



Uniting Church Adult Fellowship

National Committee

Joan Stott
UCAAF Bursary
(Scholarship)
for Young Adults under
the age of 35 years.



Joan Stott UCAF Bursary 2016 Awardees



Matthew Julius (Victoria)

I am fond of saying that I am Christian, but I am not necessarily *a* Christian. That is, I am undeniably formed by the Christian family, and broadly (post) Christian culture I was born and socialised into. However, I make no pretence of being a prototypical exemplar of some sort of fixed and settled understanding of Christian identity. For me, to account of a “faith journey” must be to take seriously the present and ongoing nature of such a pilgrimage. I thus find myself at home in dialogue with nomadic ideas: Christian thinkers that emphasise the dynamic task of thinking about God, and of the exciting provisional nature of what we say about God and the world. I find myself energised by open and welcoming spaces: in conversations that foster generous orthodoxy, and church contexts that take seriously a unity deeper than agreement. In these relations I find the words and practices to articulate where I happen to be in a continuous journey.

The Danish poet-thinker Søren Kierkegaard provides an articulation of one strand of my self-understanding of faith as journey, *“It is perfectly true, as the philosophers say, that life must be understood backwards. But they forget the other proposition, that it must be lived forwards.”*¹

This quote urges me resist the simple conflation of my faith journey with a history marked by significant moments. (Moments that tend to retrospectively homogenise a typically heterogeneous narrative.) Instead, my faith journey *is* a constant and unstable relation to story (to draw on some of the language of the Australian sociologist John Carroll). The story I tell myself about myself, and about my place in the world, is me transfixed by Christ.

In making sense of my own story, then, I must look beyond myself. Firstly, to the Other (Christ) that transfixes me; and secondly, to conversations within which I can participate and learn. I seek to read my story as if from the outside. This seeking drives my faith journey. And this seeking comes together in my attempts to think about God in ways that are accessible for those on the outside of Christian faith. Which is to say again that I aim to participate in conversations beyond myself in an academic career that traverses philosophy, sociology, and theology (the three disciplines I’ve studied formally). These disciplines, for me, help to articulate deep questions of how we should interpret ourselves in the world. Their broad integrative disposition inspire my pursuit of a conversion that is both ongoing and dependent upon community beyond myself.

All of this is to say that any possible past account of my faith journey is impossible without Kierkegaard’s insight into the mandate to live forwardly, and the shaping of understanding by ideas beyond myself. The key moments in my past, then, serve as discrete centres of gravity around which the continuous path of my conversion coalesces. And they are such because of my current and future vision however limited. So as I recall my past some moments become clearer, and others are obscured, as they refract my present state of transition. In these moments I begin to understand my story.

In conversations with my father, where probing questions were met with further stimulating questions, and a generous ear. In reading the work of the Australian sociologist John Carroll, and finding a view of Christ from the outside, that yet engaged the story deeply. In beginning to study the Bible formally, with Sean Winter, that I realised that there are Christians, like myself, prone to stubborn inquiry. And it has, in recent times, been in faith community curated by Sandy Brodine that I have come to appreciate the full depth and diversity of Christian belief and practice. In these encounters I am coming to see my faith journey now shift from feelings of a youthful, alienated outsider, towards those of a nomadic stranger: from Christian (without article) to maybe, perhaps *one* sort of Christian.

This poetic articulation of my faith journey, as that of a nomad and stranger, is perhaps insufficiently clear. But it seems the only safeguard against setting up as homogeneous and settled that which is ongoing and indeterminate. It is the only way of articulating an honest summary of my faith journey. Any such summary must, like much of our talk about God and the world, be provisional. The hope too, then, is that this précis is at least partially outdated by the time it meets you.

¹ Søren Kierkegaard, *Journals IV A 164* (1843)



Bradley Case (Queensland)

Current Ministry Context

I am currently 30 years old and work full time for Scripture Union Queensland as their youth and children's ministry development officer. With SUQLD's major focus being on school chaplaincy, this role consists of resourcing and training chaplains by writing programs for lunch time groups for primary and secondary schools and generally supporting them to run other effective programs. I also contribute to the writing and delivering of professional development modules for chaplains which have included Good Group Work Practices, Working Effectively with LGBTQI Students and Responding to Domestic and Family Violence.

This year I have been facilitating training all across Queensland for the 'A2B Life Changing Groups' where over 100 people have been able to engage in better processes for group work that helps open their students and participants to the good work of God that is already happening in their life that leads to a better holistic sense of spiritual, social and emotional wellbeing.

As well as supporting chaplains I am involved in the QLD Youth Ministry Network with the heads of youth ministry across the denominations and parachurch organisations. Here we meet together and explore what Bible Engagement, discipleship, leadership, longevity of faith and many other issues to try and find solutions and ways forward for youth and young adults to deepen their faith and relationships with God and the church. I also work with others from this network and from SUQLD to put on ministry training events across Queensland. Our latest training weekend in Longreach saw clergy from each denomination in town and the surrounding areas tackle the challenge of keeping our young people engaged in church.

