

Northern Synod News

Issue No 84 February 2006

Yirrkala celebrates

Wilbur Chaseling first heard of Arnhem Land in 1923 when the *Douglas Mawson* disappeared off the coastline.

In 1935 he and his wife became the first missionaries at the new Methodist Mission of Yirrkala. The Mission was established in response to the 1933 killings of Japanese fishermen at Caledon Bay at the invitation of the Commonwealth Government.

The Chaselings reached Yirrkala by the only means possible—the mission lugger *Maree*, which made regular three monthly supply trips to the Arnhem Land mission stations.

The first choice for a mission

site was actually at Caledon Bay but no suitable site could be found. The Yirrkala site was chosen. Before long the local people were coming to meet the missionaries.

The Mission work continued

under the leadership of a number of missionaries who followed in the footsteps of Mr Chaseling.

The Mission continued until 1973 when the local community established the Yirrkala Dhanbul Community Association in 1972 and took responsibility for the running of the community.

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1935 - 2005

The re-enactment of the coming of the first Methodist missionary to Yirrkala in 1935. In the boat, Wilbur Chaseling's daughter-Helen and her husband John.



Inside ...

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Luncheon on the church lawns at Yirrkala.

Tree planting ceremony to celebrate Yirrkala's 70th anniversary. Helen holding the spade, and current minister, Rev Hala Tupou (extreme right)



Pastor Dtangadtanga explaining to visitors and locals the history of the establishment of the Yirrkala Methodist Mission in 1935. Some of the visitors include Litia Vuqa (daughter of a former missionary), John, Helen, Eunice Marika.

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Pastor Dtangadtanga recording stories of mission days on tape at Yirrkala with ARDS volunteer, David Shield.



Photographs from Rita Lotu Lane and the Rev Hala Tupou.

Yirrkala bark petitions 1963



The Yirrkala Bark Petitions were the first documents to bridge indigenous and Commonwealth law. They were presented to the Commonwealth Parliament in 1963 by the Yolgnu people as they sought recognition of their rights to their traditional lands on the Gove Peninsula. Although their petition was unsuccessful it paved the way for later land rights appeals and recognition of indigenous rights.

The painted designs proclaim Yolgnu law, depicting the traditional relations to land and the typed text is in English and Gumatj languages.

In memory of Beulah Madeline Lowe

Beulah Lowe was born in Sydney, and went to Primary and High School before completing two years of Teachers' College. She then spent one year at Missionary Training College in Sydney before flying to Darwin in December 1950 to become a teacher amongst the Aborigines in Arnhem Land.

She read an article in the *Missionary Review* of the need for teachers and, at Milingimbi there were 50 school age children with no teacher. Beulah was held up in Darwin for three weeks due to a cyclone, and then travelled for five days on the mission boat *Aroetta* to arrive at her new home. She remembered the language she had studied while at Sydney University, and was able to greet those who came to meet her in their own language, a big surprise which caused much laughter and excitement.

Beulah began the first school

on Milingimbi, realising that her pupils would not learn to read English very well unless they first learnt to read in their own language. Her deeper desire was that the Yolgnu of Arnhem Land would be able to read the good news of the New Testament in their own vernacular. Some work had previously been done by other missionaries and Beulah continued this work, her musical ear catching nuances of sound that others may have missed.

In 1958 Methodist Overseas Missions appointed Beulah as their very first fulltime linguist, to translate some of the Scriptures into the Gupapuyngu language. To learn translation skills she attended the Summer Institute of Linguistics. Dictionaries, grammars, lessons, translations of hymns, stories and sections of the Bible in Gupapuyngu were amongst her work.

Conversational courses, with tapes were also there prepared in 1964—65, and reprinted in 1975. Her grammar and dictionaries were reprinted in 2003. Today her dictionaries are on the internet!

The people of Milingimbi remember in charge of the choir, in a white frock at the front of the church on Sundays, producing wonderful sounds. Her musical talent was equal to and related to her linguistic gift. She translated many hymns.

