).

borders to tear down walls of guilt, shame and failure,” he said.

Bruce explained that Oscar Muria from Nigeria used the image of a jigsaw puzzle from 1 Corinthians 12 on gifts and unity.

“Just as puzzle pieces are different to make the picture, so God has given gifts to each part of the church. This forces us to work together to be the beautiful picture God wants. He applied this to local, national, continental and worldwide expressions of church.”

While American Leroy Lawson suggested that God translates his love into body language.

“If the Gospel is the bridge, God has done his part. Jesus did his part so now we have to do our part—we are the ramp to the bridge and need to love with the love of God,” he said.

“This Gathering was without a doubt a turning point in making it a truly Global Gathering of the Churches of Christ (Campbell Stone Movement).” ■

**The next gathering will be held in Swaziland in Easter 2019. Contact [brucegreig3@bigpond.com](mailto:brucegreig3@bigpond.com).**

*During January, Dean and Janette Phelan travelled to India for Global Gathering, the World Convention of Churches of Christ.*

*“With Christianity a minority religion in India, there was armed security at the convention, and we heard many horrific first-hand stories of Christian persecution in the country,”*

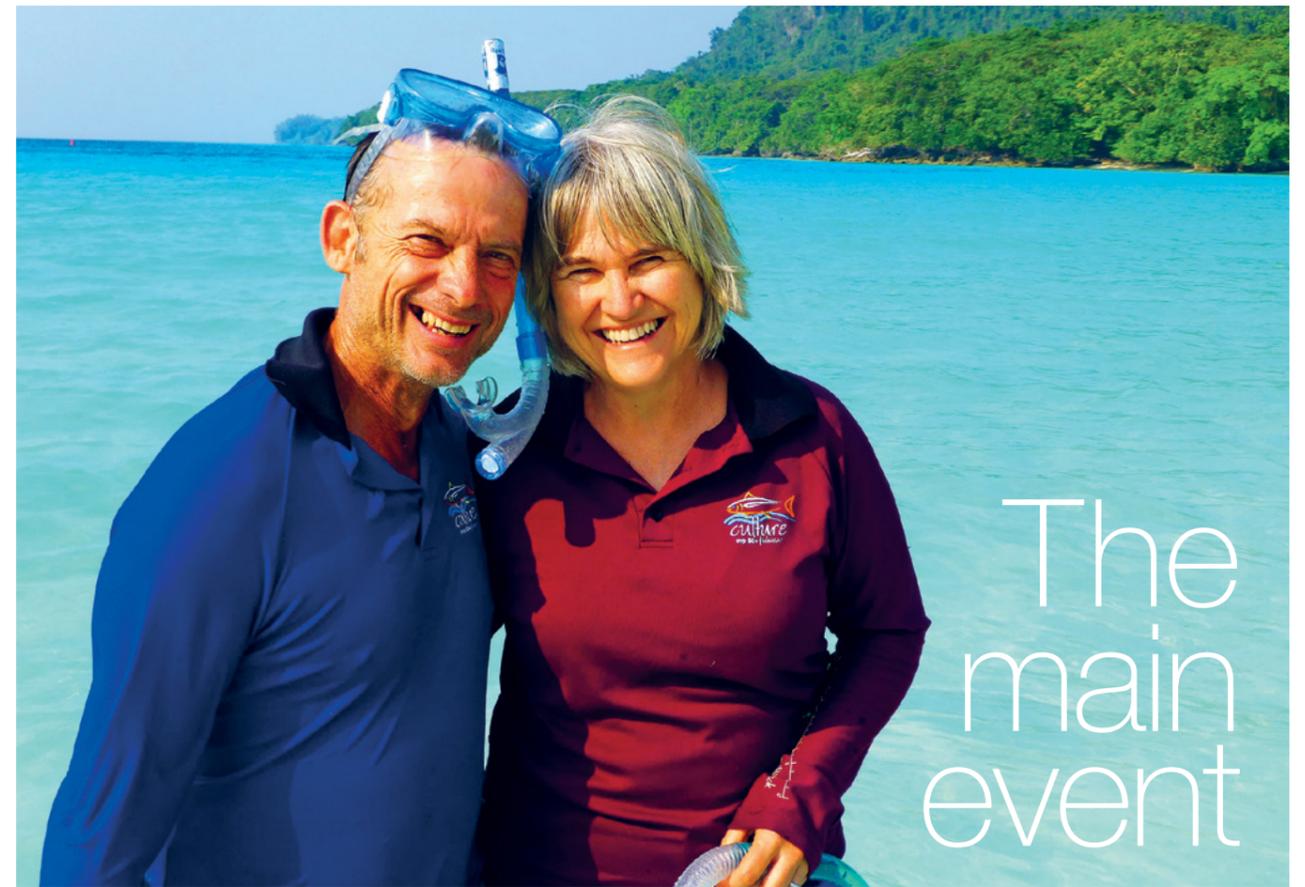
*Janette said.*

*They met many brave Christians whose faith puts them at risk, and their ministries are being blessed and multiplied. “They are changing lives and giving hope.”*

*“Their faith and practice is real and authentic; and their relationship with God is such that they are willing to take risks for what they believe,” she said.*

*According to Janette, forwarding the Gospel is not about outward rituals and religious practices, but rather about relationships: loving neighbours and sharing the love of a God who wants them to have a fulfilling life.*

*“To Jesus, the true practice of Christianity turns the accepted order on its head, encouraging leaders to be servants as he did when he washed disciples’ feet.”*



“No matter our skin colour, intellectual or educational abilities, family or cultural background, we are all blessed with the heart and smile that God gave us”

On a recent trip to Vanuatu, Global Mission Partners’ Vicki Marney was accompanied by George and Cheryl Reid (pictured). As a team they had discussed that while they had a plan, God would ultimately decide what the main event would be.