My greatest passion is camping; having been involved in almost 40 camps as both a participant and a leader/director (I have directed over 20 of these). Training week is a camp that I currently direct and is for Christian students in grades 10, 11 and 12 to explore what their faith looks like lived out in their schools and churches. Each year we hear stories of young people who've returned home to their youth groups and to their schools and started up new ministries or have returned equipped to passionately serve their youth pastors and chaplains as student leaders. This work is very exciting and I am very passionate about seeing it grow.

Current Church Participation

As I've previously mentioned, I had volunteered at Glebe Road Uniting church for 10 years as the youth ministry coordinator; a role which I loved and cherished. It helped inform my practice and theology of youth ministry and how to run meaningful, impacting ministry focused on discipleship. From here I felt called to move on and Sherwood Uniting called me to serve part time with them as their Youth and Children's pastor. I loved working in this church role and while it wasn't necessarily a challenge for me, it was indeed a sweet spot where I felt I could meaningfully contribute to a local expression of the Kingdom of God.

At both Glebe Road Uniting and Sherwood Uniting I would participate in the life of the church by being on the music team and worship leading, service leading, preaching, welcome and Bible reading as well as leading youth ministry every Friday night of the school term. At both churches I also ran a leadership course for young leaders who would help run the youth group as student leaders. While at Glebe Road I would facilitate and lead the service and preach on a roster each Sunday night which was a service specifically for our young people. At Sherwood I would also run one of these services once a month as well as teach Religious Instruction each Friday. I also participated in wider Uniting Church events such as leading worship and parts of the program for Summer Madness as well as participating in the NYALC (National Young Adult Leaders Conference). All throughout this time I enjoyed singing and playing saxophone in worship times.

Having been put on full time with Scripture Union, I have returned to Glebe Road and am currently not serving in any of the old areas I used to as I am discerning what is the main thing that I feel God is calling me to volunteer for with my specific gifts, talents and personal vision statement. This is an exciting time for me and I am enjoying some more time in which to focus on my current vocation with SUQLD as well as my studies.

Current Study with Arrow and ACOM

In 2007 and 2008 I attended Bible College at Brisbane City Institute of Training and completed my Diploma of Christian Ministry. That has helped my understanding of both practical ministry and theology in the youth ministry contexts and

in wider church participation. At the beginning of 2015, I was invited to attend the Arrow Leadership course. This course runs over 2 years and has four units of study with exceptional reading for each unit. Each of the units covers...

1. Leading Myself: Integrity, Character, Leading from your strengths, spiritual disciplines, personal and time management, personal leadership strategy/improvement.
2. Leading Others: Team leadership, coaching skills, developing leaders, personal vision statement, integrated mission strategy.
3. Leading Organisations: Conflict management, strategic staffing, performance management and change management.
4. Leading in the World: (we have yet to get the schedule for this residential intensive week).

In addition to the Arrow Leadership course I'm involved in, I am currently completing one subject a trimester with ACOM (Australian College of Ministries). Combined with my already completed Diploma, these studies are helping me to complete my Bachelor of Ministry. Even though I am accruing a HECS debt, the Joan Stott UCAF bursary that I am applying for will help cover the costs of some of this study.

Future Opportunities

My completed study will likely conclude in 2019 and from there I hope to have a break from study. As a lifelong learner, this Bachelor of Ministry will simply enhance the work that I am already currently doing with SUQLD and whatever context I find myself at Glebe Road Uniting and beyond.

In the past, I have participated in the Period of Discernment in the Uniting Church and discerned that a call to ordained ministry was not what God was calling me into. However I pray I will keep my ears and heart open to this call should it arise again. If it does so within the life of the Uniting Church, I would aim to complete my Graduate Diploma in Theology and continue the process toward being ordained as a Minister of the Word.

Joan Stott UCAF Bursary News



Danielle Hemsworth-Smith (NSW) who was a recipient of the bursary in 2014 is pictured conducting Holy Communion, after she was recently ordained at the Trinity Worship Centre, New Lambton Uniting Church in Newcastle



Nathan Barton (QLD) received the bursary in 2015 was ordained early in 2016. He is pictured at his Induction as Minister of the Word at Iona West Uniting Church in Mackay.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The incumbent UCAF National Committee may award up to two (2) 'Joan Stott UCAF Bursaries' each calendar year, each bursary to the value of \$1,500 to assist those committed to, or who already are, studying in the field of leadership or theology, within the ethos of the Uniting Church. The bursary will be paid to the 'Place of Study' but other options will be considered if deemed necessary, and satisfies any requirements of Centrelink.
- 1.2. At the time of application, each applicant must be under the age of 35 years.
- 1.3. Each February, the UCAF National Committee will extend an invitation to each State and Territory Synod UCAF Committee through their Secretary, seeking nominations for the following year for the Joan Stott UCAF Bursaries.
- 1.4. These applications must be received by the Secretary of each State or Territory Synod UCAF Committee by 31 May each year.
- 1.5. Following interviews in each State or Territory, the recommended applications with names of their nominee/s are to be forwarded to the UCAF National Committee Secretary, together with comments from the applicant's referees, by 31 July for their consideration. If there is more than one application, an indication of the State/Territory's priority of the applicants is to be included.
- 1.6. Applicants will be notified of the decision of the UCAF National Committee by 31 October for payment in the ensuing year.
- 1.7. Each applicant will be asked to indicate how the grant will be used, e.g. study or tuition fees, etc. Each applicant will also be asked to provide a short faith journey statement and a précis of their ultimate goals at the end of their current study.

