



## DJAMBARRPUYŊU NEW TESTAMENT

The dedication of the Djambarrpuyŋu New Testament took place at the church at Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island, on 7 June 2008. "You are the ROCK of my SALVATION" was paraded on one of the banners through the middle of the crowded grounds as about 1000 people joined to rejoice and give thanks at the presentation and dedication of "GOD-WANARRWU WALNAMIRR DHARUK" (God's Living Word).

There was a colourful mix of clans and cultures sharing through word, song and dance around the 'ceremonial waterhole'. The photo spread on pages 8 and 9 gives the flavour of the dedication weekend.

Phil Zamagias, the Flying Bibleman from the Bible Society of the Northern Territory, flew some of his Bible Society colleagues to Elcho Island for the celebrations. Dr Peter Carroll (former Bible Society Translation Consultant who worked on this project), Hermoine Thomson (from the Bible Society Scriptures Division, Ingleburn) and Paul Eckert (Bible Society South Australia Scripture Production Officer), all attended the dedication.

Translating the New Testament into the Djambarrpuyŋu language, one of the most commonly spoken languages on Elcho Island, has been a thirty year undertaking. The translation project was administered by the Northern Regional Council of the Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress of the Uniting Church, in partnership with the Bible Society in Australia Inc and Australian Society of Indigenous Languages.

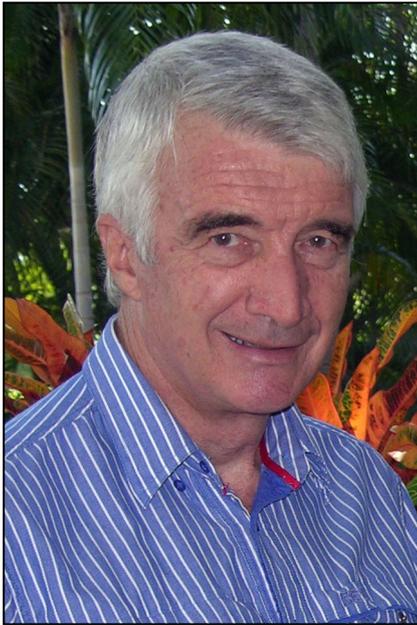
The cover of the New Testament is a special design reflecting the artwork style of Eastern Arnhem Land. The publication is both attractive and functional, with a font style and size specially chosen to enhance readability. There is additional material to assist the reader locate Bible history on a colourful time-line. This is the first New Testament to be printed by the Indonesian Bible Society. Mrs Alicia Chandradewi represented the Indonesian Bible Society at the dedication as it was Mrs Chandradewi who was responsible for putting the book into production at the printing plant in Bogor, Indonesia.

The Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, sent his best wishes to all those celebrating the dedication of the Djambarrpuyŋu New

*(continued on page 2)*



Members of the Djambarrpuyŋu Bible Translation Project Team at the Dedication Ceremony



2008 will be remembered by many people as the year when the Commonwealth Government offered an apology to the Stolen Generations.

I was really moved by Kevin Rudd's speech to the House of Representatives on February 13<sup>th</sup>, when he used the word "sorry" many times. The Prime Minister made it clear that he regarded the motivation behind this word "sorry" to be critically important. This was no casual or off-the-cuff use of a word. It was an expression of deep regret for a shameful period in our history when much unnecessary suffering was caused to many people.

The Rev. Mawundjil Garawirtja was able to be in the Great Hall of Parliament House in Canberra when

the Apology was offered and he said it was a great experience to be there. The Rev Rronang Garrawurra and I were in the Legislative Assembly chamber of the Northern Territory Parliament that morning to hear the statements made there following the speeches in Canberra. It was particularly moving to hear the stories and comments of the Indigenous members of Parliament as they welcomed what was expressed in Canberra.

As a Synod we are pressing on with our commitment to work in partnership as Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. My hope is that we will be alert to what God is already doing and that we continue to co-operate with him in his kingdom work.

My mother died in Melbourne on February 15<sup>th</sup> at the age of 91. At Mum's Thanksgiving Service at North Ringwood Uniting Church on February 29<sup>th</sup>, her Minister, the Rev Dr Ian Hickingbotham, spoke of a blessing that he believed was on Mum's life and was being passed on to her family.

He read from Deuteronomy 33:24,25, where Moses blessed the tribe of Asher with these words: "Most blessed of sons is Asher; let

him be favoured by his brothers, and let him bathe his feet in oil."

Ian quoted the great 19<sup>th</sup> Century preacher C H Spurgeon, who said of this text: ".....let him dip his feet in oil.' O for an anointing of the Holy Spirit, not only upon the head with which we think but upon the feet with which we move. We could have our daily walk and conversation gracious and useful. We wish that, wherever we go, we may leave behind us the footprints of divine grace."

