

# Northern Synod News

Issue No 80 November 2004



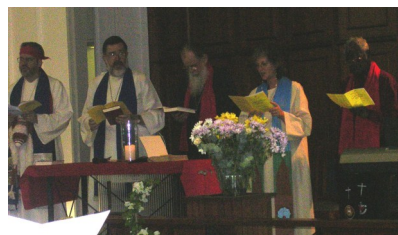
Induction of the Moderator of the Northern Synod at Darwin Memorial Uniting Church.



## Living together in Christ .... What future for us?

Sunday evening, September 26th saw the joyful occasion of the induction of the Reverend Stephen Orme as the Moderator of the Northern Synod.

Although not all members of the Uniting Church in the north who might have wished to be there could be, there was nevertheless representation from many if not most congregations and communities.



As the leading figures in the induction processed down the aisle there was a pause as Congress elders invested the Rev Orme with sacred symbols of the law — the dilly bag, head-dress and feathers, and the message stick. For all present this, which had been planned by the elders unbeknown to anyone, was a significant and awe-inspiring moment which symbolised the reality that the Northern Synod is a real and vibrant combination of both the Northern Regional Council of Congress and the Pilgrim Presbytery.

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# Synod Snippets

Elsewhere in the country September heralds springtime. Here in the North September points us towards the “build up”. But everywhere around the country it seems September is also the Synod season.

The Northern Synod meeting began formally with the induction of the new Moderator at Darwin Memorial Uniting Church on the evening of Sunday September 26th.

From Monday to Wednesday of that week (September 27 — 29), synod delegates gathered at Kormilda College, Berrimah for the formal part of proceedings.

Following the Assembly model of meeting in table groups, the Synod established itself in table groups in the Dining Hall of Kormilda College.

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*from page 1*

The new moderator's investiture with the moderator's stole and also with the NRCC stole was watched with delight by all present. The joyfulness of the occasion was re-inforced by the participation of a number of singing groups representing the range of congregations in the Synod.

The singing of these groups and the congregation was

Although the synod meeting necessarily follows a business agenda this particular synod was almost universally described by delegates and visitors alike as having been “creative, inviting and inventive”.

Certainly the morning worship sessions and evening sessions demonstrated the great range of talent and the rich cultural diversity which is one of the strengths of the Uniting Church in the North.



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testimony to the spirit-filled nature of the occasion. There was much laughter and delight when one of the singing groups announced that they were going to sing some of the “great old Methodist hymns”.

The new moderator has chosen to continue to use the theme introduced to the synod by the retiring moderator, the Rev George

One of the features of Synod gatherings is the spiritual encouragement and challenge that delegates receive through the daily Bible Studies. This year was no exception.

Geoff Boyce, Uniting Church Chaplain at Flinders University in South Australia, delivered a series of studies which were rich in challenge and very relevant to the role of every Christian, as well as to the Church as a whole.

Exploring at such questions as: inclusion, exclusion, embrace - who's in and who's outside the embrace of God (and the church); and What does it mean to be Christian? How do people become part of 'the church'? Even more basic was the question — to which we all think we know the answer: Who is a Christian?

In teasing out possible answers to those questions, Geoff Boyce explored both “the Joshua paradigm” and. The Abraham paradigm.

*Continued on page 5*

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Woodward — *Living together in the love of Christ* — but he has added the question: *What future for us?*

In his induction sermon Steve Orme, preaching on Joshua, the Promised land and the journey, exploring the idea of what it means for us today to live in the Promised Land. ☩



Left—right : Revs George Woodward (former moderator), Steve Orme (moderator), Felicity Amery (chair, Pilgrim Presbytery) and John Rowland (Gen Sec, Northern Synod)



Promised Land. They believed those spies who told them it was full of giant problems. It was much more attractive for them to camp in the desert than to attempt to settle in the land. Forty years on the journey was not God's plan. God's plan was a year or so in the wilderness and then into the Promised Land. To arrive in the Promised Land was the purpose of the exodus, not to journey endlessly in the wilderness. As a church we need to move on to the Joshua story.

