The Perspective of time

The Press now and again highlights problems in Indigenous communities. Certainly there are social problems as there are in the wider Australian community, but there are good things happening too that are given less attention. During a recent conversation with visitors from the Anglican Board of Mission–Australia, I was able to give them a 35-year perspective on ministry development in the Aboriginal churches of Cape York Peninsula (CYP). Back in 1969, when I went as Chaplain to the Lockhart River Aboriginal community, there was only one Aboriginal priest in Australia (in the Northern Territory), and a widespread dependency on white authorities in both church and community governance in Aboriginal communities. Today the communities have Shire Councils with Aboriginal mayors and councillors, and the churches have a growing band of trained lay leaders and a number of ordained leaders emerging from them. While problems remain in both spheres, a lot has been achieved and will continue to be achieved with the right kind of skilled support (that is not paternalistic).

None of this change has happened easily. I will attempt to reflect a little on why. (This may take several newsletter episodes.) The 1970's were years of turmoil in CYP communities, and a widespread dependency on white authorities in both church and community governance in Aboriginal communities. Today the communities have Shire Councils with Aboriginal mayors and councillors, and the churches have a growing band of trained lay leaders and a number of ordained leaders emerging from them. While problems remain in both spheres, a lot has been achieved and will continue to be achieved with the right kind of skilled support (that is not paternalistic).

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From the Principal

Hi! Everybody. God's richest blessings and strength from all of us are all of them! Many thanks to all our supporters for their prayers and donations as we continue to obey the Lord's command to “make disciples”. The College at present has one hundred and five students, doing either Community Development, Certificate III in Theology or Diploma in Theology studies, all at various stages of maturing in Christ, and getting to understand the Bible a little more each time.

As older students finish their studies, they leave the College and their places are filled with new students that have never been to the College before, but have heard about it, and want to check it out for themselves. So have heard about it, and want to understand the Bible a little more each time.

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Changing of the guard at Wontulp family

The stockmen are any Christians who are on an evangelist mission, and the wild cattle are people who have gone their own way, living life according to their own human (wild cattle?) nature. (Gal 5:16-17 GNB). The “ticks” and other destructive or irritating “bush mites” that need to be cleansed from the bush cattle comes from this human nature and are outlined in Galatians 5:19-21, GNB.

Well, I hear whistling and the whips are a-crackin’ so we at the College must go now and do our bit in helping to replace these destructive ticks with the fruit of the Spirit as outlined in Galatians 5:22-26. Jesus is Lord.

Rev. Michael Connolly

New members of the Management Committee

Two new members of the College Management Committee were elected at the Annual General Meeting on the 19th June 2006. (Pictured at left: Rev. Des Rumble - Anglican Church, and right: Ailsa Wainb - Lutheran Church.) Each of our partner churches – Lutheran, Anglican, Catholic and Uniting – have three representatives on the committee. We welcome them!

Certificate III in Theology students pictured singing at their break-up concert following a study block in May 2006. (Pictured L-R: Josephine Murgha, Elizabeth Norman, Elthia Nai, Coleen Savuka and Gertrude Levi.

New children’s book to be released shortly

Avid readers of our Indigenous children’s book range will be thrilled to learn that we have just completed a new children’s book based on a traditional Mer Island story. The story was told to Janine Paterson by one of our Diploma students and local Anglican Priest, Rev. Stephen Tabo. Called ‘Trigger Fish and Trevally’– Nagag and Geiga, it is an engaging story suitable for primary school age children to read. The story concludes with a moral lesson, which draws comparison to Jesus’s parable about the Lost Sheep.

The book will be available for sale from Wontulp-Bi-Buya College in July for $19.95 posted. Two other children’s books are still available and also the Resource Book for Aboriginal Theology and Ministry: Milbi Dabaar.

Help Wontulp-Bi-Buya College Grow

Please send me _____ copies of Trigger Fish and Trevally - Nagag and Geiga at $19.95 posted
Please send me _____ copies of How Kangaroo Found His Tail at $16.95 posted
Please accept my gift of: for: $25 $50 $100 $ __________
Staff and programs Building Fund (tax deductible) Library Fund (tax deductible)
Credit card donations may also be made by calling 1800 065 607 in Qld or (07) 4041 4596.

I enclose my cheque/money order OR please debit my Card

Forward gifts to: Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, PO Box 960N, North Cairns Qld 4870

Please advise change of address. Enclose mailing label if possible.

Like most organisations, changes in staff are inevitable. After faithful service in the administration of Wontulp-Bi-Buya College for a number of years Judith Hathaway (Registrar - 3 years) and Bethalia Tabuai (Administrative Assistant – 5 years) have moved on to other life adventures.

Working at the College, rekindled a love for teaching for former teacher Judith and she took up an employment opportunity in June teaching two children on a remote cattle station in the Northern Territory. Beth developed strong business administration skills during her time at the college, leading to her completing a Diploma in Business Management at the Australian Catholic University last year. She has moved since to Ballarat, Victoria for family reasons and is currently undertaking an Associate Degree in Business Management.

Melissa Bann has replaced Judith as the Registrar. Melissa would be well known to Torres Strait students, as former Office Manager for the Hon Warren Entsch, Federal Member for Leichhardt and Journalist with Torres News. A variety of administration roles also brought her into contact with Aboriginal people from New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory. She has also worked for another registered training provider and has worked for another registered training provider.

The new Administrative Assistant, Daniella Crowe, brings to the role a wealth of experience in administration and has worked for another registered training provider. She has also worked for Centrelink and other government organisations.

Daniella’s family hails from the Torres Strait with connections to the Eastern, Central and Western islands. She has resided and worked previously in the Torres Strait.

Daniella was a former member of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance troupe, Kungap. We wish Judith and Bethalia all the best and thank them for all their hard work and effort on behalf of the College. We welcome Melissa and Daniella to the Wontulp family and hope they will find working for the college a rewarding experience.

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