*We wish that, wherever we go,  
we may leave behind us the  
footprints of divine grace.*

Ian went on to say that he was sure that my mother had left behind her "footprints of divine grace" and this was what we, her family, were called to leave behind.

It seems to me that evidence of "footprints of divine grace" includes a willingness to say sorry; a commitment to treat others the way we would like to be treated; a generous heart, gentle hands and willing feet.

May God help us fulfill our calling as sons and daughters of the king each and every day. As beneficiaries of divine grace, let us pass the blessing.

*Wendell Flentje  
Moderator*

## Djambarrpuyŋu: New Testament

*(continued from page 1)*

Testament and acknowledged the enormous amount of careful, detailed work which went into completing the translation. The publication of the Bible into local languages said Mr Rudd, has often been a transforming moment for local communities and makes it possible for people to hear and understand the bible in the language they use every day.

After thirty years of dedicated work the Djambarrpuyŋu Bible Translation Project team has seen its vision to "have the Word of God in a language that [is] theirs ... bringing Yolŋu together in a linguistic team" realised and is now using its wealth of experience and skills to address the wider language needs of East Arnhem.

## Big Plans for National Youth Ministry

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The Assembly has appointed a National Faith Development Consultant, a new position that is part of Uniting Faith and Justice. This appointment follows the establishment of the National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) comprised of representatives of the Synods that oversee the work of the national church with a focus on youth events like National Christian Youth Convention (NYCC), About

FACE and the order of St Stephens. Senior Youth – the year 11 and 12 age group – and young adults are the target group.

The objective is to give oversight to the program side of national initiatives for the age group, with a key focus on issues of faith development, discipleship, and mentoring for senior youth and young adults. Another aim is to link senior youth and young adults in to opportunities for mission,

service and justice. Ecumenical partnership and relationship building with Aboriginal Congress and Second Generation Multicultural Ministries is also encouraged.

This initiative is a response to the need to engage young people in authentic and creative ways and to foster the interest young people have in social justice projects and authenticity in the church.

## Burarra New Testament Dedicated

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There were smiles all around at Maningrida when the Burarra New Testament was unveiled and dedicated recently. The new volume was received enthusiastically amid dancing, singing and reading from God's Word.

Phil Zamagias, the Flying Bibleman, took the Moderator, Rev Wendell Flentje, to Maningrida to join with

the local church to celebrate this much awaited publication.

The Bible Society in Australia sent a greeting to the Maningrida community and the first bible out of the box was given to the Traditional Owner of the Maningrida area who welcomed the assembled crowd to his country.

Bible Translators, David and Kathy Glasgow had spent 29 years at Maningrida working with local people to translate and write the Burarra language. They shared stories and pictures of the early days when they arrived and David had to build a hut for his family to live in. Such is the dedication of those involved in bible translation; it is not a short-term ministry.

## Kormilda College

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The Reverend David Burgess joined Kormilda College at the beginning of 2008 as the Anglican Chaplain. Father David has had a long history of involvement with young people at both the parish and diocesan level while living in South Australia. He was very fortunate to be a leader in a number of eco-spirituality youth treks that took city kids to live and work with the Adnymathanha people of the northern Flinders Ranges.



*Rev David Burgess and Rev Peter Richter*

Father David offered leadership at the Drop-in Centre, a social justice ministry of the Anglican Church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Adelaide. Amongst the Indigenous and non-Indigenous urban poor and homeless he established his credentials as a country and western 3 chord wonder!! Reverend Burgess and Reverend Richter have been joined by Kendall Trudgen who is assisting the Kormilda College Chaplain Team.

## What's Happening at Riyala?

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We received a phone call today from someone who wanted to know what is happening at Riyala these days. Some may ask "What, Who, is Riyala"

A few years ago, the Northern Synod Lenten appeal was gracious enough to include funding to help with the renovation of the Caretaker's Cottage. Why does Riyala need a caretaker's cottage?



*Riyala Caretaker's Cottage*

Well, Clem and Joyce Gullick, along with Ian Morris, established and developed a recreational camp site 25 years ago. With work parties and other interested friends the 20 acre block has been developed. Friends from Nightcliff, Casuarina, Humpty Doo Uniting congregations and other churches have helped build the ablution block, meeting shed, kitchen and dining area, planted grass for the camping ground and playing field. We now have a facility that is able to accommodate 38 folk indoors and up to 200 camping.

Last year, 3 couples from Mobile Mission Maintenance spent 3 months at Riyala working on rebuilding the kitchen and a small toilet and continued the renovation for the Caretaker's Cottage.

This is now waiting for the bathroom to be completed and the fitting out of the kitchen and purchase and installation of

stove, washing machine and refrigerator. Dave Unwin and Darrel and MMM have given us invaluable assistance.