“The things that we thought were important in the end were, in fact, insignificant compared to the last minute opportunities that arose,” Vicki said. “One amazing development was the opportunity to speak to people about healthy relationships and support the message of equality and safety in a culture still steeped in domestic violence.”

George and Cheryl were invited to present at a Sunday worship service, where they shared a message about Jesus’ love:

“...No matter our skin colour, intellectual or educational abilities, family or cultural background, we are all blessed with the heart and smile that God gave us. We are united by His Son Jesus and we are all children of God...”

They ended their time by singing a medley of worship songs as a duet and

encouraged the people to join in praise and worship of Jesus.

As they left, many thanked them for the message of encouragement, particularly the children’s story they had shared.

The Pastor at the worship service had been speaking to his congregation about the true meaning of love and submission to each other, particularly in marriage.

“Domestic Violence is an issue in Vanuatu, just as in Australia. Some parts of old culture are still found in the churches, because the idea of submission has been sadly misunderstood.”

“It was so encouraging to realise God had used George and Cheryl to minister to these people by simply being themselves in the way they love, honour and care for each other as husband and wife and do things together in such a way that neither overshadows the other. They are simply one.”

“God has a bigger plan that he is working on to bring uplift to the people of Vanuatu and it was awesome to play a small part of that, and surprising that it came in a way we could never have expected.” ■



## Solitude through spirituality

Chris Gribble is a Pastor with Churches of Christ in Queensland. On a recent mission trip to China with his wife, he discovered how finding solitude through spirituality helped him understand the true reason he was there.

Each time Chris visits China, he gets a feeling of being overwhelmed by the number of people that fill every space, everywhere he goes.

“Personal space is not something that is known in the same way that we know in Australia,” Chris said.

During their time in China, Chris and his wife cared for children in an orphanage.

“The children have HIV and all have a sad story about how they ended up in this small orphanage. But, they are all normal kids... we were subjected to the usual range of emotions, tantrums and moods that come with kids from five to

14 years of age,” he said.