2. Application Form (see separate document)

3. Guidelines for Synod Committees

3.1 Calling for applications

Having received advice from the UCAF National Committee, applications should be called for by each Synod when advised.

- Details of the bursary (copies of the leaflet and any further information) should be distributed through each presbytery, publicised in Synod UCAF newsletters, Synod magazines/news and made available to all UCA tertiary facilities within the synod.
- The information distributed should include contact details for the Secretary of the Synod UCAF Committee together with a request for:
 - (a) letter of application,
 - (b) application form including statement of personal faith journey and a passport size photo of the applicant,
 - (c) future ministry/leadership objectives.
 - (d) contact details for referees (as indicated in leaflet), and
 - (e) note the closing date of 31 May for applications;
- Applications to be received by email;
- The Synod committee shall appoint an interview panel.

3.2 Applications received

- 3.2.1 Immediately on receiving each application, the synod UCAF secretary shall acknowledge receipt of the application.
- 3.2.2 At the closing date for applications, the Secretary will forward all applications received to the convenor of the interviewing group.
- 3.2.3. The interview process shall include:-
 - interview applicants by an appropriate means,
 - e.g. face to face, SKYPE, teleconference, etc.;
 - consultation with referees;
 - if more than one applicant, determine a priority order of applicants within the Synod and
 - provide a recommendation back to the Synod committee.
- 3.2.4 The Synod UCAF committee receives the report, considers any recommendation/s and forwards application/s and referee comments together with that committee's decision to the UCAF National Committee Secretary by 31 July. If more than one recommendation, then an indication of priority for their nominations is to be included.

4. Guidelines for National Committee

- 4.1. The National Committee will receive all applications and nominate from the Committee those who will be responsible for the review of all the applicants.
- 4.2. Any member of the National Committee who has been involved in any way with their State Synod recommendation will not be eligible to be part of the review and selection decision.
- 4.3. Where necessary, the National Committee may seek to further interview any applicant, e.g. face to face, telephone, telephone conference, SKYPE or any other appropriate way for clarification or further questions. They may also need to contact the State or Territory Committee from which the nomination came as well as contacting any of the referees of any of the applicants.
- 4.4. The incumbent National Committee has the discretion to choose to award up to two (2) Joan Stott UCAF Bursaries.
- 4.5. The Chairperson of the UCAF National Committee will advise all applicants of their decision by phone and in writing before 31 October, and the names of the successful applicants will be circulated to all Synod UCAF Committees via their Corresponding Member by 31 October for the bursaries to be paid in the following year.
- 4.6. Whilst the Bursaries should not necessarily be awarded on a rotating basis among the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship Synods, the National Committee should be mindful of an equitable distribution over time (as per C09.36.4 (f) May 2009 National Consultation Minutes).

Joan Stott

Past President (1985-1988)

Joan Stott is an older member of the Uniting Church. A nurse prior to marriage, some years later she completed a Clinical Pastoral Education Program enabling her to develop and train volunteers for a visiting program in which 500 people became visitors in 25 aged care facilities.

One of her passions has been the role of elderly people in their congregations and the way they contribute in unique ways to the life of their church. This interest, along with other God-given skills which have been developed over the years, enabled her to become involved in UCAF leadership.

On her appointment as UCAF National President in 1985, Joan also became involved in the World Federation of Methodist Women (WFMW) and in the Asia Pacific region attending international conferences and becoming editor of WFMW's *Tree of Life* newsletter.

In 1996 she became WFMW world secretary at a time when the movement became the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women.

Her ministry in the years 1991 - 2001 involved participation in many World Federation and 'Non-Government Organisation' (NGO) United Nations Conferences held in various countries across the world.

Joan has been an elder and chair of several boards and committees, but in her retirement whilst she is still a lay preacher, she spends most of her time preparing to lead "Worship on Thursday" each week, and writing Prayers and Personal Meditations for her website www.thetimelesspsalms.net/

Are you under 35 years of age?

Are you undertaking leadership or theological studies?

If you answer 'yes' to these, you are eligible to apply for the bursary, by .

- a) Completing the application form by 31 May and sending by e-mail to the UCAF Secretary in your state.**
- b) The UCAF state committee will review all applications.**
- c) Any applications the state committee feel meet the criteria will be forwarded to the UCAF National Committee.**