When this is done, we can start advertising for a caretaker. The work load is heavy now for Clem who is 81, and continues to do the maintenance and preparation of the place for the schools and churches that book in.

If Riyala is to continue to be available to serve the Christian and local community we need help. Staff from Youth for Christ have come and helped with some maintenance the last couple of weeks when they have had free time.

Riyala is used by churches for their family camps and schools use it through the week. Youth for Christ's High Ropes Course is used in conjunction with YFC for students from schools. At times there are only a couple of hours between one group leaving and one arriving.

So if ever you want to visit us please feel free. This year Scripture Union held their interdenominational Easter Camp. Nightcliff and Casuarina Churches have had family camps, as well as Christians from other churches.

*Clem and Joyce Gullick and Ian Morris.*



*Meal time at Riyala*

## Living Water Chaplaincy Services

Living Water Uniting Church, Humpty Doo, is providing a chaplaincy service to the local high school and four of the feeder primary schools (Humpty Doo, Girraween, Berry Springs and Bees Creek). The five schools are covered between Jason Purugganan (4 days), and Pastors Stuart and Ros McMillan (3 & ½ days each). Jason has completed the Clinical Pastoral Education program through Royal Darwin Hospital, which will enhance his pastoral care skills.

The chaplaincy program is funded through a Federal Government initiative which aims to assist schools and their communities to support the wellbeing of their students. This might include support and guidance

about ethics, values and relationships; the provision of pastoral care; and enhancing engagement with the broader community.



*Some members of Girraween Kids Club performed a dance at the end-of-year assembly. One girl sang. Some of the boys rode scooters!*

The direction that we, as a church, are taking has emerged over the last few years as an important way we serve the community - not to preach the gospel to students, families or staff, but we witness to the love of Christ through our actions. One of the activities that is greatly appreciated in a number of the schools are lunch-time "clubs" which

provide a safe and welcoming environment for students to participate in a range of activities and 'belong'.

## Air Force Chaplain

Becoming an Air Force chaplain was a long and interesting journey, much like my call to ordained ministry in the first place. And that is really at the heart of why I am in the Air Force – I am called by God to this ministry.

Coming from Victoria, it is no small thing to become a Defence Force chaplain. There is a significant movement within the Synod advocating radical pacifism. Whilst I am not a fan of violence, and like most of my chaplain colleagues pray long and hard for peace, I acknowledge that there are times when conflict between nations or other heavily armed groups is simply a reality of life. And those who find themselves caught up in such conflicts, many of whom are simply trying to defend their freedom, need to know the love of God just as much as you and I.

If all of this sounds like I am trying to justify my ministry, please re-read my first paragraph!



*Chaplain Alan Williams*

In many ways, becoming an Air Force chaplain has opened up many opportunities that I probably would not otherwise have been able to access. First has been my move to the Northern Territory. This is a spectacular part of the world, and to have so much of it on my doorstep is a great privilege. I have also learnt a great deal from the members of the Northern Regional Council of Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress at last year's Synod meeting about a whole range of cultural and other issues.

The relative remoteness of RAAF Base Tindal allows a great deal of

*(continued on page 6)*

# Pukatja: restoration of old church building

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The following article was sourced from the *Anangu Lands Paper Tracker*, an online project of UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide. The website tracks government commitments to Anangu (Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people). It publishes accurate, up-to-date information on projects and services that are important to Anangu.

The old church at Pukatja (Ernabella) is the most prominent building in the community. Over the last ten years, it has fallen into serious disrepair. With help from the State Government, steps are being taken to protect and restore the building.

The old church at Pukatja has stood at the physical heart of the community since the early 1950s and was officially opened in November 1952.

The construction of the church was a major project. All of the bricks had to be made on site. Much of the work was completed by Anangu.

In July 2001, the church and two other historic buildings at Pukatja were listed on the State Heritage Register. (The other buildings were the old hospital and the manse).

Over the last decade, the church building has fallen into serious disrepair. The presence of

deteriorating asbestos posed a significant health risk to the entire community.

Negotiations between the South Australian Government and the APY Executive have been ongoing and on 7 January 2008, the Department indicated that the estimated cost of the first stage was \$264,000 (GST inclusive)



*Pukatja Church, June 2008*

and that, to date, contributions of \$114,000 had been secured.

The Department also indicated it would "on behalf of the land (and building) owners ... assist with an application to the Australian Government Department of Environment and Water Resources for grant funding ... under the 2008-09 Indigenous Heritage program." Applications to this program closed on 28 February 2008.

The funding application process required information on land ownership

"and the organization that has ultimate responsibility for the maintenance and operation of the building." Accordingly, the Department sought advice on these matters from Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara (the land-holding body which holds the title for the APY Lands).