In the midst of the largest group of people in the world, in a city of around nine million people, in an environment where he was surrounded by children constantly, solitude was not something that was a part of his experience.

Reading Rainer Marie Rilke’s ‘Letters to a Young Poet’, Chris came across a great section in the sixth letter:

What is necessary, after all, is only this: solitude, vast inner solitude. To walk inside yourself and meet no one for hours—that is what you must be able to attain.

To be solitary as you were when you were a child, when the grownups walked around involved with matters that seemed large and important because they looked so busy and because you didn’t understand a thing about what they were doing.

“This short excerpt highlighted that in the midst of activity and action is a

need for a place for solitude.

Then in the midst of that solitude is a desire to take the time to walk within my mind to help me develop a true understanding of my world,” Chris said.

“I think that it’s in the space that I am fully able to understand what compassion means when I am seeking to obey the gospel’s demand to listen to the cry of the poor.”

“This to me is the fullest expression of spirituality.”

“Compassion as an honest expression of love means that I seek to not inflict any of my own pain on anyone else. Rather I seek to gather up my own brokenness to allow myself to love more fully.”

“In the midst of all the busyness I am glad that my spiritual life drew me to a place where for a few moments I was able to wander through the deeper places of ‘why’ I am here.” ■

## The fast way

Fasting is common practice in Christianity, a tool for increasing a connection to God and spiritual health.

Jesus tells his disciples, “Do not look sombre as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show they are fasting...when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matt. 6:16 -18, NIV).

There are many more biblical examples of fasting for guidance, protection, repenting, wisdom, healing or preparing for ministry.

So when Arana Hills Church of Christ’s senior pastor announced he was leaving to pursue another role, leadership and church family joined in a 40 day fast as they sought a replacement.

“It made sense,” explained church member Leanne Day who took on the 22 January to 28 February fast.

“Fasting and praying during a time of major change, when deep wisdom and hearing the voice and direction of the Lord was paramount,” Leanne said.

Fasting does not necessarily mean the denial of food. The practice is a spiritual exercise in self-discipline

so abstaining from sweets, internet, social media, television or any other pleasurable daily activity.

“I wouldn’t say it was easy,” admitted Leanne. “Definitely not.”

“He fasted himself. So, if it was good enough for Jesus—it was good enough for me!

“It got me to thinking more about fasting as I pray—for breakthrough, for wisdom on important decisions, as I seek to hear the Lord’s voice more clearly. So when fasting gets hard, I get praying.

“Has it helped my spiritual health? Yes—there have been amazing times of closeness to God and raw prayers and hunger for His presence and an amazing sacred space in the midst of physical hunger. And also no—there have been times of dryness, struggle, craving, a lack of inspiration, outright spiritual opposition. What a ride. But I am keen to take it.

“I sense that there is a gathering momentum, a bursting through of light and life into our church and neighbourhood, a pushing back of darkness and a victory. At the halfway point my praying has changed. I have changed. The Lord has shaken our comfortable world to gain our attention and then taken us to a whole new level of obedience and trust. He is a good Father.” ■

## Further, Faster conference 2017

**Monday 20 March 9am – Tuesday 21 March 5 pm.**

**Newlife Uniting Church  
4 Greenwich Court, Robina**

Further Faster 2017 is a two-day conference for church leaders and teams passionate about healthy church growth hosted by Willow Creek Australia. It is modelled on North Point Community Church’s Drive Conference, which regularly gathers thousands of leaders from around the world.

Over the two days together you will have opportunity to hear from three experienced North Point senior leaders and practitioners, joining us in person to share transferable principles for churches of any size passionate about the Great Commission. You will learn principles on how best to lead volunteers and develop and maintain a healthy leadership culture, amongst many other topics. There will be break-out sessions to dig deeper into particular subjects, as well as opportunities for your specific questions to be addressed by the North Point team. Together we will gather on the beautiful Gold Coast to network, worship, learn, grow and have a lot of fun with hundreds of leaders from across Australia.