The Joshua story really came

## The Journey is Over. Rev Steve Orme's induction sermon.

This evening I want to suggest to you that, for the church, the journey is over and we have arrived in the Promised Land. In the Uniting Church we have become almost addicted to the language of the journey. We are a people "on the way to the promised end" says the last paragraph of the Basis of Union. So to suggest that we have somehow arrived could be heard as heresy! But before you start lighting the fires, listen on!

The journey story was strong and appropriate in the years leading up to the formation of the Uniting Church and in her early years of life. We journeyed out of our former denominations, often reluctantly and begrudgingly, and entered into the journey together towards God's new thing, this Uniting Church in

Australia. For the church here in the north that was not such a big thing. We had been journeying together for a generation already. So the journey story was good for its time and generation.

But times have changed. And I wonder if the journey story still serves us well. I believe it has problems for the church. It is usually linked to the Old Testament story of the journey of God's people after the Exodus through the wilderness. What better hymn to reinforce the story but "Guide me O thou Great Jehovah, pilgrim through this barren land."?

We need to remember that in the old story the people of God spent forty years as pilgrims in the barren land because they lacked trust in God's plan for them. They were too afraid to enter the

to prominence centuries later in the time of King Josiah. It was recovered in the religious reforms during his reign. The northern Kingdom of Israel (most of the Promised Land) had been invaded in the previous century. The southern Kingdom of Judah was threatened by invasion. The warriors had been lying down and dying for some time. They needed a story to give them courage and hope. Joshua was that story. It told them that God had given them the land. It told them they had possessed the land under the leadership of a mighty warrior.

The Joshua story is a story to bring courage and hope to a threatened people. But God's people have misused it on a number of occasions. It has been used to justify the oppression of the weak by the

## Induction Sermon

*Continued from p 3.*

oppression of the weak by the strong. It can feed the desire for domination in some. It is part of the Christian story but needs to be read in the light of a new story – the Jesus story. It is no co-incidence that the names Joshua and Jesus mean the same – God saves. Jesus in the new Joshua who leads his people into the promised land. So what does it mean for us to be living in the Promised Land?

It means we believe that this is where we belong. To say that we have arrived in the Promised Land is not to say everything is perfect. Far from it! People have messed up what God has given. But it is still God's gift to us. Pilgrims are focussed on another place and so do not fully engage with their present location.

This is the life God has given to us. This is the place God has put us.

Our purpose is not to dream of some other place but to work at transforming this place into what God intended. The theme for the upcoming National Christian Youth Convention is "Live this Life". To live in the Promised Land is to live this life in all its fullness. That is what Jesus said he came to enable us to do.

Living in the Promised Land means living with neighbours who are different to us. In the wilderness the people of God were one mob moving together and talking only

amongst themselves. They saw the other mobs they encountered as enemies and threats. In the Promised Land, these other mobs are scattered as we are and share the same communities. If our communities are to be peaceful and safe we need to learn to live with them, share with them and respect them. We witness to the love of God in our friendship and understanding and not in our confrontation and condemnation.

Living in the Promised Land means that we are scattered in our different tribal groups. God's people are not one mob who are all the same. We have different backgrounds and live in different situations. These affect the way we understand God and how God deals with us. This is true across the whole of the Christian Church. It is also true within the Uniting Church.

When Jesus called the twelve disciples to be the foundation of a new People of God, he called them as unique individuals from very different situations. Jesus taught them to use their God given gifts and abilities in his service. Just as the people of Israel, when they entered the Promised Land spread out to different locations and engaged in different activities according to their context, so the apostles after Jesus' ascension spread out to different places with different ministries and missions. They did not always agree. When there was a major issue to be resolved they came together in a Council to seek God's will,

decide and act upon the decision. Their identity in the midst of their diversity came from their one leader, Jesus, who had called each individually into the one Body. The church is built on that foundation and so should reflect that same reality.

Living in the Promised Land means living under the leadership of Jesus. The big difference from the old story is that Jesus is not a military commander. He is a suffering servant. He does not end up covered in glory because of his military victories while others end up covered in blood. He ends up covered in blood on a cross because of his uncompromising love for all people. God then gives him back the life that was taken from him. So Jesus continues to lead his people into a land of love and joy and peace. He continues to lead his people out of a land of hate and pain and violence. His life shows us the way to live in the Promised Land. It gives us the vision of what God intended for life in this Promised Land.