After more than a quarter of a century, Beulah left Milingimbi as her parents had become increasingly frail and she felt that she must spend some more time with them at home.

She did not return to Milingimbi, to those she loved and who loved her in a very special way, going to be with her Lord in Sydney in September 2005.



Editorial

It is something of a departure for the *Northern Synod News* to have an editorial column.

However, since we are introducing a new emphasis in the News, this seemed to be a good time to explain our thinking.

The *Northern Synod News* is the printed voice of the Northern Synod. As such it attempts to represent the entire Synod, its membership, constituent Presbyteries and activities.

In 2006 we are planning to focus on a different region of the Synod in each issue. In this issue the focus region is the Eastern region of the Synod—from Palmerston to Arnhem Land. In the next (May) issue, the focus will be the Central region—from Katherine to the

Pitlands. In August, the Western region—Derby, Mowanjumb, Broome, Kununurra.

The final issue will focus on the Darwin region.

One of the reasons for taking this approach is to encourage congregations in each of these areas to contribute articles to the *News*. In a Synod such as ours it is very easy to lose sight of the wider church beyond our own congregations. But we are part of a national Uniting Church.

We are trying not only to reflect the life of the Synod for the members of the Synod but, since the *News* is circulated well beyond the boundaries of the Northern Synod, we are also aiming to bring some sense of the life of the Northern Synod to people beyond our boundaries.

We are aware that, within the Northern Synod, there are many people who are relatively isolated and so part of our purpose is to give such people a sense of connection with what is happening not only within the Northern Synod but also within the wider Church in Australia (and sometimes beyond).

The *Northern Synod News* falls under the responsibility of the Synod Standing Committee. There is an advisory Editorial Committee consisting of the Synod General Secretary, the Chair of Synod Standing Committee, the Chair of Pilgrim Presbytery and the Chair of the Northern Regional Council of Congress.

The Editor and the Editorial Committee always welcome contributions and feedback. This is your paper—make it work for you! †

Yolgnu Radio

Currently Yolgnu Radio is transmitting to communities across the Northern part of Arnhem Land on both FM and High Frequency (HF) bands.

There are plans to extend this service to cover the whole of north-east Arnhem Land.

The Community Development Radio Service was developed by the Aboriginal Resource and Development Services Inc (ARDS) in an attempt to meet the needs of the people—particularly the Yolgnu people for education and media in



Binalany listens to ARDS radio

Yolgnu Radio can now be heard in Darwin on AM 1530

their own language.

The aim of the radio service was to address the specific necessity for information access, self-learning and adult educational needs of the Yolgnu people of north-east Arnhem Land.

The CDRS offers education, information and cultural reinforcement for the Yolgnu people in their own language and encourages the active participation of the people in developing this radio service.



For more information:
www.ards.com.au/broadcast

Alf and Fleur Taylor

The Reverend Alf Taylor was the supply minister at Alice Springs during the second half of 2005. He was accompanied by his wife Fleur. Alf and Fleur have now returned to New Zealand.

Alf Taylor reflects Notes From A Pilgrim Guest.

What follows are the rambling notes, observations and reflections of a guest who has had the privilege of being shown hospitality, in this land of rich diversity, beauty and colour.

The metaphor of 'guest' I find useful, for it embraces many different aspects of my time here in the Northern Territory. As a guest, I take this opportunity of acknowledging the traditional owners of the land here in Alice Springs the Arrernte People.

Then of course I acknowledge the people of the Alice Springs Congregation who worship in the John Flynn Memorial Church whose hospitality and acceptance of Fleur and myself we have experienced these past months, I also acknowledge the hospitality and helpfulness of the staff of the Pilgrim Presbytery and the Northern Synod.

Where to begin ... T S Eliot said, "In my end is my beginning". I think he is right, for often it is only in looking where one is now, that we can fully appreciate where we have come

from. So I take a glance back into history, not too far back, and recall how for many years I have expressed to Fleur my desire to live and work in the Outback of Australia. For many various reasons it has not been possible, until now. This time here for me has been a gift, that I have been given, which I will treasure for the rest of my life.