**Cost \$179. Student rate \$99. Special Group Discount - buy five and get one ticket free (total of \$745 for every six tickets) ■**

F

Further faster 2017 is a two-day conference on the Gold Coast for church leaders and teams.

FEATURING  
**PASTOR  
ANDY STANLEY**

via videocast plus learn from his key team LIVE in person

**20-21 MARCH** | Student rates & Group discounts available

**REGISTER** [WWW.FURTHERFASTER2017.COM](http://WWW.FURTHERFASTER2017.COM)



WILLOW CREEK AUSTRALIA



# People & Events

in our communities

## 1. Princely party

St James Retirement Village resident Bill Prince celebrated his 104th birthday on 2 February, surrounded by friends, family, and Townsville City Council representatives. The 80-strong crowd were entertained by the Townsville Chorale Society, as they enjoyed a delicious birthday cake fit for a prince. Happy birthday Bill, and congratulations on reaching such a huge milestone!

## 2. Aub still rolling at 95

Churches of Christ Care Chesterville Retirement Village resident Aubrey Gamble (pictured with his friends Jill and Margaret) celebrated his 95th birthday on 21 December. But age hasn't slowed him down!

Aub continues to play golf a couple of times a week, volunteers at an op shop, delivers Meals on Wheels, and goes roller-skating each fortnight.

Keeping busy is the key to Aub's good health. "I don't have time to sit in a rocking chair," he said.

To Aub, and his fellow village residents' delight, he appeared on The Project on Channel 10 and in the Herald Sun. They are delighted to have a celebrity in their midst.

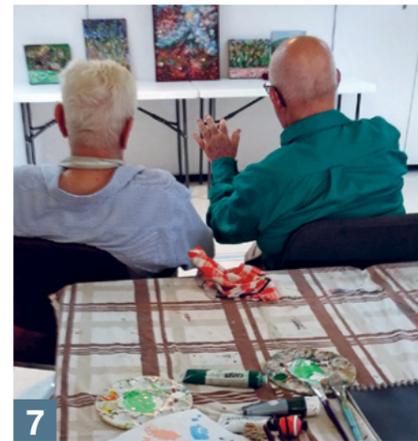
## 3. North Queensland Strategic Action Leadership Team visit Gidgee Inn

The North Queensland Strategic Action Leadership Team gathered at the Gidgee Inn Cloncurry at the end of January to hold their first meeting for 2017 in far western Queensland. (Front: Wendy Williams, Jane Carter, Kim Teudt. Middle: Dorothy Smith, Sharon Lowe, Michelle Lemon, Julie Teakle, Marissa Sherry. Back Row: Chimie Moxham, Andrew Woodward, Tim McMenamin, Phil Bignill, Ross Dinnar.)

The Gidgee Inn is managed by Mission Action Pty Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Churches of Christ in Queensland. The profits from the Gidgee Inn, and other enterprises operated by Churches of Christ in Queensland, go directly to funding a diverse range of community activities, including Community Chaplaincy, Medical Santo and Access Place Social Enterprises.

During their visit, the team were able to get a good understanding of some of the issues affecting rural Queensland and also hear how the Gidgee Inn is important to the community of Cloncurry.

This September, Cloncurry will celebrate its 150th anniversary, with the Gidgee Inn hosting many of the dignitaries. If you are travelling through far western Queensland, be sure to



call in and stay a night or two. For more information and to book please visit [gidgeeinn.com.au](http://gidgeeinn.com.au).