So what holds us together is a common loyalty to our leader Jesus. We can continue to live together because of the love of Christ which is God's gift to us in Jesus. When we lose that perspective we lose our identity.

So members of Synod, the question before us is, living together in the love of Christ, What future for us here in this place at this time?

Stephen Orme ✠

The Joshua Paradigm is based on CONQUEST (of the land).

This is a major Biblical thread. It is a masculine, male, macho paradigm typified by the way in which Joshua conquers Jericho then curses the place. The real punishment for Jericho was not the destruction of the city but the curse which followed it. In this paradigm that which is outside (or other) is cursed.

A contrasting image is that of the Abraham Paradigm. Abraham is the father of both the Jews and the Arabs.

Abraham was a God-fearing man who, before he knew YHWH, worshipped El Elyon, as did the Old Testament figure Melchizedek. Abraham wants his integrity as a non-indigenous person to be respected when he bargains to buy a burial plot in the land to which he has come. He negotiates with and embraces the other without anyone losing anything. There is transparent negotiation – nothing happens behind closed doors and there is justice in the transaction.

We can't have negotiation if we have a theology of separation ... a practice of not talking to those who are different from us.

These two Old Testament paradigms represent modern thought in that the Joshua paradigm represents the "either ... or" form of argu-

ment whereas the Abraham paradigm represents "both ... and". One is exclusive and the other inclusive.



*(for further ideas from Geoff Boyce and others see the*

*Provocations column on page 14 )*



A Synod meeting is of course primarily an opportunity for delegates to review the life of the Church — and we have yet to find a way to do that other than by the presentation of reports.

#### **Retiring Moderator's Report:**

Rev George Woodward described himself as "having become moderator by default" but few in the Synod would accept that he has done anything but an outstanding job during his time in office. As Rev Woodward himself said, the significant aspects of his time as moderator were:

- Bringing the synod together after Resolution 84 which caused a great deal of heartache throughout the Synod;
- Participation in the opening of the Mitchell Centre retail complex in central Darwin. The Mitchell Centre is built on the site of the former Knuckey Street Methodist Church and MOM store;
- The developing covenant relationship symbolised by Congress stole which is presented to the moderator;
- Strengthening the relationship with Protestant Church of East Timor.

#### **Standing Committee Report.**

The major focus of this report was the Review of the Synod General Secretary's position which was undertaken during 2004. The report was presented by Mr Jack Michelsen on behalf of the review committee.

The key issue in the report was the recommendation of a review of the organizational and administrative structures of the synod in order to clarify the vision, direction and policy development of the Synod.

#### **Report of Northern Territory Council of Churches, of which Mrs Ros McMillan is currently President.**

Activities which the NTCC initiates and oversees include:

- Christian education in schools
  - hospital chaplaincy - Mary McCarthy is currently the interdenominational Chaplain
  - prison chaplaincy - Rev Felicity Amery is currently the co-ordinating chaplain, 2 days/week
  - palliative care — there is a team of palliative care workers including a pastoral worker
  - Christian world service – e.g. Christmas Bowl; refugees and displaced people
  - Disaster and emergency relief & response
  - School chaplaincy – which has NT government endorsement
- The NTCC is also looking at ways of further developing their work.



One of the great things about Synod — queuing for morning tea!

### Report from Assembly

National Director of Uniting Care, Lyn Hatfield Dodds presented a report on behalf of Assembly and Uniting Church Agencies.

She mentioned two recent documents to come out of Assembly: *National Matters* – the report of Assembly to the Synods and *Resolution 59*, a national approach across the church as a whole rather than as individual agencies of the Church operating separately.

**UnitingCare** provides birth to death care — and cares for over one million people per year. Annually the UCA provides \$36 million in community services. (The Australian Government spends \$800 billion economy dollars in welfare each year.)

There is a capacity for mission and outreach within the provision of caring services which are characterised by integrity and hope. The

dream of UnitingCare is to involve congregations in order to enrich both the church and community.