In February 2008, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet assisted Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara in finalising an application for funding to restore the church. The application sought "the entire funds for the completion of the project (\$264,000). Monies previously secured for the restoration project may be "used to maintain the building after it has been restored."

On 7 April 2008, the Pukatja Uniting church Congregation resolved to negotiate a lease agreement with APY to use and maintain the Pukatja Church building after the building has been restored and that the final lease document will be explained in detail to members of the ... Congregation before it is signed.

The Paper Tracker will continue to monitor progress on the church's restoration.

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## **Air Force Chaplain** *(continued from page 5)*

visitors, flights (and therefore work) at all sorts of odd hours, and generally a great opportunity to practice for the reality of military operations. This has been a broad, and rapid, introduction to the Air Force, and has prepared me well for six months in the Middle East. I am looking forward to the challenge of ministry to a whole bunch of people who will be missing their families as much as I am in a Muslim country on the edge of a war zone (pewh!). There will be so many

potential issues, and so much to learn as we will be sharing the airfield with the Americans and British.

I haven't said much about what chaplaincy is like in the Air Force. I guess it is a lot like any other sort of chaplaincy – it's just that the reason the people I minister with have gathered together is a little different to other chaplains.

*RAAF Chaplain Alan Williams*

# UCA Fijian Congregations National Conference

The national conference for Fijian congregations within the Uniting Church of Australia was convened in Adelaide on 10 – 13 July 2008.

The conference which comes under the auspices of the Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry of the Assembly was successful in meeting the aims and objectives of convening these forums.

## **Discussion**

There is always an enthusiastic anticipation from Fijians around the country to meet up with fellow Christians, relatives and friends who share a common cultural background to meet up at the National Conference.



*Darwin Fijian Fellowship Committee*

This was the case in Adelaide, which despite the icy cold winds blowing in from Antarctica, was not able to quell the excitement and intent discussion that was undertaken.

Whilst there is a cultural bias of leaving the talking to Ministers and ‘church officials,’ all attendees were encouraged to voice their ideas, concerns and suggestions. This was especially relevant to young people who were strongly represented at the Conference. The Conference theme of ‘**Unity In The Body of Christ**’ stressed the need to breach differences that were common to the different congregations.

Whilst time was limited in fully addressing relevant topics and issues facing Fijian congregations, it was encouraging to witness people fully prepared to work closer together in sharing information and ideas of helping each other.

## **Venue and location**

For the first time the Conference had to be convened at a venue outside of a Uniting Church conference venue. This was primarily due to the numbers attending the conference which could not be accommodated at a UCA venue. The venue for the

conference was at the Shores Conference Complex and accommodation at its Bungalows, Villas, Units and Cabins. Whilst the accommodation was more than suitable, equivalent to four star hotel accommodation, there was still a shortage for the growing numbers at each National Conference.

## **Hosts**

The Conference was hosted jointly by the Adelaide and Darwin Fijian congregation. The Adelaide congregation were responsible for logistical aspects while Darwin were responsible for the program. This joint arrangement worked out well for the two Congregations, even though they are separated by thousands of kilometres.

## **Multicultural church**

Reverend Dr Tony Floyd, who is the National Director of the Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry, in his address to the Conference succinctly posed a relevant question of whether the Uniting Church was a ‘multicultural church’ or a ‘church of different cultures’.

Without a doubt the overwhelming majority of attendees view themselves as members of a ‘multicultural’ Uniting Church of Australia. It is the balance of fully appreciating their cultural background, faith and their current environment that they are keen



*Melbourne boys in traditional dance costume*

to help each other with in forums such as the National Conference. The discussions, encouragements and information - sharing is ongoing.

## **Next Conference**

The next Fijian National Conference is scheduled for Darwin in January 2010.

*Jone Lotu  
Darwin*



Maratja and John Blacket make some finishing touches to the program.



The School's Culture week finishes



Members of the translation team are ushered into the celebrations



The Djambarrpuyru Clan

youthful looks and beautiful skin. The ladies were



The 'waterhole' that contains God-Wajarrwu Waljamirr - God's Living WordDhärük



Prayer of thanks - Bapa Djinijini and Moderator Wendell Flentje

# Djambarrpuynnga Celebrations



Sunday morning worship begins with Ramingining ladies dancing



The Pentecost Banner presented by Casuarina Uniting Church representatives



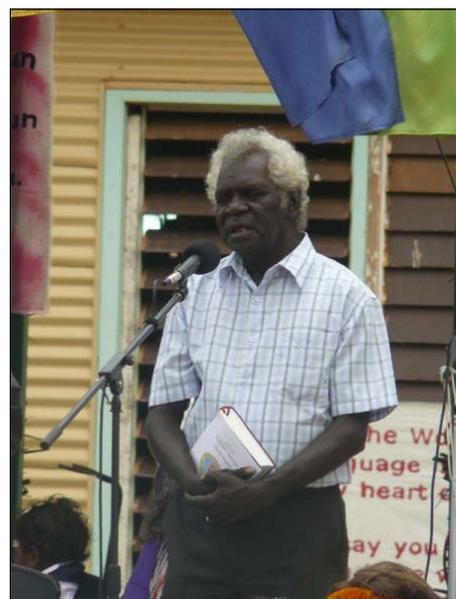
A plaque is presented by Sister Gideona to the church