## 4. Farewelling a super colleague

David has been with Churches of Christ Care for over eight years, and received a CEO's Excellence in Service Award for his outstanding work with clients. David, an ordained pastor, has left to take up a fulltime ministry position with his church

## 5. Pie game fun!

Residents at Clive Burdeu Aged Care Service were left with pie in their face after taking part in the popular 'Pie Face' game. In the surprisingly suspense-filled game, whipped cream is placed on the 'hand', and a dice is rolled to determine how many turns of the handle the player must make. This goes on until the cream is randomly flung

into their unsuspecting face. Activities therapist Tracy Kenyon bought in the game for a bit of fun and something different for the residents to take part in. Tracy said that the residents enjoyed playing the game, and loved seeing the staff and service manager join in too! Resident Dorothy Dolan enjoyed taking part in the popular game.

## 6. Capturing Bribie's men

Bribie Island Retirement Village has a thriving Men's Shed, with the group growing over the past months. They have been enjoying each other's informal company and making new friendships.

Resident cartoonist Herb Harrold (pictured) has drawn portraits of each of the men, which are proudly displayed in the shed.

## 7. 'Retirement Village' by Nubeena Art Group

Residents from Nubeena Retirement Village in Toowoomba are excited with sheer delight to be presenting their artworks at Toowoomba Regional Art Gallery from 18 March to 19 April.

Each week the group meet in the hall to paint, laugh and share their skills with one another in order to continually improve their own practice and provide inspiration and encouragement to other members..

The Nubeena Art Group has participated in various art competitions within the Toowoomba region. This exhibition proudly displays the work of five members including Bill van Mourik (pictured with Tom Sharman) Henny van Lonkhuyzen, Mal Armstrong, Jean Ahearn and the group's facilitator Tom Sharman.

## 8. Bev celebrates 80th birthday at service she helped create

For many years, Beverley Grenfell (pictured) was the Chair of the Board for Churches of Christ Care. Bev, and her family, have had a long association with Churches of Christ, so it was only fitting

that on 19 November she celebrated her 80th birthday with over 150 friends and family at Nubeena Retirement Village. The village holds special significance for Bev, whose family was instrumental in the development of Churches of Christ Care in the Darling Downs region, and her sister currently resides at the village.

## 9. First community barbeque

Residents at the newly opened Wattle Apartments at Acacia Ridge were welcomed by their 'campus-mates' from Brig-O-Doon Retirement Village at a barbeque get together. Campus Chaplain Merisa Holland, organised the low key event, with residents sticking around after to continue mingling. The husband of a resident at the campus's residential aged care service donated the sausages for the event.

## 10. Providing comfort

Friends of Warrawee volunteers have worked at making the lives of residents entering palliative care at Warrawee Aged Care Service more comfortable, with new sheets, towels, a stereo with music and two beautiful quilts made by the quilting group.

"The ladies involved in this project found it very rewarding and said it was nice to provide something special that will make a difference to the residents and their family to provide comfort at that time," Terri-Lee Mills, Lifestyle Therapist, said.

For one resident, the colour of the sheets made her feel special, took her mind off of how her body was feeling, and made her look a bit brighter.

(Back row: Robin Rogan, Beryl Staines, Pam Moon, Pam Carson, Sheryl Rigg, Blanche McNelley, June Robertson, Lesley Begg, Lola Cuff. Front row: Marie Wippell, Joyce Winks.)



## Understanding grief and trauma

Words: Stephen Parker

**T**he word spirituality means something different to everyone. At its essence, though, spirituality should be about our human spirit, as created by God, and the Spirit of God, and how those two connect. Sound simple enough? God's Spirit, our spirit, what can go wrong?

Perhaps it's just me, but all too often discussions on spirituality lead to cringing. Did they really say that? There are two times when talking about spirituality is most likely to make you cringe: when someone is going through a terrible time of grief or trauma, and a well-meaning person 'comforts' the one suffering with their thoughts on spirituality. Sure, there is a lot that can be said that is helpful in traumatic times, but how often does what we say miss

the mark? How can our spirituality prove helpful in these times?