I am here as a guest, holding the treasure of the experience as a gift, yet with eyes open to see, ears open to hear, a heart open to feel and hands open to receive. Some times a person coming into a community from another place or culture sees things, hears things, feels things, receives things that those who live in that place have long taken as the norm and perhaps are no longer aware are actually there.

In my end is my beginning

So this collection of notes, thoughts and reflections come from being exposed to a different culture, and in no way are a criticism of any person or thing. Rather they come out of my own experience and faith journey. For space and time I focus on the following:

Reflecting on Presbytery and Synod, I was delighted to

hear, see and experience the act of *Covenanting* between NRCC & PPNA. Being from outside Australia I would not presume to comment on the issues facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. However, as a therapist and a group facilitator I would like to comment on the process.

My understanding and experience from similar processes in NZ with Maori groups is that it is important that the process goes at a pace, which is honouring to each Covenanting partner, that respects each others culture, values, resources, and spirituality.

In plain English the PPNA partner will need to move at a pace which is comfortable for the NRCC partner to ensure both walk together in the love of Christ. The gift that the PPNA can give to the NRCC is the gift of truly listening to them; this will enable each to walk forward together in the Spirit of Christ.

One of the similarities with NZ Churches that I have noticed since being here in the Northern Territory is that Churches are seeking to discover their Mission. Or putting it another way, what does it mean to be the Church at this moment in time, to serve the community they find themselves in and among. I have been impressed with the Alice Springs Congregation, and their Mission vision statement, which includes the objectives of Pilgrimage,

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Covenanting and Chaplaincy.

This is an exciting adventure for the Congregation here in the Red Centre. I am sure it will bear fruit in the months and years ahead. I truly pray they may have the resources of people and finances to ensure an effective ministry to the community is developed and sustained.

The other aspect of serving here in Alice Springs is the presence of history and tradition. Next year sees the 50th Anniversary of the John Flynn Memorial Church and the 80th Anniversary of Adelaide House. The presence and spirit of John Flynn is alive and well here in the Outback of Central Australia.

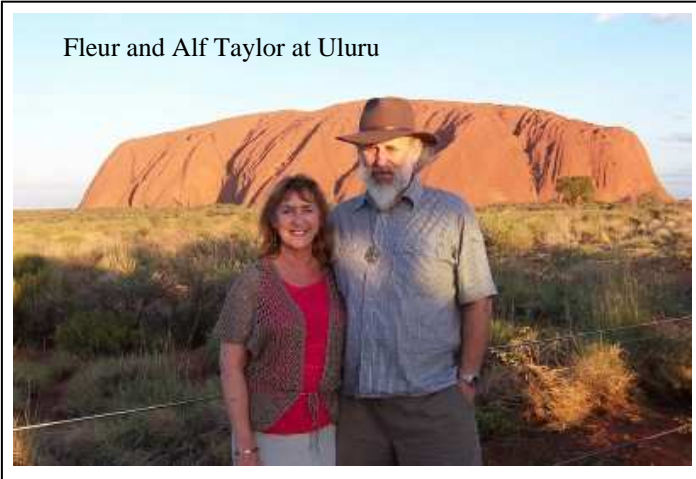
My hope for the future of the Alice Springs Congregation is that the weight of history and tradition will not be an anchor for the future, rather will be a catalyst and motivator for change to achieve a new era of ministry and spirituality, to those who both live and are travelling through the Red Centre.

In a few weeks time Fleur and I will be back in NZ, our time here will be over. I take back many memories and experiences. But one stands out as I was walking around Uluru, I recall how as a young Police Officer I would walk the beat around the slums of Liverpool (UK) in the 1960's, and some of the many special places my feet have touched since then, now here I am walking around Uluru, a dream fulfilled

In the silence of Uluru, I reflected again upon the struggle of the spiritual journey for quiet and solitude while trying to respond to the needs of God's people both in and outside the Church. I became aware again of the God who in Christ is eternal, cosmic, and transcendent, yet who meets us through the Holy Spirit in the lives of many different people, and in surprising places.