Bäpa Dan Armstrong brings a message before communion



Joy is expressed through the use of colourful worship banners



Bäpa Mawunydjil gives a prayer of thanks

## Bali Conference - July 2008

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A 'rich experience' and a 'humbling experience' – these were the two key sentiments of the 63 participants in the inaugural UCA National Ministers Conference, held in Bali, 1-4 July 2008.

The conference has been hailed a great success by both the President of the UCA, Rev Gregor Henderson, and by all who took part.

Through Uniting International Mission, the UCA has a partnership with the Protestant Church of Bali and the small island was therefore the perfect setting to provide ministers from all over Australia the opportunity to see how church is 'done' elsewhere in the world.

Nonetheless, many had questioned the location: why should a bunch of ministers go out of the country – and to Bali no less – to talk and learn about their own uniquely Australian church and ministry?

The answers are many and varied. Our rich partnership with the Protestant Church of Bali; the UCA's standing as a multicultural and cross-cultural church; the fact that Bali is a shorter (and cheaper) flight for those in Western Australia than it is to travel to the east; the notion that to experience other cultures and, indeed, other faiths, is to enrich our own experience and ministry in Australia. When we sit in the world of the other, our perspectives change. New questions are raised about the church and a fresh perspective of mission in our own backyard emerges.

However, regardless of the setting (as participants in the Darwin and Sunshine Coast conferences are sure to attest to), the very fact of having 60 ministers from all over Australia to share, talk, compare notes, provide support, advise and spend time together, was very rewarding for all.

Within the serene surrounds of the conference and accommodation centre (called Dhyana Pura, which means 'place of meditation'), ministers from every Synod came together. They represented a range of ministries: from rural settings to inner city congregations. From school chaplaincy to multicultural and cross-cultural ministry. From decades-long involve-

ment in the church, to the newly-ordained. From those who had ministered in other countries, to those who had never before left their own Synod.

Under the broad heading, *Creative Adventurous Ministry*, the conference, while looking at the Protestant Church of Bali in its pluralistic context, nonetheless focused particularly on the Basis of Union. Guided by the charismatic, witty and deeply thoughtful Rev Dr Andrew Dutney, the Basis of Union was pulled apart, looked over with a fine comb, and reassembled. The continuing wonder of union – the very essence of what it means to be a part of this great Church – was explored from every angle. In many ways, it was like reading that founding document for the first time and learning anew the courage it took to unite.

Added to that, and making the most of the country we found ourselves in, was a look at contextualisation of the Gospel, interfaith dialogue, rural ministry, community development, current events in Bali impacting the global community, our international relationships, and

the experience of being Indonesian in Australia.

We have a lot to learn from Indonesia. A country founded on the five principles of the Pancasila, it has a long history of cultural, social and religious ac-



ceptance.

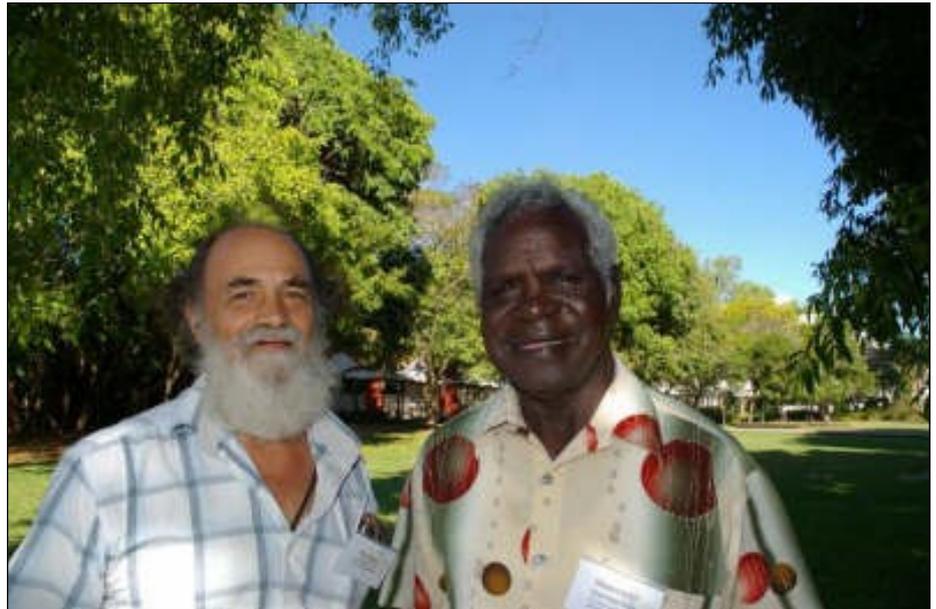
For years, five key religions – Christian, Catholic, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim – have lived in relative harmony. Indonesia does interfaith very well in its pluralist society. However, none deny this harmony is under threat. The events of 9/11 and the Bali Bombings have made that abundantly clear.