The second cringe-worthy time is when issues of spirituality venture into the public sphere. Too often the media—and those interacting with the media, Christians included, can deal with caricatures of spirituality. An easy but misleading headline, a glib comment, an insensitive Facebook post; sadly these are more likely to be the outcome when we see spirituality being discussed publicly.

It is because of the high potential for this that ACOM is holding two seminars exploring grief and trauma and how to deal with them. We want to help Christian leaders to develop great understanding, sensitivity and skills in these areas. Our goal is simple: when conversations about spirituality

arise, may the way we contribute bring blessing, peace, life, joy and hope. Not cringing.

**22-24 March** we are looking at "Understanding and Working with Grief and Trauma". The first day is also a stand-alone mini-conference for those who can't make the full three days.

**6-7 June** is "Faith in the Public Square" – or "How can Christians discuss spiritual matters in public forums without us putting our feet in our mouth?"

Both are at Springwood Church of Christ and are \$75 per day (or less for groups). They are open not just to ACOM degree students, but to anyone wanting Professional Development in these crucial areas. For more information, contact Stephen Parker on 0410 614 894 or sparker@acom.edu.au. ■

# { Events }

Find us on 

## March

**1 MARCH – 9 APRIL**  
40 days of Prayer

**3 MARCH**  
World Day of Prayer

**4-5 MARCH**  
Ignite Weekend

**8 MARCH**  
International Women's Day

**10-12 MARCH**  
Darling Downs Ladies Retreat

**20-21 MARCH**  
Further FASTER Conference

**21 MARCH**  
Harmony Day

**22-24 MARCH**  
ACOM –  
understanding and  
dealing with  
grief and trauma

## April

**31 MARCH – 9 APRIL**  
National Youth Week

**5 APRIL**  
Youth Homelessness  
Matters Day

**7-9 APRIL**  
L10 Camp

**14 APRIL**  
Good Friday

**16 APRIL**  
Easter Sunday

**24-30 APRIL**  
Foster and Kinship  
Carer Week

**25 APRIL**  
ANZAC Day

## May

Domestic and Family Violence  
Prevention Month

**8-14 MAY**  
National Volunteer Week

**8-14 MAY**  
Road Safety Week

**12 MAY**  
International Nurses Day

**14 MAY**  
Mother's Day

**15 MAY**  
International Day of Families

**21-28 MAY**  
Palliative Care Week

**26 MAY**  
National Sorry Day

**27 MAY**  
National Day of Thanks

**27 MAY - 3 JUNE**  
National Reconciliation Week

## June

**6-7 JUNE**  
Faith in the public square

**12-18 JUNE**  
Men's Health Week

**15 JUNE**  
Centrifuge conference

## July

**1-9 JULY**  
NAIDOC Week

## August

**4-6 AUGUST**  
Mission Leadership  
Training Weekend

**7-13 AUGUST**  
Homelessness  
Prevention Week

**19-27 AUGUST**  
Queensland  
Seniors Week

## September

**1-30 SEPTEMBER**  
Dementia  
Awareness Month

**3 SEPTEMBER**  
Father's Day

**3-9 SEPTEMBER**  
National Child  
Protection Week

**8 SEPTEMBER**  
R U OK? Day

**21 SEPTEMBER**  
International Day of Peace

**21 SEPTEMBER**  
World Alzheimer's Day

## October

**8-14 OCTOBER**  
Mental Health Week

## November

**4-5 NOVEMBER**  
Girls Getaway  
Weekend

**11 NOVEMBER**  
Remembrance Day

**15-16 NOVEMBER**  
Celebrate 2017  
Ministers Forum and  
Annual General Meeting

**25 NOVEMBER**  
White Ribbon Day

## December

**25 DECEMBER**  
Christmas Day

**26 DECEMBER**  
Boxing Day

Bringing the light of Christ  
into communities



[cofc.com.au](http://cofc.com.au)