So like Thomas Merton I can say again "life is not a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be lived." Being here in Alice Springs, I continue to live the mystery of life.....the journey continues, and only God knows the next step on the journey for me and for you.

Shalom
Alf Taylor



Snippets from Fleur's Journal

When landing at Alice Springs, the pilot, announced, "be prepared for landing." I looked out of the window, and saw nothing !!!!!!! no buildings, no houses, no car, but RED RED RED. Alf laughed.

I then recall the moment in New Zealand when somebody said to me, " Why go to Alice Springs there is nothing there? !!!!!!"

I came with an open mind, excited about our adventure that Alf had wanted to do for a long time.

After landing we drove into Alice Springs, and had lunch with Tony Davies, and I saw Aboriginal people for the first time sitting in groups on the pavement. My first thoughts were that they looked sad and poor.

Those first few weeks I could not believe how cold it was at night, but lovely warm days. I decided that the purchase of two hot water bottles was in order. Our first Sunday morning, we could not shower, as the pipes had frozen.

I found the local people in the Church, chemist, shops and bank, all very friendly and helpful.

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Fleur's journal excerpts continued from page 6

I have found Aboriginal art fantastic and enjoyed seeing their work both in Darwin and Alice Springs Art Galleries.

I will take back with me memories of helping out at the Op Shop, the diversity of the people who come to buy, each with different personalities, looks, smiles, and attitudes.

A special moment for me was meeting an Aboriginal teacher at Tennant Creek and her chil-

addresses and I will keep in touch with her.

When people in NZ said “you would be bored travelling in Australia in a car over long distances.” I got an impression of total emptiness, in fact I found the opposite, and I have been in awe of the beauty, colour, diversity of landscapes. My special moment in travelling was to see and touch Uluru. This was for me a spiritual and mystical experience.

I take back with me many special memories, photos, and experiences, which I will share, with my family friends back in NZ. I have learnt much in such a short time.

Northern Territory – Alice Springs, “you’re a great place.” Some people in New Zealand have got it all wrong, you have everything and more.

Fleur Taylor.



GOD'S WORD
GOD'S WORLD
11th Assembly 2006

July 5 to 11

Welcome to the 11th Assembly

The 11th Triennial Assembly meeting is being held in the UQ Centre at the University of Queensland from July 5 to 11, 2006.

The church has adopted the theme, God's Word, God's World for the 11th Assembly. At a time when fewer people are connecting with Australian churches, it is hoped the theme will encourage Uniting Church members to reflect on who we are as a church and how we bear witness to the Gospel in our context.

The Assembly web site - <http://assembly.uca.org.au/11thassembly> - will be updated regularly in the lead up to the Assembly. Remember to pray for the Assembly.



UnitingJustice is part of the agency Uniting Faith and Justice, within the National Assembly of the Uniting Church.

Our mission is: to be faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ by pursuing social and ecological **justice and peace in Australia and the world.**

We are seeking expressions of interest for membership of the UnitingJustice Reference Committee, August 2006 – August 2009.

If you are passionately committed to the gospel of justice and peace, keen to contribute your gifts and experiences as part of a small, hardworking, voluntary team, and believe in the national life of the Church, contact

UnitingJustice for an information package and selection criteria.

UnitingJustice Australia
tel: 02 82674236

email: unitingjustice@nat.uca.org.au
website: <http://nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice/>

Enquiries to Rev Elenie Poulos:
02 8267 4239

Translation

Bible translation into indigenous languages is not as old as the missions themselves. In the early days it was often a struggle simply to establish and maintain the missions and few missionaries had time—or the skills—to invest in translation.

Today as missions have become self governing communities the mission endeavour has turned to support work such as translation. Often, it was the hymns which were translated first.