The conference heard from a panel of speakers on this issue: Christian, Catholic and Hindu. Each are involved in interfaith dialogue and, for the most part, the dialogue is very open and highly successful. It is only the small (but growing) group of radicals that are threatening the peace. No-one knows what the short-, medium- or long-term future holds, suffice to say that the Christian Church and the other major faiths are attempting to continue the dialogue and therefore maintain peace on the island.

# Darwin Ministers Conference

The second National Ministers Conference in Darwin focussed on Aboriginal spirituality and on the ministries of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in the Northern Territory. The seventy participants came from all Uniting Church Synods, with the largest group coming from Victoria and Tasmania.

Participants were given some insight into the complexities of Indigenous spirituality at the Indigenous part of the conference which was led by the chairman of the Northern Regional Council of Congress (NRCC), Rev Mawunydjil Garawirrtja, supported by Rev Rronang Garrawurra, NRCC resource worker Howard Amery, Rev Dr Tim Bose and others.



*Rev Dr Tim Bose and Rev Mawunydjil Garawirrtja who explained aspects of Indigenous spirituality to participants at the National Ministers' Conference.*

Rev Bose explained that it's a common western belief that spirituality is just one section of our life and that it's separate from other areas such as family, politics, law etc. He added that some Indigenous people find it difficult to reconcile their own spiritual beliefs with Christianity.

Mawunydjil gave some insights into the connection that Indigenous people have with their land and the whole of Creation. For Aboriginal people the land is a living, breathing thing that is to be nurtured, not exploited. Indigenous people are connected to

Creation spiritually, emotionally, culturally and physically. "As a Christian people we believe our Soul can go to God and that our Spirit can move across the land with the Spirit of our ancestors to ensure the land is protected," he said.

Yolngu translator and artist Gulumbu Yunipingu talked about the impact of European settlement on Indigenous people in the Northern Territory. It is very sad, she said, that the opportunity for a real exchange of information about Aboriginal spirituality and the riches that the Creator gave the Yolgnu people had been lost. "We would love to have had opportunities to deeply share our faith and theology together."

The Uniting Islander and Aboriginal Christian Congress (UAICC) national administrator Rev Shayne Blackman spoke about the origins of Congress and challenged the church to renew its covenant with Congress. "In 1985 the UAICC was established and the UCA agreed to be in covenant with it – from then we sought live in a new way with each other." Shayne presented statistics on Indigenous education, health, employment and incarceration which showed the quality of life for Indigenous people in Australia is the second worst in the developed world. "What a glorious opportunity for the



*Yolgnu translator and artist Gulumbu Yunipingu with Northern Synod General Secretary Peter Jones. Gulumbu is pictured buying the first quilt (made by Morialta Uniting church) to help fund a Centre for Indigenous Scripture in the Northern Territory*

# Darwin Ministers Conference



*UAICC national administrator Rev Shayne Blackman believes there is a 'glorious opportunity' for the church to covenant with Congress and to address Indigenous disadvantage.*

church to engage in and to address this situation", Shayne said. He said the challenge now was for congress and the church to work in partnership to address Indigenous issues.

Rev Dr Andrew Dutney, principal of Parkin-Wesley College in Adelaide was the keynote speaker. He led three sessions on the Uniting Church's identity, ethos and understanding of mission, plus the role of ministers.

Andrew's sessions revolved around the Basis of Union which he described as a far-sighted document and said we under-estimated the enormity of what was achieved at Union and the vision of our founding fathers. "Paragraph three of the Basis of Union is a summary of our mission," said Andrew. "Reconciliation and renewal is the destiny of everything, because in Christ, God has reconciled all things. That's why we (the church) are involved in welfare, in health, in frontier services, in covenanting with Congress – because that's where God is:" in reconciliation and renewal."

Andrew said it's time the church stopped splitting hairs over doctrine and focused on the main game. "Just read the Bible, be open to ancient faith and respond to God. Our concern for law, for ethics, for morals etc are all important, but not as important as this calling from God to mission. The Basis of Union also states that we are a pilgrim people, always on the way to a promised goal. We need to hold ourselves to that vision."