Another essential function of Uniting Care is **advocacy** — speaking the truth transformingly, aiming for social transformation.

The aim of UnitingCare is – to deliver services in the best targeted manner to those who need them.

Ms Hatfield Dodds referred to the central importance of believing in the “inherent value of every human life” which, she said, “is a radical concept in Australia today”.

UnitingCare Australia, UnitingJustice Australia and UnitingEducation Australia are all working together for National Poverty Week.

All three agencies are committed to taking action – to deliver their services in the best targeted manner to those who need them.



### Are you passionate about Frontier Services?

The creation of a Board to provide strategic leadership and governance for Frontier Services has been approved by the Assembly Standing Committee.

If you have:

- a passionate commitment to the mission of Frontier Services;
- The ability to understand the mission of Frontier Services and its operating environment; and
- The capacity to promote and represent the work of Frontier Services,

Ask for an Information Package.

Contact Lynda Pearson on: (02) 8270 1321 or [lynda.p@frontierservices.org](mailto:lynda.p@frontierservices.org)

Further enquiries—

Rosemary Young on (02) 8270 1320 or [rosemary.y@frontierservices.org](mailto:rosemary.y@frontierservices.org)

Expressions of interest close on 17 December 2004

## Frontier Services Report

**David Thiem** reminded Synod that there are 500 Frontier Services staff in remote Australia.

Among those carrying on this pastoral ministry in the Northern Synod are: Bill Pickering, Andrew Watts, Tony Davies and Graham Brown.

David Thiem is always on the lookout for suitably qualified people to answer the call to service with Frontier Services. He pointed out that the Esperance patrol has had no permanent placement for five years. Lest you think you need to be a strong, strapping male to apply, he pointed out that the Pilbara Patrol padre is a slightly built woman who nevertheless copes very well with changing the tyres on the “troopy” whenever necessary!

The value of the patrol ministry to isolated families and individuals in the outback is represented by those who say: “I don’t get to church too much but I really appreciate that the church comes to me”.

There will be five vacant placements in the new year.



Fortunately Synod meetings are not all hard work!



Shakespeare was right – parting is a sweet sorrow.

Some of the sweetness was made more real at our joint 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday celebration in Melbourne when family members and old friends enthused about our impending return to the South. The sorrow notes each of the last events – the last Synod Standing Committee meeting, the last Assembly Standing Committee meeting, the last meeting of the General Secretaries, the last time driving through Alice Springs, and so forth.

There is also sorrow in leaving relationships. Past experience quietly confirms that a lot of the good intentions about keeping in touch are crowded out by the busyness of the next context for living. So let me address the

## A Farewell Word from the General Secretary

business of the next context for living. So let me address the

moment and express some thanks.

My most profound thanks are to God for the call to the North and to the members of the Nominating Committee who discerned that call with me. Exploring faith and serving the Church in the North has provided an experience of a lifetime. There are friendships and relationships to be treasured as gifts with the wonderful prospect of seeing old friends in new places.

Thanks to those of you both in the Uniting Church and beyond who have been open to engaging with us in ministry.

*Continued on page 8.*

The ecumenical relationships have been incredibly rewarding, as have the experiences on the various boards and committees around town.

I am also grateful for the challenges that came with the job. Through those hard times I have learnt a great deal, and am now looking forward to seeing how God will use that experience in the future.

A parting word for the team.

In one of the first sermons preached in the Beale Street Uniting Church at Griffith, NSW, I used a life-sized paper jigsaw puzzle to demonstrate how the different parts fitted together to make up a whole body. We had used our eight-year old son for the outline of the body, and the body of Christ became a hall mark of my ministry in Griffith.

Twenty five years later I am still struck by the relevance of Paul's Corinthian teaching about the gifts of the Spirit and the body of Christ. The review of the General Secretary's position highlighted the need both for order amongst the parts, as well as for mutual respect and cooperation among the members. To some extent we have been distracted from the main game of improving our team work by trying to describe the function of the team leader. There is a subtle but important difference between individuals working alongside each other and members of a team performing different tasks while working together as a team.