The following article is written by **Peter Carroll, who came to Oenpelli in 1967 to work with the Kunwinjku people at Oenpelli. He has recently retired from ten years work as a Translation Consultant with the Bible Society.**

Bible Translation in Indigenous Languages

There are currently bible translation programs in 16 different indigenous languages in Australia. This work is done by Indigenous churches and translators with support from a range of translation partners and churches. The Churches involved are the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, and Uniting.

The Partner Agencies are the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Nungalinya College (a Christian Training College in Darwin), the Church Missionary Society, the Finke River Mission, the Lutheran Bible

Translators, the Aboriginal Resource Development Services and the Bible Society.

Over the past 40 years parts of the Bible have been translated into 36 indigenous languages (see map and table), with at least 6 New Testaments. The languages have included Gumatj, Djambarrpuynu two Yolngu languages spoken in Arnhem Land and Pitjantjatjara spoken at Ernabella and other communities in Central Australia.

There has been a Christian presence in Australia since the arrival of the first fleet in 1788. It is estimated that at that time there were at least 250 different languages spoken throughout Australia.

Over the past 218 years there has been a significant loss in the number of languages. Some scholars have estimated that there are only 20 'viable' languages still spoken. It is a sad reflection on Australian Christians that in this time no one group has a complete bible in their own language.

This situation will change in 2007 as the first complete Indigenous Bible will be published in the Kriol language of North Australia. Kriol is an Aboriginal language spoken by an estimated 30000 Aboriginal people in the southern part of Arnhem Land, including the Roper

River area, also the Katherine and MacArthur River regions and as far south as Tennant Creek. It is also spoken west of Katherine and in the Kimberley region of Western Australia. There is also limited use in western Queensland. The translation has been done by Kriol speakers from the churches in the communities of Ngukurr, Minyerri and Barunga, with assistance from the Summer Institute of Linguistics, the Church Missionary Society and the Bible Society.

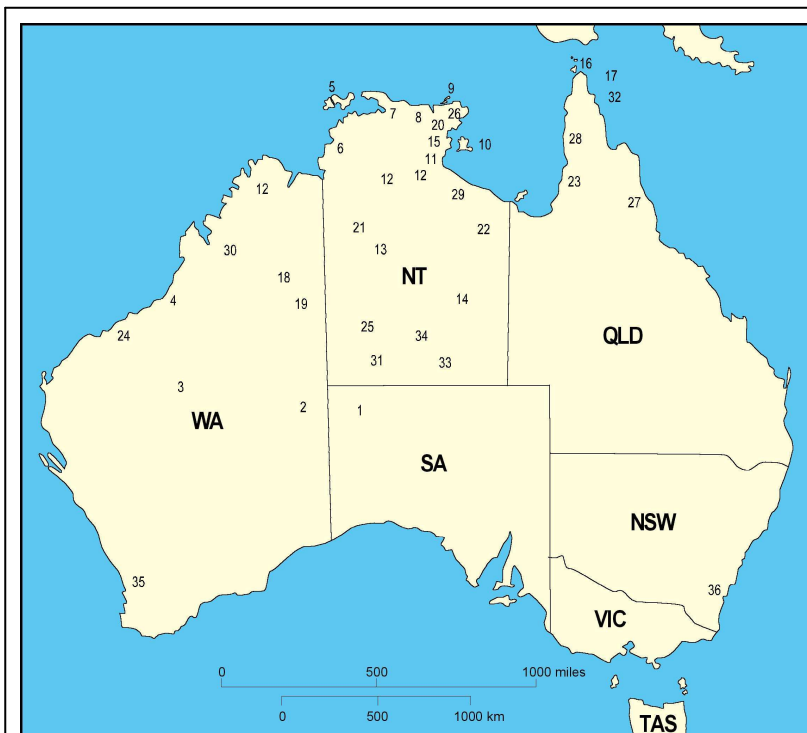
Two of the translators have commented:

"It is wonderful that we have our own Kriol Bible, and when we read God's word, it helps us to understand more and teaches us to live the way he wants us to." (Jocelyn McCartney from Barunga).