Rev Dutney also spoke on five key forms of ministry being crucial in the next decade and said that people who

are called to these ministries should be ordained for them, either as ministers of the word or as deacons.

First, local church ministry will still be the engine-room of the church – leading congregations ranging from neighbourhood communities of 70 plus to regional churches of 250 plus.

Second, resource ministry will become even more important as clusters of multiple lay-led congregations of up to 70 people will seek a minister who doesn't provide ministry but the resources to those who do.

Third, it's essential that we get serious about church planning: identifying and supporting those whom God is calling to pioneer new local churches in a variety of settings and forms.

Fourth, we'll need ministers who encourage imaginative and new kinds of church in non-traditional forms and settings.

And, fifth, chaplaincy will continue to expand and require the deployment of some of our best ministers across the variety of services and agencies.

There are organisational changes that can release this kind of ministry, Rev Dutney explained, but the necessary cultural change within the ministry itself is even more important. We must commit ourselves to a deeper, more practical collegiality, to a focus on mentoring emerging leaders, and to a stronger personal and mutual accountability for the call to ministry which has so wonderfully derailed our lives.



*Key participants at the Darwin Ministers' Conference were from left, Howard Amery, Andrew Dutney, Rronang Garrawurra, Jenny Byrnes, Gregor Henderson and Tim Bose*

# Darwin Ministers Conference

Following the Darwin Ministers Conference there was an opportunity for ministers to go on one of three different exposure visits to remote Aboriginal communities in Arnhem Land. Here are some highlights of each of those visits.

## Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island

Our group of 13, including Assembly President Rev Gregor Henderson and incoming President Rev Alistair Macrae, flew to Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island. Galiwin'ku has a population of approximately 2,100 and the price of petrol is \$4.60 litre. In this area of Arnhem Land the Indigenous owners have retained their traditions, culture and law.



Wanymulu pictured at the Bible translation Centre at Galiwin'ku

The first night our group slept under a Banyan tree. From the next night we had a choice of tents or cabins, but there was only cold water for showers and long drop dunnies.

On Sunday morning

there was some discussion as to what time church was. Northern Synod time is a little different - even more so in communities. The service did eventually take place at the Galiwin'ku church. Three of our group, including Gregor Henderson were asked to preach without warning. The congregation consisted of about 25, half of whom were Balandas (white fellas).

Part of Sunday afternoon was spent sitting in a circle with Djiniyini who gave us the opportunity to talk with him about theology, Congress and the community. Again it was a great privilege to spend time in the company of a man of immense standing within the church and his community.

We spent some time at the Bible Translation Centre where after 30 years the New Testament has been translated and printed in the local Indigenous language.

For me, both the conference and the time spent on Elcho Island was one of considerable learning - gaining a greater knowledge of another culture, by being a part of it. By sitting with the people some understanding is gained. I say some understanding, because Aboriginal culture is very complex - particularly the system of kinships.

There was also a great sense of congeniality and reconnecting amongst participants.

While we spend a lot of time talking about the lack of numbers in churches, the Uniting Church is doing some amazing things in remote areas of Australia; and in the urban areas as well.

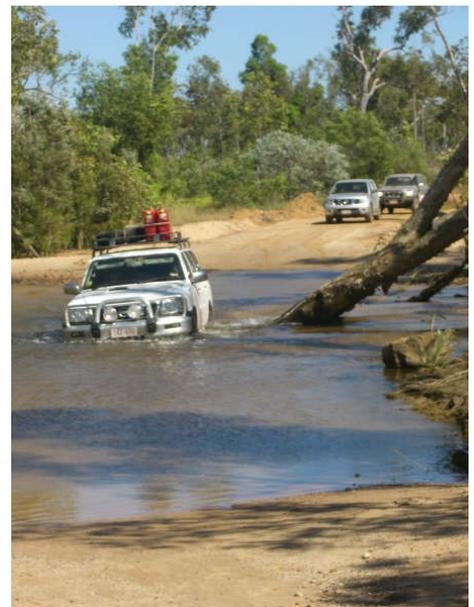
*Pastor Walter Sholl, Victoria*

## Ramingining

Ten Uniting Church ministers, all women, had spent the best part of the day sitting in the shade in the park in the centre of the Ramingining community with a group of Yolngu women and children.

Our bodies and lives intertwined as we did our best with fumbling fingers to weave the pandanas collected days earlier into shapes slightly resembling the beginning of baskets and watched as artistic hands created string and wove the fibres steadily and effortlessly.

The fire that echoed the heat of the day became a focus as the colour collected from the roots of grasses boiled into life. We talked, shared stories, silence and a meal. The sharing was easier this time, but no less sacred.