General Secretary John Rowland with attentive audience at synod.

My prayer is that a change in the team leader might provide an opportunity for a team to form.

May the steadfast love of God lead you all into the future.

Rev John F Rowland  
General Secretary



### Somerville Community Services & Target Palmerston SHARE Christmas Gift Appeal Launch at Palmerston Shopping Centre.

Somerville Community Services Inc., your local non-government, not for profit, youth, family and community welfare organization indigenous to the Northern Territory is joining forces with Target, UnitingCare and thousands of volunteers throughout Australian to launch the **SHARE Christmas Gift Appeal** on Monday 8 November.

Olympian Brooke Hanson, who won a silver medal in the Women's 100metre breaststroke in Athens, has been announced as the new patron of this year's appeal.

Vicki O'Halloran and the team from Somerville Community Services are part of a national network of 1250 dedicated volunteers who donate a total of 15,000 hours to UnitingCare each Christmas to run the SHARE Christmas Appeal.

"By simply donating a gift, we all have the opportunity to brighten Christmas for children living in poverty, families experiencing a tough time or those who are homeless or lonely", said Vicki O'Halloran, CEO of Somerville. In the past 12 years Australians have generously donated 883,637 gifts beneath the SHARE Christmas Tree at Target stores across the nation.

Vicki said that 404 gifts were donated at Target Palmerston last year as more people make donating a gift part of their family's Christmas traditions.

**Gifts can be donated at Target Palmerston until  
24 December.**





AMBON, INDONESIA

# YOUNG AMBASSADORS FOR PEACE



PROJECTS | 2004

## WHO

The program is facilitated by Joy Balazo (UIM Executive Secretary) and involves several others who have experience in international conflict situations.

Participants are referred by community organisations based on strict criteria formulated by UIM.

## WHAT

Young Ambassadors for Peace is an ambitious attempt to develop a 'culture' of peace based on justice. It aims to:

- 1) Expose young people to the idea that conflict can be resolved peacefully and that lasting peace with justice is possible.
- 2) Equip young people to actively participate in the struggle for justice and peace in their countries.

## WHY

Conflict situations exist in many countries in the Asia-Pacific region in which we focus. The 'culture' of peace has eluded many young people who have grown up with constant conflict and violence.

Often young people are tempted by the power that access to weapons and fighting seems to provide. Yet they also have great energy, vision and creativity, which can be used in other ways in their communities. By engaging young men and women in active movements for peace and justice, this energy can be creatively directed and emerging generations can approach conflict in an innovative way.



## HOW

Delegates are brought together and participate in a ten-day workshop that focuses on a range of issues relating to the causes of conflict and methods of resolution. A forum is provided for participants to discuss their convictions on the causes of their country's conflict, and how that conflict is affecting them and their aspirations of their people.

The program provides a unique opportunity to seriously analyse the conflict situation, and together find strategies to help resolve issues practically. A network of colleagues is also formed so that participants do not operate alone and draw on others for support and encouragement after the workshop is over, through emails, letters and other forms of communication.

## WHERE

YAP takes place in Asia-Pacific countries experiencing conflict. This is in response to requests from communities, partner churches and NGO's for a program that addresses conflict situations, consequences of conflict and rebuilding trusting relationships. YAP workshops have been held in many countries, including: Indonesia, Burma, Sri Lanka, India, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

Ambon, Indonesia is in great need of peace. YAP has had a great impact so far on communities, promoting peace between Christians and Muslims.

## WHAT IS NEEDED

This is an ongoing project that depends on your continued support. In 2003 \$30,938 was donated to support the YAP workshops.

Ongoing costs include:

- workshop expenses such as accommodation, travel and food.
- organisation of facilitators
- establishment of in-country groups following workshops

## BE INVOLVED

Are you able to:

- Coordinate a group to support this project?
- Make a donation?
- Offer your prayers?

We can provide resources to help you promote this project in your local area.

## CONTACT US

for more information about these projects log on to [www.uim.org.au](http://www.uim.org.au)  
 P 02 8267 4265 | E [uim@nat.uca.org.au](mailto:uim@nat.uca.org.au) | A po box a2266 sydney south nsw 1235  
 uniting international mission - a national assembly agency of the uniting church in australia



# News Roundup

## around the synod

Moderator Steven Orme has recently visited Ambon, Indonesia.