"When we started work on this Kriol Bible translation it was a bit hard for us, but we always prayed first and asked God to help us. The Bible translation work has really touched my life and changed it, and it has made me think about God all the time. I want to keep doing this Bible translation work till it is all finished." (Estelle Farrar from Minyerri)

Djambarrpuynu is spoken at Elcho Island off the North Coast of Arnhem Land and in other communities in north east Arnhem Land. The translation team has recently completed the translation of the New Testament and are finalising the translation for publication. This has included the writing of Introductions to each book, checking for

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Australian Indigenous Languages with Scripture Translation

Languages in Numerical Order:

- 1 Pitjantjatjara; 2 Ngaanyatjarra; 3 Martu Wangka; 4 Nyangumarta; 5 Tiwi; 6 Murrinh-Pata; 7 Kunwinjku; 8 Burarra; 9 Djambarrpuyngu; 10 Anindilyakwa; 11 Nunggubuyu; 12 Kriol; 13 Warlpiri; 14 Alyawarr; 15 Ritharngu; 16 Kala Lagaw Ya; 17 Meriam Mir; 18 Djaru; 19 Gugadja; 20 Djinang; 21 Gurindji; 22 Yanyuwa; 23 Thaayorre; 24 Yindjibarndi; 25 Pintubi/Luritja; 26 Gumatj; 27 Kuku-Yalanji; 28 Wik-Mungkan; 29 Garawa; 30 Walmajarri; 31 Arrarnta; 32 Torres Strait Creole; 33 Eastern Arrernte; 34 Anmatyerr; 35 Nyoongar; 36 Dhurga.

Languages in Alphabetical Order (Current Project)**

Alyawarr (14) **	Gumatj (26)	Nyoongar (35) **
Anmatyerr (34) **	Gurindji (21)	Pintubi/Luritja (25) **
Anindilyakwa (10) **	Kala Lagaw Ya (16)	Pitjantjatjara (1) **
Arrarnta (Western) (31) **	Kriol (12) **	Ritharngu (15)
Burarra (8)	Kuku-Yalanji (27)	Thaayorre (23)
Dhurga (36) **	Kunwinjku (6) **	Tiwi (5)
Djambarrpuyngu (9) **	Martu Wangka (3)	Torres Strait Creole (32) **
Djaru (18)	Meriam Mir (17)	Walmajarri (30)
Djinang (20)	Murrinh-patha (6)	Warlpiri (13) **
Eastern Arrernte (33) **	Ngaanyatjarra (2) **	Wik-Mungkan (28)
Garawa (29)	Nunggubuyu / Wubuy (11) **	Yanyuwa (22)
Gugadja (19)	Nyangumarta (4)	Yindjibarndi (24)

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consistency in translation and checking the spelling. The members of the team are Maratja, Gapany, Wangarr, Matjarri, Yurranydjil, Djawut, Ngandama, Margaret and Wanymuli.

Please pray for the Kriol team as they complete the Bible and for the Djambarrpuyngu team as they complete the New

Testament and for the Djambarrpuyngu team as they complete the New Testament.



Peter Carroll.
Translation Consultant (retired).

If you would like to know more of the work of the Dambarrpuyngu translation team—whose New Testament is due to be dedicated this year—contact: Dambarrpuyngu Bible Translation Centre, Galiwin'ku, Elcho Island NT 0822. Phone/fax 08 8987 9075. email: dbtp@ards.com.au

On **Pancake Day**, held annually on Shrove Tuesday, thousands of individuals, school, community, church and business groups nation-wide cook and sell pancakes to raise funds for **UnitingCare's** work with Australians in need.

In the Territory Sommerville Services run an annual Pancake Day activity. Watch the local media for details. **Pancake Day 2006 is Tuesday February 28th.**

Lay leaders in worship

Lay leadership in worship is as old as the Passover!

In our tradition, however, lay readers were there to read scripture or prayers but not to preach. Women could not aspire to any leadership role at all.