*Fording the river to reach our destination*

# Darwin Ministers Conference

We gathered for a midday meal that held the elements of a carefully choreographed dance. Two groups of women and children, meeting for the first time and



*Learning about the bush*

sharing prayer and food, with language and customs unfamiliar, mixed with wild honey and chili chocolate – and Christ present in the breaking of the damper and the sharing of water that was sweeter than wine.

We were ten women who travelled 11 hours through Kakadu and into Arnhem Land and back, in a convoy of three vehicles with only one flat tyre.



*Learning to weave with pandanus leaves*

Ten women of varying ages and experiences, mostly from the eastern states; ten women in ministry seeking to learn something of the lives and spirituality of our Indigenous sisters and brothers; ten women who are used to feeling quietly confident and competent

becoming overnight quite the ‘dhunja’ – inexperienced and ignorant.

We carry home the treasure of an experience of the presence of the Spirit, woven through the lives of women in a community where land and stories, food and shelter, relationships, law and love are not separate entities but part of the whole of life’s glorious wonder. We will hold them in our prayers.

*Rev Jennie Gordon, Victoria*

## Yirrkala

A group of eleven UCA clergy and lay members spent four days with the Yirrkala Indigenous community, at the northeast tip of Arnhem Land, after the Darwin Ministers Conference.



*Rev Eseta Meneilly (left) visited Yirrkala with other Uniting Church Ministers following the Darwin Ministers’ Conference.*

Many of us participated in the Sunday worship service – with our group contributing a ‘magic’ children’s story, a sermon, children’s songs and guitar playing. After the service we went to Shady Beach to share a picnic lunch which included fresh bananas and pawpaw. On Monday we were treated to a tour of an Indigenous Healing Centre where traditional herbs and medicines are used. We were treated to a ‘bath’ of boiled leaves which promised

## Darwin Ministers Conference

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On the Wednesday everyone was a-buzz with the impending visit of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet. We got there early and had front-row seats. It was a special experience to see the school children's welcome dance and to hear the singing and speeches by the Indigenous elders.

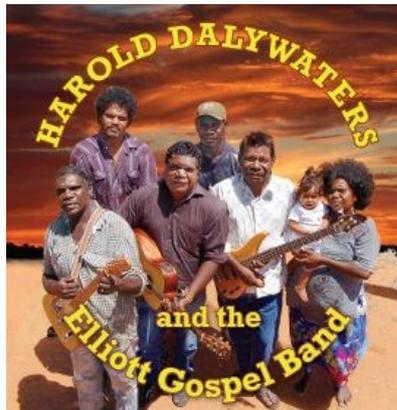
Prime Minister Kevin Rudd spoke carefully and honestly and he answered questions from the Indigenous people present.

One of our members spoke to him at length about the Uniting Church's covenanting partnership with Indigenous people. The Prime Minister was then given a petition by the people. It was a privilege to watch traditional dancing and the Indigenous people's enthusiasm in greeting their Prime Minister with much excitement and joy. This really was a visit to remember.

*Rev Eseta Menelly, Victoria*

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**Awarded '2008 Gospel Album of the Year'  
New album release**



**'Harold Dalywaters and the Elliott Gospel Band'**

The new self titled album from Harold Dalywaters and the Elliott Gospel Band has already won one of the most prestigious awards in Indigenous music after taking home the 2008 Gospel Album of the Year title at the recent Northern Territory Indigenous Music Awards.

Harold was also selected as a finalist in the Song of the Year category in this year's awards. The awards acknowledge and celebrate the achievements of the Territory's Aboriginal musicians.

The album blends traditional instruments including clap sticks and the didgeridoo with modern electric and bass guitar to create a unique style of country gospel music.

"I believe I've got a gift from the Lord to share his message through my music," says Harold. "The lyrics are challenging and I hope they make an impact on people's lives."

Harold previous two albums include 2005's *Until I meet Him* and an acoustic solo album recorded almost ten years ago (*He Has Given Me Love*)

He first strummed a guitar as a teenager studying at Yirara College in Alice Springs some three decades ago and says he hasn't stopped playing since. One of his favorite bands is country gospel group the Soft Sand Band from Galiwinku in the Top End.

The Elliott Gospel Band that plays with Harold on his latest album includes Raymond Dixon (guitar, keyboard), Gregory Jackson (Didgeridoo, guitar, keyboard, vocals), Caroline Jackson (vocals), Roderick Lane (Didgeridoo, drums, guitar), Jason Hill (drums, guitar), and Randall Jackson (drums, guitar, keyboard, vocals).

**Copies of the new album can be purchased at  
[www.tracksofthedesert.com](http://www.tracksofthedesert.com)  
Ph: 08 8953 5930 Fax: 08 8953 5935`  
PO Box 5005, Alice Springs NT 0871 Australia**

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**The Northern Synod News is published by the Northern Synod of the Uniting church in Australia.  
All inquiries should be directed to the Editorial Committee at the above address.**