The National Christian Youth Convention is being held at Gawler, S.A in January 2005. Youth representatives from the Northern Synod will be travelling to NCYC by bus. They will be accompanied by the Moderator, Steve Orme and the Chair of the Pilgrim Presbytery, Rev. Felicity Amery. There will also be a number of young people from Indonesia — 2 from Ambon, and two from Minahasa and two from Bali.

The theme of NCYC is “Live this life”.

**Mr Kevin Davis AM** has been appointed to the position of Interim General Secretary of the Northern Synod. Kevin will take up his position in the new year.

Kevin will be well known to many Territorians. He and his wife Heather first came to the territory to serve at Elcho Island.

More recently Kevin has worked at the Northern Territory University and is associated with the Darwin Symphony Orchestra and Superstar Productions

Kevin worships at Darwin Memorial Uniting Church.

The Finance and Property Services Committee has begun exploring ideas and proposals for new building work at Broome. The current Church hall is a heritage building and any building programme will need to meet both the needs of the church and the demands of the Heritage Commission.



The Rev Lindsay Faulkener was farewelled at a separation service in Alice Springs in October.

*(see story next page)*

## around the nation

The Indonesian National Conference which met in September at Wamberal, NSW included representatives from twelve Indonesian congregations and fellowship groups. The thirty-two delegates came from Darwin, Perth, Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney.

The Rev Apwee Ting (Victoria and Tasmania) was elected Chairperson and the Rev Salomo Bangun (Northern Synod) the Secretary for the next two years. The next conference will be held in Perth in 2006.

*From Insights Nov. 2004*

Thresi Mauboy, minister of the Indonesian Missionary Congregation in Darwin also attended the conference.



Thresi Mauboy and Fritz Momuat at Northern Synod in September.



Salomo Bangun and his aboriginal family at Synod.

# Farewell celebrations in Alice Springs for Lindsay and Nessie Faulkener

At Alice Springs on 31st of October in the Flynn Memorial Church the Pilgrim Presbytery prepared worship to mark the Cutting of the Ties and The retirement of Lindsay and Nessie Faulkner after 42 years of ministry in the Methodist and later the Uniting Church. Lindsay has served in South Australia, Victoria, Tasmania and the Northern Territory. Over the years he has been Chairperson of several Presbyteries and Moderator of Northern Synod which covers an area of 1/5 of Australia.

The worship was attended by Felicity Amery, the Chair of the Pilgrim Presbytery and John Rowland, Secretary of the Northern Synod. The invited preacher was Rev, Chris Howard of Geelong who worked with Lindsay in Bendigo and is a special friend. The church was filled with about 150 people.

An extraordinary surprise feature of the worship was the attendance of the aboriginal choir from Ernabella in the Pitjantjatjara Lands. Lindsay has shared much time with these people and greatly admires their culture and their people. The singing of this choir enriched the wonderful service.

After the worship the whole congregation attended a barbecue in the Old Timers Village. Here we were enthralled to hear again



from the Ernabella choir.

During the farewell speeches a very special tribute was given to Lindsay by Gordon Ingkatji who is a church and Aboriginal Elder at Ernabella as well as the choir leader. Gordon presented Lindsay with a Puturu, a red head band given as a mark of respect and honour.



The Ernabella ladies gave Nessie a necklace and bracelet made from gumnuts and painted in their unique style.

In the time he ministered at Alice Springs Lindsay made a

great contribution to the town and church. He initiated Life Line and trained many volunteers, was involved in many community projects including the Masters Games as Chaplain. Lindsay and Nessie will be missed by so many people.

*Story and photos — Trevor Oates*



# Holy Mackerel!

## Book review

***Holy Mackerel!: Doug and Maisie McKenzie 20<sup>th</sup> Century Pilgrims* by Maisie McKenzie. Copyright Publishing, 2004.**

Autobiographies are difficult to write. They are often too long – full of details that are of interest to no one but the writer, or otherwise exercises in self-justification. *Holy Mackerel!* suffers from neither. It is lively, entertaining and modest – both in style and size (152 pp).