Vatican II began to define leadership as no other church ever had. For example, it spelled out the roles of lay leadership. The lector, reader/s of the prayers of the people and the cantor are all lay people. The Priest reads the Gospel.

Bell's own home church in Glasgow is known as "the mother church of Presbyterianism" – but she's an old dame getting more wrinkled every year! ALL churches have a manpower crisis which makes lay leadership vital.

What's the difference between an ordained person and a lay leader?

An Ordained leader
gets paid
is assumed to have a higher level of education
can celebrate the sacraments
gives up their personal faith for a more universal faith
has greater pastoral responsibility
power resides here
celebrates Word and Sacrament
is isolated
is recognised and recognisable
individualistic
less inclusive or participative
on-going ministry

A Lay leader
does not get paid
is assumed to have a lower level of education
cannot celebrate the sacraments
may still have their personal faith rather than a more universal faith
has relatively little pastoral responsibility, if any at all
power does NOT reside here
celebrates the Word only
is out amongst the people
is often anonymous
is a co-operative worker
more inclusive and participative
has short-term ministry

All churches have a manpower crisis

With ordination there comes the assumption of control of a parish. Is it true that lay people have no power when they take on leadership roles? Do lay people only have power because they are standing in for the 'priestly power figure'? Are the laity empowered at all? If so, by whom? What is the theology of power?

Lay people actually have a tremendous amount of power.

What can prevent arrogance developing in lay people when they have a chance to lead? Being rooted in Scripture; having a personal relationship with God; being able to reflect with other people; a sense of accountability; being able to reflect with other people;

and a sense of accountability.

In developing lay leaders it is sometimes necessary to deal with people's reservations before they feel free to participate in lay leadership. Jesus did not call people who were perfect but he called imperfect people in whom he saw potential. Sometimes a bad experience prevents people from accepting leadership roles.

God calls people to be both lay people and lay ministers. People need encouragement not judgement. The practical difficulties which potential lay leaders often have to do with the space or architecture of the church building. The architecture suits ordained leaders but not lay leaders. It is necessary to use the physical surroundings as effectively as possible.

Lay people have a tremendous amount of power

Types of leadership ... derivative ... authentic

In **derivative leadership**, all leadership roles are derived from what the priest/minister does and with their authority. Everything then has to be carried out as the minister normally does it. Sometimes this means that lay leaders are set up to fail.

Authentic leadership is based on discovering multiple roles ... in this model the liturgy itself dictates what happens and it is a matter of how best to use a group of people as leaders.

What happens in authentic leadership of worship should arise out of people's own experience and knowledge.

Planning worship involves sharing in prayer, the focus of which needs to be linked to the season of the Church year.

Preparation for worship.

Lay preparation differs from ordained preparation. You can't expect lay people to lead forever. In preparing consider whether a small congregation needs to replicate the large scale organisation? That leads to "a plethora of wee jobs – the wee job mentality!". If every Sunday we need to reinvent the wheel we need to look at ourselves. It makes sense to use a regular written liturgy.

Scripture.

Reading Scripture is "breaking open the Word". Marion Tolley wondered what an Afro-American woman might have to teach white male priests. Precisely this: that the Scripture is not broken open in the preaching but in the **reading** of Scripture. She devised a six week course for readers. It involved their considering such questions as: what am I reading? why? what effect will it have on the hearers? what kind of literature is it? how can I digest it before I read it to others?

You cannot break open the Word if you only see it as you are reading it on Sunday morning. The reader had to be the mouth of God speaking to the ears of God's people. Only lay people can enliven the reading of God's word by breaking it open, and bringing

Bernadette Farrell in a London RC parish works with groups of 8 – 12 people preparing liturgies for about 5 or 6 weeks only. Theirs is corporate preparation. This builds interpersonal knowledge and trust; knowledge of the season, the lectionary, which influences church decoration and so on. This approach involves the youth group, readers, artists, musicians. It involves selecting readers who are age/character appropriate to the reading e.g. poets for the Psalms .

These lay leadership groups meet each week on the Monday before the service for a meal and conversation so that their work is relationship driven rather than task driven.