The McKenzie's have lived a full and exciting life, spanning ministries in Victoria, USA, Northern Territory and Brisbane – as well as regular trips to Bali and Switzerland. Now in their eighties, they look back with sheer wonder where God has taken them. The story is told with pathos, humour and humility.

Whether it is distributing food to war orphans in Hamburg, adopting three children (all at once!) in the USA, attending a kangaroo's birthday party in Central Australia or hopping across Arnhem Land in a flimsy Cessna – each experience is recounted with gratitude.

What will stay with me is their determination to live life to the full, to accept what each day brings with wonder and joy, both the disappointments and the delights. The story reflects the author's unbounded energy, a zest, an enthusiasm to embrace the challenges and joys of the everyday. Maisie McKenzie delights in people and the wonders of nature. Whether it is sitting with Aboriginal people in the bed of the Todd River, climbing Alps in Switzerland or battering down in the face of Cyclone Tracey in Darwin – all are experiences to be savoured to the full.

Doug and Maisie McKenzie have previously told other people's stories. (They have published about a dozen books between them.) I, for one, am delighted that they have now had time to tell their own story.

*Rob Bos*



# NRCC/ARDS

## Meeting in Darwin prior to Synod 2004

Greg Stehle of the Aboriginal Resource Development Service at Nhulunbuy has sent us some photos of the NRCC/ARDS meeting in Darwin which preceded the Synod meeting.



*Above:* the executive.

*Left top:* a young man has his say.

*Centre left:* The translators at work.

*Lower left:* Shane addresses the meeting.

*Top right:* members of the meeting.

*Lower right:* An East Arnhem woman makes her contribution.

# CREATIVE ..... INVITING .... INVENTIVE ....

The 2004 meeting of the Northern Synod was described by delegates, visitors and guests alike as having been creative, inviting and inventive. For a time dedicated to doing the business of the church, that's high praise indeed.

And here are some more photos so that those who were not there can at least feel they were part of the experience.



# Provocations ... ideas to make you think



The average age of entry to the Uniting Church ministry is now 47 years, rather than the in the 30—39 age bracket.



“ministers are living too long” ....  $\frac{2}{3}$  are between 65 and 80 years of age;  $\frac{1}{2}$  are over 80 ... and 5 are over 100.



The Micah challenge .... is an initiative from St Mary’s Roman Catholic Church, South Brisbane, a church which works consistently for social justice.

The Micah Challenge is an ecumenical approach which is committed to action to alleviate, or preferably eradicate, poverty. “What we can do together, we will do together.”



"economic rationalism is killing us"



Corporate Strategic plans are NOT what this church should do – we should use a mud map of vision, mission, purpose, direction.



... “I’m a sensitive person ... and I want to stay that way”- from a T shirt.



Christianity is about hospitality and respect for all.



... “ The real sinner is not the outcast but the one who casts the other out. Sin is not so much a defilement but a certain form of purity - the exclusion of the other from one’s heart and one’s world”. The exclusion of the other is an exclusion of God. - Miroslav Volf.



“have no other gods; love strangers” - Volf



“Human beings are never more frightening than when they are convinced they are right” - Laurens van der Post



Evangelism is traditionally taking people from the outside to inside. The focus is on the boundary. So, on what basis do people become Christian?

Perhaps evangelism needs to focus on relationship to Jesus.



We can’t have negotiation (with others) if we have a theology of separation ... a practice of not talking.



People are coming to church today not to express their faith but to explore or to find their faith.



Next Edition of *Northern Synod News*  
March/April 2005

To contribute news items or articles contact the Editor, NSN ...  
Wendy Beresford-Maning.  
c/- Synod Office or  
wendy.beresford-maning@ns.uca.org.au

## Diary Dates

- NCYC bus tour departs on December 31st
- Synod Standing Committee
- Kevin Davis begins work as interim General Secretary of the Northern Synod in January



*Grace*

*Peace*

*Joy*

*Love*

*May Christ be reborn  
in you this Christmas.*