They then read the Scripture for the following Sunday and discuss how it affects them. The priest (who is present but not leading) listens and makes notes for his homily in the context of their planning. The readers, prayers, welcomes and kid's talk are decided week by week.

it to the ears and hearts of others.

So, the essentials of lay leadership of worship are prayer, relationship, planning and preparation. Ideally lay leadership would be undertaken by teams rather than individuals. And so that the lay leadership teams do not suffer burn out, their contribution should be short term rather than long term. That suggests that several teams would be a bonus!

Rev John Bell at Nightcliff Uniting Church 2005.

Desert Journeys 2

Cathy Pickering from the Living Water Congregation, Humpty Doo reports:

In August 2005, Jenna Nowland (Nightcliff) and I received the opportunity to attend a Desert Journey through the Simpson Desert from Alice Springs in the Northern Territory to Birdsville in Queensland.

We were to be part of a group of young adults from all over Australia who were to travel in 4WDs along with four leaders: Peter Kaldor, Tony Davies, Ian Robinson and Dean Drayton.

To start off we were very worried or scared at the thought of travelling through such a large area without any civilisation. But I decided to look on it with eyes of adventure and as a chance to learn something different. With instructions as to what to bring and where to meet, the journey began.

Jenna (whom I knew from a previous trip) left Darwin on Saturday and arrived to a rather chilly Alice Springs. We were then met by Peter and we made our way up Anzac Hill to meet the rest of the group. It was amazing to meet them as there were people from each state in Australia.

We were challenged to do things we had never done before, such as driving up steep sand dunes without any idea of what might be on the other side! That's one way to learn what trust is all about.



Provocations ...

ideas to make you think

Today people are disposable ... but we all have autonomy – freedom to determine our own destiny.



We are narrative beings. We have to tell the story of ourselves ... our faith ... our church.



We need a self-forgetfulness that leads to self-discovery.



Hope makes us ambitious: it is a summons to flourish.

Timothy Radcliffe



Nationalism is both a vital medicine and a dangerous drug. Geoffrey Blainey



The more you learn about perspectives other than your own, the greater the chance you will be able to judge objectively. Justice Sally Brown.



Ultimately we have got to cooperate for our common destiny. Rev Tim Costello



Leadership is an elusive concept, hard to describe and impossible to prescribe. It is more evident in its absence, so that when leadership is needed, its lack is sorely felt.

Patrick Dodson



We are persons made up of body, mind and spirit, endued with five senses and we must come to God with the whole of ourselves.

Esther de Waal



The glory of God is man fully alive. St Irenaeus of Antioch



Vacare Deum.

Be free for God.



On the day of Judgement God will ask only one question: Did you enjoy my world?

Traditional Jewish saying.



Letters

Dear Friends,

Though it is now nigh on 12 years since I left my second stint in the Northern Synod, I continue to look forward to the arrival of the "News".

I was especially delighted to read of the tribute to Ron Brandt at Nightcliff. What a magnificent man in every way!

Thank you for the work that goes into the preparation and distribution of the paper. I am one reader who is delighted to see the envelope with the Darwin address on the back, knowing that there is an hour or so of happy reconnection in store with a special part of my life.

Thanks again.

Doug Turnbull. Bendigo Vic.

The Editor and Editorial committee thank Doug for his letter.

We would like to encourage other readers to write to us—feedback, comments ... a letters column at least!

**Next Edition of Northern Synod News
May 2006.**

Focus on Central region.

**Deadline for articles:
April 8th, 2006.**

To contribute news items or articles contact the Editor, NSN ... Wendy Beresford-Maning.

c/- Synod Office or
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Diary Dates

- February 8—Service of recognition & induction of Tim Bose at Nhulunbuy.
- March 3—4 Pilgrim Presbytery meets
- March 5—8 Ministers' retreat
- March 26 Induction of joint ministers and Patrol minister at Tennant Creek
- May 6—7 50th Anniversary of building John Flynn Memorial Alice Springs

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